

The Movies Civically Considered: Panoramas, Labyrinths and the Motion Picture City

Based upon the successful Broadway play by Sidney Kingsley, United Artists's lavish 1937 movie version of *Dead End* (1937) begins with a panoramic shot of the skyline of New York's East Side. Sweeping across avant-garde skyscrapers that suggest a wealthy, progressive city capable of mastering any problem, the camera then descends into a slum neighborhood, its labyrinth of streets stretching out before us, where unsupervised young toughs are looking for trouble and finding plenty. The whole tableau is really a \$90,000 Goldwyn sound stage, complete with filthy garbage cans, roach-infested apartments, and freshly-cut fruit peelings floating in the East River (a concrete tank holding thousands of gallons of water). The same expertise that fashioned a mythical city, it seemed, would be brought to bear on the persistent social problems of the real city. "The abnormal habits and traits of a transitional society," a United Artists press release for the film explained in confident, sociological jargon, "are soon reflected in anti-social behavior of both children and adults alike." But the film itself ended inconclusively, offering little reassurance that the mean streets of the gritty city would be transformed into what one of the characters called "a decent world where people could live decent and be decent."ⁱ

We might better understand the fate of our cities if we examined the role of the panorama and the labyrinth, older cultural forms embedded in the motion picture city where they continue to shape our perception of the city. The panorama and the labyrinth came into prominence as civic responses to the market revolution as it began to transform the cities of the Jacksonian era. The commanding view from above, enclosing the city in a broad sweep, promised to rationalize the city in line with market imperatives. The bewildering ground-level view of the city as a maze suggested civic paralysis in the face of market transformation. The panorama and the labyrinth continue to capture important qualities of city life, but at the cost of encouraging either an exaggerated sense of mastery or a fatalistic surrender to the incomprehensible. Mastery and surrender have each done their share of damage to our cities. Neither leave much room for a contingent world of possibilities in which civic debate and deliberation might play a central role.ⁱⁱ

The Panorama and the Labyrinth: In the early 19th century, the panorama and the labyrinth offered contrasting strategies of visually and verbally representing the city. The panorama provided an all-encompassing, bird's-eye view, as in the New York Commissioners' Plan of 1811 and the hundreds of plans that followed. Depicting the city as a legible and rational unity of civic and material progress, the panorama promised mastery of the city and its processes. In contrast, the labyrinth provided a "mole's eye" view of the city as dark and mysterious, an illegible and fragmented terrain of misery and deception. Lurid exposes served as guidebooks to the labyrinth. Even as they pointed out spectacles and warned of dangers, the exposes conveyed an resigned attitude of surrender to a city of avarice and vice.ⁱⁱⁱ

As the United States underwent its most rapid urbanization between 1830 and 1860, the panorama and labyrinth expressed conflicting responses to the market revolution transforming the antebellum city. The panorama captured the market ambition to incorporate land and labor into an orderly world of rationally calculating individuals and transparent transactions. Celebrating our ability to master the city, the panorama buried the details of economic

dislocation beneath a visual order.^{iv} In contrast, the labyrinth depicted the city as dark and mysterious, an illegible, fragmented terrain of misery and deception. The labyrinth exposed the underside of market culture, a new opacity and dissembling in human relations as strangers competed on crowded city streets. Confidence men and painted women, feigning gentility to entrap the genteel, walked the streets and haunted the imagination. The literature of the labyrinth took the form of advice on how to avoid such snares. Recommending a taciturn and bland demeanor in public, the advice made social relations all the more opaque. Disarming advice could become rearming strategy, culminating in mutually assured deception.^v

The flaneur emerged as a figure in literature and on city streets who bridged the panorama and the labyrinth. An idle, disinterested spectator of the city, the flaneur amused himself by classifying the mysterious figures who passed before him. Combining a reassuring mastery of the passing scene with a lack of interest in reform or action of any sort, the flaneur was a sort of panoramist of the labyrinth. The flaneur knew the darkest secrets of every passerby (although Edgar Allen Poe's "The Man of the Crowd" explored the flaneur's own confusion), but took no responsibility for the spectacle he consumed.^{vi}

The panorama and the labyrinth sometimes took more admirable forms. In 1815 a New York watchmaker, Peter Stollenwerck, displayed a three-dimensional panorama of a busy commercial and manufacturing city at the back of his shop. Anticipating later photographers and filmmakers, Stollenwerck sought to reproduce the city as accurately as possible. Even as the market began to transform the crafts, Stollenwerck encouraged his fellow artisans to recognize themselves as part of a harmonious and comprehensible urban order.^{vii}

Likewise, even the most sensationalized exposes of the labyrinth advanced a tepid reform agenda, mapping the labyrinth as a first step toward amelioration. The labyrinth also produced a character with a moral code. A sort of bourgeois flaneur who turned his panoramic knowledge of the labyrinth into gainful employment, the detective began his cultural career exposing the petty snares of confidence men and painted women in the Jacksonian city. Embodying "a touching faith in the eventual victory of human rationality," the detective was bound for bigger roles in the 20th century. The hard-boiled detective of popular fiction and film noir championed human decency in a world of rampant corruption. Down "these mean streets a man must go who is not himself mean, who is neither tarnished nor afraid..." Raymond Chandler wrote of the detective. "He must be the best man in his world and a good enough man for any world."^{viii}

Masters of the labyrinth, Chandler's detectives sometimes ascended to the panoramic redoubts of the criminal rich in order to bring them to justice. The Sternwoods "could no longer smell the sump or the oil," Philip Marlowe remarked of a family that lived high above their oil fields, "but they could still look out of their front windows and see what made them rich. If they wanted to. I don't suppose they would want to." Such villains lived "with a 'prospect,'" in "large pretentious houses...surrounded by high walls that isolate and insulate them from the consequences of crimes they have committed" on the mean streets below. The detective's task "is to drag the criminal rich *down* to the flatland, carry them back to their histories, their crimes....Moving through a labyrinth of mistaken and assumed identities, he finds historical truth by distinguishing the real from the counterfeit."^{ix}

The panorama and the labyrinth, the flaneur and the detective, all reappeared in movie culture where they continue to shape our views of the city. Important markers of our response to the great transformation brought by the market revolution, these cultural forms remain useful tools in exploring and thinking about the city. But in their dominant expressions neither the panorama nor the labyrinth, neither mastery nor surrender, offered an appropriate or sufficient response to the city.^x

Mastery reduces city life to a set of predictable processes and serves the obsessive impulse to regularize, systematize, classify, to efface the contingency and individuality that are irreducible elements of city life. The panorama reflected that part of American culture that the French poet Charles Baudelaire described as “a vast cage, a great counting-house” of relentless calculation and simplification. The panoramic sense of mastery informed the centralized planning that culminated in the “cataclysmic” urban renewal programs of the post World War II period. Impatient with the particular and idiosyncratic in the lives of individuals and cities, the masterful too often ripped through the human substance of urban fabric with a “meat ax.”^{xi}

