

points to one of the greatest limits of New Urbanism as a response to the problems of cities, New Urbanism is an anti-urban approach. In taking the colonial New England town as its model, it embodies the pastoralism of Thomas Jefferson over the urbanism of his rival Hamilton, but without Jefferson's emphasis on democratic community. By emphasizing the community sphere over the public sphere, New Urbanism can contribute to a loss of public life. As such, we lose an important avenue of individual growth (public life with strangers). We lose an avenue of political will formation that is outside of the state and corporation wand, we lose the marvel and wonder of the encounter with strangers Following Levinas, we become morally impoverished as the range of face-to-face encounters we have is ever more attenuated.

Civic Environmentalism proposes that design alone will not be the solution. Further, in terms of my earlier list of reasons to care about the fate of cities, I note that for Civic Environmentalism:

- Building the Public Sphere is central to any hope for transforming cities, communities, and ultimately selves.
- It does not take desire as fixed. Rather, Civic Environmentalists understand desires, selves, and communities as formed through on-going and interactive processes in which the quality of everyday experience is central. It does not have a predetermined idea of the design form, and so is open to contingency. Civic Environmentalists aim at “ends-in-view” which is the best we can think of and agree on given where we are now.
- Similarly, it does not assume a single way of living. Civic Environmentalists are open to the creative chaos of the city, but one made richer by political and community life.

I should note that Civic Environmentalism has thus far seldom been brought into direct dialogue with the practice and teaching of planning and architecture. As it is, it is quite likely that a codification of design principles will take place. However, given that the procedures by which Civic Environmentalism proposes responding to the problems of cities is one where the decisions are driven by those most involved, and that experts act as advisors, succumbing to the belief that design principles alone will suffice seems unlikely.

Note also that I am not arguing that New Urbanism has no place in responding to the crisis brought about by sprawl. The advocates of New Urbanism have been partially successful in placing the relationships between the form of cities and buildings and the quality of everyday life on the public agenda. New Urbanist design principles and practices embody many of the same values as Civic Environmentalism. What I am arguing is that in so far as New Urbanism is primarily a design paradigm, and assumes that through design alone we will solve social problems, it will fall short. Further, in so far as it trusts existing social relations and market structures to be sufficient to transform our urban areas, it risks reinforcing these problems. Civic Environmentalism is thus a more promising model with which to approach our urban problems.

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