

MITOCW | 22. Cases I: Public and Private Domains

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JULIAN

OK, enough about knowledge of the past, be it memory or history. We are in a very interesting space-time

BEINART:

capsule. We have the possibility of imagining the future, or at least contemplating more and more about how one might use even geometry to associate with minimizing the obstacles of the future. And we also have the capacity to look backwards, using many techniques, as showed in these examples.

This should produce a much richer set of ideas of urbanism than modernism. It will depend on the genius of individual interpreters given this new scale of things. What we're not seeing are overall theories of urbanism based an amalgamation of these two ideas-- forward looking and backward looking. Maybe that'll happen. Maybe we're still too early.

We switch now to a discussion of the relationship between public and private space. At first glance, the distinction between private and public space is simply a question of the difference between rights and obligations. You cannot park your car on my land, because I have the right of ownership.

But when we get to a parking lot on Mass Avenue, it's a contestation between two of us fighting for public use, for the use of a public-- the available space at any time. Sometimes we are very angry that we are beaten by a car which has gotten there first, but we have no rights. We only have rights to part if it's free.

In the same way, we have rights of behavior in our private world which are not superintended by the law, provided we don't hurt anybody or behave illegally. But if I grow marijuana in my garden, and as long as it's seen as green space, it's OK. There are no rules in the Cambridge Historical Society's book which says that you're not allowed to grow marijuana in your garden. There probably are other rules which prohibit that.

There are a number of other distinctions between public and private and have been used at different times. I don't want to go into them. I simply want to look with you at a number of examples where the relationship between public and private is not so clear and where, if you take a matrix and have four headings to your vertical columns, the four headings are use, ownership, access, and meaning. Let's look at each of these categories and see what examples come to mind.

Under the first, which is use-- use, ownership, access, and meaning-- Richard Sennett gives an example, in London, in the 18th century. It was impossible for investors in shipping and in trade to know the outcome of of a shipping trip that they've invested in. There was no electronic communication. It took too long to write letters. The letters had to come by ship, anyway. So you didn't know if the pirates had got hold of the ship that was carrying silver back to Spain or whether the ship had been sunk in a hurricane. This knowledge was certainly capable of being transmitted verbally through human beings.

So near the docks in London, a coffee bar grew up. The coffee bar was a private entity. You paid a penny to enter and sit down. You weren't able to-- you had to sit anywhere that space was available. You couldn't reserve space. It was frequented by sailors who had this important information about their ships. So the wealthy and the poor managed to occupy the same space because of the importance of the information.

What became of this place? Lloyd's of London grew out of this corner coffee shop. The important thing is that an important public set of transactions could take place, but under the shelter of a private institution.

If we wish to put our body into public space, we need security. Security is often provided more by private institutions than by public. 30,000 people on a summer's night occupy the center of Boston only if they go to the Red Sox game. The Red Sox are a private corporation with private security. MIT has its own security force. Harvard has its-- and the Christian Science Center-- just going down Mass Avenue, you would transect a number of private authorities.

So there's a principle that the private sector provides a kind of phenomenological and actual security for the actions of public need, such as putting your body into public space. For those people who have criticized-- and they're endless. Hannah Arendt, for instance, Richard Sennett criticized the modern world as promoting isolation from the public world-- narcissism, self-preoccupation, people locked up in their own private quarters, fed by television and electronic systems and not hazarding the danger, if you want to call it, but the adventure, which is a better word, of immersing yourself into public space.

So public space doesn't exist, except in Roger Scruton, the British critic's, argument that public space only exists in the street. All the rest is an affectation and an unnecessary affectation. The idea of creating a public space as a Plaza is an affectation. It's true of contemporary Tokyo, for instance.

Public world exists in the dense stream of connections between functions. There's no tradition of public meeting space. Where it's been tried in front of the tall, new metropolitan city hall building, it's a waste of time. We'll go into the history of public space in a few minutes. We still have time.

