



Chaos Creation and Crowd Control: Models of Riot Regulation, 1700 to 2005

E. Joanna Guldi

Does policing public space aid peacekeeping or disrupt local patterns of government? The author surveys a variety of historical approaches to regulating public space, focusing on the controversy in nineteenth century Britain over riot control. The Tory view of landscape asserted that a less interventionist pattern of surveillance is more likely to quickly diffuse cultural tensions. Various modern analogues for policing and surveillance are explored, including embassy architecture in the post-9/11 world.

As the invasion of Iraq was being plotted, the *New York Times* remarked on a Pentagon screening of Gillo Pontecorvo's 1966 film *The Battle of Algiers*. Pentagon officials interpreted the film using what political historians like G. Kitson Clark and John Vincent refer to as the "official mind": an institutional set of tools and prejudices for defining and approaching a problem. In the last three decades, America's official mind has formed a discernible response to the problem of terrorism. A gathering of elite American army officers for such a screening signaled the existence of certain shared assumptions: the army knew that the conflict it faced would take place in cities; that the opposition would be governed by small networks; and that the approach must be to establish democracy and avoid tyranny. Following from these priorities, intelligence agents gathered information about Middle Eastern cities and looked for the appropriate technology to deploy. What assumptions about cities, peaceful society, and military strength influenced decisions regarding the kind of force the American army would eventually apply?

In the mid 1980s, the organs of American military intelligence perceived a sea change in the nature of threats facing the nation. No longer simply fighting a cold war between evident superpowers, strategists saw the U.S. as vulnerable to terrorist attacks by organizationally obscure assailants hidden in the labyrinthine cities of the Third World. The Rand Corporation published reports on centers of violence, terrorist networks, and urban warfare. Army strategists even contemplated lessons learned about street fighting in the LA riots. These and other early reports codified a number of suppositions about imminent conflicts. Perhaps foremost among these suppositions was the centrality of urban warfare in the major struggles to come.

As America's predecessor in the role of global hegemon, Great Britain dealt with colonial peacekeeping only after attaining stability and equanimity at home. Between 1688 and 1832, Great Britain moved from a traditional society of face-to-face relationships and local obligations to a modern society of new, formalized institutions. During this time, the government faced active domestic unrest in the form of the Jacobite Rebellion, the Gordon Riots, the Jacobins guillotine, and the threat of Napoleonic invasion. Like ours, British society was torn between an inherited ideal of public openness and an authoritarian willingness to censor dissent. Elites read Gibbon's *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire* and wondered whether Great Britain might follow Rome. British military and political leadership together sought an avenue between despotism, which prompted revolution from below, and lassitude, which threatened overthrow from without.

During the transition to modern forms of government, the British gentry debated how best to reestablish order. Would fencing the public out of public spaces make rebels more or less violent? Was surgical removal of the most hostile elements the best way of establishing order? Or should the riot be met where it stood? Or was the best path to seed native militias capable of protecting their own turf?

Around 1768, public violence took an unprecedented form in England, and its causes and organization resembled the destabilizing shifts of experience that many parts of the world are undergoing today with the globalization of advanced capitalism. Like the

world today, England suffered social upheaval rooted in the transition from a localized, familiar, small-town barter economy with limited trade to a large-scale, industrial economy. Similar to the present-day clash of civilizations described by Samuel Huntington, Britain underwent an era of violent outbreaks unparalleled in scale and coordination, which directly resulted from a misfit between government culture and the culture of the governed. Britain, however, learned what to do.

The lessons learned in Britain become relevant to America today as we build walls at home and abroad, as police handle riots in major American cities, and as tanks patrol the streets of Baghdad. The problem is that few lessons are as straightforward as wall-building and trench-digging: erecting barriers in cities is a matter of propaganda as well as military strategy. Walls symbolize exclusion, delineate the safe from the chaotic, the privileged and protected from the anarchic and hopeless. In *The Battle of Algiers*, a sanitary cordon and curfew temporarily stemmed riot only to provoke a more intense period of suicide bombings. British magistrates similarly noticed that the suppression of riots might later trigger worse outbreaks of violence. In the French example, the official mind never changed and so lost its colony; in the British example, the official mind responded to urban violence with a complex understanding of culture, urbanism, and the use of force. When political leaders are able to appreciate the changing aims, means and organizational structures of unrest, their application of force changes appropriately. This essay

will highlight the spatial and urban dynamics of peacekeeping, riot, and political symbolism.

Riot and Civil Society in Modernizing Britain

The larger question of public space is always one of access, where the spatial stands in for the political. In Great Britain, access to the public commons—a means of livelihood as well as a visibly public space—became endangered during the country’s transition to a modern nation. Before the democratic traditions of compromise and settlement were institutionalized, riots served the purpose of expressing popular grievances. As political circumstances changed, so too did the motivation behind riots; they came to be used to redress different forms of exclusion. Rioting was effectively the only appreciable form of democratic representation—the only possible public and visual presentation of the human body before other human bodies.