Surrender offered no improvement over mastery. As the focal point of the labyrinth, the “slum” encouraged acceptance of poverty as a natural, timeless fact of urban life as inevitable as “smoke, or bricks or saloons.” Crowded, immigrant neighborhoods became symbols of intractable problems of poverty and depravity. The same distance from the lives of individuals that the panorama encouraged could also characterize the labyrinth. A place of “vice and abomination,” went one description of San Francisco’s Chinatown, where “the filth and misery, are not prominently visible but are hid from public gaze in the dark alleys.” Chalking up these “Cauldrons of Offensive rottenness which simmer and evaporate” to the failings of their inhabitants, the connoisseur of the labyrinth could be as complacent as the most Olympian panoramist.^{xii}

Making Sense of the Modern City: Motion pictures arose in part from an effort to capture the city in panoramic embrace. In 1877 the British immigrant Eadweard Muybridge set his camera atop Nob Hill and took a series of photographs that provided a panoramic view of San Francisco. Muybridge appealed to civic pride and sought to capture the city in one grand, sweeping vision. In San Francisco and cities across the nation, political disorder and physical expansion made the search for a unifying image of civic clarity urgent. The photographic panorama provided a means of enclosing the city and making it appear both more civilized and comprehensible. Muybridge’s was among the most ambitious of the genre, a multiple-plate panorama that provided a 360 degree view of the city.^{xiii}

But Muybridge’s orderly panorama disguised the violence and disorder of the real city. Upon his arrival in San Francisco, Muybridge himself had produced a lithograph to commemorate a murdered newspaper editor. As Muybridge made his panorama, the “sandlots” (the barren construction site of the stalled project for a new city hall) were becoming the staging area of anti-Chinese riots and a racially-vicious labor movement. “We will take them by the throat,” the racist labor leader Denis Kearney threatened, “squeeze their breath out, and throw them into the sea.”^{xiv}

Muybridge’s effort to provide a visual and civic order for the city also ran up against the

sprawling expanse of the metropolis, the increasing velocity of its commercial activity, and the lack of the public spaces that had provided order and legibility to the Jacksonian city. Taken from the Nob Hill bedroom of railroad tycoon Mark Hopkins, Muybridge's panorama was appropriately dubbed a "boudoir view of San Francisco." It revealed a city with block after block of undifferentiated private residences and commercial establishments with hardly a public space to be seen. By making the streets of the city appear to converge on the Nob Hill mansions of the city's railroad barons, Muybridge's panorama expressed the social pretensions and political dominance of the city's elite. But it could not capture the political tensions that led Kearney and three thousand workers up Nob Hill to present their demands in October 1877. Subsequent legislation expanding the police force and outlawing incendiary speech reinforced the primacy of private over public space.^{xv}

Muybridge's panorama failed to unravel the mysteries of the great city. The modern city deceived the citizen, the early film critic Walter Benjamin wrote, "is on its guard against him, masks itself, flees, intrigues, lures him to wander its circles to the point of exhaustion." But cut loose and allowed to range freely, the camera might provide a coherent image of the expanding metropolis, moving through its spaces, reuniting its disparate parts, and capturing its frenetic pace. In its rapid-fire sensations and its dynamization of space and spatialization of time, the motion picture explored new modes of perception that corresponded to those "that are experienced on an individual scale by the man in the street in big-city traffic, on a historical scale by every present-day citizen." The motion picture, Benjamin continued,

on the one hand, extends our comprehension of the necessities which rule our lives; on the other hand, it manages to assure us of an immense and unexpected field of action. Our taverns and our metropolitan streets, our offices and furnished rooms, our railroad stations and our factories appeared to have us locked up hopelessly. Then came the film and burst this prison-world asunder by the dynamite of the tenth of a second, so that now, in the midst of its far-flung ruins and debris, we calmly and adventurously go traveling.

Motion pictures promoted the "heightened presence of mind" that was essential to physical and political well-being of the metropolitan citizen.^{xvi}

Likened to a day-long walking tour of the city, Muybridge's panorama anticipated these possibilities. Muybridge later gained fame as "the father of motion pictures" for his photographs that revealed the intricacies of a thoroughbred race horse's gait invisible to the unaided human eye. His panorama had also enhanced human perception. In breaking with the conventional 180 degree panorama that conformed to the limitations of normal vision, Muybridge's 360 degree panorama provided for simultaneous perception of what the human eye could only perceive in time (through rotation of the eye across the horizon) - a view of the city no one had, nor could have seen unaided. Muybridge never took the next step of using motion pictures to capture the life of the city in its multiple settings of time and space. But his challenge to the existing conventions of visually depicting the city opened the door for others.^{xvii}

In the 1890s, the Edison and Biograph companies began making motion pictures in and of New York City. Bulky cameras and slow film speeds demanded accessible, outdoor locations. But producers were also drawn to extraordinary sights the city offered. Exploring the city's

harbors and parks, mansions and slum tenements, markets and subways, Edison and Biograph made hundreds of short (2-3 minute) documentaries of the city called “actualities.” Providing panoramic views from bridges and skyscrapers, the actualities also toured the city’s labyrinth of streets, subways and elevated trains.^{xviii}

Films of civic ceremonies and public projects encouraged civic pride, while depictions of dumping wharves and incinerating plants stimulated a curiosity about the complex systems and processes essential to city life. Films of excavations and demolitions captured the creative destruction remaking the city. In 1902, Biograph used a new time-lapse technique to condense the weeks-long razing of the Star Theater into a powerful two-minute actuality. A 1903 Edison actuality on the city’s professionalized sanitation department quoted from the reformer Jacob Riis’s praise of the sanitation worker: “His broom saved more lives in the crowded tenements than a squad of doctors. It did more: it swept the cobwebs out of our civic brain and conscience, and set up a standard of a citizen's duty which...will be ours until we have dragged other things than our pavements out of the mud.”^{xix}

The actualities provided an encyclopedia exploration of the city, juxtaposing rich and poor, heights and depths, rural outskirts and congested core, civic ceremony and municipal service. They proved popular, not only in New York but across the nation where audiences found in the city’s marvels and its daily workings intimations of where their own communities might be headed. Stationary cameras soon gave way to cameras on swiveling tripods that made possible the panoramic films and then to cameras mounted on moving platforms, particularly boats and elevated trains, which captured the movement and energy of the city, revealing the cityscape as a dynamic composition.^{xx}

Soon the most ambitious film makers aspired to supplant the novelist as the preeminent interpreter of the city. In Europe a series of “city symphonies” provided panoramic tours through time and space. Inspired by the city’s traffic jams, *Berlin: Symphony of a City* (1927) offered a dawn to midnight tour of metropolitan life. In the United States, D. W. Griffith combined the power of movies with the literary techniques of Charles Dickens, the city novelist par excellence. The city, Dickens wrote, was “a labyrinth, whereof the mystery was known but to a chosen few.” A “kind of resigned distraction came over the stranger as he trod those devious mazes and, giving himself up for lost, went in and out and round about, and quietly turned back again when he came to a dead wall....”^{xxi}