So if we see that public use can be made more appropriate by private endeavor, we have a notion of sharing of use which has always been true in urbanism. The agora, which most of our arguments for public communication space rests on, was a 37-acre piece of messy mixtures of monuments, temples, shoemakers, stoas where philosophers like Socrates sat and engaged young men-- not young women, young men-- in discourse, even housing. This is the space of democracy.

Wycherley, the historian, writes about it in the same way that I've just mentioned it as a highly dense agglomeration of shoemakers, temples, monuments, none of which fit any cardinal pattern. There is no assemblage of items in the buildings, which sit in relation to any other. This is, in one thesis done here by a [? Marxist ?] [? smart ?] student, the result of a kind of democratic form of rhetoric which only allowed people to speak-- that's males and not women and not slave-- to take part in discourse through the use of a particular language.

When it became necessary for people to meet and debate propositions later on, a meeting place called the Pnyx was created separate from the agora. The agora was this mixed domain. Aristotle rejected that image of the agora. For him, a public plane or public place of meeting was a clean, absolutely minimized environment. I should read you the quotation from him.

Here-- "The agora in Athens, far from being architecturally impressive, was a jumble of crowded downtown streets and the regular open spaces where shrines and altars, public buildings and monuments, stood in the midst of workshops, market stalls, and taverns. The agora was the haunt of the dregs of the populace. The home of idleness, vulgarity, and gossip. For Aristotle, the ideal public square were that all commercial activities and all merchants and vendors would be exported to another part of the town. Nothing in the agora may be bought or sold. No member of the lower order may be admitted unless summoned by the" and so on and so on.

So much of Aristotle's view of the public meeting space, as opposed to the agora, the Athenian agora, has become part of architectural dogma. City Hall Plaza rests on an Aristotelian assumption that there is something absolute about prior public space which is satisfied by whenever we wish to immerse ourselves in bedlam. In a metaphysical condition, we think of it as depicting our public environment in gracious and hallowed terms.

The curious thing is the pattern, the bipolar relationship between City Hall Plaza and Faneuil Hall Marketplace. Faneuil Hall Marketplace would be the agora in the ideal connection between the two. However, it's not. It's a singular high, upmarket phenomenon totally driven by market conditions, at market conditions.

So we start off with a notion of the public meeting place, which derives from a unique setting for democracy in first century Athens and has maintained itself through deviations under the Romans. There were no elevated platforms in the agora for people to make speeches. If you spoke, you spoke from the same plane as everybody else.

The Romans introduced in the Forum places for people who were spokesmen, people who had particular ability to make political speeches or speeches which are non-political but of specialized nature. In the examples I show in the slides at the beginning of next class, you will see that the traditional-- many of the traditional public squares in small towns in Italy were simply based upon passageways through space, not cul-de-sacs of space at all.

I spent a year in Assisi, living in Assisi, documenting the town and measuring pedestrian volumes. The Piazza del Comune is exactly that space. I'll show you in some illustrations.

In the post-telephone era, the need for people to obtain communication by machine-interposed systems has become another variable. What is the most significant public place built since 1920? Anywhere? This is part of an urban tradition, after all. If we stopped--

AUDIENCE: But it's really hard to [INAUDIBLE]

JULIAN Hm?

BEINART:

AUDIENCE: It's really hard to say one [INAUDIBLE]

JULIAN Well, say six.

BEINART:

[LAUGHTER]

AUDIENCE: The High Line? [LAUGHS]

JULIAN High Line is an old train track.

BEINART:

AUDIENCE: Oh, do you mean from [INAUDIBLE]?

JULIAN No, I don't. I mean just anything which resembles a public square.

BEINART:

AUDIENCE: They built one in Columbia Heights in DC in the early 2000s that's been pretty successful.

JULIAN Yeah.

BEINART:

AUDIENCE: [INAUDIBLE]

JULIAN Rockefeller Center is by far the best, universally. It contradicts all the argument about public. It's the largest
BEINART: private investment in a city in history. Let me give you a few details.

