

THE FUTURE OF FOLKLORE STUDIES IN AMERICA:
THE URBAN FRONTIER

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Cities have been with us since antiquity, and from their inception they have fostered distinctive urban traditions.¹ As early as the sixteenth century, London had its own antiquary, John Stow, who was probably the first person to pay formal recognition to the folklore of London. Other cities attracted their collectors of folklore too. In 1825, Robert Chambers published *Traditions of Edinburgh* in two volumes. And by the mid-nineteenth century, Mayhew had issued *London Labour and the London Poor*, a monumental treasure trove of occupational lore, urban street cries, local characters and legend, street performance, folk speech and nicknames.²

During the nineteenth century, most British and American folklorists lived in cities. For many of them, fieldwork was part of their everyday lives. Dorson reports that John Francis Campbell of Islay was driving in his hansom cab in March of 1861, when he spied a knife-grinder who seemed a likely prospect. He jumped out of his cab and arranged for the man and his brother to come the next day to the office of the Lighthouse Commission, where Campbell presumably worked. Campbell, who had prepared long clay pipes, beer, bread and cheese, recorded seven tales from the two gypsy tinkers.³

By the 1870s, William Wells Newell, author of *Games and Songs of American Children* (1883), was gathering examples from New York, Philadelphia, Boston, Cincinnati, Washington, Dubuque, Toronto, Charleston, and other American cities.⁴ Reporting on his fieldwork in New York, Newell writes:

The writer was not a little surprised to hear from a group of colored children in the streets of New York City...the following ballad [Hugh of Lincoln and the Jew's Daughter]. He traced the song to a little girl living in one of the cabins near Central Park, from whom he obtained this version.... In this unlikely spot [an unswept hovel] lingered the relics of old English folksong, amid

all the stir of the busiest cities. The mother of the family had herself been born in New York, of Irish parentage, but had learned from her own mother, and handed down to her children, such legends of the past as the ballad we cite...and so the thirteenth-century tradition, extinct perhaps in its native soil, had taken a new lease on existence as a song of negro children in New York.⁵

A close observer of children's spontaneous and improvised play in city parks, schools, and streets, Newell was as impressed with children's inventiveness as with their conservatism. While noting the extent to which children with different immigrant backgrounds shared a common repertoire of English-language games and rhymes which they transmitted to each other, he stressed the regional character of this lore: "During the time that we are writing, independent local usages sprang up, so that each town had oftentimes its own formulas and names for children's sports."⁶ Even today in New York City, the distribution of small variations of terminology and practice in children's lore and games may be mapped to reveal "regions" of the city.

Newell also provides numerous examples in support of his claim that the "New World has preserved what the Old World has forgotten."⁷ His much criticized premise that folklore originates with the "intelligent class" and diffuses to the lower orders, where it may thrive long after it has been forgotten by "society," had a positive side effect. Newell was particularly attentive to the lore of "well-bred" children.⁸ As a result, his work is relatively balanced in its attention to diverse social sectors of American cities.

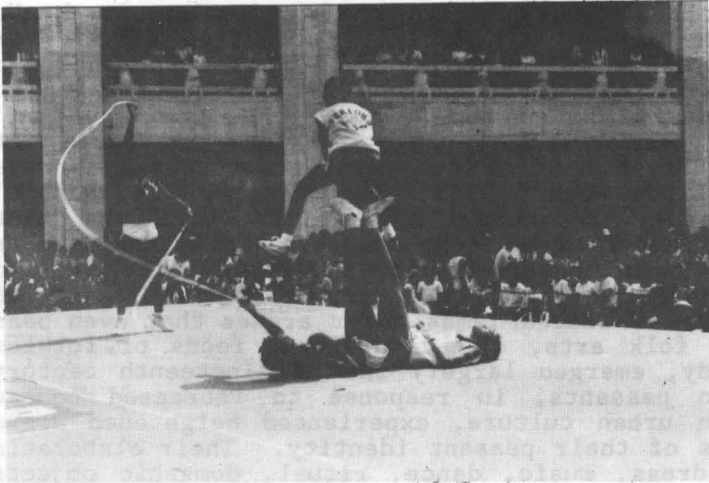
The year Newell published *Songs and Games of American Children* also marks the onset of mass migration to the United States. Y. L. Cahan, who had begun his collecting efforts in Warsaw in the 1890s, came to New York, where in 1904 he wrote that "here, we can scoop folklore up with our hands."⁹ Comparing Europe and America, he stated that in America there is "undisturbed folklore to the extent that it survives and still lives in the memory of the folk, which awaits its collectors, waits for them to come and gather and research, even in the eleventh hour, before it is too late."¹⁰ An immigrant himself, Cahan was interested

in old world retentions, and for the next decades recorded Yiddish folklore from immigrants in New York City. An impressive advantage of New York for Cahan was that he could find informants from diverse old world regions without undertaking and expensive expedition.

Interest in urban folklore continued into the first half of the twentieth century, as noted by Linda Dégh. In her response to R. M. Dorson's article, "Is there a Folk in the City?" she points out that European scholars, especially the Germans, had been concerned with *Gegenwartsvolkskunde*, or contemporary folk culture, since at least the 1920s.¹¹ Indeed, Tamás Hofer argues that even peasant folk arts, the traditional focus of folklore study, emerged largely in the nineteenth century, when peasants, in response to increased contact with urban culture, experienced heightened awareness of their peasant identity. Their elaboration of dress, music, dance, ritual, domestic objects, and other folk arts articulated their changing relationship to the urban milieu.¹²

In the United States, just before and after the Second World War, new collections of folklore from American cities began to appear. In his 1946 article in *New York Folklore Quarterly*, Ben Botkin describes the work of the WPA New York City Writers' Project, which pioneered in collecting the "living lore" of New York City. According to Botkin, in 1930 nearly half the population of New York City was born outside the state--700,000 were born in other states and 2,400,000 in other countries. Participants in the project were aware of distinctive features of New York City life. According to the Chicago sociologist R. D. Mackenzie, "The widest cultural differences...are not between the country and the city but rather between different residential areas within the city itself."¹³ Accordingly, the team sought out the lore of neighborhoods, occupations, and foreign language groups. Drawing on the materials collected by the WPA Federal Writers' Projects, as well as on other sources, Botkin published *Sidewalks of America* in 1954 and *New York City Folklore* in 1956.¹⁴

From its inception, the study of urban folklore in the United States has been largely dominated by a survivalist paradigm. as seen in two major collections of essays, *The Urban Experience*



Furious 5 compete at the 1983 Double Dutch Tournament on the Plaza of Lincoln Center in New York. Onlookers standing on the balcony of the New York State Theatre during the intermission of a ballet performance catch a glimpse of the virtuosity of the young competitors.



Charlie Barnett telling jokes to an impromptu gathering on a grassy patch, Washington Square, 1982.

and *Folk Tradition* (1971) and *Folklore in the Modern World* (1973).¹⁵ Whereas the nineteenth-century folklorists found popular antiquities in the city, the twentieth-century folklorist has looked for retentions of the pre-migration folkways of people who moved to the city either from the countryside or from distant lands. After decades of collecting folklore in country towns, Dorson explored Gary, Indiana and East Chicago with three purposes in mind: "to ascertain if the folklorist could ply his trade in the city; to contrast the vitality of the traditions among the various ethnic and racial groups; and to observe the effects of life in an urban, industrial center upon these imported cultures."¹⁶ The emphasis in so many of the existing urban folklore studies is still on verbal art and music, on immigrant and ethnic folkways, and on approaches which focus upon enclaves and "folk groups," traditionally conceived.

Most recently, scholars such as Dorson, Langlois, Miska, Posen, Szwed, Wachs, Warshaver, Zeitlin, and a growing cadre of urban ethnomusicologists are shifting the emphasis from the city as locus to the city as focus. Informed by the contributions of urban geographers, social historians, sociologists, and urban anthropologists, they are developing perspectives designed to address the specifically urban character of city life and its expressive implications.¹⁷

THE URBAN FRONTIER

If cities have been with us for millenia, if folklore has been part of city life all that time, and if folklorists have long recognized the presence of folklore in cities, in what sense can we speak of "the urban frontier" in American folklore studies? From a substantive perspective, the frontier resides in the concern with expressive behavior generated by and about the urban experience. The city is thus not a museum of folk traditions brought to it from elsewhere, but a crucible in which expressive behavior is forged. From a theoretical perspective, the frontier lies in developing approaches to explore the relations of expressive behavior to the special conditions of urban life. Implicit here is the idea that cities are diverse and that historical and cross-cultural

perspectives are essential to the study of urban folklore.¹⁸

The urban frontier also offers new horizons for the folklore field as a whole. In addition to focussing our attention on the expressive life of cities, the study of urban folklore promises to reshape our thinking about folklore more generally. The focus on ethnicity during the 1970s was, in its time, such a frontier, because the more interesting work challenged the construct of folk group as a bounded social entity coterminous with its traditions, explored the socially situated nature of identity, applied sociolinguistics to the notion of multiple cultural repertoires, and offered concepts of tradition as a construction rather than an inheritance.¹⁹ Just as immigration creates special social circumstances with distinctive expressive outcomes, so too does urban life have its peculiar folkloristic emanations. Paradoxically, it is by focussing on the distinctive aspects of urban folklore that we will discover more general applications for the field as a whole. We are prompted to ask -- is what we find really unique to urban life? Or is it that the urban setting offers an extreme and particularly clear case? Is the approach we are using applicable only to the urban setting? Or, would it be productive to apply such approaches to other settings? Similarly, core concerns in folklore study become even richer in their implications when explored in new, and specifically urban, contexts.

There is yet another sense in which we can speak of an urban frontier, this time for the interdisciplinary study of cities. Anthropologists, who have given cities serious attention only in the last two decades, have contributed cross-cultural perspectives and an emphasis on non-Western cities. In the struggle to apply the wholistic perspective and ethnographic methods developed in the study of small societies, urban anthropologists have emphasized the ethnographic study of enclaves and the adaptation of migrants and immigrants in urban settings.²⁰ Sociologists, despite early encyclopedic claims, have specialized in the study of large, complex, modern, industrial societies, and in their quintessential social expression -- cities. They too have emphasized enclaves

and the pathologies of city life.

In a provocative article entitled "Strategies for Discovering Urban Theory," Anselm Strauss argues that for new theory to develop it is necessary to study the "unstudied," the "unusual," the "trivial," and the "odd."²¹ These terms are meaningful only in relation to normative sociology. Louis Wirth's characterization of cities in his classic and by now thoroughly critiqued essay "Urbanism as a Way of Life" offers the view of one influential sociologist of what constitutes the studied, usual, significant and normal. Wirth's 1938 statement will provide the point of departure for outlining how²² folklorists can rise to Strauss's challenge.

Wirth states: "For sociological purposes, a city may be defined as a relatively large, dense, and permanent settlement of socially heterogeneous individuals."²³ Wirth characterizes the city as an ideal type of community and polar opposite to the folk society defined by Redfield. After asserting that cities are centres of civilization, just as they are the initiating and controlling centres of power in industry, commerce, finance administration, and politics, Wirth delineates urbanism as a life style growing out of these conditions, but by no means confined to them. He stresses the high price that city dwellers pay for the city's satisfactions in the form of diminished quality in their social relationships.

Interpersonal relations in cities, Wirth asserts, are overwhelmingly segmentalized and based upon secondary contacts. They tend to be utilitarian, competitive, and exploitative, characteristics that are intensified by the absence of the personal and emotional controls of intimate groups. Regulation by formal controls replaces solidarity, sentimental ties and control through custom. The casualties of these features of urban social life are loneliness and anomie, bred of the reserve and indifference urbanites cultivate in their efforts to immunize themselves from innumerable contacts and demands. The more positive results are in the direction of sophistication, cosmopolitanism, rationality, relativistic perspectives, and greater tolerance of differences. Competition, though it can be ruthless, also accentuates uniqueness and places a premium on eccen-

tricity, efficient performance, and inventiveness. Heterogeneity and mobility, though they contribute to instability and transience, also allow for greater freedom and opportunity. Lastly, voluntary organizations multiply around a great diversity of interests as a substitute for kinship groupings.