New exclusionary measures primarily included enclosure in the countryside and the ensuing displacement from the countryside to the city. These measures decreased most persons’ access to the traditional securities of an agrarian economy. Enclosure meant not only the exclusion of the poor from familiar neighborhoods and communities, but also their exclusion from once secure sources of income. Enclosure was fundamentally unsettling to traditional local relationships of place (Hay and Rogers 1997).

If enclosure in landscape caused practical hardships for the families it affected, alienation from the land came to sharply reflect the political exclusions implicit

in the civic settlement of the Glorious Revolution in 1688. At the same time, political philosophers construed landed property as a primary ground of democracy. In a tradition going back to Hobbes, the Englishman’s enclosure of his home formed the primitive and essential act of self-preservation that made democracy possible. Just as everyone had to consume space to survive, every land owner would defend the use of space against anarchy.

Changes in language reflected the reality of spatial exclusion. The English word “property” had gained a second meaning by 1760. “Property” can slip between “private property,” material wealth in any form attributable to one individual, and “real property,” that is, real estate. When the term “property” was first applied to real estate between 1710 and 1760, the linguistic shift marked the development of two ways of looking at land. On one hand were those with access to land, who saw property as the basis of their government. These landowners cultivated a sentimental attachment to place, whose social networks were generated through the use of informal public places. On the other hand were those recently dispossessed of their land. These peasants, who had often moved from place to place, and whose income afforded them none of the delights of the urban center, now saw land as but another kind of property whose benefits they were unfairly denied.

As land made its way into the domain of exchange, it entered the class of things that traditional riots were used to protest against. It, like other commodi-

ties, became a target of rioting. For instance, rioters would stop a miller on his way to sell much-needed local grain at a better market. Such collective protests against unfair use of property were generally countenanced by the local gentry and looked upon as a fair expression of popular politics. Exclusion from land was an increasingly evident threat, and it plainly meant exclusion from the circulation of capital and from political representation: the stakes had been drawn, and space—in the form of “real property”—had been defined as a crucial point of access to political representation.

New measures of enclosure, as well as proto-industrial urbanization, signaled a shift in provincial English towns from a monocentric to a multicentric structure. Among other things, multicentricity meant that the rich and the poor were increasingly isolated from each other. This new spatial arrangement changed the stakes of rioting. Unlike the monocentric town, where a riot could easily claim victory after occupying the town hall, the multicentric town could not be straightforwardly seized. To use John Bohstedt’s phrase, traditional riots depended on the “symbolic possession” of the city, and what possession meant was no longer the same when the town sprawled across a half dozen squares and neighborhoods (Bohstedt 1983). The difficulty of identifying a public target recognized by all classes may have spurred the shift toward targeting private property. The new culture of public entertainments and allegiances meant that a single individual might belong to a dozen clubs, participate in a dozen enter-

tainment venues, and frequent a wide variety of religious and political associations (Brewer 1997; Plumb 1973; Plumb 1980). To associate the origin of a social wrong with a visual icon or spatial center in the city was now impossible.

Older forms of rioting also lost effectiveness with the changing shape of English social geography. Even as the poor were displaced, other segments of English society continued to seek out relationships based on informal interactions in a place. Coffeehouses and other urban institutions drew together the burgeoning ‘middling sort’—persons rising on the tide of capital and trade (Borsay 1989). While place-centered relationships were disappearing for the agricultural poor, they were flourishing for the middling sort, helping to define what would emerge in the early nineteenth century as the middle class.

The change in the urban landscape made necessary a changed practice of rioting. From the 1760s, riots began to exhibit a new level of violence and geographical breadth. The shift came in two stages: first, an attack on property rather than people, and second, an attack on private property rather than public property.

As it existed until mid-century, a traditional riot was expected to be nonviolent because it was sanctioned by custom (Shoemaker 1987). Riots became accepted at the end of the seventeenth century as a legitimate way of enforcing social propriety where other institutions had lapsed. Along with citizens’ arrest and the posse comitatus, or temporary militia, the riot was

seen as a legitimate extension of government, during which common people were transformed into agents of the law. Thus “riots were expected to be nonviolent and not threaten to undermine the rule of law” (Shoemaker 1987: 27). However, once a law was in place giving authority to the constable for acts formerly under the mandate of riots, it became the responsibility of the law to suppress the riots rather than to stand aside and let them run their course. Riots then acted as a form of consensus: violence within certain bounds to reaffirm access to public space.

Riots of the seventeenth century typically attacked a single individual or household for some action seen as corrupt or dangerous to the community. These dunkings, charivaris, and “rough music” on occasion turned deadly.¹ The riot might have targeted the particular politician involved, but in targeting a public figure, the crowd risked alienating its middle-class sympathizers. Roger Wells describes the change as “the transformation of the rural incendiary tradition from a mode of exacting private vengeance to expressing public protest” (Wells 1991: 214). The rioters could have besieged and even have torn down the village’s town hall. The riot might have targeted a public place: crimping houses, the Bristol Bridge and Blackfriars Bridge were all foci of riots. By the 1790s, destruction of public property took on a more important role in protesting the faults of local government (Harrison 1988). The public landmark stood in for an abstract complaint—a financial relationship, an

unfair tax, or a corrupt government—rather than the deeds of an individual.