The usual solution of rising above the city in panoramic embrace only multiplied the sense of “wilderness upon wilderness” for Dickens. Instead Dickens took his readers into the streets of the city, uncovering the shaping human relations beneath its institutions and buildings, exposing the political and moral order embedded in the built environment. There is “at first an absence of ordinary connection and development” in a Dickens novel, Raymond Williams explained. “But then as the action develops, unknown and unacknowledged relationships...are as it were forced into consciousness.” Dickens revealed connections “of a kind that are obscured, complicated, mystified, by the sheer rush and noise and miscellaneity of this new and complex social order.” Griffith attempted a similar task in *A Corner in Wheat* (1909) based on the Frank Norris novel, *The Pit*. In Norris, Griffith found an American Dickens, determined to link the hardships of the urban poor to the decadence of millionaire speculators who manipulated the price of necessities.^{xxii}

In the most ambitious of all the early city films, Greed (1924), Eric Von Stroheim also adapted a Norris novel (McTeague). Von Stroheim, who remarked that he "had graduated from the D. W. Griffith school of film-making," resolved to "go the Master one better as regards film realism." He would film in "real cities," in "real tree-bordered boulevards, with real street-cars, buses, and automobiles, through real winding alleys, with real dirt and foulness, in the gutters as well as in real castles and palaces," filling his movie with "real men, women and children, as we meet them in real life...without exaggeration, without modification."^{xxiii}

Von Stroheim insisted on realism in an enormously expensive and expansive film that in its uncut version lasted nine or ten hours. The Norris text, its realism and physicality anticipating the cinematic art, aided Von Stroheim's efforts. Not only were the exteriors all filmed on location - providing a panoramic tour of tenement blocks and suburban developments, transit and sewer systems, schools and offices, music halls and parks, lunch counters and saloons, but the interior scenes were also shot on location. Von Stroheim leased a building in a lower-middle class neighborhood and demanded the cast and crew not only shoot but live in the building to promote maximum realism.^{xxiv}

Yet for all its most advanced techniques, Greed betrayed Von Stroheim's and Norris's lack of sympathy for their characters. Norris and Von Stroheim cast the pall of labyrinth over the dynamism of the new metropolis. "Clouds and sunshine, corpse lights and bridal lamps, joy anthems and funeral dirges contrast and mingle in New York," an expose of the labyrinth explained in 1867. Greed contains a visual parallel when a funeral procession passes outside the window as the McTeagues are married. For all its ambition, Greed failed to realize what movies had to offer cities.^{xxv}

The Nickelodeon and the Progressive-era City: A political cartoon of 1880, entitled "The Latest Phase of American Politics - A Sunday Matinee on the Sand-lot," anticipated what progressive-era reformers would see as the civic potential of movies. Muybridge's panorama had captured a metropolis in need of new public spaces, a revived civic culture, and a coherent image of itself. The political cartoon suggested how movies might contribute to a solution of those problems. The cartoon played on the way the city's workers moved through the city, reconnecting its spaces (the Nob Hill mansions, the offices of railroad corporations, the sand-lots themselves) and using them as backdrops for political theater. A generation later, the nickelodeon had become a treasured public space in crowded inner-city neighborhoods, while civic reformers had begun to explore the potential of movies to promote an understanding and appreciation of city life and to stimulate civic discussion of its problems and possibilities.^{xxvi}

The daily matinee appeared ready to become the latest phase of American politics. Communicating complex ideas more immediately than newspapers or speeches and transcending barriers of language and education, the movies broadened participation in the formation of public opinion. "Far more people today are reached by the moving picture than by the daily press," a reporter observed, "and while we read the newspaper only in parts, the moving picture we see complete." The "motion picture has become a public power," the National Board of Review of Motion Pictures declared, "and a moral and cultural influence which must be brought under social control."^{xxvii}

Although movies remained largely in private hands, corporate consolidation still lay in the future. Thomas Edison's Motion Picture Patents Company attempted to monopolize the industry, but dozens of independent producers resisted. In 1905 two Pittsburgh entrepreneurs opened a storefront theater devoted exclusively to showing movies and coined the term "nickelodeon." By 1907 some 5,000 nickelodeons had appeared in cities and towns across the nation. Seven years later 18,000 movie theaters attracted a daily audience of seven million. In some cities, weekly attendance approached twice the total population.^{xxviii}

When the better classes noticed the spread of nickelodeons in 1907, they responded with alarm. Harper's Weekly announced the spread of "nickel madness," a "nickel delirium" that "was sweeping the country coast to coast." Movies, the Atlantic Monthly warned, offered "a cruel realism which at once dulls the imagination and destroys the illusive romance of the art. They are utterly incapable of intellectual content." The "biggest attraction of the nickelodeon," Harper's Weekly added in 1913, "is that it makes no demands on the audience." Less hysterical commentators recognized the capacity of movies to educate, enlighten and arouse as the true source of alarm. "It seems as if we who have this education, this culture have had something taken from us," American Magazine mused in 1913. "I wonder if we will ever get it back."^{xxix}

Working people shaped early movie industry as audiences, subjects and even producers of films. "The crowds not only throng the shows," The Nation observed, "they talk about them, on the street corners, in the cars, and over the hoods of baby carriages." To be sure, nickelodeons offered entertainment. Their "twinkling, tungsten facades, the apotheosis of pressed tin and light bulb" were "effulgent, wild, and imaginative." Garish placards, salacious barkers with megaphones and titillating films all contributed to the movies' illicit appeal. But movie culture offered more constructive possibilities. Working people found their struggles dramatized on screens, their enemies vanquished or ridiculed, their hidden hopes and dreams made the visible subjects of public life. Movies, the National Board of Review recognized, functioned as "an agent of challenge, of conflict, even of revolution."^{xxx}

Unlike the silent audiences of today, early movie-goers commented on the films, booed and cheered, conversed with fellow patrons, mounted the stage on amateur nights. Intertitles (written dialogue that punctuated silent films, sometimes read aloud or translated by spielers) enticed the illiterate or immigrant into learning the language of political life. The "academy of the working man" served women as well. One exhibitor made "voting by women in his [seven theater] lobbies a permanent feature of election day performances," years before women won the vote. Suffragists found exhibitors willing to screen such films as Votes for Women (1912) or Eight Million Women Want -? (1913). Catering to local tastes and allegiances, exhibitors screened pro-labor films like From Dusk to Dawn (1913) and the Jungle (1914), offering socialists, unionists, suffragists the stage between reels, before and after films, even allowing collections for striking workers.^{xxxi}