Wirth's critics have argued that his essay is not about cities, but about urban industrial society, and that his model is relevant, and then only partially, to little more than the inner city, where transience may be more significant than size, density and heterogeneity in creating or explaining the social pathologies Wirth describes. Reacting to the strong ecological bias in Chicago school sociology, Gans goes to the other extreme in arguing that the ecological features of the inner city have little or no influence in shaping ways of life. Furthermore, Gans and others have been quick to point out that within the city as well as in the suburbs there are many coherent communities that resemble small towns in their way of life. This point has not been lost on folklorists, who have done most of their urban folklore research in enclaves and neighborhoods. Lastly, cities have changed greatly in the four decades since Wirth published his statement and in the two decades since his most vocal critics published theirs. Nonetheless, Wirth's statement still stands as a classic formulation and a provocative point of departure for this discussion.

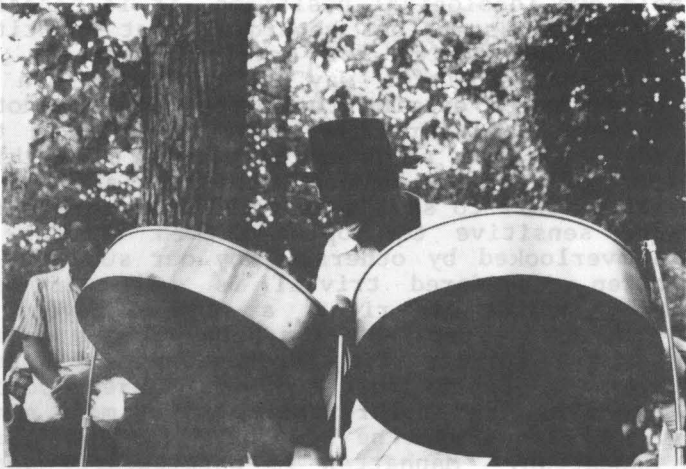
Given Wirth's characterization, it is not surprising that despite the many celebrations of the city as a cradle of civilization, a place of excitement and opportunity, the emphasis in earlier research has been on the negative aspects of city life -- anonymity, impersonality, rootlessness, alienation, crime, violence, exploitation, deadening routine, brutal living and working conditions -- or, more recently, on showing the extent to which enclaves in the city are like Redfield's folk society. These emphases are understandable where the results of research are to have practical applications in ameliorating problems and in providing a sound basis for better planning.

Noting that sociologists have left many

aspects of urban life unstudied, Strauss argues that in order to escape the constraints of a discipline's own ideological positions, it is necessary to question assumptions regarding what constitute the important topics for developing theory. I suggest that fruitful way to question such assumptions is to examine the priorities of another discipline. Folklore has much to offer in this regard. Without reducing the field of folklore to the study of the unusual, the trivial, and the odd, it is fair to say, that folklorists are particularly sensitive to topics deemed trivial and hence overlooked by others. Why our subjects are so often considered trivial is a matter worth studying in its own right, a subject beyond the scope of this paper. My aim here will be to examine how a folkloristic perspective can enlarge the range of topics for study and thereby contribute to urban and folkloristic theory more generally. My focus will be New York, and specifically, Manhattan. Manhattan is particularly appropriate because many parts of it approximate the kinds of urban formation described by Wirth.

The study of folklore is at its core an investigation of how people in their everyday lives shape deeply felt values in meaningful form.²⁵ In the urban setting, where large-scale bureaucracies control ever increasing areas of life, folklorists are especially attuned to control, autonomy, and efficacy at a local level -- the individual, family, small business, building, block, street, parish, neighborhood, association, or network. Wirth stated the case in the extreme: "The individual is reduced to a state of virtual impotence."²⁶ Whereas sympathetic architects, urban planners, and sociologists designed solutions to the hazards of city life, those arising from over planning as well as from anarchy, folklorists seek to discover indigenous solutions, the arrangements that inhabitants themselves evolve, often independently of the authorities, if not in defiance of the law itself.

Questions of interest to the urban folklorist are: What is the relationship between peculiar features of urban settings and the expressive forms found there? How do people use expressive behavior to personalize and humanize the urban environment? How do they insert themselves into the larger power structures, or find ways in which to



Vincent Taylor playing steel drums in Washington Square, 1982.



John Runnings protesting national boundaries and advocating the political union of the U.S. and the USSR as a solution to the arms race, Washington Square, 1983.

exercise choice and control? How do they appropriate and rework mass-produced commodities? How can expressive behavior reveal the complex interplay of formal controls, tacit understandings and custom? What forms does the traditionalizing process take in a heterogeneous and competitive urban setting? How do the inhabitants of a city form images of the larger whole and their place in it?

NEW YORK CITY: THE QUINTESSENTIAL METROPOLIS

Since the beginning of the century, when half of New York City lived in Manhattan, the population has decreased in real numbers and percentages, although the population density is still higher than the national average. Today there are 1,428,285 people in Manhattan, an island of 22.7 square miles, and they constitute about twenty percent of New York City. Relative to other boroughs, more non-Caucasians, one-person households, and rented housing units are to be found in Manhattan. There are more very poor and very wealthy people, and proportionately fewer middle-income families than in the other boroughs. A strong manufacturing area, Manhattan is the nation's center for financial dealings, publishing, and the arts. Compared with other cities, in the United States, Manhattan devotes less space to residential and commercial needs, and more to public, semi-public, and industrial purposes.²⁷

The Big Apple, or Empire City, as it is also known, may be seen as a hyperbolized urban setting, in the sense that in it are found extremes of scale, heterogeneity, density, verticality, and intensity. "There is little opportunity for one individual to obtain a conception of the city as a whole or to survey his place in it," writes Wirth.²⁸ Yet, the inhabitants of New York City do form images of the metropolis.

A sense of the city is something accomplished, rather than discovered, something constituted rather than uncovered. Expressive behavior is a powerful way of constituting a sense of the whole city. The sense of the whole changes with each vista, parade, and celebration. A question to ask then is: What is the sense of the whole city that a particular event or activity or vista puts forward?

Verticality is essential to the distinctive visual character of the city, summing up as it does the corporate power that determines so much of city life. New York's distinctive skyline is specifically the profile of power located in mid and lower Manhattan. Silhouettes of the Manhattan skyline appear on handpainted and neon signs throughout the city, advertising taxi companies, travel agencies, delicatessans, and other small businesses. These are emblems of an identification of local life with the city writ large. The vistas from expansive bridges, rooftops, freeways, and boardwalks, experienced from a stationary position or traversed by foot, car, or train, allow the city to be grasped at a glance with the comprehensiveness of the eye. Vertical displacements, such as rooftop gardens, and aerial excursions, such as the flying of pigeons and kites from rooftops, capitalize on the city's verticality. In these cases, the monumental view from the roof often contrasts sharply with the experience of the street, which in the inner city may be the scene of litter, drugs, and devastation.

Distance helps to miniaturize the city and to suppress detail, thereby rendering it more graspable -- hence the appeal of views from the tallest buildings and cruises round the island on the ferry. These experiences indicate that scale, rather than size per se, is the issue, that it is the relational nature of spatial perception and experience that matters. The fascination with scale is particularly clear in the Macy's Thanksgiving Day parade, which is famous for the gigantic inflated figures that dwarf the skyscrapers lining the parade route. In the Halloween parade in Greenwich Village, people dress up as famous skyscrapers and landmarks, for example, the Chrysler Building and the Statue of Liberty. In the annual Empire State Run Up, a 1,575 step dash to the top of the Empire State Building, people participate in "vertical race well-suited to a city where climbing--either social or corporate--is part of the culture."²⁹ Reducing buildings down to body size, inflating figures up to building size, walking a tightrope stretched between the two World Trade Towers, as Philippe Petit did a few years ago, or racing to the top of the Empire State Building--these are playful exercises in urban scale. These are mappings of the body onto the city.³⁰

Another way that one city is experienced as a larger whole is through its celebrations. "The key to the visible city lies in the moving pageant or procession," writes Mumford.³¹ Cities have their own traditions. Their festivals, fairs, exhibitions, memorials, inaugurations, marathons, tournaments, demonstrations, and competitions reveal how expressive behavior can be organized on a vast scale. Unfortunately, folklorists tend to overlook these kinds of materials because of their civic, corporate, or institutional sponsorship. Indeed, a narrow definition of folklore would disqualify such events from consideration at all, and in so doing, urban traditions as old as cities themselves would escape the folklorist's scrutiny.

Brown and others argue that the physical structure of cities is itself a response to the ceremonial activity that takes place there: "The spatial form belonging to a given ritual and established by repetition acquired independent architectural existence."³² What the participatory procession is to the winding streets of the medieval town, the parade and its spectators are to the wide avenue of the Baroque city. Wide avenues were designed to accommodate military parades, just as large squares and plazas provided the stage for displaying the power of the ruling class.

Furthermore, as Warner has so brilliantly analyzed, parades, pageants, and related forms offer authoritative images of the city and its history as constructed by the organizers and participants.³³ In the case of the pageants and parades staged for the tercentenary of Yankee City, Warner shows how the scrupulous attention to "historical accuracy" and the recourse to scholars, historians, and other specialists are rituals of authentication. They provide the basis for claiming the presented history as authoritative. Yankee City pageantry, like many historical commemorations in the city, is a particularly clear example of the past being a construction in the present, and one which lays claim to authoritative versions of history. Dedications, rededications, centennials, and other celebrations of time are opportunities to reconstruct the past in relation to the present and in relation to the consciousness that makes the separation between the two possible.

The recent centennial celebration of the Brooklyn Bridge is a case in point. Even the fire-

works display by the Long Island Grucci family, who for five generations have specialized in pyrotechnics, was informed by a sense of tradition:

On May 24, the 100th anniversary of the opening of the Brooklyn Bridge will be marked by festivities reminiscent of the holiday declared in the cities of New York and Brooklyn a century ago ... there will be a dramatic fireworks display reminiscent of the thrilling pyrotechnics that marked the Brooklyn Bridge's opening.³⁴

Millions of New Yorkers stood on the freeways, piers, rooftops, and barges near the bridge to participate in the bridge's birthday festivities. The celebration of such value-charged sites and moments makes the city as a larger whole visible, if only for a few fleeting hours. "Identity of place is achieved by dramatizing the aspirations, needs, and functional rhythms of personal and group life," writes Yi-Fu Tuan.³⁵ Celebrations are precisely such dramatizations.

To the degree that celebrations articulate key points in the city's history and calendar, they celebrate time. According to Wirth, "Without rigid adherence to predictable routines a large compact society would scarcely be able to maintain itself. The clock and the traffic signal are symbolic of the basis of our social order in the urban world."³⁶ Even this distinctly urban preoccupation with the precise measurement and rationing of time is celebrated. New Year's eve on Times Square, a distinctive New York City celebration extending back to 1904, is the most time-specific celebration in the Christian calendar.³⁷ To dramatize the precise instant when the old year ends and the new year begins, the New Year's eve celebration in Times Square uses a spatial metaphor for temporal passage -- a ball drops at precise ten-second intervals down the seventy-foot flagpole and touches down at precisely 11:59:60 on December 31. Now that the measuring of time has become so precise, it is necessary to introduce a leap second during the last minute of the year in order to synchronize clock time and the calculations of the Naval Laboratory. New York becomes the ritual timekeeper for the nation.

In contrast with these authoritative images of the city are perspectives shaped by a set of oppositional values. The rebellious graffiti writer, for example, conceptualizes the city in terms of its rapid transit arteries and their all encompassing reach. He has detailed knowledge of the schedules and routes of each subway line and the vistas offered by various stations. He spends long days on the trains and on the platforms, waiting for a car with his name on it to appear, and at nights he hangs out in the yards, where he does his most ambitious pieces. The pinnacle of success is to be "all city," that is, to have his tag (name) well-represented on both the IRT and BMT lines. Competition for control of the lines is city-wide, both in terms of other writers vying for fame and in terms of the Metropolitan Transit Authority, symbol of the city itself, struggling to keep the trains free of graffiti. "City Losing Another Battle in Graffiti War,"³⁸ is the headline in a *New York Times* article. Even after spending over \$150,000,000 since 1970, the MTA has failed to suppress graffiti. The drama of control -- "The graffiti makes you wonder just who is in charge down here anyway," a commuter remarked to the *Times* -- is played out on a vast scale, the city itself being the stage. The efficacy of the individual is emblazoned across the city: "You have to go ride to work in my name," declared one writer.

