

Beauty without Nature: Refounding the City

The image we shall hold before us this evening is an archaic urban phenomenon, or rather an archetypal urban phenomenon, because it is so universal and so powerful and so self evident: the City Wall. It is curious that human kind has more or less universally constructed cities apart from the natural world. Are cities therefore unnatural? Are they merely human inventions without Gods and without soul? Is soul only on the other side of the wall to be found only in nature or in human nature, but not in the city, and certainly not in its walls? Does the city wall mean that cities have no souls, or if they do have souls, then what sorts of souls exist in this city? What is an urban soul?

We cannot come easily to an understanding of the soul of city until we first unburden ourselves of some very common prejudices, especially that basic idea common to most of us, that cities are human constructions different and separate from nature. The city wall stands as a symbol of the separation between civilization and nature, between what is man-made and God-made, between two kinds of beauty -- civilized beauty and natural beauty. Owing to this extreme distinction, we commonly believe that we must go to nature to find beauty and to commune with soul.

Moreover, we commonly believe that there is an untouched innocence about nature, whereas the city is polluted, corrupted and evil. As early as the first novels of the United States, in the late 1700's, the city was the place where the innocent farm boy went and got corrupted. That was Philadelphia, which according to *US Today*, is the evilest

city in the country. Goodness resides, as does beauty, truth and soul, in trees, rocks, streams, mountains, flowers, but not in streets, offices, garages, airports and apartment houses. Our sense of soul is restored by a tree or a stream and seems to be lost in a parking garage. So to find soul again we try to import it within the city wall by making a garden, a fish pond, a bonsai tree or an art object to remind us of natural beauty and therefore to feel soulful.

Now this evening I will challenge these usual habits and usual experiences, stemming from this usual prejudice, because if we do not begin to examine our usual experiences, the cities we live in will become more and more soulless and alien and our lives and personal souls more and more victims of contemporary urbanization. The occasional islands of beauty in giant noisy, smog cities like Los Angeles, Manila, Cairo, Mexico and Osaka do not resolve the major problem of our urban existence. Some other thinking and feeling is required. What I am touching upon has echoes in lives all over the world. Our problems are similar: the extension of airports into farm land, the protection of smaller farmers against industrialization, the concretization of the world, increasing slums, high rises that block the sunlight, the mass tourism that despoils natural places in the search for beauty, the retreat of individual citizens from the urban world into private sanctuaries of transcendent meditation, psychotherapy, alcohol and entertainment. Collectively, these problems keep the soul numbed to its dilemmas.

The bitter political fights and technical arguments over wilderness, pollution and energy have grounds that are not only ecological or considerations of the biosphere. They have as well, deep aesthetics grounds in the necessity of the soul for beauty. The

psyche's need for beauty is fundamental. All people have modes of beautification: enhancement of their bodies, their utensils, their movements in dance, their speech, and in poetry. And when satisfaction of the urge to beauty is located in nature, and nature is threatened with destruction, it is human to feel a soul loss and we are driven to extraordinary measures of conservation. The aim is not to preserve the snail darter and the whopping crane as such, but to preserve the soul's need for beauty and the satisfaction of this need by nature.

Our Western tradition has long condemned nature as a machine, an enemy, or a lifeless, soulless extension of objective matter for exploitation. Consequently, we realize that our philosophy made strip mining possible because our philosophy declares matter is dead; therefore, you can do what you want with it. This same arrogant, tough-mindedness has paradoxically retained a tender-minded association of beauty with nature. The lazy creek, and white waterfall, the wide clean sky, a sunset, the far hills, and great trees - these have been our models for beauty and so refuge for the soul.

It was not always so in our civilization's history. During many periods, nature - or the physical world "out there" including the seas, and the mountains, and the forests - was considered demonic. There is, for instance, a great deal of scientific literature from the early days of this country, insisting that the forests be radically cleared to allow more sun light to dry the air and thereby improve human health. The forests were places of miasma, of disease, of pagans - read it in Hawthorne - of all kinds of bad things. What we now call "nature" was not a good place to go. The wilderness was for centuries a dreaded

place. Only during the Romantic period, did British puer young men first climb the high Alps. Our language still bears traces of this vilification of the natural: heathen, savage, wild pagan, boor, peasant, and clown as terms of opprobrium derived from natural landscapes. These words mean wooded, rocky, hills, of the soil and so on. The natural is not necessarily the beautiful and the beautiful not necessarily natural.

