Film Goes to War: Bombing, Surveillance, Morale: The movies had been implicated in war and as well as in home front morale. The Kodak ad on 37 captures the role of aerial photography in "strategic bombing" and the destruction of cities around the world. The emphasis on "serving human progress through photography" couldn't erase the dread many felt with the new vulnerability of cities. Then The House on 92nd Street highlighted the role of surveillance cinematography in the FBI campaign against subversion but also in subversion itself (foreign agents filming US cities targeted for destruction). Such "victories" may not have raised morale on the home front, but Hollywood movies on "home," featuring urban and rural settings, did support the morale of troops overseas. This may be why cities featured so prominently in films of the early 40s, but these films may also have revealed dramatic changes in those cities (consider the opening of Best Years of Our Lives) even as they tried to stress unchanging permanence and nostalgia.

The Filmed War Comes Home: The violence in 40s noirs (Mitchum) may also have come from brutal newsreels and training films during the war, just as wartime film production utilized and further trained documentary film makers who would add their skills and perspective to noir after the war. And some of wartime strangeness and anxiety ("the magic fruit of strangeness") may have helped turn reassuring images of home into noir's "menacing sites of danger and surveillance." Consider here Hellinger's opening of Naked City, so similar to a reconnaissance flight for a bombing mission, yet revealing an intact city. So too E. B. White's This is New York, juxtaposing the emerging United Nations complex with the bombing runs its diplomats would have to try to prevent. White preserves knowledge of urban destruction even as he changes it into a (weak) hope for peace (celebrating the city, brooding over its future). This aerial photography found other practitioners and other uses: the work of Andreas Feininger and Arthur Haug providing the sharp details that would aid postwar planners

in remaking and controlling the city. See bottom of 46-47. Postwar photography appeared "inextricably bound up with social planning and control, if not the violent threat alluded to by White."

The Flaneur's Gaze: Protect and Control: The forced analogy of "naked city," in the context of wartime violence and postwar redevelopment, pretended to "represent the city in a direct and unexpurgated manner" (48) but actually gave expression to a simultaneous desire to protect and control the city. The immigrant photographer Weegee, pioneer of the deep-focus photography common to noir, inserted himself into the urban spectacle, as participant and observer. Specializing in images of the city from 10PM to 5AM, Weegee reflected on crime, fame, the sources of social cohesion, and the fraying of social bonds. His photographs played a role of surveillance, adjudicating disputes (as at fires). Wm. McCleery described Weegee as a dandy (a flaneur), linking him backward to Gavarini's Le Diable a Paris (1845-6) and its image of a giant who (like Weegee's photos in mass-circulation newspapers) called attention to its own role as one of many narratives revealing the naked truth about the city. The connection to the flaneur prompts Dimendberg's feverish discussion of "pyschosexual relations," paralleling the flaneur's controlling gaze and desire to ravish with the effort to protect and control the city by fixing it in the photographer's gaze. This same psychosexual dynamic appears to be at work in Hellinger's film, certainly in the advertisements for it (57).

Seriality and the Attempt at Humanization: Weegee's and Hellinger's naked cities shared this: "their role as urban narrators whose humanizing discourse imposes order on the random and often chaotic experience of the metropolis" (57). Both posed as reassuring and sincere authorities, Hellinger as a columnist telling stories similar to Weegee's photographs. Building on wartime location photography, speaking as the voice of the city, basing the story on actual police procedures, Hellinger follows the aerial opening with a montage similar to Ruttmann's in Berlin - only it's the city asleep, not at dawn, and less centered and connected. Indeed these empty sites, captured in the early morning hours, suggest Sartre's idea of seriality: "cultural production directed simultaneously toward everyone and no one" in a mass society (best captured in the top ten best-selling record shows, where you get a picture of what the ideal, mass-oriented "other" would like and listen to - a record collection which is no one's and everyone's at once). This is a vision of the city as isolation, buying the same paper everyone else buys then reading it on the bus while ignoring everyone else (who are reading the same paper - recall that subway image from King Kong?).