The city is also grasped as an articulation of parts. Though Wirth attributes the pattern of spatial segregation in cities to the heterogeneity of the population, and though inhabitants and writers alike have often noted the abrupt juxtaposition of distinctive areas of the city, the organization of urban space is more complex than the term segregation implies. Segregation is but one aspect of the spatial articulation of values.

Maps, whether official or tacit, delineate territories and have implications for jurisdiction, responsibility, and activity. Any one stretch of land is organized for its inhabitants in terms of multiple maps, none of them coterminous: there are divisions in terms of parishes, precincts, fire stations, sanitation, community planning districts, voting districts, zip codes, area codes, zoning, school districts, locally defined neighborhoods, occupational specialties, vendor and street

performer territories, drug traffic, play areas, and gang preserves. These divisions vary in the salience they hold for different segments of the population and at different times of the day, week, and year. They come to be known not only through formal and institutionalized means, but also through tacit understanding. Toponymy, the way directions are given, architectural style, folk imprint on the built environment, street life, concerted action, competition, traditionalizing, and the customizing of mass-produced commodities are build a few of the many ways in which tacit understandings are formed and expressed.

TOPONOMY

For whom is the area near the Port Authority bus terminal Hell's Kitchen rather than Clinton? For whom is the area below Fourteenth Street and east of the Bowery the East Village rather than the Lower East Side? What do these designations reveal about the conflict between historical images and contemporary real estate interests? Why is it that hundreds of name changes initiated by the City Council, most of them ceremonial, are seldom used by ordinary people? Someone who calls Sixth Avenue "Avenue of the Americas" can be spotted immediately as an out-of-towner.

ORIENTATION

The Bowery is a street between neighborhoods. Many of the cross streets dead end on the Bowery. Therefore, when specifying 'where' on the Bowery I live, I must orient the visitor in terms of the adjoining neighborhoods. Do I live between Rivington and Stanton (the Lower East Side cross streets to the east of the Bowery) or do I live on the Bowery at Prince (the Little Italy/Soho cross streets)? The answer depends on whether my guest is an older Jewish New Yorker or an artist from out of town.

ARCHITECTURAL STYLE

Soho is characterized by an exceptionally large concentration of cast iron industrial buildings, the Lower East Side by its tenements,

the Village by its brownstones, Wall Street by its skyscrapers and narrow streets. The layers of styles, even within these relatively consistent architectural areas, make time visible. Through an archeology of architectural style, the social history of the area is revealed -- old and new structures stand beside each other, and successive generations of modifications to older structures leave their traces. The built environment is unfinished, always in process, and the traces of its historical unfoldings can be discerned in architectural style.

Style is an articulation of values. Corporate style, as described by Whyte, conveys an aesthetics of uniformity, conformity, anonymity and order. Control and power are coded in these monumental structures. Whyte explains:

Large institutions have a special affinity for blank walls. They proclaim the power of the institution, the inconsequence of the individual, where they are clearly meant to put down, if not intimidate. Television surveillance cameras and admonitory signs underscore the message The city is a messy and chaotic place. The walls bespeak its antithesis -- the internalized control environment, with access carefully monitored, a refuge from the street and the undesirables who frequent it.⁴⁰

No wonder that public plazas at the base of new buildings often provide no seating and are locked, or that graffiti on these structures are not likely to last more than two hours, according to one writer. Nor are blank walls strictly a city occurrence; they figure prominently and increasingly in the suburbs as well.

Most recently, the enclosed suburban shopping mall has been introduced to midtown Manhattan and not without controversy about the "hermetic, homogeneous, enclosed environment," which one critic considers very anti-urban.⁴¹ In a devastated area of the South Bronx, where tenements once stood, a new public housing project aims to bring a "taste of suburban life." Prefabricated single-family ranch-style houses with picket fences are under construction.⁴² The first two are in place and can be glimpsed from the elevated subway. They are an incongruous site amid the rubble of gutted tenements.

The architectural expression of control in suburban residential areas takes a variety of forms: middle-class attitudes to property are upheld by means of ordinances and covenants outline open garage doors, unduly bright colors, unmowed lawns, visible clotheslines, the parking of vehicles with commercial license plates and other modifications of the look of the neighborhood that might reduce property values. In a recent article in the *New York Times*,⁴³ blue collar residents of River Edge, New Jersey, protested that despite the fact that they earn more than many of the white collar residents, they considered the objections to their commercial vans a way of saying, "We aren't as good as they are." The exertion of control reaches an extreme in the adults-only mobile home parks in California.⁴⁴ And in the walled towns of southern California (Rolling Hills, Hidden Hills, Bradbury) and southern Florida (Golden Beach, Golf). These wealthy "gated communities" enjoy 24-hour security, which strictly controls the access of non-residents and guarantees the "anonymity,⁴⁵ privacy, and prestige" of those who live there.

Working class behavior in neighborhoods with middle-class aspirations can be a source of considerable friction. The mixing of business and residence by parking commercial vehicles at home is but one example. Another is the passion is the passion for ornament:

Scarsdale is a village where most people put up no outdoor decorations at all, and most who do keep their enthusiasm for the season firmly in check, displaying tasteful door wreaths of natural material. The entire field of outdoor Christmas decorations in such suburbs of studied reserve seems fraught with peril.⁴⁶

Nonetheless, for twenty years, the Prisco family has mounted an elaborate eleven-piece nativity scene, 1,000 pulsating lights and a Santa on the roof. The traffic past the display is so heavy that the police have to direct the passing cars. The neighbors are not pleased.

In the case of public housing, Gans argues that problems are created by a lack of fit between the middle class values that inform the design and the working class life styles of the prospective inhabitants.⁴⁷ In his book *Defensible Space*,

Newman takes a harder line. He suggests that public housing is stigmatized by the uniformity, anonymity, and ugliness of its design, a source of danger for the inhabitants: "Most crime in housing occurs in the visually deprived semi-public interiors of buildings."⁴⁸ How do aesthetic and social values inform the ways in which people transform (or destroy) these and other regimented structures? How are class and ethnic differences in notions of inside/outside and public/private expressed in the build environment and its folk modifications? What is the acceptable range of variations? What are the appropriate materials, motifs, and modifications? What are the canons of order and taste?

Elizabeth Cromley has explored the aesthetics of working and middle-class families in the residential districts of old industrial areas, such as Brooklyn, Queens, and Hoboken, where row and semi-detached houses were built, mostly between 1890 and 1940. Tacit understandings rather than legislation govern the delicate balance between the individualizing of houses and the assertion of neighborhood loyalty:

Traditional relationships among historic shapes and materials have been dismantled: you can put shutters at the picture window, or side your house with a different material on each floor. Thus there is great syntactic freedom in juxtaposing elements from diverse sources in history, allowing endless individual variation. The popular design vocabulary is rooted in a neat accommodation of the roles of individual and member of a larger⁴⁹ whole, both finding expression in people's houses.

In a working class concentration of row houses in Baltimore, a local tradition of painted window screens has evolved, and is one way in which residents individuate these regimented structures within limits deemed appropriate by the community.⁵⁰

Protecting the value of property may not necessarily motivate these modifications. Nor is increasing the value of housing stock necessarily in the best interests of long-time residents of an inner city neighborhood: "Speculators Out." "Cooper Square Is Here To Stay. Speculators Stay



Charity Christian Fellowship from Pennsylvania conducting a service in Washington Park, 1983. A member of their group was recruited from the park the year before.



Street the Beat sing Beatles' renditions and their own compositions to the accompaniment of drums made from different sized cardboard cartons, Columbus Avenue, Upper West Side of Manhattan, 1982.

Away." "Stop Gentrification." "20 Families Live Here. Don't Kick Them Out. Where Do We Go From Here?" "Property is Theft." "Corporate Rot." "Corporate Eugenics." "Anarchy Is Freedom." "Ninth Street United. Don't Buy Drugs Here." Boldly inscribed on banners and walls in Lower Manhattan (Lower East Side, East Village, Soho, Chelsea, Chinatown, Little Italy), such messages signal the hazards of urban redevelopment for the low-income renter. Arson, tax foreclosures, and abandonment of buildings force families from their dwellings. The vacated buildings are either rehabilitated or razed in preparation for major new building projects. In either case, the property value will far exceed the means of the former residents. In the interim, the local community is gradually dismembered.

FOLK IMPRINT ON THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT

Paradoxically, the very neglect that leads to the abandoning of buildings and their eventual levelling also creates zones of entrepreneurial opportunity. The lots open up to the unsupervised construction of elaborate gardens and handmade buildings, often without formal sanction from the city. Two examples are Adam Purple's Garden of Eden on the Lower East Side and the Puerto Rican country cabins in Harlem and the Bronx.⁵¹

According to Adam Purple, "When you take personal responsibility for your immediate environment, that is a political act. You run straight up against the state."⁵² Since the mid-1970's, as the building in which he lived and those adjoining it were gradually abandoned and gutted, Adam Purple planted a carefully conceived garden on the vacant lots, increasing the garden in concentric circles as additional buildings fell. As a vigorous traffic in drugs took hold in the neighboring shells, Adam was busy cultivating the garden with compost made from the horse manure left by the mounted police in Central Park, which he transported to the garden by bicycle, sixty pounds at a time, and mixed with his own nightsoil, vegetable peelings, and crumbled bricks from demolished tenements.

In his application to the New York Department of Cultural Affairs for artist certification on February 20, 1982, Adam described the Garden of Eden:

a non-linear, minimum-technology, **urban agricultural** artproject designed to demonstrate how abandoned-bulldozed lots (in even the most "depressed" ghetto) **can** be converted into abundantly fruitful and beautiful open-space **without necessitating any government or private funding.**

...The Garden's expansion has already answered the question: What minimum number of tenement-size lots needs to be 'greened' to achieve the return of such song birds as finches, thrushes, etc.? **Answer: Three.** It was discovered simultaneously that one person could 'green' one lot per year by **hand (and bicycle!).**

On the basis that Mother Nature takes 500 years to create **one inch** of top soil, the Garden of Eden represents **artistically** 2000 to 3000 years of r(apid) evolution.

Adam Purple made a similar statement before the New York Board of Estimate on December 16, 1982. There is a conflict between the city, which plans to build a housing project on the garden, and Adam, who insists that the garden cannot be moved. City officials cannot understand why their offer to move and incorporate the garden into a city park is unacceptable to Adam. They refuse to acknowledge that the meaning and power of the garden is precisely in the garden's location, in the process through which it was formed, and in its self-sufficiency, conditions which cannot be replicated. Their proposal to destroy the garden at its present site and to recreate it elsewhere domesticates by appropriation, an act that would transform the meaning of the garden and dissipate its force.

In East Harlem and the South Bronx, little country cabins pop up incongruously on vacant lots between tenements and brownstones, some abandoned and others still intact. These old-fashioned **casitas**, once common in the Puerto Rican countryside, are now scattered throughout inner city neighborhoods, where vacant lots abound and where local men can no longer afford to rent space for their social clubs. One **casita** was built by un-

employed men, who salvaged materials from abandoned buildings nearby. Another was constructed by a retired carpenter on a parking lot. In one case, the city cooperated by clearing garbage from the lot and furnishing some gardening supplies. Brightly painted and rich in pastoral imagery, these little cottages recreate in loving detail the veranda, wood-burning stove, latrine, chicken coop (complete with chickens), well, and gardens remembered from the Puerto Rican countryside. Men who are unemployed, retired or marginally employed take pride in their ability to construct these buildings, the closest that most will come to controlling property, however tenuously.

STREET LIFE

The Bowery is an unlikely mixture of homeless people, thriving businesses (restaurant supply and⁵³ electrical lighting wholesalers), and artists. They coexist in midden-like layers from the sidewalks and roads, which are the province of the homeless, the ground floor storefronts, which house the businesses and the upper lofts, where artists live and work. Large trucks nurtle down this wide street on their way to the bridges that connect Manhattan to the other boroughs and New Jersey.

When the Human Resources Administration tried to open a men's shelter at the Seventh Regiment Armory on Park Avenue, an elegant Upper East Side residential area, "Some of the men refuse(d) to go there because they don't like the neighborhood," commented Bonnie Stone to the **New York Times**. She added, "I think it's a wonderful comment. The staff thinks they mean they feel out of place. They⁵⁴ can't blend in and they get uptight about it."