Let us further this distinction between the idea of beauty and the idea of nature. Moreover, explore what may practically result from our inquiry. Philosophers have already noted at least 60 different connotations of the word *nature*. Perhaps Heraclitus, at the beginning of Western thought, was right when he said, “Nature loves to hide.” At least it is as elusive as the mythical nymphs of nature, or illusory as the Hindu idea of *lila*, nature as a playful and ensnaring display. To use the word nature at all ensnares us in nostalgias, fears, fascinations and devotions. “Natural” embroils us in its history, not of nature as vegetation, rocks, or un-thought behaviors, but in the history of an idea with its shifts of affect-laden images. Kepler’s astronomy, Linne’s botany, Goethe’s *Farbenlehre* and *Urpflanze*, Darwin’s species and the contemporary Gaia hypothesis, present parables of the mythic imagination, which act upon consciousness as creation myths. In other words, imagination is perpetually creating nature and recreating it in a new guise; nature is archetypically psychological. There is not a thing called nature, there is an idea of nature.

I am trying to suggest that we cannot take nature just “naturally,” unconsciously. We tend to use the words “nature” and “naturally” to mean unconscious and unconsciously, as if nature referred to a purely physical environment of air, water, earth and fire; animals, plants and minerals; planetary bodies, motion, substance and their shapes, colors, temperatures and tastes. We think of a world “out there” not invented by human minds or constructed by human hands, a world without consciousness of any sort and before all consciousness as its ground. To be natural has come to mean to be simple, un-self-conscious, without art. It is just plain given. We call it data - purely objective. This as well implies that nature is objectively pure, without subjective artifice. It is genuine, and therefore the one remaining place where truth, beauty and goodness abide.

This givenness, this priority of nature, is often expressed as “God-given,” and opposed to human or “man-made.” I think this quality of God-given is longed for by the soul in its turn to nature to find beauty. But this turn leads to a major shadow, because, by turning to nature, to God-given nature for soul, we leave the City. Moreover, this creates more urban devastation. There is more ugliness in the places where we pass our days and do our work. So to begin, let us realize the seriousness of this topic. Otherwise, we merely continue as before imagining the soul has only two possible locations: either in natural things - streams and trees and rocks - or in human persons or among human persons in their relationships. Because we identify soul with nature, the desire for nature becomes desperate. Anything that represents nature, such as sexual body, tropical fruits, wild animals, memories of rural places, even audiotapes of ocean waves or bird songs, become idealized and passionately clung to. A vast area between nature on the one hand,

and human persons on the other, is considered soulless. What is considered void of soul is the realm of constructed objects, the things we live with daily. Our entire surrounding imagined to be only material, that is, functional, is soulless and dead. So of course, the environment, toxicity, immunity, and allergy are the problems of our times. Our cities have become great concentration camps almost cemeteries where people go about their lives longing for escape outside the walls to find nature, beauty and soul.

Perhaps the strong contrast between nature and city can find a background in contrasts between several Greek Gods, those whose cults find locations mainly in the city and those outside the city. For as the Greeks said, “all things are full of Gods,” so therefore the Gods are everywhere. At least five figures are to be found mainly outside in what we call nature or outside the city walls: Pan, Ares, Poseidon, Dionysus and Artemis. We have to mention Aphrodite, the Greek Goddess of love.

Pan’s places are among rocky hills where goats and sheep graze. He’s the God of the isolated shepherd and uncivilized, somewhat like the Japanese figure Oni, a red-faced figure, with horns, bearing strong animal attributes. Pan is wild, he makes his music with shepherd pipes; his impulses are sudden and sexual. He was the God who invaded civilized life with nightmares and the frightening demons of sleep. He still appears in the European word, both in Latin and in German: panic. He was the most favorite Greek figure in 19th century Western poetry. He appeared more often than any other of the Greek figures during its turn to romantic, wild nature and its turn away from industrialized urbanism. Pan is decidedly outside the walls.

Ares, the battle God, is not well spoken of in Greek literature. As a war God, Ares urged humans to fight and rage, but he protected the city. He was to be kept outside of the city, beyond the city limits, as for instance in Rome where Mars, the Roman equivalent of Ares, had a special place in the field of Mars outside the walls. Armies were not allowed in the city of Rome until after Caesar, so dangerous to the city was Mars.