It's the largest privately held complex of its kind in the world. It's the largest private building project ever undertaken in modern times. It was bought-- it was leased by John D. Rockefeller from Columbia University in 1928. It was completed-- it was built between 1930 and 1939. In 1985, Columbia University sold the land beneath Rockefeller Center to the Rockefeller Group for \$400 million. The entire complex was purchased by Mitsubishi Estate in 1989. In 2000, the current owner [INAUDIBLE] paid \$1.85 billion for all the buildings.

This is an-- there could be nothing more private in ownership than Rockefeller Center. It provided the public with an open space. It provided the public with an underground concourse, shopping concourse. It added streets to the number of streets in the grid in Manhattan. And yet it's a public space.

So does public space have to be owned by the public? I'm looking for examples of contradictions simply to make the argument a little more interesting.

AUDIENCE: Well, there's the famous court case, a Supreme Court case, in the suburban mall in Portland, Oregon. I forgot the details, but that's where, I think, you're not allowed to have a protest in the mall even though it functions as a public space, because it's private. So even Rockefeller has more control over that space than a space that actually would be common.

JULIAN Yeah, I don't know about-- certainly, Diego Rivera's mural--

BEINART:

AUDIENCE: [? Mural ?] [INAUDIBLE]

JULIAN --was removed. And doing this just before the '39 war. Germany wanted to invest in Rockefeller Center and build
BEINART: something called Deutsches Haus. And that was turned down. So the Rockefellers have played a very antiseptic attitude towards politics.

I don't know what the present status would be. Security issues at the moment in America are probably so inflamed after Boston that you would probably stop anybody carrying a knapsack for a while. But to be more serious, I don't know about the limitations on public protest in New York. I should ask somebody. I don't know of any history of the restriction of public protest in New York. It's a very open city.

AUDIENCE: Well, with the protests, they started penning people in [INAUDIBLE] [? Iraq. ?]

AUDIENCE: [INAUDIBLE] public [INAUDIBLE]

AUDIENCE: Yeah, and that one, too. They would--

AUDIENCE: [INAUDIBLE]

AUDIENCE: There was that famous-- the day before we invaded Iraq the second time, there were protests in cities all around the world. And you saw most [INAUDIBLE] people were gathering in plazas. And in New York, they had you penned in. They had all the streets blocked off with the pop-up fences. It didn't look very open.

JULIAN
BEINART: It raises another question, which urbanistically, is difficult to answer. We have City Hall sitting on a plaza. The mayor has said that he was actually thought of selling City Hall Plaza-- City Hall. I don't know about the Plaza. Do you feel more public when putting your body into space in Filene's Basement than you do in City Hall Plaza?

If association with other people is the phenomenon which guides us from a self-preoccupation to a sense of being part of a large human race, part of the rhetoric of communication, stochastics, and so on, which Hannah Arendt makes a big fuss of in her book, *The Human Condition*, that we are different from animals. I don't go to, nor do I know anybody who goes to, Boston City Hall Plaza on a Sunday morning to negotiate with strangers.

AUDIENCE: [? You need ?] [? to go ?] [INAUDIBLE]

JULIAN
BEINART: You do--

AUDIENCE: [INAUDIBLE]

JULIAN
BEINART: --because you have too little else.

AUDIENCE: But [? you might ?] [INAUDIBLE]

JULIAN
BEINART: Yeah, I know-- fair enough. In Assisi, you would wander down to the Piazza del Comune because it's on your path somewhere else anyway. It's in the middle of a small town. And if there's any action-- secondary, the amount of private accommodation you've got is very small. Why do black kids in Baltimore play basketball in the street? Because they haven't got the space and got backyards to play basketball as you can in your own suburban garden.