It is precisely the distinctive inner city characteristics of heterogeneity and size that allow diverse types of people to "blend in" and thereby to preserve their anonymity and independence. The most heterogeneous sections of Manhattan attract eccentrics of all types. Some may be known by name and held dear by local residents and business people. Others are ignored or shunned. Many are magnets for legends about their former lives and they become a predictable and

vivid part of the urban mise-en-scene. In their way, some of these individuals are living, if tragic, emblems of fierce independence and survival. In the case of a Brighton Beach character such as Disco Freddy, a performance of some kind -- music, dance, patter,⁵⁵ -- is the primary vehicle for social interaction. In such a performance, a marginal individual, who cannot sustain intimate relationships, controls and maintains the formal distance necessary for there to be any interaction at all.

As in the folk imprint on the built environment, the social activity on the streets is shaped by class and ethnic values and expresses different conceptions of the line between public and private, indoor and outdoor. Standing around on street corners, sitting on stoops, and leaning out of windows, are common on the Lower East Side, but not on Striver's Row, a middle-class section of Harlem, where privacy and quiet are highly valued.⁵⁶ Housecoats and bedroom slippers are commonly worn by hasidic women relaxing outdoors on the porches and verandas of their homes or in their front yards during nice weather on the Sabbath or other holy days in Boro Park, Brooklyn, for example.

Children also have their own ways of utilizing the streets. New York City street games follow the pattern of children's folklore more generally -- they are passed on from child to child with little, if any, intervention by adults, and they are widely distributed across the boroughs, albeit with telling variations. Stickball is organized around the sidewalk, which marks fouls, and sewer caps, which serve as homeplate and as measurements for scoring points. The basis for slapball, also known as triangle, are determined in relation to a fire hydrant and the sidewalk, which is out of bounds. Stoopball utilizes the steps at the entrance of a house, sidewalks to mark distance, and the house across the street to signify a home run. These urban games exploit the specific architectural features of the street in the organization of play. Children also use the play potential of refuse, from which they fashion go-carts, bazookas, airplanes, and other toys. Their conception of the street is rooted in its potential for play.⁵⁷

There are other urban sports that depend on density for their existence. The conditions for

the pigeon game include flat rooftops in close proximity, enough pigeon flyers on those rooftops to fly competing flocks, and cooperation from the owners and inhabitants of the buildings, who must be willing to allow the rooftops to be used for raising and flying hundreds of birds.

The natural staging areas provided by retaining walls, steps, doorways, fountains, and large trees are also exploited by street performers, an old urban tradition which has emerged with renewed vigor on Manhattan streets during the last decade, despite harassment from the police. The behavior of the street performers capitalizes on the heterogeneity and size of the city, at the same time that it reveals the extent to which tacit understandings can take precedence over the formal controls which are said to supplant custom and solidarity in such areas.

Almost 20,000 people use Washington Square Park on a warm weekend day. A rich panoply of activity takes place in the 8½ acre area: sunbathing, tending children at play, watching people, sleeping, picnicing, chatting, reading, playing frisbee, soccer, chess, checkers, cards, dancing, roller skating, selling food, drugs, or crafts, and watching numerous acts. Charlie Barnett tells stories, Tony Vera eats fire, Nguyen Thien Phuc juggles, Mitch Cohen races turtles, the Brewery puppets mime popular songs, Seventh Day Adventists hold samples of diseased lung tissue preserved in plastic to dramatize their appeals for clean living and Revival Meeting is conducted by a group visiting from Pennsylvania. There is no admission charge or announced program of events or publicity or coordinating committee or prior fundraising. The police cruise on the lookout for drugs and trouble. The sanitation trucks pick up garbage. The community argues about what the park should be -- a serene natural oasis or a socially active square?

Washington Square is an extraordinary example of cooperation on a large scale with a minimum of formal control -- that control, when exerted, is generally repressive, as the police harass performers for park permits, noise permits, and soliciting money (something only religious groups can do). As one performer explained to me, the city extracts a \$50.00 fee for the park permit, which gives him



Via Crucia por las calles (Stations of the Cross Procession) on Good Friday, 1983, St. James Church, Lower-East Side. The congregation has been largely Latin American since World War II. (Above and below)



the privilege of performing for nothing.

For street performers to make money, they must compete with each other and with the many distractions of a stimulating environment. Street performance depends on a constant stream of strangers to provide a renewable and captive audience willing to throw a few coins into the hat. Itinerant performers solve the problem of small towns by moving from one to another. In a large city, the performer can stay put, while the stream of people renews itself. The adolescent dancers who do breaking and electric boogie in Washington Square could not expect their family and friends to pay them for dancing on the streets and in the parks of their local neighborhood. In Manhattan, however, these same dancers can pick up several hundred dollars on a good day.

Apparently, New York City does not have a street performance ordinance per se, but rather provisions for dealing with street activities, disorderly conduct, disturbing the peace, noise, peddling, vending, solicitation, and related aspects of life in public places. Whereas Boston has an "Itinerant Musician License" and advocates in Chicago are trying to legalize street performance, Alexandria, Virginia, is prosecuting street musicians. New York is selective in the enforcement of the law, which, even should it be changed to permit street performance, would still be an instrument of control. The law would determine who is a street performer and who is not, and when and where they can perform.⁶⁰

CONCERTED ACTION

In contrast with the way in which street performers thrive on a constantly changing stream of strangers are the parades, demonstrations, feasts, and processions organized by religious, political, cultural, and other groups.

Massive assemblies of people with common interests are powerful expressions of solidarity and as such carry political force. The solidarity march for Soviet Jewry, the June 12, 1982 march in protest against nuclear arms, the parade on Captive Nations Day, and West Indian carnival are examples of events which define their success in large measure by the sheer number of people who

participate. In London, England, where Caribbean blacks are a small minority, the "gathering of a quarter million black people is an important political event."⁶¹ Carnival becomes not only a cultural festival but also a demonstration of political force, a point not missed by the government. It does so by virtue both of the size of the gathering and of the success of the organizational efforts necessary to turn the numbers out and coordinate their activity on such a large scale once they are present. Recognizing this principle, the **New York Times**, in its reporting on the papal visit to Poland, pointed out that "Perhaps over the long run, the most damaging error the Government may have made in scheduling the Pope's visit is that it permitted so many Poles to gather and share their feelings. The ability to isolate people has been the most effective tactical weapon of martial law."⁶²

Annual events such as carnival also lay claim to culturally specific ways of organizing time, and hence social identity. Religious calendars are perhaps the clearest examples:

New York is not itself on Jewish holy days. Delicatessens are not open. The garment district is silent. All over the city, shops, offices, schools, cleaners, even entire buildings, close down for the day -- like so many darkened rooms in a normally well-lighted house.

Yesterday was Yom Kippur, the highest holy day of all, and nowhere was it more evident than in the diamond district along West 47th Street between Fifth and Sixth Avenues...⁶³

Discrepancies between calendars -- for example, Greek Orthodox and Roman Catholic Easter -- reflect conscientious⁶⁴ efforts to differentiate the two traditions. Each calendar creates its own distinctive rhythm, sequence of moods, and dramatic structure not only for those who live by it, but also for others who work and live in the area. Thus, lived calendars are both segregative and integrative. When activated in the form of liturgical recitations and ritual enactments of sacred history, calendars transact the relationship between a very long stretch of history and the short annual cycle of observance. As Warner has shown

in his analysis of Yankee City, calendars manifest a particular view of history in the choice they express of what to celebrate and with what emphasis.

Despite Wirth's claim that rigid adherence to predictable routines is necessary to coordinate the large numbers of people living in cities, the multiplicity of calendars and schedules is evidence of an extraordinary pluralism. In Union City, this pluralism is carried to an extreme reminiscent of the Middle Ages, when clocks were not coordinated. The state line between Indiana and Ohio runs clear through the town, thereby creating two official time zones -- Eastern Daylight in Indiana and Eastern Standard in Ohio, known by the locals as fast and slow time, respectively -- and numerous unofficial ones. Mayor Fulk tells visitors that "The trick to living here -- is you don't try to figure it out, ⁵-- you just accept it. And you wear two watches."

Ritual dramatizes these temporal structures in ways that intersect with the spatial articulation of values. Until the procession of Saint Anthony of Padua around the boundaries of the Little Italy parish, I had no idea I had been walking through a bounded religious territory on my way to work each day. The annual procession, by marking the circumference of the territory, re-dramatizes the spatial configuration of a religious fellowship and left me with a lasting image of a territorial unit of meaning where there had not been one for me before.

In contrast with the fixed boundaries of the parish are the variable routes of the Stations of the Cross processions conducted on the Lower East Side and in other parts of the city by Hispanic and Italian Catholics on Good Friday. Confined to the parish, the procession maps sacred history onto the present social reality by establishing a convergence between each stage in Christ's Passion and the places in the parish of significance to the parishioners. In any given year the route is planned so that each station of the cross will be positioned at a significant site -- a housing project, hospital, center of drug traffic, site of accident or violent death. The procession of figures clad in brilliant colors and carrying black crosses, preceded by a police car and followed by the parishioners, make their way

against the monumental backdrop of bridges spanning the East River and towering buildings in the distance.

In order to use the streets for a saint's feast, procession, or fair, an organization must obtain a street activity permit and specify precisely where and when they plan to conduct their festivities. The police, who cordon off streets, reroute traffic, and help control large crowds, become an integral part of these events, often without understanding what they are about. In the case of Chinese New Year, for example, the police view the lion dancing as one parade, and Chinatown as one neighborhood. Concerned with the practicalities of rerouting traffic in this small and crowded neighborhood, the police prescribe one route for the lion dancers to follow. For the dancers, however, Chinatown is a complex area, divided into highly charged provinces of power. What the police, press, and visitors consider "one parade" is for Chinatown a series of seven or eight independent and competitive processions. Each lion dancing team has the right to pass along certain streets, but not others, obligations to go to some spots first, as a sign of deference and respect, and the good sense to avoid crossing paths with a warring team. The route, the points at which the lion dancers stop, the time spent at each place, and the elaborateness of the performances constitute a map of social relations and power structures shaping life₆₆ in the area, and beyond to the larger community.

Graffiti constitutes such a map as well, and has implications for the legal status of gangs who use graffiti to delineate turf. In Los Angeles, prosecution depended on the bench accepting that the gangs were actually unincorporated associations: "Legally, graffiti are considered a public nuisance, but criminal citations depend on catching the offender in the act. Civil action would be possible, prosecutors argued, if gangs were held collectively responsible for their members' scrawling."⁶⁷ One judge certified three gangs as legal entities in Los Angeles and ordered their 72 members to clean up the scrawls.

COMPETITION

Wirth argues that urbanism is marked by heightened competition, itself a response to the size and density of the city. Though potentially ruthless, competition promotes uniqueness, virtuosity, and inventiveness. Several examples from children's play reveal how competition introduces regimentation at the same time that it institutionalizes innovation, and paradoxically, how competition promotes cooperation and solidarity.

Several traditional pastimes -- double dutch, frisbee, yoyo, stickball, marbles -- have been formally organized into championship competitions, which have in turn transformed child's play into a consummate art. The annual National Marbles Tournament is sixty years old. The aim of the more recent First Annual Great Upper West Side Sidewalk, Stoop, Dirt, Curb and Alley Game Festival, held in 1982, was to stimulate children to learn and play the games remembered by their parents -- stickball, potsy, marbles, jacks, Red Rover, and double dutch. In 1983, PAL (Police Athletic League) organized the first annual Yoyoolympics. The First Annual American Stickball Tournament, also on the Upper West Side, was initiated in the same year.

According to Detective Williams of PAL, who helped organize the Double Dutch Tournament in 1973:

What's missing is somebody to have the sense to fund a study that would analyze double dutch and put it in the language of eggheads, to show what a positive sociological impact it can have in urban areas. We need a controlled study to show the merits so that money will come to pay for clinics and expand the competition... the problem is that there is no hardware involved that would lend a profit motive for a corporation to get interested... You can't patent a jump rope. All you have to do is take down a clothesline, use it, and put it back up.⁶⁸ There 's no product like a hula hoop or a Frisbee.