Another figure of great power was Poseidon. He was one of the three brother Gods who ruled the cosmos: Zeus above, Hades below, Poseidon the waters. These waters referred to all the surging, rushing, disquieting phenomenae, the restless and stormy seas as well as the rivers coursing toward the seas. He was the God of earthquakes. It was Poseidon who gave horses to humans. One tale about Poseidon and the horse shows the issue we are discussing today, city vs. nature, is not new. It is an archetypal question, arising with the city walls. There was a fierce argument between Athena and Poseidon. She was the patroness of all cities and of the greatest city perhaps ever, Athens. On one side, Poseidon and on the other, Athena with both saying they gave human beings the horse. Each claimed it. Finally, it was decided in the myths, that Poseidon gave the horse, but it was Athena who gave the bridal and the reins. The power of the horse is natural, the control is civilized.

The fourth figure on this list of city outsiders is Dionysus. Inside the city, Dionysus's place was the theatre for he was a God of tragedy and comedy and the presentation within a civilized form of the deepest natural forces that rule human fate. In

fact, he was simply called Zoe or the life force. Our Western languages still have the words zoo and zoology indicating the connection between Dionysus and instinct, beyond civilization and beyond domestication. He ruled natural conditions such as intoxication from wine and excitement, from sexual mystery, and the deep descent to underworld depression beyond the polite world of urban manners.

Just as Dionysus could be discovered within the city, through strong emotions, as in the theatre or in drunkenness, the Goddess Artemis also was in the city, but only in an emotional way. She too was outside the walls. However, she was in the city for women in the pangs of childbirth to be present for the emotions. This lady of the beast, as she was called, was the force of nature in a women's body as she gave birth. Otherwise, Artemis was distant, remote, a Goddess of forests and the animals of the forests, a huntress that had to be alone. She would find the crowds of the city unbearable, because the very word for city in Greek, polis, for which we still have political and police, and metropolitan and polite, means originally throng or crowd, like a flowing press of people in a city street. You could imagine how miserable Artemis would feel holiday-shopping in a strip mall.

I have not mentioned Aphrodite. One must always take great care inviting the Goddess of love into your conversation because her strength is so mighty and her rules so irrational. We can never tell in advance, what might happen. She is not bound by city walls and therefore cannot be said to belong either inside or outside. For the Goddess of love can appear anywhere and something about her does not like walls at all, for they

make separations where she makes new unions. Nonetheless, her temples were located often near the seaside and she herself was born from the foam of the salt waves. Further, many of her temples were near rocky promontories, overlooking the majestic and forceful landscapes, attesting, as one scholar has written to the irresistible and terrible power of love, a natural power beyond the control of civic order.

If these Gods and Goddesses are mostly found outside the city or inside the city only at special ritual moments, like theatre or child birth, or drinking celebrations, or the rush of sexual desire, then much of nature is considered to be (at least to the Greek mind which originated the very notion of city and Western culture) destructive to the city. Perhaps city walls and the division of city and nature are the only way possible to imagine cities. Perhaps the Gods themselves wish to keep a separation. However, I am insisting that the quality and experience of God-giveness does not have to be restricted to shoreline and canyons, grasses and birds. In other words, we are in a problem. Do the Gods themselves want to keep these two things separate, which would mean that the God-giveness is only out there in nature? Natural, prior, God-given could be deliterized to mean far more than only the physical world out there. Natural could also mean lawful rather than willful, rightly formed, rather than freely expressed, systematically ordered, rather than random. "Prior" can also mean given first place to anything other than my subjective self. Moreover, that would be nature -- it comes first.

"God- given" can be sensed as belonging to an object as in the examples we find in animism where any object can be animated to have soul. Any little thing could be

considered to have soul: what you wear around your neck, the keepsake you bring back from vacation or the little stone you pick up on the beach. These too would have soul. Any stone, whether in the ground or held in the hand or carved into a statute, or used as a tool, or respected as an amulet, can be a soul-speaking object, that is a totem or a fetish, depending upon where it is placed, how it is cared for and ritually regarded. All sorts of things can afford the sense of beauty, even mundane, everyday objects, depending less on their origin in nature, than on their treatment by our hands and minds. One of the virtues of the pop art movement has been its ability to restore the sense of wonder to the banal things of life, like a brillo box. The ordinary world can release the experience of God-giveness. Once we are released from identifying that experience solely with nature, with what human hands did not make, then what the Greeks said becomes obvious: “all things are full of Gods.”