Serial Products, Behavior, Feelings, Thoughts: A Serial Mode of Urban Space? The opening of The Naked City, even as it speaks of the city's pulse, undermines that organic metaphor by depicting the socially-produced distances that separate us all and the seemingly autonomous mechanical processes that keep the city going. To link and contrast the organic and mechanical, the narrator asks: Do machines ever need to rest? The actual characters in these opening scenes are remarkable only for their isolation, the lack of distinction or individuality in their remarks. If as Sartre suggests there are not just serial products, but serial behaviors, feelings, and thoughts, then perhaps there is also a serial mode of urban space: "a metropolis now experienced as

placeless, bereft of historical markers, and increasingly indistinguishable from other cities" (63), where people lose their subjective identity and feel as if they might be anywhere and nowhere, be anyone or no one. This is akin to what Lefebvre meant by "abstract space" and although Dimendberg does not explain this for forty more pages (see next handout).

A Mediated Life: Abstract space reinforced a fear of the loss of subjective identity just as mass culture and mass media supplanted earlier forms of direct contact and collective action. The spoken and written word – and mass produced images - took the place of architecture and urban space in shaping collective meaning and community. The Naked City, as film and TV show, outlasted the spaces and places (Turtle Bay, the Third Avenue elevated) it photographed. In its publicity, The Naked City established new social groups, to counter the "alterity" (i.e. otherness, alienation) it depicted, by setting up photo contests and competitions for a "voice of the city."

Bureaucratic Procedures, Humanized Narratives in the Naked City: Standardized, bureaucratic police procedures (depicted in Hollywood's "procedurals") also accentuated the loss of subjective identity. The procedural treated crime as a statistically-predictable aspect of a serial society (the "average crime and its predictable location"). The new detective, then, relied on scientific techniques rather than individual genius – and therefore needed to be humanized as Halloran is in the Naked City where we see him in his Queens low-rise family neighborhood. Here, again, is the humanizing of seriality, mentioned above. Naked City, as book and movie, tried to humanize anonymous urbanites, provide an experience of place in cities being given over to homogenizing, abstract space. The movie also provided a sense of lived experience in aerial views, street scenes, disaster narrative, humanizing narrative – since those were lived experience for wartime audiences. The murder of Jean Dexter is a disaster that creates new social groupings and provides social adhesive for the city. Aerial views also aspire to give the city some coherence, an organic and social whole (the panorama as serial product, a view of others by others, of anyone and everyone by no one). Street scenes also challenged serial and abstract space with space that "presupposes the bodily familiarity and memory of spatial practice in order to navigate its maze" (70). Dimendberg contrasts this with a modernist treatment of the Williamsburg Bridge as abstract space (contrasted also with Stella's paintings of the bridge).

Counter Tendencies: Regimentation and Media Culture in Cold War US: Political controversy attended the film's release as the contrasts between rich and poor, magnificence and squalor, favored by Dassin and Maltz (the screenwriter and one of the Hollywood Ten), were edited out. The Cold War regimentation of opinion paralleled the remaking of NYC, leveling slums and substituting housing projects. Weegee's and Hellinger's love of and recording of these disappearing spaces recalls Baudelaire and suggests they too may have been announcing the coming of "modernity" or in this case "postmodernity." Weegee's antipathy to television (replacing his mobile studio) and his final portraits of Warhol (champion of seriality) suggest as much. So does the ending of Hellinger's film, self-reflexively commenting on the evanescence and inescapability of media culture (the discarded newspaper and the final image of Times Square). Notwithstanding the publicity that sought to exclude any reference to media culture (and Times Square), the film (and the book) are most honest in suggesting that moral certainty is

illusive in a media-dominated culture of seriality.

From Naked City to Beehive: the disappearance of authority: The organic metaphor (the Naked City) is perhaps itself evidence of the city's loss of a coherent image of itself (an appeal to unity and certain origins in the face of the 8 million disposable stories of anonymous masses). Other noirs, such as The Big Clock, also commented on the role of the mass media in urban life and culture. Time in everything in the world of Janoth publications, as it seeks to stay ahead of the curve in an image-mediated culture. Time replaces space as the organizing principle of urban life. As the synoptic[1] image of the panorama gives way to abstract space that appears more like anthills or beehives than coherent urban communities, cities appear as entities somehow automatically controlled rather than the subject of overt, conscious discipline, societies in which authority has become diffuse and therefore hard to identify and to challenge. Dimendberg offers "the beehive" (which recalls the opening of Force of Evil) as an epitaph for the effort to offer a coherent and organic view of the naked city.[2]

[1] a general, all-encompassing view

[2] As an example of what is so maddening in this text, Dimendberg throws into this section the observation that the skyscraper in the Big Clock also suggests the growing prevalence of white-collar crime, near the heart of the mainstream system, in the noir world. I can imagine how this might have come to his mind when he wrote this, but revision and editing would have either removed it or placed it somewhere else.