Reformers and unionists, socialists and suffragists, bankers, industrialists, and governmental agencies were all making movies and sparking debate. But the most popular movies explored the struggles of working people to make sense of their lives in the new metropolis. One of hundreds of films on the struggles of working people, Charlie Chaplin's twenty-minute Easy Street (1916) addressed a host of civic issues, including the social gospel, charity organization, police brutality, street crime, domestic abuse, birth control, prostitution, the white slave trade and

drug use. Opening on a Protestant mission, with droning preacher and distracted flock, Easy Street ended with a reformed neighborhood centered on a “New Mission,” more attuned to the people’s needs and looking suspiciously like a nickelodeon.^{xxxii}

A strange alliance of industry leaders and moral reformers, the National Board of Review also provided a pulpit for civic reformers. “I am entirely a socialist when it comes to the municipal ownership and operation of amusement places,” the executive officer of the National Board Review of Motion Pictures declared in 1912. “There is no more reason why moving pictures...should be the property of commerce to exploit, than there is in the case of the public libraries,” Collier argued. Treating movies “merely as a form of entertainment giving the people thrills, with no output of effort on the part of the audience, and with no definite constructive object,” served only as “a method of disorganizing the public.” But linked to schools, libraries and discussion groups, the movies could “aid the public in carrying out the great primary social function of public discussion.”^{xxxiii}

Officers of the National Board of Review also opposed censorship. Even as “the movies begin to portray labor struggles, conditions in mine and factory,” the Board’s chairman wrote in 1914, even “when it becomes the daily press of industrial groups or classes, of Socialism, syndicalism, and radical opinion,” we should avoid censorship. “Shall pictures which honestly and with reasonable accuracy portray any or all of these questions be suppressed,” he asked, “because they deal with unconventional or forbidden topics; because they tend to excite class feeling or, as is alleged tend to bring discredit upon agencies of government?” Let the state assume “the right of regulating this most important avenue of expression,” he predicted, and “only the safe and sane, the purely conventional, the uncontroversial film would be produced.”^{xxxiv}

In place of governmental censorship, the National Board of Review introduced a voluntary system of submitting films for review. Much of the Board’s early activity focused on driving overt sexuality and immorality out of the movies. But after 1914, the Board became much more proactive, encouraging the production of better quality films, reading rooms for nickelodeons and closer ties to libraries. The Board pursued links with other civic movements and helped provide cheap projectors for public schools. The Board also continued to work with labor leaders to combat censorship.^{xxxv}

The National Board of Review failed to dampen the demand for legalized censorship. Many cities and states created censorship boards, including the 1913 board that operated under the auspices of the Industrial Commission of Ohio. The Mutual Film Corporation challenged the Industrial Commission in court, charging that movie censorship constituted a prior restraint of free speech in violation of the U.S. Constitution as well as the Ohio Constitution’s explicit guarantee that “Every citizen may freely speak, write and publish his sentiments on all subjects.” The case went to the Supreme Court of the United States in 1915, where an unanimous decision upheld the legality of censorship. Until overturned in Burstyn vs. Wilson (1952), Mutual Film Corporation vs. Industrial Commission of Ohio (1915) provided censorship boards with a legal basis to serve not only as “guardians of the public’s morality” but also as the “guardian of its social and political thought.”^{xxxvi}

The Supreme Court’s decision quashed but did not deny the civic potential of movies. “In its discussion, counsel have gone into a very elaborate description of moving picture exhibitions and

their many useful purposes as graphic expression of opinion and sentiments, as exponents of policies, as teachers of science and history, as useful, interesting, amusing, educational, and moral,” the Court observed. “We may concede the praise,” but “all films of a moral, educational or amusing and harmless character shall be passed and approved...there is no impediment to their value or effect in the Ohio statute.” But in many films “a prurient interest may be excited or appealed to,” thus making it “in the interest of public morals and welfare to supervise moving picture exhibition.”^{xxxvii}

In denying movies protection as free speech, the Supreme Court held that the movies were a form of entertainment, like the circus and other spectacles, and not entitled to protection. The “exhibition of moving pictures is a business, pure and simple,” the Court wrote, “originated and conducted for profit, like other spectacles, not to be regarded by the Ohio Constitution, we think, as part of the press of the country or as organs of public opinion.” The “argument is wrong or strained,” the Court concluded, “which extends the guaranties of free opinion and speech to the multitudinous shows which are advertised on the bill-boards of our cities and towns.” Negating the National Board’s efforts to improve the quality and variety of films and link them to civic life, the Supreme Court consigned the movies to consumer culture. In the ten years after the Mutual decision, the studio system combined production, distribution and exhibition in a handful of dominant corporations. By 1940 the big eight studios controlled 95% of the movie business.^{xxxviii}

From Dream Factory to Myth-Maker: In 1927 the lavish Roxy Theater opened off New York’s Times Square. Dubbed “the Cathedral of Motion Pictures,” the Roxy signaled Hollywood’s place at the center of the emerging consumer culture. As spending on entertainment, amusement and recreation soared, a host of agencies located in Times Square orchestrated the convergence and capitalization of advertising and show business. In its films, in its sumptuous new theaters, and in the lavish lifestyles of its stars, Hollywood supplied alluring images of luxury and abundance, of personal emancipation through conspicuous consumption that helped to legitimate corporate capitalism.^{xxxix}

An endless round of clubs and penthouses, sexuality and shopping, a utopia of cross-class consumption characterized the Hollywood city of the jazz age. As censors harassed the occasional radical film that appeared, civic engagement dissolved in favor of fantasy. “Ye portals bright, high and majestic,” an ethereal voice intoned on the Roxy’s opening night, “open to our gaze the path to Wonderland, and show us the realm where fantasy reigns.”^{xl} The shift to sound after 1927 reinforced the trend toward fantasy as primitive microphones picked up sound from everywhere and forced the shift to soundproof stages. No longer ranging freely through the city, movie-makers built mythical cities of elaborate and expensive sets as backdrops for their films.^{xli}

The Great Depression also intensified the fantasy city. With the growing need for dialogue, Hollywood studios courted the host of writers (novelists, journalists, playwrights) who clustered around New York’s entertainment industry. As literary opportunities in New York began to dry up, these writers flooded into Hollywood to become hired hands for corporate studios (“schmucks with Underwoods,” Harry Warner called them).^{xlii} In their dismay over “the goddam lotus land” they found in Los Angeles, the New York writers helped to develop a Los Angeles fiction that treated the city as a synonym for deception, masquerade, and unreality. But in their

films they immortalized their romantic memories of New York.^{xliii}

The movie writers missed, above all, New York's street life. From the vantage of a place where no one walked and it appeared "as if everyone had gone indoors and pulled down the shades," New York's streets now appeared as glorious, crowded and talkative. The writers populated the skyscrapers and mansions, penthouses and nightclubs of the consumers' city with fast-talking, wisecracking reporters, gangsters and showgirls. The ebb and flow of traffic, the chance encounters on sidewalks, the nights of liquored conversation made New York appear not a foreboding labyrinth but a creative Mecca.^{xliv}