We begin to see that what we go to nature for, natural beauty can be distinguished from the natural world. We begin to see that the natural world does not necessarily afford this experience, because in various times in cultures, nature is not the place of beauty. Finally, we begin to see that nature as a primary given cannot be separated from basic ideas about nature, which too are God, or Gods, given in the human psyche. “Nature” is always somehow human-made, if not directly with our hands, certainly with our minds. We are always constructing nature one way or another. See how difficult it is to keep this distinction because of a fixed idea already in your mind of

what nature is. It is that rock out there. However, that rock out there is what we have decided is nature and where does nature stop? The great question now, in psychology, is where is the subject, not what is the subject, but where does it stop? Where does the unconscious stop? Where does the psyche stop? Does it stop inside my skin? Does it stop in my relationships - just you and me? Does it extend into the room, into the furniture? Where does nature stop?

We go to nature to find soul, but more specifically we go there to find beauty. We seek aesthetic pleasure for our senses and to breathe in the majesty and wonder of the given world, its soul. This we feel nourishes our soul. If I ask two questions: first, what comes first to your mind with the idea of beauty? Usually it is a physical, natural phenomenon. Then if I ask: what best nourishes your sense of soul? Again, the reply is usually some aesthetic experience. A moment of beauty, a moment of music, a moment of seeing a fox suddenly in the forest, a painting, or a moment of communication with another person that went deep. It is some kind of something you would call “beautiful.” In the city, we try to fulfill this longing by importing beauty and placing it in a special reserve: a museum, a concert hall, a garden, a temple, or art treasure in a special place in your private room. This kind of beauty does not permeate all of life, and so the city remains generally untouched. Beauty remains sequestered and objectified into precious natural places, times, and things.

As you know, beauty is nourished differently in many tribal, non-industrial societies. There, songs and stories, and dances and decorations and rituals, enhance much

more of everyday. The Balinese say that they do not have art; they simply make each thing as beautiful as they can, whatever it is they are making. In some so-called “primitive” societies, two thirds of waking time passes in non-productive aesthetic ritual. In other words, they spend their time talking, telling stories, getting ready for a festival, cleaning up after a festival, arranging a huge celebration hunt, but it’s not in growing food and selling things. Most of the waking time passes in aesthetic ritual.

Industrial cultures - European, American, Asian - however, seem to treat beauty in this special way, walling it off from the world in general. Why this wall, why the walled garden, that classic symbol of the *hortusinclusus* which we find in Muslim architecture, Persian poetry, Catholic symbolism, as well as in the superb examples of the enclosed garden in Japan? My concern, as I said at the beginning, is to disrupt our habitual thinking and look for ways of getting out of the garden. By getting out of the garden, I mean releasing beauty from enclosure in special preserves like a wilderness area.

This touches on religious feeling, because the sacred preserves, which protect beauty, are usually religious, or revered with religious emotion. Today, museums with paintings by great masters, and concert halls for great performance artists are places of secular religion. They have become temples of beauty and our relation to art objects has become a kind of religious piety. The forty million dollars that a Japanese business man pays for Van Gogh’s *Iris*, or the money spent on rare exquisite manuscripts, violins, Persian carpets, and contemporary sculptures, attest to the high value we place on beauty

in a secular world were money states value. Highest value, in yen or dollars, expresses what we regard as the most. It is a secular way of appreciating the divine quality of an object – Kami in the Japanese sense, Theos in the Greek.

These high prices show a religious homage to beauty attesting again to the need of the soul for beauty, but there is a problem still. Although these religious emotions recognize the high or religious quality of art, because art inspires and delights the soul, these same religious emotions tend to segregate art with a secluded and protective reverence. Alarm systems, humidity control, and restoration to keep each art object safe from touch and from time, eternally preserved as if forever young. Michelangelo's Sistine Chapel has just had cosmetic surgery.

Beyond these protections, there exists a psychological attitude that an art object is itself somehow holy, and therefore sacred and separate from the mundane. As if each moment or thing of beauty is itself a walled garden. Now, the precious seclusion of beautiful art should not be blamed only on egocentric artists or vanity and curators, greedy gallery owners and collectors. The desire to sequester beauty seems to arise from the soul whenever it encounters something precious. In a world where beauty is so rare, this desire to keep beauty behind lock and key is especially strong. We feel this protective urge about a rare tree as well as about a rare drawing by a master hand. Psychologically, we feel a protective urge in a similar way about our precious loves our rare and important dreams and cherished memories. We tend to wall them off and allow,

only on special occasions, someone special through the gate into our private garden of intimacy.