In 1982, two years after Detective Williams made that statement, McDonald's Restaurants joined the American Double Dutch League as an official sponsor of the sport, and in 1983 participating teams from New York City, Hartford, Washington, D.C.,

and Philadelphia competed on the plaza of Lincoln Center. Onlookers standing on the balcony of the New York State Theatre during the intermission of a ballet performance caught a glimpse of the virtuosity of the young competitors catapulting into the turning ropes, speed jumping, and executing complex moves with precision and grace. "Street ballet" is what the announcer proudly termed the performance. "Double Dutch," he said, "is the purest team sport. There are no stars."⁶⁹ As teams that placed less than first sulked on receiving their prizes, the announcer reminded the coaches about "attitude."

The shift in context from children's unsupervised play to a formal competition controlled by adults has implications for the activity. First, double dutch, yoyos, and frisbees continues to have a life on the street independent of the competitions. In the case of the games that are less frequently played today than they once were, there is no assurance that the festival will reshape the pattern of play on the streets. To varying degrees, these contexts are autonomous, though permeable, and what the contests can do is to give a second life to a form that is declining in its natural setting by providing a new setting for it. Second, competition intensifies both regimentation and innovation. For scoring purposes, the activity is highly formalized and moves are standardized. In the case of double dutch, regular practice ensures that the required movements are executed precisely according to the rule book. However, the free style category institutionalizes innovation. The inventiveness exhibited in double dutch goes beyond anything generally seen on the street. Fourth, these examples raise the issue of colonizing children's culture, of appropriating it. An examination of what continues to happen to those spheres children still control can provide evidence for exploring this question further. Fifth, the double dutch competitions are a way of inculcating the middle class values of discipline, teamwork, development of technical skills, achievement, delayed rewards, and decorum. Participation in the sport is linked to good school grades and good behavior. Potential rewards include recognition, travel abroad, and scholarships. For children in inner city schools, participation in such activi-



The martial arts club Wan Chi Ming performs the lion dance before the Sun Lok Kee restaurant on Mott Street in Chinatown, Chinese New Year, Year of the Pig, 1983.



Purim in Williamsburg, 5742/1982. Hasidic children dress as the Temple priest Aaron, modelled on nineteenth-century popular prints, and as a Jewish eye chart. The children are carrying the gifts of ready-to-eat food that are traditionally exchanged on the holiday.

ties can shape later life options, though according to basketball coach Bill Raftery, "Most athletes can't convert the energy, enthusiasm, and devotion they apply to athletics to earning a living."⁷⁰ Sixth, athletic competitions such as Double Dutch physicalize these values, measure the degree to which they have been achieved, assess and reward them instantly and in public. The spectators not only see the results of training in the form of scores, they also witness the effort, concentration, will, and stamina in action before their very eyes, as the competitors strain themselves to their very limits.

TRADITIONALIZING

Tradition finds no clear place in Wirth's characterization of urbanism, where rationality, utility, secularism, competition, uniqueness, and formal controls take precedence over symbolic behavior, sentiment, religion, solidarity, consensus, and custom. A closer look at urban life reveals the complex ways in which the traditionalizing process interacts with the defining features of urbanism as outlined by Wirth.⁷¹

At the commodities exchange in the World Trade Towers, where six-digit deals are executed in seconds, the most modern electronic methods of instantaneous global communication combine with the archaic method of executing deals on the trading floor. In the brokerage high above Wall Street, with vistas extending for miles in all directions, telephones and computer terminals provide instant contact and information control over long distances, a communication web that is worldwide and round the clock. Downstairs on the trading floor, cut off from daylight or street sounds, the floor brokers stand around the various commodity pits, flailing their arms and screaming their bids in a highly coded and intense style, as they compete for the attention of each other and of the chairman. The floor traders are susceptible to pecking orders established over time in the pit. Hoarseness is an occupational hazard, and a costly one -- laryngitis can cost a broker tens of thousands of dollars a week. Some companies have taken to providing actor training for their floor traders in the effort to teach them to get sustained volume from their voice without losing the ability to talk

altogether. Convinced that this archaic style of craining is the only way in which their business can be transacted -- that this is the most efficient way -- floor traders are intensely loyal to this way of operating. The modern corporate culture of the brokerage on the upper floors has its own patterns of traditionalization, patterns that students of management have come to appreciate and study.⁷²

Rites, ceremonies, rituals, language, stories, and other expressive activities, generated both by management and by workers, play an important role in the formation of organizational culture. From the perspective of management, healthy organizational culture is good for productivity and profit. From the perspective of the workers, the achieving of autonomy and control in the workplace can make work bearable, if not satisfying.⁷³

Roy found that in highly routinized jobs which left no room for worker creativity, the informal interaction among workers was essential to survival.⁷⁴ Horseplay, pranks, jokes, nicknames, taunts, teasing, games, insults, and the exchange and sharing of food provided satisfactions that repetitive execution of a mechanical task could not. Roy's case supports de Man's statement that "Workers will find some meaning in any activity assigned to him, will find a certain scope for initiative which can satisfy after a fashion the instinct for play and creative impulse."⁷⁵ The culture of the workplace evolves in significant ways from such expressive, non-instrumental activities.

Aware that the shortest distance between two points may not be a straight line, management now appreciates the importance of company history and the role that local heroes and legends play in creating a sense of that history. Identity, style, character, image, and climate are valued and shaped by sagas and legends, myths and stories, rites, rituals, and ceremonies. These cultural aspects of organizations represent a symbolic approach to the study of a subject dominated by instrumental approaches: organizations have been analyzed for the most part as a rational mechanism and in terms of design, planning, goals, and decisions.⁷⁶

Giving value meaningful form is at the heart of the traditionalizing process:

The key is to consider the usual enumerations of the traditional as only part of the the notion's potential scope. Let us root the notion not in time, but in social life. Let us postulate that the traditional is a functional prerequisite of social life. Let us consider the notion, not simply as naming objects, traditions, but also, and more fundamentally, as naming a process. It seems in fact the case that every person and group, makes some effort to "traditionalize" aspects of its experience. To "traditionalize" would seem to be a universal need. Groups and persons differ, then, not in presence of absence of the traditional -- there are none which do not "traditionalize" -- but in the degree, and, the form, or success in satisfying the universal need.

As early as 1934, Max Radin in the **Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences** had argued that tradition implied value, that something becomes a tradition when people recall that it existed in past time and when at least some people desire to continue it. According to Radin, what is really tradition, therefore, is not the product itself, or even the process of transmission per se, but the belief in its value. Lowe's statement that "Bourgeois society tried to consume the past, in order to attenuate somewhat its estrangement in the mechanical, segmented present,"⁷⁸ though not intended to pertain to the bureaucratic society of controlled consumption of the twentieth century, offers a useful historical context for considering the traditionalizing process in a modern city such as New York. His statement that primitivism and exoticism were two new interests in bourgeois society to compensate for the estranged experience of the bourgeois self can help us distinguish among various forms of traditionalization.

Urban self-consciousness gives rise to long and short chains of transmission and to "restorations" of all kinds. In some ways a large city is an ideal haven for the long chain of transmission of intergenerational transmission necessary to produce the exquisite violins which the Frirsz family, four generations of master craftsmen from Hungary, turn out in their workshop behind Carnegie Hall. They have the discerning clientele with the necessary resources to appreciate and afford these instruments. Five-generation family

businesses of many kinds -- the Di Palo dairy, the Grucci fireworks family, the Manteo electrical contracting and marionette family -- are examples of such long chains of transmission. In contrast, the adolescent graffiti writers and rappers are examples of short chains, where the career of the writer or breaker may extend at best from about the age of twelve to nineteen, and where new members apprentice themselves to someone two and three years older. These examples raise a more general question about the generational structure of expressive culture and the social organization of knowledge.⁷⁹

The city is a haven for a great variety of restorations, to borrow a useful term and concept from Richard Schechner.⁸⁰ Each restoration, whether a revival of the klezmer music of East European Jewish instrumentalists or Irish fiddling or contredancing, must postulate what it is a revival of. In this sense, restorations construct their "originals" as well as themselves, and in the process new contexts, audiences, and meanings for the forms are also created. Thus, old-time Jewish wedding dance music becomes concert fare detached from knowledge of the dances they accompanied and the people who played and danced to the music. The performers make choices about what to restore -- the music of the 1890s in East Europe, when the cymbalom and string instruments were still an important part of the ensemble, or the sound preserved on 78 rpm recordings of the 1920s and 1930s, in which wind instruments predominated and the influence of American popular music idioms can be heard. New bands, such as **Kapelve**, which draw widely from the styles of this music over almost a century, create a repertoire for themselves unique in the history of the music. It is precisely their estrangement from this musical culture, known to them primarily through recordings and printed music rather than through sustained contact with active klezmerim, which frees them to be so eclectic.⁸¹

There are many other examples in the New York City area -- Sleepy Hollow Restoration, a living historical estate; Wild Asia at the Bronx Zoo; the reconstruction of modern dance works; the re-created 42nd Royal Highland regiment that now participates in Scottish gatherings in the city. The impossibility of perfect or complete replication

offers opportunities for innovation, for reflection about the relationship between the proposed "original" and the restoration, between the past and the present.

Innovation itself can become a traditional value. West Indian carnival in Brooklyn can be seen as a tradition of innovation, where, in addition to preserving very old aspects of the festival, people create new and surprising costumes each year. These designs are a closely guarded secret, not to be revealed until carnival itself, when they can be unveiled with full dramatic effect and judged in a competition. Similarly, graffiti writers and breakers take great pains to elaborate style as a means of making a statement that is identifiable but not easily copied. Claims to particular forms are a great source of concern, as is over-exposing a new move or having one's innovation stolen.⁸² In the case of Hasidic and modern Orthodox Jewish communities, innovation is used to strengthen traditional values -- sabbath clocks automatically turn lights on and off and elevators are set to stop automatically at each floor without anyone pushing a button. These devices make it possible to utilize electrical services without violating the prohibition against work on holy days.

The multiplicity and permeability of contexts and the changes of meaning that occur as expressive behavior shifts from one context to another are especially fertile places to examine the traditionalizing process at its most fluid. As graffiti writers appropriate the techniques and audiences of advertizing, the new wave appropriates the techniques of graffiti writers. Adolescents who made their mark spraying trains exhibit in galleries, while the artists have taken to the streets. In some cases the two collaborate. Contexts also shift for the lion dancers, who train in martial arts clubs, participate in the Chinese New Year's procession on the streets, and perform on the concert stage as part of international arts festivals. The Hasidim perform their folk drama in the **bes medresh** (house of study and prayer) during Purim, and a week later stage **The Golem of Prague**, also a Purim play, at Madison Square Garden's Felt Forum.



Casita de campos (little house in the country) built by unemployed men from scrap on a vacant lot on 106th Street at Lexington Avenue in Spanish Harlem, 1982.



Victims of Emigrats / Pushers Dead / Fab Fredi 5. Black figure by conceptual artist Richard Hambleton, Houston at the Bowery, 1982.

CUSTOMIZING MASS CULTURE

To the degree that urbanism is marked by a high degree of centralization and bureaucratization, the mass media's control of the image-making machinery must be examined in terms of the expressive behavior that people themselves control, a subject of more interest to folklorists and ethnomusicologists than to sociologists. The high/low culture dichotomy continues to dominate the mass culture literature. Dwight MacDonald states that "For about a century, Western culture has really been two cultures: the traditional kind -- let us call it 'High Culture' -- that is chronicled in the textbooks, and a 'Mass Culture' manufactured wholesale for the market."⁸³ "Folk Art" occupies a problematic place in such schemes. For MacDonald, folk art was the culture of the common people until the Industrial Revolution, during which time folk art and high culture were sharply separated, into fairly watertight compartments. He argues that after the Industrial Revolution, mass culture overpowers folk art, which also recedes from the attention of analysts of the subject. Folklorists have the opportunity to fill a vacuum in scholarship such as this, and to correct misconceptions regarding the nature and history of "folk art." Tamás Hofer, for example, explores how, between the late eighteenth and early twentieth centuries, folk art underwent rapid differentiation and enrichment, quite the opposite of what the sociologists of mass culture have described. Though focussing on Hungarian peasants, his argument is more widely applicable:

In contrast to nineteenth-century romantic ideas considering that the creative ability of peasants evolved isolated from "foreign" effects, it might seem surprising that the most singular, most "peasant" styles appear just at a time when peasants meet urban people more frequently than before.... In embroidery ... the pomegranate and carnation motifs of the eighteenth century are closer to the domestic embroidery of the gentry than the more peasant-like patterns of a hundred years later.⁸⁴

Elsewhere in Europe, rural folk art developing in the seventeenth to the eighteenth centuries is

"attributed by German scholars to a growing rustic self-awareness directed against the city...."⁸⁵ Hofer goes on to describe how intellectuals, poets, artists, and members of various populist movements selected from this evolving peasant culture that which served the interests of an emerging national culture and integration, while at the same time peasants folklorized composed texts and tunes emanating from urban poets and composers.