Hollywood's mythical New York of the late 1920s and early 1930s was an impossibly stimulating place. "Oh, to be back in Hollywood, wishing I was back in New York," one writer mused from a New York barstool in the late 'forties. But this imagined city also had its darker side, its racketeers and shyster lawyers, its cynical editors and scheming prostitutes, equally untethered from the real city whose future was at stake in these images. In an effort to hold its audience in the depression, Hollywood served up ever-larger doses of sex and violence. Gritty films about desperate characters made extensive use of shyster city as the symbol of a failed social order. A convenient scapegoat for the depression, shyster city allowed Hollywood to explain the depression without implicating the corporate system of which it was a part.^{xlv}

In the wake of the election of Franklin Roosevelt and in tune with the hopefulness of the period, Hollywood shifted its strategy from dream machine to myth maker. At the apex of its cultural and economic power in the fifteen years after 1933, Hollywood self-consciously took on the responsibility of producing reassuring myths, endorsing traditional values at a time of social turmoil. As the New Deal took off in a more reformist direction after 1935, several Hollywood studios promoted progressive policies for the struggling nation.^{xlvi}

In both myth-making and policy-shaping, Hollywood made extensive use of the negative urban symbols that had been crafted early in the decade. As it glorified small-town values and explored deeper into shyster city, the big-city streets Hollywood had only recently glorified became the mean streets of crime and corruption. The streets of working-class neighborhoods - the "cradle of crime" - came to be identified as the number one problem facing American society.^{xlvii}

Movies and Urban Renewal: After 1935 shyster city and its mean streets shifted from backdrop to central character as Hollywood traced social problems to bad urban design and offered social engineering as the solution. In search of new variations on the gangster theme that would mesh with the hopeful, reformist mood of the country, Hollywood used the mean streets of shyster city to explain how poverty and juvenile delinquency led to crime and corruption. Anxious to win popular support for government action, city planners also turned to the motion picture city so familiar to the public to depict their proposals.^{xlviii}

In Dead End (1937) the streets themselves are the problem. The union-conscious sister of one of the delinquents commits herself to a strike so as "to get you off these streets." Meanwhile, a former inhabitant of the neighborhood, a street kid turned psychopathic killer, returns to its dark alleys to avoid the law, revealing the end product of these mean streets. The film inadvertently suggests how the streets served as a crucial resource in the social life of the neighborhood. The

film's political thrust also arose from those streets, where the wealthy residents of an upscale apartment building with picturesque views of the river are forced to confront and acknowledge the poor of the neighborhood. But the film's message is the need to do away with such streets.^{xlix}

As the law closes in on the gangster, the future belongs to a local boy who wants to do good, an unemployed architect who kills the gangster and offers an alternative vision. "What chance do they have against all this," he asks, glancing up at the tenements. "Spend my life dreaming about tearing these places down....I want to tear them down with my fingers." In response, the union-conscious sister recalls the policy. "Yeah, you always talked about that. How you were going to tear all this down and all the other places like it. How you were going to build a decent world where people could live decent and be decent."^l

New Deal stalwart Senator Robert Wagner of New York, then sponsoring the 1937 Housing Act that initiated slum clearance, was Samuel Goldwyn's honored guest at the premiere of Dead End in August. With the new law, the New York Times editorialized after its passage just weeks later, "at last America makes a real start toward wiping out its city slums." Over the next two decades federal policy and programs leveled dozens of inner-city neighborhoods and underwrote massive suburban development.^{li}

One Third of a Nation (1939), based upon a Work Progress Administration-financed stage play, celebrated the new policy. In the film's upbeat conclusion, in front of documentary footage of urban demolition, the sister of a boy crippled in a tenement fire rejoices that their landlord "is going to give this whole block to the city - and they're going to build new houses, decent houses. And you won't have to play in the streets anymore. There'll be grass and trees, and regular playgrounds for kids, with swings and a handball court." Two years earlier, Angels with Dirty Faces had suggested the missing ingredient in its depiction of a priest-as-social-worker who gets the kids off the unsupervised streets into a gym and helps channel their energies into sports.^{lii}

City planners joined Hollywood in using film to shape urban policy. Just as film aspired to replace the novel as the leading interpreter of urban life, documentary film aspired to supplant the written word in shaping social policy. A series of literary efforts at the end of the 1930s offered cogent suggestions for urban policy, but none made much impact. In 1937, Our Cities: Their Role in the National Economy, the federal Committee on Urbanism called for "a form of economic organization better attuned to the public interest." In 1938 Lewis Wirth's "Urbanism as a Way of Life," which grew out of Wirth's contributions to Our Cities, and Lewis Mumford's The Culture of Cities also offered sweeping reinterpretations urban past and future. But none of these studies had much impact on policy.^{liii}

Documentary film offered a more popular and effective means of mobilizing public opinion. "Educators and publicists everywhere," the reform-minded Survey Graphic noted in 1938, "are hailing documentary as a vivid, urgent method for developing the social attitudes of masses of people, for reconditioning their civic thinking." British planners, under the guidance of John Grierson, had already suggested the potential of documentary film to explain and promote urban policy. Growing up in the United States, the Scottish-born Grierson recognized the power of film but regretted "the way that Hollywood cinema missed its opportunity to combine entertainment with education."^{liiv}

The British documentary film movement won support for the British slum clearance programs of the 1930s. The documentaries did little to explore the underlying causes of slums or the complaints emerging about the new towns that supplanted them. Nor could they convincingly communicate the technical planning process itself, except to suggest it was a process best left to experts. But sweeping, panoramic images of clearance and construction carried the message of efficient, scientific planning. The “master planner” himself (invariably male) appeared as an anonymous wizard, in one film rubbing out and redesigning a Birmingham slum in just over a minute.^{lv}

In the U.S., the documentary films of Pare Lorentz suggested the potential for shaping New Deal policy. Two of Lorentz’s colleagues, Ralph Steiner and Willard Van Dyke, photographed and directed The City (1939), the most important city planning documentary. A product of Civic Films, a non-profit corporation which Mumford’s colleague Clarence Stein established for the American Institute of Planners, The City opened at the New York World’s Fair of 1939. Reflecting the ideas of the Regional Association of America (including a commentary written by Mumford), the documentary offered the garden city idea as the antidote to inner-city poverty and metropolitan congestion.^{lvi}

The City opens with scenes of a harmonious New England village, a human-scaled community combining work and play. These are juxtaposed with following images of grimy industrial city and frenetic, impersonal metropolis (reinforced by dissonant music and a darker film texture). The final third of the film examines the garden cities being constructed by the federal Greenbelt program, an updated version of the New England village which served as a critique of existing conditions. Aaron Copeland’s musical score and Mumford’s commentary reinforced the image-based argument. “You take your choice,” the narrator explains over images of the greenbelt town. “Each one is real. Each one is possible. Shall we sink deeper, deeper into old grooves...or have we vision and courage? Shall we build and rebuild our cities?”^{lvii}