So all these connections-- City Hall Plaza should have been surrounded by dense housing. Most of the Rockefeller Center placed in Des Moines, Iowa, would not be the same as Rockefeller Center built on a grid of density plus income with Fifth Avenue right adjacent to it and part of an extraordinary grid which pumps energy through all of the system, much like the system of reticulation in your brain. Let's just look at some other examples.

Under the idea of control or access, I pay taxes to maintain army camps and nuclear power stations and private domains which I don't claim access to. But yet I own a fraction of it. What is public about me earning part of the built environment but not being able to have access to it? I have much more access to shopping environments, which are largely private than I do to-- who guarantees access to all space, independent of ownership?

This isn't a subject which Michael Sorkin tries to attack in his book, where he terms shopping centers space be ageographic, where there's dissipation of stable relationships, of loosening of ties to any specific place that is nothing which is emanating from history. Everything is ersatz. The market doesn't produce any environment which has the resonance that is required for domain of public space.

And lastly, the category of meaning-- but just before we leave ownership is the category of psychological ownership, which is very much part of the habitation of urbanism. If I had to ask you, in Boston, what would we miss more, the Boston Celtics moving to Sacramento or City Hall Plaza being redeveloped? The one is an absolutely public phenomenon, especially. The Celtics are a private company. They're only physically in the sense they play 62-- 31 games a year in the town.

But the psychological ownership, which is a very-- again, we go back to [INAUDIBLE]-- or not back to him, necessarily. But we get this sense that there are traces of understanding which we carry with us as human beings which are not absolutely contingent. It's five to two.

Let's just talk a little bit about meaning. The federal courthouse in Boston is an interesting example. It faces towards the sea, which is a foolish kind of notion, facing to lobstermen in the boats. The traditional courthouse in New England faces towards the town, to a square, opposite a church, or something of this kind.

AUDIENCE: It's really weird, because the courthouse here not only faces the sea, but that's really good prime real estate that is off-limits. So it's heavily secured [INAUDIBLE]

JULIAN Well, it has a McDonald's underneath it.

BEINART:

AUDIENCE: Well, yeah, but underneath it.

JULIAN Well, as part of it.

BEINART:

AUDIENCE: So it's weird to stand in that little corner, that little tip, and look at what they have and then, at the same time, see nobody moving around because of the security around, surrounding the place.

JULIAN It's badly configured in a number of ways. But they are private courthouses in New England, in Boston. In the State Street building, there are courthouses which are purely private, where you can settle civil suits by judges who are retired, sitting in. And you have to agree that you will-- now, what is the difference between a public courthouse and a private courthouse in contemporary [INAUDIBLE]?

The private courthouse is lost in the assemblage of the State Street tall building. You could be going to visit your accountant, instead of which you go to a courthouse, which is not-- all you have to agree is to listen, to take the judgment of-- you have the wonderfully beautiful environment. It doesn't have the dregs of the population have to go to a public courthouse. I wonder how that would configure in the [INAUDIBLE] structure of a town.

OK, I've used the shorthand system of trying to connect us to some of the dilemmas of public and private life. The idea of solitude, removal from the public, was considered madness in medieval society. You were considered insane or heroic if you went on a trip without somebody else, without a group of people. To build or to maintain your own private garden was considered a very antisocial move.

What caused us, as a society, to change from an extreme publicness? And you read this book on Socrates in Athens. You were amazed at the sense of transparency. Socrates would be walking barefoot through the agora, and a young man would come up to him and ask him something. And he'd give a philosophical answer. And the young man would be asking for where he could buy food.

This intermingling of the acceptance of remote speculation about life and everyday things is not part of our domain any longer. It may be in some places. Why did we invent solitude? Let's start with that place. Think about the answer to that question. We are [INAUDIBLE] and endless architects for not behaving more in public.

I lived in Assisi for close to a year, measuring the whole town. This is a drawing, an axonometric based on my measurements, that some of the texture of part of the-- part of my purpose was after being at MIT as a student in teaching. I got a Rome Prize to study pedestrian movement in a small town. Next.