So you see the problem with the wall confronts us again. First the wall between city and nature, then the wall between secular and sacred and now a third wall - the soul constructs to protect its treasures.

Now I am now quite at a lost. I intended this evening to lead beauty from exile out of the garden back into the city. Instead, I am finding her increasingly walled in. Moreover, it even seems as if the soul asks for these walls, this protection, as if beauty itself asks to be enclosed. Must we conclude that the soul requires the seclusion of beauty? If it is the soul that insists upon protecting beauty, then does opening the wall to allow beauty to escape into the world, mean we are violating the soul's own wishes? Does it mean that our intention to restore beauty to all the daily things of the city would result in a loss of beauty? Is this move into popular city life, soul destroying, rather than a soul-making enterprise? Must not we protect rarity, rather than dissipate it? Is not one exquisitely perfect cup made of racu or transparent porcelain more significant than thousands of very well made ones?

The answer to this aesthetic question, once again goes back to those Greek Gods. This time to a God who definitely belongs more to the city than to wild nature, the God Apollo. As you will recall he was the young God of sunlight, of male perfection, of rational clarity, purity, and eternal tranquility, away from the turmoil of ordinary life – a

God of the elite. He upheld correct action, correct form and noble ideals. He was a God of youth, and his temple stood off in high places, in rough terrain, signifying his opposition to the wild powers of earthy nature. In Western culture, Apollo was particularly associated with and became the patron God of the arts, even medicine and science. In short, from the heights of Athenian civilization, through Rome and the renaissance to the neoclassicism of the Enlightenment, an Apollonian idea of beauty dominated Western culture. The art of the people was considered only folk art or ethnic or primitive or regional or parochial or amateur or outsider. The restriction of art to high art of masters, we owe to an Apollonian definition of beauty. This is one reason why art by women rarely received acclaim in Western culture. Women were not part of the Apollonian vision of life and Apollo's own mythical relation with females was frequently and usually a disaster. Apollo had appropriated beauty for himself so that art objects, art criticism and art theory, reflect Apollonian ideals, until the various rebellions against him, by followers of other Gods such as the Dionysian romantics, the Demetrian feminists and the Hermetic conceptualists, and so on. Now do not think only of Western culture. I believe that Apollonian attitudes, even if not called such in other cultures, dominate all sophisticated urban civilization where art is associated mainly with higher values and an elite class and where beauty is sequestered.

Curiously, the myths of Apollo tell of attempts to objectify beauty and fix it in a natural place or moment - as for instance in a photograph - cuts the rarified moment off from nature. Much of what we today regard as nature has suffered this objectification and seems to be a projection of sophisticated urbanism. Consider this: most supporters of

environmentalism are people living in cities. Thus, before we can restore beauty to the city and the soul to the world, we must free our notion of beauty from Apollonian ideals. Then beauty could be freed from objectification and seclusion and we might still have our precious objects and wall gardens, but not as the only locus of beauty. Beauty could find definition in many other styles: office buildings and office furniture, traffic highways and gasoline stations, neon signs and TV advertisements could also be imagined as places where beauty might “naturally” appear.

The casual graffiti on buildings and subways, the strange disharmonies and words of pop music, the clever consumerist advertising, the sarcastic and aggressive disillusion of the avant-guard, are each ways of tempting aesthetics away from the eternal perfection and purified ideals of the Apollonian mode. For example, some years ago, in Singapore’s extremely Apollonian structure a man’s crime was graffiti. The pop modes at first seem cheap, destructive and careless. Nonetheless, they make an opening with humor and vitality for the soul to find beauty back in the streets. Let us remember the Berlin Wall, the symbol of so many walls of our time, came down because of these very same, cheap, sarcastic, graffiti-like impulses in the common citizens. It was pop music took the wall down.

The two main ideas we have been developing -- freeing the definition of nature from the narrow limits of natural things and disentangling the need for beauty from the need for nature - have consequences for our daily environment.