Working with such constructs as taste culture and taste public, both of which are analytic aggregates of his own making, Gans states clearly that his focus is on commercially distributed cultural products and their consumption:

The analysis ignores altogether the cultural fare many people still create at home and in the community, whether as art, entertainment, or information, or for that matter, as myth and ceremony. Some of this fare is local adaptation of the national commercial culture (as in parodies of television programs and popular songs).... Much of the non-commercial culture is however, either original or adapted from earlier folk culture, for example, children's games and the music created by occupational groups, such as the work and protest songs of miners.⁸⁶

Gans's characterization of "the cultural fare many people still create at home and in the community" is actually a defense of his decision, not to include such materials in his discussion of high and low culture. The emphasis in his characterization is on the derivative nature of such cultural fare -- it adapts either mass culture or folk culture. He provides no examples of "original" creations. Furthermore, Gans's approach to mass culture posits a physically passive, if mentally active, consumer/user, whose major move is choosing which mass-produced commodity to acquire, and a standardized, unmodified product that is complete as purchased.

The term **customizing** refers here to the ways in which users modify mass-produced objects to suit their needs, interests, and values, and naturalize mass culture items into new systems of meaning and activity. From the consumer's perspective, the massproduced object is not necessarily complete. Nor is it indefinitely tied to its advertized function. Workers on an assembly line in Detroit make belt buckles out of the trunk lock ornaments

that are supposed to be attached to the car.⁸⁷ Whole cars are radically modified to create hot rods and low riders in Los Angeles and Dallas.⁸⁸ In New York and elsewhere, vanity plates are produced as a by-product of normal auto-registration. In addition to the assigned license number, you can Create-Plate: one "fellow ... put BEYOND on his blue Horizon and Jack LaLanne has, yes EIEIO."⁸⁹

Such syndicated newspaper columns as Dear Heloise are rich in helpful hints from devoted housewives for salvaging torn nylon stockings, empty milk containers, mismatched dishes, and other cast-offs. These hints explicate an aesthetic of thrift in a context of waste and excess. But paradoxically, the hints also create new needs for which the suggested contrivance is a solution. Flowers are planted in modified rubber tires or old wheelbarrows, empty eggshells in used egg containers are used to start seeds, glass bottles and old bricks form rims round flower beds, evergreens are decorated with empty beer cans, birds are scared away by the clatter of aluminum pie plates tied to strings. Doll's house furniture is made from beer cans and clothes pins. Whole buildings and environments are constructed from discarded furniture and aluminum foil, newspaper, plastic, bottles, pencils, hub caps, license plates, broken glass and tile -- Simon Rodia's Watts Towers in Los Angeles and James Hampton's Throne of the Third Heaven of the Nations Millennium General Assembly in Washington, D.C. are two notable examples.⁹⁰ An entire way of life is recreated in miniature from telephone wire, by Vincenzo Ancona, who used to weave baskets from natural materials in his native Italy.⁹¹ In the last few years, he has found colored telephone wire a finer and more malleable material. Now living in Brooklyn, he creates scenes from the village life of his childhood, which are important in his efforts to communicate to his children and grandchildren the way of life he once knew.

The recycling process is often not neutral. Thus, when management at the automobile factory became alarmed at the disappearance of trunk lock ornaments, they manufactured a company belt buckle to be distributed on family day in the hope that it would deter more thefts.⁹² The men refused to wear the company belt clip. That steel drums are made from discarded steel cans is a source of

pride and a symbol of vindication over oppression for the West Indian community. Dr. Lemeal Stanislaus stressed the "circumstances of its birth" and its role as "art in the battle against social snobbery" in his presentation for the West Indian American Day Carnival Association, Inc.⁹⁵ The art of making musical instruments from rubbish has been carried to an extreme by Skip La Plante, who made a pan-pipe from urine-specimen tubes and melted wax. This is but one of his many ingeniously constructed sound machines:

That the instruments were invented out of "found" objects was as important as the music itself. The "trash" of civilization was being plundered. And it was being transformed through Mr. La Plante's inventions into instruments that⁹⁴ mimicked the sounds of less industrialized societies.

Artists such as La Plante recycle the "detritus of 20th-century Western life ... hoping to return to what might seem a simpler, more natural, time and place."⁹⁵ In contrast, the makers of steel drums find in the recycling of industrial waste a way to preserve the social significance of the circumstances of the birth of this instrument: the steel drum, like the shrapnel madonna of Poland, is what⁹⁷ Baudrillard would call a "witness object." At the same time, classical, jazz, and popular music are introduced into the steel drum repertoire, an expression of the struggle to enter the mainstream on one's own terms.

Connoisseurship is entailed at every stage of the selection, modification, and integration of mass-produced material into complex performative settings and physical environments. Through this process, mass-produced materials are assembled and transformed to form an elaborate code, one that is constructed by the users. The meaning of these objects is derived from their relation to each other, to the contexts from which they were drawn, and to⁹⁸ the new ensemble of which they now form part.

In the adolescent subculture of graffiti, rapping, breaking, and hip-hop music, the disk jockey becomes a musician when he physically manipulates the spinning records -- he makes the needle repeat sections, he plays two records at the same

time, he forces the record to play backwards, he monitors the sound. Simultaneously, a rapper orally improvises a verbal patter over the recorded music, and the dancers perform routines that they learned from each other or invented out of an idiom they share. People are dressed in carefully selected and modified massproduced fashions -- graffiti writers emblazon the back panel of a blue denim jacket with aerosol paint cans, tea-shirts are cut off at the midriff and armholes and the edges are left raw, and athletic gear may be worn as fancy dress.

The connoisseurship of "cool" in the case of the graffiti subculture is paralleled by the fine-tuning of style laid bare in the **The Official Preppy Handbook**.⁹⁹ The values of this elite minority are also expressed through the careful integration of mass-produced items into a total way of life, rich in its own oral traditions and expressive behaviors. Exclusiveness is created through understatement and attention to esoteric detail -- only the cogniscenti will recognize the tell-tale signs of class subtly coded in the timeless classicism of monograms, signet rings, bermuda bags, breed of dog, nickname, turned-up collar, L.L. Bean rubber moccasins worn **without** socks, and Gucci wallet. Neither the graffiti nor the preppy "ensemble" was packaged as such for the consumption of these subcultures, though particular items might be targeted for their use. Rather they have been assembled and transformed by their users.

The creation of new ensembles becomes and end in itself in the formation of collections. Mechanical reproduction, the existence of multiple copies, and the acceleration of obsolescence are no deterrent to collecting. On the contrary, the very surfeit of objects and the modest value of many of them make collecting accessible to people of limited means. In such cases, value derives not from the money spent to acquire the object or from its resale value but from the meaning the object holds in the context of the collection and the collector's life. As one of Land-Webber's collectors explained:

It's very important to me to live with my flamingo collection all around me. All of these things are truly alive because they once belonged to someone else and now belong to me. I try to find out who owned each

item I acquire, where it has been, how it was used, where it was kept in the house. If I trade or sell something, I try to keep track of it so that I can be sure the new owners will care for it as I have.¹⁰⁰

An anvil collector explains that what he likes is the challenge: "They're hard to find, and when you do find one it's not always for sale, no matter what you offer."¹⁰¹ From their shape, he can date them. Two experts on carriage and buggy steps describe their entire collection as R.F.D. -- Rescued from the Dump. In her astute analysis, Susan Stewart notes that collections exemplify the total aestheticisation of use value, as an object is shifted from the context of production to the context of acquisition.¹⁰²

Collections are so appealing because of the flexibility they offer for creating new ensembles and novel internal ordering principles. Collectors are free to choose their scope and focus, which may be as narrow as every printing of *Catch 22* or as broad as primitive art. They can determine the principles of internal organization -- arrangement by alphabetical or numerical order, chronology, geography, provenance, color, material or medium, function, theme, or motif. Like competitions, collections make the criteria for classification and evaluation explicit and as such offer rich opportunities to contemplate form and create meaning. As Baudrillard suggests, discrimination moves from possession pure and simple,¹⁰³ to the organization and social usage of objects.

CONCLUSION

Emblazoned on a subway car, the epithet "Style wars" captures not only the spirit of urban graffiti, but also the larger point that style is meaning, that expressive behavior articulates values. Scrawled on a devastated building in Lower Manhattan, the epigraph "Semiotic Guerilla Warfare" acknowledges the conflict of value systems played out in the marks individuals make. These marks are complex and esoteric. "Style War" is intelligible to the graffiti subculture, where Sontag's notion of style as the "signature of the artist's will"¹⁰⁴ is applicable quite literally to these highly stylized signatures, or tags, that are the stock-in-trade of the young writers. Often un-

readable to the casual subway rider, these tags are immediately intelligible to the writers, whose identity resides as much in their style as in their name. The public nature of the trains and the outrage of the "city" are essential as an oppositional context for these marks. As Hebdige suggests, the "crime" is only a broken code.¹⁰⁵ "Semiotic Guerilla Warfare" is the mark of one sector of the new wave art scene. An esoteric allusion to Umberto Eco's coinage, this mark on a burnt-out tenement offers a critique of the established art scene and society.¹⁰⁶

Both "Style Wars" and "Semiotic Guerilla Warfare" are instances of expressive behavior which derive their meaning from the problematic relations of private and public, individual and institution, property and the law. These relations inform a vast array of expressive forms in the city. The issue therefore is not one of high culture versus popular culture, but rather that of style as an arena for dramatizing conflicting values and of context and meaning -- what do people do with the things they make or appropriate, and what do their actions signify? "No system can wipe these thoughts from my mind" is written on the wall of a Lower Manhattan building: it is precisely because so many people do not have the power to control the image-making machinery that it is so important to examine what they do control, namely the expressive shaping of their immediate and everyday lives. For them, style can be a form of refusal.¹⁰⁷

It is precisely this area that has been underestimated and generally overlooked by those who study urban culture. The implications of this absence are profound for Gans's policy recommendations, which offer a paternalistic case for aesthetic pluralism, or relationism, as he prefers to term it:

The higher taste cultures may be more desirable when culture is abstracted and judged apart from its users, but the real world is not abstract, and the desirability of the higher cultures cannot be used as a guide to policy as long as lower taste publics lack the socioeconomic and educational opportunities prerequisite to choosing higher cultures.¹⁰⁸

Even with regard to their own taste culture, low culture publics are characterized as having less training in their standards, less skill and resources for putting their standards into action, and less verbal fluency for justifying their choices, than high culture publics.¹⁰⁹

In contrast, folklorists have demonstrated repeatedly that:

the capacity for aesthetic experience, for shaping deeply felt values into meaningful, apposite form, is present in all communities, and will find some means for expression among all.... Our work is rooted in the recognition that beauty, form, and meaningful expression may arise wherever people have a chance, even half chance, to share what they enjoy or must endure. We prize that recognition above fashions or prestige. And we see it as the way to understand a fundamental aspect of human nature and human life.¹¹⁰

Our task is therefore to identify and illuminate the ways in which people shape their expressive behavior in relation to the conditions of their lives. Cities and mass culture have not sounded the death knell of folklore. On the contrary, they have offered a new frontier for exploring the indomitable will to make meaning, create value, and develop connoisseurship under the most exhilarating, as well as the most devastating, conditions.¹¹¹

NOTES

1. For a recent study, see Bill Ellis, "De Legendis Urbis: Modern Legends in Ancient Rome," *Journal of American Folklore* 96 (1983): 200-208.
2. See R.M. Dorson, *The British Folklorists: A History* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1968) for a discussion of the work of British antiquarians in cities.
3. *Ibid.*, p. 399.
4. Other folklore collectors working in American cities during this period include Steward Culin (Brooklyn), William Beauchamp (Washington, D.C.), and a little later, Leah Rachel Yoffie (St. Louis), to mention but a few.

