

## September 20, 2007: Lecture 8

### ***“Urban Blight and the Tranquil Antidote.”***

*Assigned Readings for Today:*

- 1.) Le Corbusier, “The Hours of Repose” in *The City of Tomorrow* (1924, 1986), pp. 197-212. (PDF)
- 2.) Tunnard, Christopher, “A Solution for Today” in *Gardens in the Modern Landscape*. (1938, 1948) pp. 143-148. (PDF)

#### **Goals of Today’s Class:**

- 1.) Reinforce the awful conditions which the majority of urban dwellers faced everyday in the early 20<sup>th</sup> Century. [Via short movie clip of “The City” (1939)]
- 2.) Indicate how design professionals responded to these horrible living conditions through the creation of the urban park. (Ideas of sunlight, fresh air, open space, and exercise) [Lecture]
- 3.) Introduce the idea that the purpose of an urban park has radically changed since the 19<sup>th</sup> Century and to engage them in identifying the agents that are responsible for these changes. [Small group work.]
- 4.) To have students critically examine contemporary urban parks and to speculate what role they are meant to fulfill today. [Small group work.]

#### **9:00- Welcome students.**

**Provide brief overview of Lecture 7:** *“Modern cities and their modernizing effects.”*

(Rise of Urban Industrialism, overcrowding, poor housing standards, increased immigration, population growth, lack of land use zoning, and increased industrial pollution.)

Ask if there are any questions/ comments from last lecture?

#### **9:10- Introduce Film Clip- “The City” (1939)** [43 minutes total run time]

Directed by Ralph Steiner, written and narrated by Lewis Mumford. (VIDREC 307.1 C498)

“The City” was exhibited at the 1939 New York World’s Fair. A classic both in the history of short film and in the concern for quality of life in our cities, it deals with four phases of town building: the New England town, the unplanned industrial community, the crowded metropolis and the designed suburban community.

**Show first 25 minutes of the film-** end clip when the discussion ends on the importance of urban parks and starts showing the need for suburbanization.

#### **9:35- Lecture for 20 minutes (ppt: “LA 590 Lecture 8”)**

Thesis- Design professionals in the early 20<sup>th</sup> Century viewed the urban park not as a place of recreational leisure, but rather as essential infrastructure to counter the physically unhealthy, socially immoral, and mentally damaging conditions of the modern city. The architectural response to these conditions through Le Corbusier’s concept of the “Contemporary City” for three million inhabitants, and Christopher Tunnard’s ideals presented within “Gardens in a Modern Landscape”, Jens Jensen’s works as Director of the Park District in Chicago.

#### **9:55- Open Class Discussion (Small group work if student energy level seems low):**

How successful were the design solutions that Corb and Tunnard provided? What does Le Corbusier’s “contemporary city” remind you of? (Think Chicago’s South Side.) What are the danger’s, if any, inherent within these designer’s solutions for the urban condition? What are the conditions that are being addressed by contemporary urban Parks such as Chicago’s Millennium Park? What are the social, physical, cultural, economic, and ecological conditions addressed there? Are these issues being addressed at all today?

#### **10:15- Introduce next lecture:** *“The Machine in the Garden: The automobile and the development of suburbanization.”*

**Remind students of readings for next week, and that their first paper due in two weeks on October 1, 2007.**