This is the Piazza del Comune. And there's the measurements of pedestrian flow at different times of the day. One of the things that was interesting was that there was always this [INAUDIBLE] the Piazza del Comune is the central plaza of the town. Assisi's a linear town. I'll just turn on the light for a second, because-- oh, I'm afraid you have to-- it's got this mad system of turning it off in one place and turning it on in another place.

[LAUGHTER]

Assisi's on the slope of a hill. The town consists of a set of public spaces linked across the grain and along the contours, with a major Piazza del Comune in the center. Because the land use is distributed throughout the town, there's as much chance of there being a destination here as destination here.

The volume of traffic moving this way through the center of the town is the same as the volume moving that way through the town. So the center of the town, in a very dense, [INAUDIBLE] kind of environment, is a combination of platforms at different steepnesses-- Piazza, with the San Rufino, Santa Chiara, San Francesco, and so on forming the basis for the organization of the town into parishes and into neighborhoods. But essentially, the meeting place is in a restricted town in the center. And serves both as a passthrough and as a place.

The slide on the left is my crude attempt at time-lapse photography of a burial of a soldier in the central Plaza. Next. I stayed up in the tower above the Plaza for many hours of the day and night and was struck by the fact that, when there's nobody in the Plaza, [INAUDIBLE] [? years ?] of postmen delivering mail, it still seems very well inhabited, as opposed to when it was full with the crowd. It seemed appropriately sized. Next.

Traditionally, the piazza, the Italian piazza, takes its form from a position of centrality or access, surrounded by dense housing environment, surrounded by a wall. This is a classic image of it. This plays out in different ways. As the town is a bit bigger than this one, this is Il Palio in Siena. Originally, it is a place for festivals and for animal games. Next.

Now, it is a large open space which, twice a year, hosts a palio. And a palio is a kind of medieval reconstruction of a ritual. It's a game in which the various components of the town compete in a race. A lot of money is now gambled. On the right is an example of the use of public space for private use. This is very typical in the Italian open space, where land is leased from the public authority by the private-- in this case, a restaurant. Next.

The palio takes place in the Piazza Del Campo here. There are other significant places in the town. Just above it is the great cathedral and medieval hospital.

People have asked a lot about the emptiness of City Hall Plaza. And there are at least two theses which have been written about it and two competitions to do something about it. What is wrong with Boston City Hall Plaza? Say something.

AUDIENCE: There's no real active [INAUDIBLE]

JULIAN There's no active what?

BEINART:

AUDIENCE: [INAUDIBLE]

JULIAN OK, there's no reason--

BEINART:

AUDIENCE: The [INAUDIBLE]

JULIAN Hm?

BEINART:

AUDIENCE: The building [? is ?] [INAUDIBLE]

JULIAN The building is the problem? Why is the building a problem?

BEINART:

AUDIENCE: [? It's ?] one part of the [? problem ?] [INAUDIBLE]

JULIAN OK, so we've got a couple of ideas. The one is there's not enough housing density around the square. That's

BEINART: probably a good observation. In a decentralized city, why do you need a central square?

AUDIENCE: Stubbornness.

JULIAN Stubbornness, yes. Archivalness-- that this was a good idea historically, but it's misappropriated literally. It's

BEINART: taken out of another context and placed in one which doesn't serve it.

There have been two attempts at solutions in competitions. The one is formal-- that is, to do something formally. One of them was to continue Hanover Street from the north end through the Plaza and to advocate some shopping along it. Others have proposed no formal intervention but only programmatic intervention. There's one famous one which puts a baseball diamond in the square.

AUDIENCE: Also, I think the biggest difference is that, in Siena, the space is an interior space [? and ?] [? an outdoor ?] space [INAUDIBLE]. And here, the space just meets on [? the sides. ?]

JULIAN Well.

BEINART:

AUDIENCE: [? Ties ?] [? into ?] [? scale. ?]