5. William Wells Newell, **Games and Songs of American Children** (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1883), p. 75.
6. Ibid., p. 3.
7. Ibid.
8. Ibid., p. 6. "Nor were the participants mere rustics; many of them could boast as good blood, as careful breeding, and as much intelligence, as any in the land."
9. Cited by J. Shatski, "Yehuda Leyb Cahan (1881-1937): **materyaln far a biografye**," *Yorbukh fun Amopteyl fun yivo* 1 (1938): 21.
10. Ibid., p. 2.
11. Linda Dégh, "Prepared Comment to 'Is There a Folk in the City?'" *Journal of American Folklore* 83 (1970): 218. See also **Notizen** (Institut für Kulturanthropologie und Europäische Ethnologie. Universität Frankfurt a. M.).
12. Tamás Hofer, "Changes in the Style of Folk Art and Various Branches of Folklore in Hungary During the 19th Century -- An Interpretation," *Acta Ethnographica Academiae Scientiarum Hungaricae* 29 (1980): 149-165.
13. Cited by B.A. Botkin, "Living Lore of the New York City Writers' Project," *New York Folklore Quarterly* 2 (1946): 254.
14. Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill; New York: Crown.
15. Américo Paredes and Ellen J. Stekert, eds. **The Urban Experience and Folk Tradition** (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1971); R.M. Dorson, ed., **Folklore in the Modern World** (The Hague: Mouton, 1973).
16. R.M. Dorson, "Is There a Folk in the City?" *Journal of American Folklore (JAF)* 83 (1970): 187.
17. R.M. Dorson, **Land of the Millrats** (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1981); Janet Langlois, "The Belle Island Bridge Incident: Legend Dialectic and Semiotic System in the 1943 Detroit Race Riots," *JAF* 96 (1983): 183-199; Maxine Miska and Sheldon Posen, **Tradition and Community in the Urban Neighborhood: Making Brooklyn Home** (New York: Brooklyn Education and Cultural Alliance, 1983); Gerald

Warshaver, "Urban Folklore" in **Handbook of American Folklore**, ed. R.M. Dorson (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1983), pp. 162-171. As folk arts coordinators for the borough of Queens, Steven Zeitlin and Amanda Dargan are developing a variety of urban folklore projects, one of which focuses on play. Better known as a contribution to Afro-American folklore, Roger Abrahams, **Deep Down in the Jungle...: Negro Narrative Folklore from the Streets of Philadelphia** (Hatboro, Penn.: Folklore Associates, 1964) is a classic study of urban folklore. As director of the Center for Urban Ethnography at the University of Pennsylvania for many years, John Szwed stimulated important urban folklore projects, among them Elizabeth Mathias, "From Folklore to Mass Culture: Dynamics of Acculturation in the Games of Italian Men," Ph.D. diss., Folklore, University of Pennsylvania, 1974. See Adelaida Reyes-Schramm, "Explorations in Urban Ethnomusicology: Hard Lessons from the Spectacularly Ordinary," **Yearbook for Traditional Music** 14 (1982): 1-14. This brief account of folkloristic interest in cities is of necessity cursory and incomplete. It is intended to provide a context for the discussion which follows. A full exploration of the history of urban folklore study remains to be written, as does a current bibliography. For work done prior to 1971, see Richard A. Reuss and Ellen J. Stekert, "A Preliminary Bibliography of Urban Folklore Materials," in **The Urban Experience and Folk Tradition**, pp. 181-200.

18. Provocative points of departure for the folklorist include: Lewis Mumford, **The City in History** (New York: Harcourt, Brace, 1961); Gideon Sjoberg, **The Preindustrial City** (New York: Free Press, 1961); Peter Burke, **Popular Culture in Early Modern Europe** (New York: New York University Press, 1978); J.B. Jackson, **The Necessity for Ruins and Other Topics** (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1980); Roland Barthes, **Empire of Signs** (New York: Hill and Wang, 1982); Yoshinobu Ashihara, **The Aesthetic Townscape**, trans. by Lynne E. Riggs (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1983); and Stanford Anderson, ed., **On Streets** (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1978).

19. See Stern, "Ethnic Folklore and the Folklore of Ethnicity," **Western Folklore** 36 (1977): 7-27, and Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, "Studying Immigrant and Ethnic Folklore," in **The Handbook of American Folklore**, pp. 39-47.

20. For a recent history and synthesis of the literature, see Ulf Hannerz, **Exploring the City: Inquiries Toward**

an Urban Anthropology (New York: Columbia University Press, 1980).

21. Anselm Strauss, "Strategies for Discovering Urban Theory," in **Urban Research and Policy Planning**, eds. Leo F. Schnore and Henry Fagin (Beverly Hills: Sage Publications, 1967), pp. 81-98.

22. Louis Wirth, "Urbanism as a Way of Life," in **On Cities and Social Life: Selected Essays**, ed. Albert J. Reiss, Jr. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1964), pp. 4-83.

23. *Ibid.*, p. 66.

24. Herbert J. Gans, "Urban Vitality and the Fallacy of Physical Determinism," and "Urbanism and Suburbanism as Ways of Life: A Re-evaluation of Definitions," in **People and Plans: Essays on Urban Problems and Solutions** (New York: Basic Books, 1968), pp. 25-33, 34-5. For a summary of the critiques of Wirth, see Hannerz, **Exploring the City**, pp. 19-58. Since suburbs are as old as cities themselves, an historical perspective on the suburb is essential. Their variety in concept, design, and social composition offers a rich area for folkloristic study. See the special issue on suburbs of **Metropolis: The Architecture and Design Magazine of New York** (June 1983). Folklorists have begun to consider the suburb: see Simon Bronner, "Manner Books and Suburban Houses: The Structure of Tradition and Aesthetics," **Winterthur Porfolio** 18 (1983): 61-68.

25. Dell Hymes, "Folklore's Nature and the Sun's Myth," **JAF** 88 (1975): 346.

26. Wirth, **On Cities and Social Life**, p. 81.

27. **1980 Census of Population, General Population Characteristics, New York**. United States Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, 1981; New York City Planning Commission, **Plan for New York City: A Proposal**, vol. 4: Manhattan (New York: Department of City Planning, 1969).

28. Wirth, **On Cities and Social Life**, p. 76. See also Kevin Lynch, **The Image of the City** (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1960).

29. **New York Times**, 2/18/1983.

30. This discussion is inspired by Susan Stewart,

Miniatura: Narrative and the Objects of Desire (Philadelphia: unpublished manuscript, 1982).

31. Mumford, **The City in History**, p. 277.
32. Frank Brown, **Roman Architecture** (New York: George Braziller, 1971), pp. 9-10, cited by A.J. Plattus, "Emblems of the City: Civic Pageantry and the Rhetoric of Urbanism," **Artforum** (Sept 1981): 48-52.
33. W. Lloyd Warner, **The Living and the Dead: A Study of the Symbolic Life of Americans**, Yankee City Series, vol. 5 (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1959). See also Tamara Hareven, "The Search for Generational Memory: Tribal Rites in Industrial Society," **Daedalus** 107 (1978): 137-149. Where dissent is suppressed and authoritative readings of history are challenged, symbolic behavior becomes a powerful means of expressing unsanctioned views: newspaper reporting on Poland under martial law has been particularly sensitive to the symbolic behavior of crowds during public events. See for example, **New York Times** 6/17/1983. See also Christopher A.P. Binns, "The Changing Face of Power: Revolution and Accommodation in the Development of the Soviet Ceremonial System," Part I and II, **Man** (N.S.) 14 (1979): 585-606 and 15 (1980): 170-187. The Guardian Angels are an interesting example of the appropriating of the iconography of authority to do what the powers that be have failed to accomplish. See Curtis Sliwa and Murray Schwartz, **Street Smart: The Guardian Angel Guide to Safe Living** (Reading, Mass.: Addison-Wesley, 1982).
34. Undated press release.
35. Yi-Fu Tuan, **Space and Place: The Perspective of Experience** (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1977), p. 178. This paper is indebted to Yi-Fu Tuan, particularly to **Topophilia: A Study of Environmental Perception, Attitudes, and Values** (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1974).
36. Wirth, **On Cities and Social Life**, pp. 74-75.
37. Bonnie L. Becker, "Days of Auld Lang Syne: A Look at New Year's Eve in Times Square," Research paper for **The Aesthetics of Everyday Life**, Department of Performance Studies, New York University, 1983.
38. **New York Times**, 4/8/1983.

39. Personal communication, 3/24/1983. For an ethnography of the graffiti subculture, see Craig Castleman, **Getting Up: Subway Graffiti in New York** (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1982). I am grateful to Henry Chalfant, Martha Cooper, and Tony Silver for sharing their insights on this subject with me.
40. From the exhibition **The Blank Wall: The New Face of Downtown** by William H. Whyte, The Municipal Art Society, New York City, 1983. See also William H. Whyte, **The Social Life of Small Urban Spaces** (Washington, D.C.: The Conservation Foundation, 1980). For other examples of spacial articulations of value in public settings, see Jason Rubin, "Actors' Menu: Sardi's Restaurant"; Milton Epstein, "'Space or Place': Scenography of the South Ferry and St. George Ferry Terminals"; and Lisa Pagnato, "Win, Place, and Show: The Utilization of Space at the Race Track." Research papers for **The Aesthetics of Everyday Life**.
41. **New York Times**, 6/8/1983.
42. **New York Times**, 3/19/1983.
43. **New York Times**, 2/8/1983.
44. **New York Times**, 6/26/1983.
45. **New York Times**, 6/27/1983.
46. **New York Times**, 12/21/1982.
47. Herbert J. Gans, "Urban Vitality and the Fallacy of Physical Determinism," p. 29.
48. Oscar Newman, **Defensible Space: Crime Prevention through Urban Design** (New York: Collier Books, 1972), p. 79.
49. Elizabeth Cromley, "Modernizing: Or, 'You Never See a Screen Door on Affluent Homes,'" **Journal of American Culture** 5 (Summer 1982): 79.
50. Elaine Eff, "Behind Painted Screens," **Sun Magazine** (Baltimore) (9/26/1983): 30-38; Charles Camp, **Baltimore's Painted Screens**, exhibition catalog (Towsen, Md.: Towsen State University, 1982). An important theoretical contribution to the subject of remodelling is Michael Owen Jones, "L.A. Add-Ons and Re-Dos: Renovation in Folk Art and Architectural Design," **Perspectives on American Folk Art**, eds. Ian M.G. Quimby and Scott T. Swank (New York: W.W. Norton, 1980), pp. 325-363.

51. I am deeply indebted to Barbro Klein for introducing me to the **casitas**.
52. Personal communication, April 4, 1983.
53. After the 1870s, when the Bowery ceased to be the theatre district of New York, it gradually became a haven for the down-and-out, who numbered 14,000 in the area by 1949. The figure has declined significantly since then, although the image of the Bowery as Skid Row remains intact.
54. **New York Times**, 3/4/1983.
55. Annelise Orlich, "The Death-Defying Leap over the Paper-Bag Blindfolded: Eccentricity and Community in Brighton Beach," Research paper for **The Aesthetics of Everyday Life**.
56. John Perpener, "Striver's Row: An Aesthetic of Conservatism," Research paper for **The Aesthetics of Everyday Life**.
57. Bill Farrell, "Having a Ball with Sticks and Spaldeens," **Daily News**, 5/13/1979. See also Miska and Posen, **Tradition and Community...** Children's games are also seasonal and structure time in a different way: "Top-time's gone, kite-time's come, and April Fool's Day will soon be here" (Newell, **Games and Songs of American Children**, p. 176). Newell discusses the seasonal nature of children's play in detail, noting that "This succession, which children themselves could hardly explain beforehand, but remembered when the occasion came..." varies in different parts of the country and is only partly dependent on climate (p. 175).
58. Jane Schwartz, "Pigeon Flyers and the City Skies," unpublished paper. Schwartz has done the most intensive ethnographic exploration of pigeon flying in New York City and is currently writing a novel on the subject.
59. Sally Harrison and Tom Mikotowicz, "Performance Structures in Washington Square Park," **Performance Studies: A Newsletter of the Department of Performance Studies 1** (1982): 1-2. Harrison is writing her dissertation at New York University on Washington Square as a performance environment.
60. Letter from Chicago lawyer and street performer advocate Robert Wynbrandt, 4/30/1983; letter from the Boston police, 3/10/1980; see also "Cities, Be Street-Smart: Leave

Peddlers Be," **New York Times**, 6/25/1983 by Louis Raveson, a lawyer who represents street vendors in New York and New Jersey.