Image and commentary did not work together seamlessly, however, nor did photographers and planners. The planners wanted the Greenbelt program to dominate the 45-minute documentary. Steiner and Van Dyke believed a poetic treatment of modern city life would carry a more powerful message than an instructional account of a government program. “It was never conceived of that way at all,” Van Dyke later said of the seventeen-minute Greenbelt section. “We had planned it to be very short.” The “architects’ and city planners’ solution was of an impossible dullness,” Steiner added. The planners’ greenbelts were nothing but “modern slums, ...all head and no heart and no eye. Stingy minds creating stingy houses.”^{lviii}

The tone of mastery in Mumford’s commentary troubled the photographers, who felt it had been imposed on them. Over images of power stations, airplanes and modern highways, the commentary explains that the “motor parkways weave together city and countryside....Science takes new currents. We grapple with brute force and chaos. Who shall be master, things or men? At last men take command.” Years later Steiner recalled: “I still shudder...at some of the unnecessary ‘on-the-nose-ness’ and goo-iness.” Henwar Rodakiewicz, who turned Lorentz’ outline into the finished scenario, wanted to minimize commentary. “Narrative is unnecessary, for the images are brutally vivid,” Rodakiewicz explained. They could only be flattened by “a cynical and one-sided commentary.”^{lix}

Reviewers of The City praised the images, which even when played for laughs “pack a wallop.” The “shots of the steel town with many an epigrammatic detail, the sequence of the skyscrapers with the thousand voices dictating letters, the satirical portrayal of the congested highways” were “great movie art.” Whether or not they understood the planners’ principles, audiences got “the point because it is put over in terms of traffic jams and hurried meals instead of statistics.” The didactic commentary earned no similar praise. We “learn what it will be like to live in a decentralized town,” a reviewer allowed, “but from what we see on the screen” rather than from “the commentary’s decorative rodomontades.” Mumford’s overheated commentary - “Forget the quiet cities. Open the throttle. All aboard, the promised land” - did little to enhance images that even Mumford admitted were “self-explanatory.”^{lx}

Even with the main lines of postwar planning and suburbanization already falling into place, The City won no unambiguous victory for the greenbelt city. Although “the desirability of such charm is obvious,” Architectural Review nodded to the planning orthodoxy, “it appears surprisingly flat and lifeless in comparison with the teeming energy of the city.” Mumford admitted that “every attempt to show better alternatives in planning and living was commonplace, insipid, conventionally conceived, and entirely unconvincing.” The best planning theory emphasized the greenbelts as serving, in Mumford’s words, “the needs of mothers and children.” Consequently the relentlessly domestic depiction of the greenbelts focused on small children, suggesting a well-appointed suburban subdivision. In contrast, the energy, vitality and diversity of the city poked through every effort to condemn it.^{lxi}

Hollywood films exhibited a similar affinity for the city, even as their audiences headed for the suburbs. Contradicting its message of getting kids off the streets, Dead End launched long movie careers for the young actors who played the East 54th Street Gang. Beginning with Angels in Dirty Faces, the urban vitality of the Dead End Kids entertained audiences for a decade. As they approached middle age, they were renamed the “Bowery Boys” and harnessed their wise-cracking, raucous behavior to saving orphanages and other worthy deeds, bad kids gone good.^{lxii}

Hollywood showed less interest in suburban developments and high-rise public housing, those places where people could live decent and be decent. When Hollywood finally visited suburbia in the 1950s - most famously in Rebel Without a Cause (1955) - it explored dysfunctional families and deracinated kids stultified by a vision of the good life they had no hand in shaping. Hollywood came to the housing project even later. Beginning with Straight Out of Brooklyn (1991), filmed at Brooklyn’s Red Hook Houses, the first product of the 1937 Housing Act, a series of films recorded the deterioration of family and community in the projects. Spike Lee’s contribution to the genre, Clockers (1995), opens with the planners’ panoramic view of the projects, the tower in a neatly landscaped park, few people and little activity. Then Lee narrows the focus, showing how the high rise structures isolated domestic space from public space, leaving unsupervised youths free to conduct the drug trade through a labyrinth of walkways, doorways and unseen apartments.^{lxiii}

Film Noir and the Abandonment of the City: Movies had once promised to revitalize civic life but in underwriting urban renewal and suburbanization they contributed to what C. Wright Mills called “the civic vacuum into which the people of a mass society have now fallen.” The “forces that are shaping the big city are structural forces. But the awareness and the effective action of ‘the citizens’ are limited to a scatter of local milieux. That, I think, is a good definition

of what is meant by a mass society, and of the city as its major locale.” Suburban exile embodied the fear “that our personal experience is civically irrelevant, and our political will a minor illusion.” “As we become more aware of our condition,” Mills concluded, “we come to feel that we are living in a world in which we are merely spectators.”^{lxiv}

In the 1940s and 1950s film noir - city-based films with dark settings and often darker plots - reflected the new mood. One of noir’s basic tenets was “that remote forces more powerful than ourselves, whom we will never confront, perhaps never even be aware of, and who are insulated from any accountability, can change our fate in a flash.” Much of the despair in film noir arose from two decades of government-designed campaigns for the destruction of cities. “People sat in the movies between production shifts, watching with aloofness and even visible indifference,” Mills recalled, “as children were 'saturation bombed' in the narrow cellars of Europe.” Beneath indifference lay a mounting anxiety. “For all we know, we have Created a Frankenstein!” H. V. Kaltenborn reported on NBC radio on the day of the Hiroshima bomb. “We must assume that with the passage of only a little time, an improved form of the new weapon we use today can be turned against us.” If civilization meant “the ability to live and thrive in cities,” as Mumford put it, its future lay in doubt.^{lxv}

But the despair in film noir also arose from civic failure. In City Across the River (1949), a noir update of Dead End, a young teacher despairs of reforming the young gang members in his school. “Sometimes I think the only solution is to clear out all the people and drop an atomic bomb on that whole slum.” Some advocates of urban renewal found “the threat of atom bombing a useful spur to jolt us forward.”^{lxvi} Strategic bombing and urban renewal were not commensurate means of destruction. But they shared a faith in technological mastery. Noir’s “authentic power,” Chandler wrote, depended on a “smell of fear” that arose from “a world in which, long before the atom bomb, civilization had created the machinery of its own destruction, and was learning to use it with all the moronic delight of a gangster trying out his first machine gun....The streets were dark with something more than night.”^{lxvii}