JULIAN Yeah, [INAUDIBLE] City Hall-- there's another tradition of open space which I'm not showing. That is the creation

BEINART: of open space in front of important buildings. In Assisi, there happen to be small open spaces, plazas, in front of each major church. This depends very much on the quality of the building that is being addressed and whether there's any real significance.

In the Campo del Siena, the municipality has paintings from medieval times of the Comune. There's a sense that this place is somehow, to use a word from our first class, that it's somehow centered. I'm using a word from the cosmic model. Centeredness-- it's a metaphysical concept. In the case of the Campo, it is both-- and Assisi-- it is both-- I repeat myself-- it is both an important functional path to connect and also a place which can serve both small and large functions. Next.

This is the underground of Rockefeller Center, the shopping mall and elevators and new roads and the rooftop condition, which was even considered to have aerial bridges above and recreation events on the roof. So in Rockefeller Center, there's public space below and above. Next.

This is the largest-- probably, at its time, the largest private building development in history. I don't know about comparing it to the pyramids or whatever, but in modern times, certainly. It's part-- it's like Assisi. In Assisi, the square is part of the structure, the geometry of the whole town.

In this case, it fits into a grid system, which it doesn't try to destroy, but actually adds roads. So it's adjacency to Fifth Avenue, plus it's surrounding of a high-density and high-income area, make this square, again, a functionally appropriate commodity, not an attempt to symbolize something. Next.

Attempts to-- this is, on the left, a project called Urban Design Manhattan, some 25, 30 years ago, by a group who tried to argue that the way to deal with Manhattan was to see it as a three-dimensional system with vertical connections private and horizontal connections public. The slide on the right is what you see of the sky at intersections in the grid [? down in ?] Manhattan. It's an attempt to argue that there is a logic to what you see in the sky between tall buildings. Next.

The [? muteness ?] of the departed World Trade Center and the attempt in Shanghai to have completely private activity dominate the scene-- despite all of the attempts in the competition and the procedures of participation to replace the buildings on the left, the building which is has resulted is purely the result of the wishes of the Mr. Silverstein, the developer. Next.

The tall building is a modern icon, which has often been seen as having perceptual value, much like a cathedral that dominated a medieval town. The tall building is the-- the attempts to make them taller and taller-- on the left is a building in Shanghai. On the right is Louis Kahn's attempt to design a [? much ?] [? lower ?] building in Philadelphia. Next.

A Saudi bank building in Jeddah on the left and the attempt to make a tall building in Kuala Lumpur, on the left, as an Islamic building. An Islamic skyscraper is a paradox. Next. You've seen this project on the left. It's Melnikov's entry into the *Pravda* competition in St. Petersburg, with a rotating system. And on the right, the 1922 *Chicago Tribune* competition-- this is the entry by Adolf Loos, where-- it's difficult to explain in simple terms. But its obviousness is one of its powers. Next.

[? There ?] is no legislation or design of the vertical ends of tall buildings as a system. I know of no city in the world which has an inventory. This is Houston on the right, Constantinople on the left. One might have thought that somebody would have had the idea that the geometry of the system of tall buildings would have some significance.

But I don't know of any [? city-- ?] if you know of a city, tell me-- which controls the form of the system of tall buildings. It's seen as one of the things that is not necessary to control. It's interesting because it's seen, in many respects, when you have a river, and you have green space, you see the profile of the city from a distance. Next.

Tall buildings are often used to project futurism. This is on the cover of an *Archigram* booklet on the right and a *Wonder Stories* book on the left, where the synchronicity of the transportation system creates the dynamic of the city. Next.

There's another aspect, concealed aspect, of the city, much though its vertical shape is uncontrolled, so is below the level of the platform [INAUDIBLE]. This is a part view of the workings under Herald Square in New York. And on the right is a Diego Rivera drawing called *Frozen Assets*, which argues that under every city there are bodies locked up and dead bodies giving a kind of macabre picture of the use of the bottom. You'll remember a picture I showed you of travel in the sewers of Paris-- tourist trips. Next.