61. "The Fight Back: What **Race Today** had to Say," **The Road Make to Walk on Carnival Day: The Battle for the West Indian Carnival in Britain** (London: Race Today Publications, 1977), p. 9. I am grateful to Cheryl Byron for providing me with a copy of this magazine.

62. **New York Times**, 6/25/1983.

63. **New York Times**, 9/28/1982.

64. The following discussion is indebted to Eviatar Zerubavel, **Hidden Rhythms: Schedules and Calendars in Social Life** (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1981) and idem, "Easter and Passover: Calendars and Group Identity," **American Sociological Review** 47 (1982): 284-289.

65. **New York Times**, 4/24/1983. See also Jacques Le Goff, **Time, Work, and Culture in the Middle Ages**, trans. by Arthur Goldhammer (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1980).

66. Wayne Ashley, "Concepts of Territory in Dragon and Lion Dancing in Chinatown," Research paper for **The Aesthetics of Everyday Life**.

67. **New York Times**, 2/13/1983. See also David Ley and Roman Cybriwsky, "Urban Graffiti as Territorial Markers," **Annals of the Association of American Geographers** 64 (1974): 491-505.

68. June Goodwin, "Double Dutch, Double Dutch: All You Need is a Clothesline and Jet-Propelled Feet," **The Christian Science Monitor**, 10/7/1980.

69. June 11, 1983.

70. **New York Times**, 6/25/1983.

71. There are some expressive forms that seem specially designed for strangers. See Richard Baumann, "The Turtles: An American Riddling Institution," **Western Folklore** 29 (1970): 21-25, and Judy Levine, "Contra Dance in New York: Longways for as Many as Will," Research paper for **The Aesthetics of Everyday Life**.

72. I am indebted to Polly Spiegel for introducing me to this material. See Alan Dundes and Carl Pagter, **Work Hard and You Shall be Rewarded: Urban Folklore from the Paperwork Empire** (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1978).

73. The following discussion is inspired by the papers and discussion at the conference **Myth, Symbols and Folklore: Expanding the Analysis of Organizations**, March 10-12, 1983, University of California, Los Angeles. The conference was organized by Michael Owen Jones, David M. Boje, and Bruce S. Giuliano. See the bibliography prepared for the conference.

74. Donald F. Roy, "'Banana Time': Job Satisfaction and Informal Interaction," **Human Organization** 18 (1959-60): 158-168.

75. Cited by Roy, p. 160.

76. See especially Harrison M. Trice and Janice M. Beyer, "The Ceremonial Effect: Manifest Function of Latent Dysfunction in the Dynamic Organization?", Per-Olof Berg, "Rituals and Ceremonies as Symbolic Operations;" Joanne Martin, Martha Feldman, Mary Jo Hatch, and Sim Sitkin, "The Uniqueness Paradox in Organizational Stories," which were presented at the conference on **Myth, Symbols and Folklore**.

77. Hymes, "Folklore's Nature and the Sun's Myth," p. 353.

78. Donald M. Lowe, **History of Bourgeois Perception** (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1982), p. 40. Other suggestive statements about tradition include Edward Shils, **Tradition** (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1981); Karl R. Popper, "Towards a Rational Theory of Tradition," **Conjectures and Refutations: The Growth of Scientific Knowledge** (New York: Harper, 1963), pp. 120-135; J.G.A. Pocock, "Time, Institutions and Action: An Essay on Traditions and Their Understanding," in **Politics and Experience: Essays Presented to Professor Michael Oakeshott**, eds. Preston King and B.C. Parekh (Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press, 1968), pp. 209-237; Samuel Coleman, "Is There Reason in Tradition?" *ibid.*, pp. 239-282.

79. See Karl Mannheim, "The Problem of Generations," **Essays on the Sociology of Knowledge** (New York: Oxford University Press, 1952), pp. 276-320. See Barbara Kirshen-

blatt-Gimblett, "Manteo Sicilian Marionette Theatre," **New York Folklore Newsletter**, 3, 2 (1982): 1, 10; Tony DeNonno, **One Generation is not Enough** (New York: DeNonno Pix, Inc., 1979), a 23 minute color documentary film about the Frirsz family; idem, **It's One Family: "Knock on Wood"** (New York: DeNonno Pix, Inc., 1982), a 30 minute color documentary film about the Manteo family.

80. Richard Schechner, "Restoration of Behavior," **Studies in Visual Communication** 4 (summer 1981): 2-45.

81. Mark Slobin, "The Neo-Klezmer Movement and Euro-American Musical Revivalism," **JAF** 97 (1984): 98-104.

82. David Sternbach, "Private Moves in Public Places: Breaking and Electric Boogie," Research paper for **The Aesthetics of Everyday Life**.

83. Dwight McDonald, "A Theory of Mass Culture," in **Mass Culture: The Popular Arts in America**, eds. Bernard Rosenberg and David Manning White (New York: Free Press, 1957), p. 59.

84. Tamás Hofer, "Changes in the Style of Folk Art...", p. 157.

85. *Ibid.*, p. 157.

86. Herbert J. Gans, **Popular Culture and High Culture** (New York: Basic Books, 1974), pp. 74-75.

87. Yvonne Lockwood, "'Homers' and 'Government Jobs' in Autoworks: The Hidden Joys of Labor," Conference on **Myths, Symbols and Folklore**.

88. William Gradante, "Low and Slow, Mean and Clean," **Natural History** 91, 2 (1982): 28-39.

89. **New York Times**, 9/30/1982.

90. See Michael Schuyt, Joos Elffers, and George R. Collins, **Fantastic Architecture: Personal and Eccentric Visions** (New York: Harry N. Abrams, 1980); Tilman Osterwold, ed., **Szenen der Volkskunst** (Stuttgart: Württembergischer Kunstverein, 1981); Peter T. White, "The Fascinating World of Trash," **National Geographic** 163, 4 (1983): 424-451.

91. Joseph Sciorra, "Reweaving the Past: Vincenzo Ancona's Wire Figures," Research Paper for **The Aesthetics of**

Everyday Life; Miska and Posen, Tradition and Community in the Urban Neighborhood.

92. Lockwood, "'Homers' and 'Government Jobs'."
93. 4/28/1983.
94. **New York Times**, 6/27/1983.
95. Ibid.
97. Jean Baudrillard, **For a Critique of the Political Economy of the Sign**, trans. by Charles Levin (St. Louis, Missouri: Telos Press, 1981), p. 37.
98. On connoisseurship, taste, and aesthetics, see J. Barre Toelken, "A Matter of Taste: Folk Aesthetics," **The Dynamics of Folklore** (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1979), pp. 181-197; Michael Owen Jones, "The Concept of 'Aesthetic' in the Traditional Arts," **Western Folklore** 30 (1971): 77-104; idem, "The Concept of Taste and Traditional Arts in America," **Western Folklore** 31 (1972): 27-52; Susan Sontag, "Notes on 'Camp,'" **Against Interpretation** (New York: Dell, 1966), pp. 275-292; Jan Mukarovsky, **Aesthetic Function, Norm, and Value as Social Facts**, trans. by Mark E. Suino, Michigan Slavic Contributions No. 3 (Ann Arbor: Department of Slavic Languages and Literature, University of Michigan, 1979).
99. Lisa Birnbach, ed., **The Official Preppy Handbook** (New York: Workman Publishing, 1980).
100. Ellen Land-Webber, **The Passionate Collector** (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1980), p. 120.
101. Ibid., p. 124.
102. Stewart, **Miniatura**, p. 267. See also Walter Benjamin, "The Work of Art in an Age of Mechanical Reproduction," in **Illuminations**, ed. Hannah Arendt (New York: Schocken, 1969), pp. 217-251.
103. Baudrillard, **For a Critique of the Political Economy of the Sign**.
104. Susan Sontag, "On Style," **Against Interpretation**, p. 32.
105. Dick Hebdige, **Subculture: The Meaning of Style**

(London: Methuen, 1979), p.2. Baudrillard's comment on graffiti suggests a need for finer distinctions: "Graffiti is transgressive, not because it substitutes another content, another discourse, but simply because it responds, there, on the spot, and breaches the fundamental role of non-response enunciated by all the media. Does it oppose one code to another? I don't think so: it simply smashes the code. It doesn't lend itself to deciphering as a text rivalling commercial discourse: it presents itself as a transgression" (**For a Critique of the Political Economy of the Sign**, pp. 183-184). There is a wide variety of markings on the walls, and their status as signs is equally varied: sanctioned inscriptions such as "Post No Bills" or "No Dumping Here"; subversive drawings and writings on advertisements in the subway and on billboards -- see Jill Posener, **Spray it Loud** (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1982); personal statements of love; lists of "pals"; tags and territorial markers of gang members -- see Gusmano Cesaretti, **Street Writer: A Guided Tour of Chicano Graffiti** (Los Angeles: Acrobat Books, 1975); advertisement or announcements of marches, demonstrations, and performances; new wave graffiti; and many other forms.

106. Umberto Eco, "Towards a Semiotic Enquiry into the Television Message," W.P.C.S. 3, University of Birmingham (1972), cited by Hebdige, p. 105.

107. Hebdige, **Subculture**.

108. Gans, **Popular Culture and High Culture**, p. 128. The opposite case could be made, namely the need for educating "higher taste cultures" to appreciate the artistic achievement of "lower taste cultures"; see Robert Palmer, "B.B. King Hometown Proves Music Dissolves all Barriers," **New York Times**, 6/15/83. Gans statement might be considered in light of Baudrillard's comment: "Beautiful, stylized, modern objects are subtly created (despite all reversed good faith) in order not to be understood by the majority -- at least not straight away. Their social function is first to be distinctive signs, to be objects which will distinguish those who distinguish them. Others will not even see them" (**For a Critique of the Political Economy of the Sign**, p. 48). For a detailed exploration of how this process works, see Abner Cohen, **The Politics of Elite Culture: Explorations in the Dramaturgy of Power in a Modern African Society** (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1981).

109. Folkloristic studies have shown repeatedly that

formal education and economic resources are not prerequisites for articulateness. See Castleman, **Getting Up...**; Edit deAk, "Train as Book," **Artforum** (May 1983): 88-93; Michael Owen Jones, **The Hand Made Object and its Maker** (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1975); John Vlach, **Charleston Blacksmith: The Work of Philip Simmons** (Athens, Georgia: University of Georgia Press, 1981); Abrahams, **Deep Down in the Jungle**; to cite but three examples. See the bibliography in Toelken, **The Dynamics of Folklore**, pp. 195-197.

110. Hymes, "Folklore's Nature and Sun's Myth," p. 346.

111. This paper emerged out of observations and dialogue over the last five years, especially in the context of the New York City Chapter of the New York Folklore Society. Several colleagues are acknowledged elsewhere in this paper; I would like to take this opportunity to thank John Attinasi, Robert Baron, Faye Ginsberg, Nancy Groce, Flora Kaplan, Julia Lebentritt, Owen Lynch, Morton Marks, Roger Sanjek, and Lynn Tiefenbacher. While teaching **The Aesthetics of Everyday Life** during the spring of 1983 at New York University, I benefitted from the dialogue and research generated by the course. Several individuals are cited above; many others contributed to formulations in this paper. I would especially like to thank Linda Lehrhaupt, Jack Tchen, Arthur Tobier, and Suzanne Wasserman. Research papers and journals kept during the course have been deposited in the Performance Documentation Archives, Department of Performance Studies, New York University. Meriam Lobel and Julie Malnig scouted out information about scheduled events in the city and assisted me with the library research. I am grateful to Michael Bell, Charles Bergengren, Karen Creuzinger, and Sunie Davis for sharing their work in progress with me. Maxwell Gimblett, Barbara Myerhoff, and John Szwed have stimulated my thinking with their insights into the city and the life that goes on within it.