First, we would no longer have to split the natural from the urban. If God-given and man-made are an unnecessary, even false, opposition then the city made by human-hands is also natural in its own right. Surely, it is as “natural” to human beings to make burial grounds, marketplaces, political and social communities, and to erect structures for worship, education, protection and celebration as it is for them to gather nuts and berries and trap animals or hoe the soil. Cities belong to human nature and nature does not begin outside the city wall. Therefore, the City does not have to copy the green world in order to be beautiful, which is a habit that puts a premium on suburbia, each citizen with his or her private tree, turf and Toro lawnmower. Urban beauty would not draw its standards from approximation to wild nature, requiring potted trees and vine interiors, noisy artificial water walls that impede natural running conversation. It would be the natural thing to sit and talk, but the wall is so noisy with the water, which is imitating nature, that you cannot have a natural conversation. Further, there would be no need for plastics that fake the look of leather and stone. Again, pop art and sculptural forms have revealed the simple genuine givenness of plastic masses that do not imitate anything prior to themselves.

Second, if we take back the experience of God-givenness from its location only in nature, then we might be able to find this experience elsewhere. The great cathedrals of Europe, for instance, were God-given and man-made and built at a time when the wider outdoors was usually felt to be haunted by evil. The soul’s need for beauty was met mainly by urban events such as pageants, music, contests, and feasts centered on the huge cathedrals and their walls. What we now turn to nature for -- inspiration in the face

of might and majesty, wonder over intricacy, rhythms and detail -- could as well appear in our constructions. Skyscrapers, power stations, airports, market halls and hotels can be re-imagined as structures for the soul to find beauty, rather than conceived merely as secular and cost-efficient service functions.

Third, the imitation of nature would change. We would imitate the process of nature rather than what the process has made. We would imitate the way of nature rather than the things of nature. (This is a very important point: what scholastic philosophy called *naturan* rather than *naturata*.) It would be less a matter of building a false river through a mall - the Disney sort of way of doing things - than of building a mall so it reminds us of a canyon or a streambed. It would reflect the actual way nature works in local geography. It would be less, a matter of planting trees along a sidewalk than of making the sidewalk itself meander organically as if it were itself growing along irregularly. It is the way nature makes things, rather than imitating what nature has already made. However, we go on making imitations of what nature has made. We make plastic to look like wood. One of the large expenses in hotels and malls is for taking care of the artificial plants. Instead we would remember nature in the way we construct so that nature echoes in the constructed object. An example from Texas is the Fort Worth Water Garden. It's a majestic, descending torrent of water running through a place that hasn't a single leaf, a single loose pebble; it is utterly totally "unnatural" mix of stones, cement, hidden piping plunked down into the usual downtown wasteland. Yet, that construction completely overwhelms with the experience we expect from natural beauty. It is a wild adventure, encompassing grandeur. When you are in this cemented

place, with no trees, no leaves, no imitation of any sought, it is clearly a construction and you are overwhelmed with the power of it. You experience the way nature itself works in the canyon as a rush of water going through a dry streambed. So, when you are walking down Fifth Avenue in New York, perhaps you may get the experience of inspiration from the towering structures of glass, steel and aluminum with no imitation there of mountains.

The imitation of nature could then employ technical means as it has done for centuries in the arts. The garden, after all, is not nature but art. In fact, it is nature imitating art. The restitution of the natural environment would not require the literal transplanting of whole biospheres, “parked” into set-aside preserves, but would rather suggest miniature biospheres all through the city such as hybrid dwarf shrubs, song-birds in cages, window boxes and vegetable plots, fishponds, insect vivariums and terrariums. Botany and biology would be honorably represented on the staff of City Hall instead of serving only academia and servicing the drug industry. I am suggesting the imitation of nature as a miniaturization of nature such as the Japanese practice. I am suggesting a reduction in the scale of awe from a romantic and sublime immersion in vastness – the American way - to joy in pondering the particular.

Well as long as I’m on the path of recommendations, let me suggest further ones. One of the privileges of getting old is that you can say outlandish things because it is expected. So here are some more recommendations. Fourth: if art moves out from behind the secluded wall, than why not the artist too. Why not imagine the artists, first as citizens. The artist is a member of the polis whose life, as with any other citizen, is partly

in service to the city. We would no longer regard the artist as the most independent of all persons, but rather as the one most involved and most engaged in meeting the needs of the soul and therefore most caught in the issues of the community and many artists do feel this way.

Fifth, we would ask leaders and politicians to declare their aesthetic policy and not only their economic, foreign, environmental and agricultural policies. We would want elected officials to reveal their taste regarding all public projects, architecture, parks, conservation, education, and so on.