Coming at the end of one hundred years of metropolitan growth, film noir bore an uncanny resemblance to the exposes of the Jacksonian city. The labyrinth conveyed the same resigned fatalism over the decay of the great city that had accompanied its rise. Cornell Woolrich, a popular noir screenwriter, had his characters walk darkened streets where there “was no one aboard, nothing that moved. Not even a cat scenting at a garbage-can. The city was a dead thing.” They moved through “a slumbering early-morning desolation, flittered quickly” past a street light only to be “swallowed up again in the darkness on the other side of it.” The street-lights themselves, “in their impersonal, formalized, zig-zag pattern, only added to the look of void and loneliness.” Woolrich’s city is crumbling, on “a tunnel-dim side street” scarred by a decayed elevated train or in “gaps torn in the building-ranks here and there by the Depression, particularly on corner-sites, and never rebuilt upon, used now for parking lots.” Falling beams and collapsing buildings were favorite plot devices.^{lxviii}

One of the most successful screen adaptations of a Woolrich story, The Window (1949) presents an infernal New York, the heat and squalor of the city calling to mind the “Expressway world” of suburbia. Filmed on location in New York, The Window features a neighborhood of crumbling tenements and empty streets. The story revolves around a working-class boy who we first glimpse playing in an upstairs room of an abandoned tenement building. “There is no place

to go,” he complains to his parents. When he witnesses a murder from the abandoned tenement, it nearly costs him his life. Just months before its premiere, hundreds of the sort of young couples who made the film a hit lined up on a potato field in Long Island to purchase housing in the first Levittown.^{lxix}

But noir retained film’s capacity to illuminate and promote an appreciate of city life. Its parting look at the great city was as much loving and loathing. Noir’s hotels and nightclubs, seedy bars and boarding houses, cocktail lounges and diners of film noir, still common places in postwar America, challenged the emerging domestic ideology centered on the suburban home. A series of pseudo-documentary noirs, made possible by photographic techniques developed in the strategic bombing campaigns and appealing to audiences brought up on newsreel footage, returned to the real city to capture its enduring vitality. The Naked City (1948) employed over one hundred different locations, culminating in a dramatic chase across the Williamsburg Bridge past strollers and lovers enjoying the vista.^{lxx}

Noir called attention to a transitional moment in our history, as we gave up the civic and communal possibilities of the city for the consumer pleasures of the suburbs. “Too often we forget that the suburb has been built at a terrifying cost,” a popular study of the city observed in 1955, particularly in “the abandonment of the city, the center of our civilization.” Exploring the rootlessness of its characters, who clung uneasily to the seedy commercialism of the disappearing city or looked completely out of place in the new suburban order, noir called attention to this momentous decision, inviting us to reconsider it.^{lxxi}

The hard-boiled detective, noir’s central character, also calls us back to the city. An ennobled version of the befuddled citizen, the noir detective wanders a city maze of streets and tunnels, stairways and alleys, subways and overpasses, bars, offices, apartments, elevators, revolving doors, determined to set things right. Although the detective often fails in the end, he recalls in confident voice-over (sometimes from beyond the grave) his descent into the labyrinth, shifting back and forth in time and space, piling flashback upon flashback, in panoramic exploration of his own mistakes. A battered survivor from the ranks of the citizen-proprietor, the noir detective clings to a moral code as he endeavors to keep his own little corner of the city clean.^{lxxii}

A (Rear) Window on the City: Based upon a noir story, Alfred Hitchcock’s Rear Window (1954) offered a critique of noir and the policy of urban renewal. Just as federal bulldozers began to clear a St. Louis neighborhood for the most infamous public housing project (the Pruitt-Igoe project), Hitchcock supervised the construction of a six-story cityscape of 31 apartments, 8 apartment interiors, fire escapes, gardens, an alley, the street itself and, in the background, the New York City skyline. Hitchcock’s set, the largest even built on the Paramount lot (DeMille’s lot!) aimed to praise the city, not to bury it. Centered on a rear courtyard where Hitchcock loved to relax between scenes, Rear Window’s loving treatment of the informal and idiosyncratic provided maximum contrast to the oppressive standardization that led Pruitt-Igoe to be dynamited twenty years later. A monument to rational mastery and standardization, Pruitt-Igoe had no rear windows.^{lxxiii}

Reworking Woolrich’s story “It Had to Be Murder” with reference to Poe’s “Man of the Crowd,” Hitchcock examined the troubled history of movies and cities. The central character, L. B. Jefferies, is a laid-up photographer who, like Poe’s character, peers out a window as he

convalesces. Part movie-goer, part movie-maker, Jefferies projects his own fantasies onto the apartments he sees across the courtyard, each of which resembles a chapter of movie history from actualities through noir. As he explores the pathology of Jefferies' obsessive looking, Hitchcock also indicts obsessive rationalization, systemization and simplification long associated with the flaneur and now part of the movie-making business. Rear Window opens with alarm clocks, morning deliveries and other routines. Clocks and thermometers given the scenes a reassuring predictability - time and temperature imparting the same sort of legibility to the scenes that Jeff's fantasies impart to his neighbors. But nothing is working quite right, from the clock in one apartment that Hitchcock himself appears to be setting to the Hollywood formula whereby the adventurous journalist and the beautiful fashion model (Jefferies' would-be and long-suffering fiancé Lisa) prove irresistible to one another. Jefferies' nurse, who explains the stock market crash in terms of personal indigestion and love as two taxis crashing, appears to have a firmer grasp of how the world works.^{lxxiv}

In a panoramic tour of the labyrinthine courtyard, Hitchcock offers a counter narrative to Jefferies's limited and flawed perspective. While Jefferies' view is always limited to the frame of his window, Hitchcock's camera extends via a long boom into the courtyard, ranging freely and exercising film's ability to explore a cityscape. After showing Jefferies sleeping, Hitchcock's camera pans the courtyard twice, revealing its informality and examining its functions. One of the benefits of the courtyard, perceived privacy, is the one Jefferies violates. Even though visible to one another, his neighbors act as if no one is watching. No one would be were it not for Jefferies' injury. Unlike the formal streetscape glimpsed at the back of Hitchcock's set, the courtyard connects neighbors rather than strangers.^{lxxv}

Neighborliness required a respect for other people's privacy that stemmed from a genuine concern for their well being that might become more active when circumstances required. The point is emphasized in two central scenes, the first of which might be seen as the film's noir moment. One evening an older couple discovered their little dog has been killed. The woman appears at her balcony, crying out "Which one of you did it? Which one of you killed my dog? You don't know the meaning of the world neighbor! Neighbors like each other. Speak to each other. Care if anybody lives or dies. But none of you do." The scene might have come directly out of a noir thriller, a story of urban isolation, alienation and criminality. Yet the neighbors have in fact gathered, listening intently and with sympathy to the woman's plight.^{lxxvi}

But Jefferies' seizes upon the failure of one of his neighbors, Thorwald, who he suspects has killed his wife, to appear at the window as evidence of guilt. Later the same evening, Lisa enters Thorwald's apartment to search for evidence. Meanwhile, another vignette unfolds in the apartment of Miss Lonelyhearts, an aging spinster. Earlier she had entertained a man who tried to force himself on her. Jefferies's nurse noticed that Miss Lonelyhearts has laid out enough pills to kill herself. In one of the few times that Hitchcock has two apartments in the same frame, we see Lisa looking across the courtyard for Jefferies' approval just as Thorwald unexpectedly returns, while Miss Lonelyhearts reaches for the pills. But just then Miss Lonelyhearts hears the music the neighboring composer has been working on. "Wait, Mr. Jefferies," the nurse says, "the music stopped her." As Jefferies faces the disastrous consequences of his obsession, Miss Lonelyhearts experiences the unexpected benefits of sharing space with a diversity of others.