[? Here ?] [? are ?] two examples in from Manhattan of the attempt by new office buildings, on the Lever Brothers on the left and the Ford Foundation on the right, to give the impression that they're creating public space. There's no market for the space underneath, as I tried to show in comparison to Fifth Avenue and Madison, or Fifth Avenue and Park. So it's very easy to give up the ground floor space in an office building, as it was easy for Seagrams Building to sit back in return for [? higher ?] bulk.

There's no public space under a tower. Richard Sennett has written very critically of this device. The Ford Foundation puts a garden inside the building as if it's a public park. In fact, it very curtailed as to its entry. Next.

Bank in Hong Kong, of course-- a famous bank where there's an attempt to give a sense of public in the interior. And the access to the interior is tightly controlled by a single escalator. The whole idea of this insinuation is that this represents a unification of the work that's being done in this vertical space. And yet each group works individually. Next.

This is Herman Hertzberger's insurance company project in Amsterdam. No, no sorry-- it's not in Amsterdam. It's in-- I'll think of the name-- where each of the workers in this insurance company is allowed to personalize their own space. Yet the openness of the whole structure depicts a sense of community. This is the exterior of the system, whereby the system stops bluntly when it leaves the building. Next.

This is where the conjunction of public and private becomes somewhat meaningless. On the right is Trump Tower. On the left is Citicorp, the ground floor of Citicorp, which has 20 stores and enormous things going on. Do you feel public in these animated spaces, which are intensely private ownership?

Remember the matrix-- use, ownership, access, and meaning. And try always to use that matrix to test whether what is private and what is public about space. In this case, ownership is completely private. Access is public. Use is public, but probably oriented absolutely to private profit. And meaning is whatever you want to make of it. You can feel more public in the base of Citicorp Plaza, the new Citicorp Building, than you can in City Hall Plaza in Boston. Next.

The attempt to shape tall buildings with elements of the decentralized city, both ecologically and-- it's a bit of a joke. Next. From the *Wonder* magazine diagrams, you get this intense-- there are many visions of Manhattan which are multiplications of traffic, suggesting that automobiles be on a different-- the trains on the lowest level, automobiles above, and including a rail system, public rail system, pedestrians on a level above. And many levels above there are pedestrians.

This is an image of the modern city which is closeted in a lot of people's minds. It just doesn't happen.

AUDIENCE: How much was this vision reinforced by Fritz Lang's *Metropolis*?

JULIAN BEINART: A number of things-- I think Moses King, who did some of the most wonderful versions of this-- these are not King's-- portrayed a kind of utilitarian base to this. Manhattan was getting to be so dense and congested that the reaction was let's use vertical space to distinguish between vertical and horizontal movement.

You can imagine movies being made. This is this is probably suitable for a Batman movie, extraordinary things are being-- supernatural events are taking place. There's something supernatural about people walking on the 20-- up in the sky on the 20th floor across from two buildings. The basic rule is that people are where there's reason to be.

The number of people on the 20th floor of two office buildings is too few to generate any need for connection at that [? tower. ?] You come down the elevator, and you connect to the base. There are a few cities in the world which have developed enough density, nor do I-- I won't be around, but I don't project that there will ever be cities which will develop significantly upper-level pedestrian crossings.

This contradicts much of the romance with this kind of world, of architects. *Archigram* was based on dense models of urban interaction, which seldom take place. That's why architects hate suburbia so much. That's a Catholic statement.

[LAUGHTER]

Next. Next.

On the left is the marathon in New York and on the right there are celebrations after the hostages from Iran were released and returned. Archaic relied on space-time inventions such as rituals not only to mark space in particular ways, as you saw in the example of Madurai in Southern India. But in crude form, this is the same phenomenon, the bringing together of people in public to celebrate a particular thing-- in the case, a race, which has meaning which is meaningless, in the second, a celebration to return people after being captured by a foreign nation.