Sixth, we would expect all private and public construction in the city, in the planning stages, to submit to aesthetic review by artists. Art would not just be added to a project as a decoration like a fountain, sculpture or a garden, or a huge wall painting in the entrance lobby of the bank or City Hall. Rather art pleasing the soul would be inherent to the project from its very beginning. A project from inception would be designed for the sake of the soul. I'm begging a question here as I'm suggesting that artists already have a sense of soul.

Seventh, we would require city officials, when letting contracts for purchases, to take into account their design, the quality of the materials and the role of artists in their production. In this way, city government becomes a regular patron of the arts in the simplest purchases for offices such as printing, equipment, for whatever government has

to buy. As a result, the city would have to account for the aesthetic design of what its officials are buying.

Eighth, every city would have its guardians of memory. This is rather similar to the United States and Great Britain notion of historic preservation or the national trust. The guardians of memory would have veto authority over all demolitions, all remodeling, and all reconstructions. Their concern is the preservation of memory, which is located not only on the human brain, but in the physical structures of the City. Cities become amnesiacs, when their old towns are destroyed. In the destruction, they have lost their physical representations of their memory. Again, not merely ancient monuments and national treasures hold the memory of the city, but all sorts of minor designs, structures, shops, doorways, and signs.

Ninth, we would encourage that great Japanese virtue, miniaturization: instead of thinking only of expanding the green belts and increasing the park areas, as if this were the main way to bring nature into the city, we would rather imagine small details like drinking fountains, fish aquariums, singing birds as bits of nature within the city. We would further attempt to devise the buses, the machines, the public toilets and trash containers, the lights, and railings and parking places and their meters, in such a way that these small events of daily life gave pleasure to the soul.

Tenth, in other words we would no longer let the National Parks Service, the Sierra Club or God take care of our need for beauty by protecting or fostering wilderness.

We could come to a more psychological notion of wilderness, following a definition inherent in the rules governing wilderness areas. Enter and enjoy, but make no mark. Disturb nothing, pollute nothing, and leave no trace, if possible, not even a footprint. This definition, psychologically, implies that wherever we tread with the attitude of “no trace,” we are creating the experience of wilderness. When we move with senses acute, listening, watching, breathing in tune with the world about us, recognizing its priority and ourselves as guests, witnessing its God-giveness, then we have made a wilderness area or moment. The restoration of the pristine starts in a fresh attitude toward what is - whatever and wherever it is, not necessarily out there in nature. I know of school classes that start their discovery of nature by first exploring the city with ears and eyes alert and only then do they go into the countryside. Awakening to nature depends on the attitude brought to a place like cities, by the observer, and not only upon the place where the observer goes.

Idealizing wilderness and placing it in Idaho and the Adirondacks, casts a shadow on our daily world, trashing it yet further. Beauty is elsewhere, so what is here becomes desolate, uncultivated, waste – exactly what was meant by the ancient idea of wilderness: the place of Cain and the scapegoat in the Bible. By worshipping one kind of wilderness in the high Sierras, we create the other kind in the backyard: the city as scapegoat, as place of Cain. Instead, the sense of beauty that we seek in the idealized wilderness can be fostered by the attitude of walking the world without injury to it, leaving no trace, no left-over actions to be dealt with by others, giving priority to the physical thing, whatever and wherever it is, over the subjective will.

Finally, eleven, we come to psychotherapy. We would recognize therapy as it is now conceived does not include the repair of the world's loss of beauty and therefore is inadequate to meet the needs of the soul. We would ask therapy to reinvent itself as an aesthetic activity. There could be profound shifts in therapy of soul. Soul could be reclaimed from soulful places out there filled with God-given beauty, as if soul were given to us automatically, by osmosis, when we stand beneath a redwood or hear the waves on the shore. All you need to do is to get out there in nature and your soul is filled again. Once we recognize that the need for beauty must be met in many places and not just that scenic, physical nature, we would take the soul back into our own hands. Thus, we realize that what happens with it is less given and more made -- made through our work with it in the actual world by making that actual world reflect the soul's need for beauty.

Yes, a last footnote recommendation: every week or so the lights of the city would be doused at two in the morning for two hours, perhaps except in emergency areas, so that the citizens would be able to free themselves from light pollution and once again turn their gaze to the sky of stars.

A conversation with the audience:

Question: You have talked a lot about architecture; is there anybody that you know who does the kind you describe?

“Christopher Alexander and many architects I do not know practice organic architecture. I followed my own thoughts about architecture without knowing anything formal about it. Alexander runs contrary to smart-ass architecture, which is jokes, irony, wit, pastiche, making the fake look important and so on.”