In the midst of a suburbanizing nation destroying its urban fabric, Hitchcock's Rear Window

offers a primer on the joys of city life and a cautionary tale about the consequences of spectatorship. Celebrating the benefits of perceived privacy and chance encounters, Hitchcock also underscored the first fundamental of city life - the obligation, as Jane Jacobs explained a few years later, to care for one another on the basis of sharing space. In the process, Hitchcock showed once again the great potential of movies to promote an understanding and appreciation of the city.

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- ii Wyn Kelley, Melville's City: Literary and Urban Form in Nineteenth-Century New York (New York, 1996), 21-59; John F. Kasson, Rudeness and Civility: Manners in Nineteenth-Century Urban America (New York, 1990), 72-111; Stephan Oettermann, The Panorama: History of a Mass Medium (New York, 1997); Graeme Gilloch, Myth and Metropolis: Walter Benjamin and the City (Cambridge, MA., 1996), 132-167.
- iii Wyn Kelley, Melville's City, p. 38-9; Kasson, Rudeness and Civility, 72-80; "mole's eye" is Kasson's phrase.
- iv David B. Clarke, ed., The Cinematic City (New York, 1997), 1-18; Kasson, Rudeness and Civility, 72-80; Joyce Appleby, Capitalism and a New Social Order: The Republican Vision of the 1790s (New York, 1984), 25-50; Karl Polanyi, The Great Transformation: The Political and Economic Origins of our Time (Boston, 1944), especially 56-76.
- v Clarke, The Cinematic City, 3-5; Mary Ryan, Civic Wars: Democracy and Public Life in the American City during the Nineteenth Century (Berkeley, 1997), 21ff; Kasson, Rudeness and Civility, 64-146; Karen Halttunen, Confidence Men and Painted Women: A Study of Middle-Class Culture in America, 1830-1870 (1982); see also Jean-Christophe Agnew, Worlds Apart: the Market and the Theater in Anglo-American Thought, 1550-1750 (Cambridge, England; 1986), 79-92, passim; the phrase "mutual, assured deception" is Agnew's.
- vi Clarke, The Cinematic City, 4-7; Agnew, World's Apart, 149-194; Dana Brand, "Rear-View Mirror: Hitchcock, Poe, and the Flaneur in America," in Jonathan Freedman and Richard Millington, ed., Hitchcock's America (New York, 1999), 123-134; Dana Brand, The Spectator and the City in Nineteenth-Century American Literature (New York, 1991).
- vii Sean Wilentz, Chants Democratic: New York City and the Rise of the American Working Class (New York, 1984), 3-4.
- viii Kasson, Rudeness and Civility, 74-80 and Ryan, Civic Wars, 185-194; Michael Eaton, Chinatown (London, 1997), 40-43; "touching faith" on 40; and Sean McCann, Gumshoe America (Durham, N.C., 2000); Chandler's "The Simple Art of Murder" (1950) quoted in Eaton, Chinatown, 19.
- ix David Fine, Imagining Los Angeles: A City in Fiction (Albuquerque, N. M., 2000), 119-127, Chandler's The Big Sleep (1939) quoted on 124.
- x
Polanyi, The Great Transformation; Kasson, Rudeness and Civility; Dana Brand, "Rear-View Mirror"; McCann, Gumshoe America.
- xi Brand, "Rear-View Mirror," 123-134; Baudelaire quoted on 126; Clarke, The Cinematic City, 3-7; Jane Jacobs, The Death and Life of Great American Cities (New York, 1961), 241-317, passim; the phrase "meat ax" is master planner Robert Moses'; see Robert Caro, The Powerbroker: Robert Moses and the Fall of New York (New York, 1974), 837-849, passim; Robert Fishman, "The Anti-planners: The Contemporary Revolt Against Planning and Its Significance for Planning History," in Gordon E. Cherry, ed., Shaping an Urban World (New York, 1980), 243-52.
- xii Ryan, Civic Wars, 183-196; "vice and abomination" quoted on 190; "Cauldrons" on 191; Sam Bass Warner, Jr., "The Management of Multiple Urban Images," in Derek Fraser and Anthony Sutcliffe, The Pursuit of Urban History (London, 1983), 383-394; the phrase "smoke, or bricks, or saloons" is Warner's.
- xiii Peter Hales, Silver Cities: The Photography of American Urbanization, 1839-1915 (Philadelphia, 1984), 67-131; David Harris, with Eric Sandweiss, Eadweard Muybridge and the Photographic Panorama of San Francisco, 1850-1880 (Cambridge, MA., 1993), 37-53; Hollis Frampton, "Eadweard Muybridge: Fragments of a Tesseract," in Circles of Confusion: Film, Photography Video Texts, 1968-

1980 (Rochester, N.Y., 1983), 69-80; Ryan, Civic Wars, on Muybridge, 183-185.

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xv Harris, Eadweard Muybridge and the Photographic Panorama of San Francisco, 37-53; Ryan, Civic Wars, 183-197; Hales, Silver Cities, 67-131.

xvi Walter Benjamin, "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction," Illuminations (London, 1970), 219-253; "on its guard" is quoted in Gilloch, Myth and Metropolis, 44; Hales, Silver Cities, 79; Erwin Panofsky, "Style and Medium in the Motion Pictures," in Gerald Mast and Marshall Cohen, ed., Film Theory and Criticism (New York, 1979), 246; John D. Fairfield, The Mysteries of the Great City: The Politics of Urban Design, 1877-1937 (Columbus, O., 1993).

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xix Sanders, Celluloid Skyline, 24-31; Max Page, The Creative Destruction of Manhattan, 1900-1940 (Chicago, 1999), 1-19; Edison promotion on "White Wings" from the Library of Congress website on early New York City films, <http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/papr/nychome.html> (accessed March 28, 2004).

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xxvi Ryan, Civic Wars, 289; Steven J. Ross, Working-Class Hollywood (Princeton, N.J., 1998), 1-111; Sklar, Movie-Made America, 18-32; Lawrence W. Levine, Highbrow/Lowbrow: The Emergence of Cultural Hierarchy in America (Cambridge, 1988), 233-234.

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