Question: What about the evolution of consciousness?

“But I am not there - I do not believe in evolution of consciousness. I think of various moves that happen, but I do not know about the evolution of consciousness. I do not know anybody whose mind is clearer than Immanuel Kant. I do not know anybody whose sense of beauty or teaching was better than Socrates. We still have not found anybody who can write as well as the founders of the U.S. Constitution and the Declaration of Independence. Many people have said no one has ever been able to reflect as well as Christ and the Buddha. So what we are talking about the evolution of consciousness? For me this is hype.”

Question: How do we deal with the materials of urban construction, since natural materials like stone and wood feel good and age well and so on and so forth where as there aren't other materials that are equally so? In effect, I think we need materials with resonance – being an aesthetic sense.

“I am not sure there are not materials constructed, invented materials that do give pleasure and would give you resonance. For example, the cloth materials used by the fashion industry are extraordinary. They are not only silk, cotton, linen and wool. They are manufactured materials that have drape, and fold, texture, surface and luster and so on. We have to be careful of the idea that only natural materials have the right resonance. I worry about the literalism of that and the blocking of the experimentation with other kinds of constructed, manufactured materials. But this is a very important question because we cannot depend only on natural materials. For example, if you drop a little thing, like a paper clip or a pencil, on a table made of Formica it sounds terrible. You drop it on wood it sounds very different. Yes, our aesthetics are trained to prefer natural, but we have to be careful and open minded to the discovery of aesthetics in what are made materials.”

...“I was trying to say the constructed world of the city is a God-given world as well. It needs to be thought of that way; if your idea of nature is green turf and that's where you find beauty, then you can't find it in a city street. Think of the city alley like a winding path. An alley, if you watch TV, is where everything bad happens - drugs are exchanged,

people bopped over the head, people fleeing down the alley. The alley is a no-good place! However, the alley is the interior and meandering part of the city. It does not have to go in a meandering way, but it has to fulfill the same kind of function.

Question: How come you did not mention all of the feminine sources in the goddesses of beauty?

The whole appeal of the paper was to turn our attention to the city to find the beauty in the city. I did not leave out Hestia and other goddesses. They are not the subjects of this evening. These Gods and Goddesses that I mentioned were purposely chosen because their residences are outside the city. I was not giving a talk about the Gods or Goddess that are particularly in the city. I talked about Apollo in connection with the idea of beauty because largely Apollo structures are our notions of beauty. Tradition of high beauty in our culture since Winkelman and even earlier, is Apollonic. It is a form that is high and allegorical and all those qualities. I am not saying that Apollo defines all there is to beauty. There are interior goddesses, Hestia, and all kinds of other beauties, but what is defined by museums, and by high art, and by the tradition of beauty in our culture is Apollonian; that is what I am trying to say. My point tonight is to get beyond the idea of only Dionysian and feminism views of beauty, especially in the last thirty years. We are after breaking that pretense and to break the Apollonian elitist notion of beauty, freeing us from that single notion of what is beautiful. Otherwise, we would not have shows of Basquait for example. It is not in order to leave out something; it isn't that at all.

Question: The built environments and how could the social organization reflect the processes of nature?

“You see, there again we have a very big question because with the sixty definitions of nature, whose nature? Some will say nature is naturally aristocratic. It is tremendously wasteful, very hierarchical. In the food chain, it is a completely structured, hierarchical thing. We have a nice table of organization in IBM, General Motors and whatever else is hierarchically structured and selective. On the other hand, there are views of nature as expansive, organic and interlocking. It is a network and a very different sense of an organization. The aim is to realize the multiplicity of all answers, a polytheistic way of looking at things where there is not an answer. Or the one answer, there are many answers or many models, depending on the archetypal perspective that you are looking at it with. I don't think one can prescribe, by looking at nature, a model for social organization, because as I said, nature is first an idea. And we see nature according to the various eyeglasses we put on. As I tried to say: nature 300 years ago was horrendous, frightening, or awe inspiring, or full of disease or whatever, and it was not this white water world of the Snake River in Idaho.”

Question: Aphrodite seems to take on both worlds, but what are those worlds?

“Are you saying those worlds are city and nature and you see her radiance in all kinds of places? She breaks through all kinds of walls.”

James Hillman delivered this talk at Leslie College in Cambridge Massachusetts in 1995.
Hillman lived in rural Eastern Connecticut.