In 1768, the form of riots distinctly shifted. Rioters in British cities began attacking the private body as well as the private residence. According to George Rudé, by 1768 the practice of house-breaking by renters against householders had become a common feature of urban riots (Rudé 1959). The shift to targets of private property rather than public property or private persons is extremely clear in the case of religious riots. The anti-Catholic, anti-Dissent and anti-foreign riots of 1680-1740 targeted houses of worship (Stevenson 1992). The early anti-Methodist riots of 1743-46 focused on dragging ministers from the pulpit. But in 1780, the anti-Catholic Gordon rioters besieged the houses of patrician Catholics. During the Gordon Riots, raids on rich Catholics and their churches were coupled with raids on public places and raids on the Inns of Court to seek out the parliamentary supporters of the Relief Act (Rogers 1988). Dissenter chemist Joseph Priestley’s personal house and belongings were attacked in 1791 (Sheps 1989). Both classes of riot were sparked by differences in religious ideology and not, principally, by differences in wealth, but only the later ones ended in attacks on private property.

On the other hand, the difference between the two kinds of riots was governed by geography. Attacks on public property seemed to be more typical of the provinces, while attacks on private property appeared more in the cities (Harrison 1988). It is therefore plausible to relate the riot against private property to

a set of conditions specific to the city. As in the provinces, urban space could have signified an abstract concept like “corruption” or “greed.” But in the city, rioting emphasized the difference between those settled in a place and those displaced from property, as seen in instances of renters attacking householders (Shoemaker 1987). Attacks on private property suggested a spatialized antagonism between different groups. The house-breaking riots suggested violence not so much to gain symbolic possession of the town, as much as to symbolically challenge the possession of private land.

The shift to house-breaking signified a disjuncture between two very different conceptions of property, which corresponded to two antagonistic segments of the population. For the rioters, public space remained a symbolic territory to be claimed by the politically active. Private space was an extension of its owner, a commodity to be punished in the course of riot. For the middle class, however, private space was a sacred territory outside the limits of politics. In the early eighteenth century, the middle class had seen public space as fair game for political seizure. But the clash over private space would change their views about public space as well.

Ideologies of Community, Ideologies of Spatial Control

The new riots were terrifying. Pamphlets prophesied the invasion of London and the destruction of Parliament at the hands of frenzied crowds. The middle class began to react, in its travel habits, its view of the

mob, and its general intolerance for traditional riot.² Policing of London escalated in the 1790’s. A patrol was placed at the head of the New River to watch for its contamination. Volunteer sentries were positioned at several points to quarantine the aristocratic West End from outside violence (Wells 1991). For a year after the Gordon riots, the army was garrisoned in Hyde Park. In 1796 the king bullet-proofed his coach.

The shape of public space changed, as well. The West End squares were fenced-in by householders concerned about safety. Bristol fenced in its commons and would soon start charging an entry fee, to keep out the rabble. Regent Street offered a cordon to keep rioting Easterners away from the West. These changes marked a fundamentally new concern with property ownership, threatened invasion, and secure seclusion.

Although the new riots were more intimidating than their antecedents, violence had, in reality, become less common over the course of the century (Tilly 1993). Theories attempting to explain the decrease in value tend to emphasize the group discipline instilled by life in the army or factory, and a rising awareness of the need to be perceived as rational in order to engage effectively in politics (Charlesworth 1994; Bohstedt and Williams 1988).³ Better-organized riots were necessary to make a political statement of any weight in the late eighteenth century, and better-organized riots were more frightening and more destructive to private property—but they were less violent to other humans.

We reach an ironic slip here: although the riots were less violent, middle-class fear was so heightened that reconciliation between the rioters and the middle class was almost impossible. By the time the level of violence fell, the middle class had become so alienated that it only policed and repressed radicals harder. Protest was met with repression, which inflamed further protest. This cycle led inexorably towards an escalation of violence. The possibility for reconciliation was lost until the dispossessed eventually gained enough leverage to bully their way into politics.

Under English law, the private home was protected against trespassing and surveillance, and things said in the home between man and wife could not be compelled as testimony in court (Curry 1997). Transactions treating land as an investment like any other kind of property became more prevalent; the riot targeted private land as well as public land. These riots against private houses effectively pitted middling opinion against the rioters.⁴ Yet the destruction of private property was a major factor in the alienation of middle-class sympathy from the rioters during the Gordon Riots. George Gordon told the rioters when he attempted to intercept their progress that there was no fault in their tearing down Catholic churches, but that they ought not have “touched private property” (Rogers 1998: 163). The wanton destruction of private property during the Gordon Riots inspired a middle class otherwise well-disposed to reform to think better of it. Riots against private

property were the least condoned and the most likely to be put down by the army.

As we have seen above, traditional riots were peaceful when expected to be. Consensus broke over the property issue. Riots against private property happened when society divided into two groups that had fundamentally different relationships with housing, land, and the landscape. When society divided consensus collapsed, and in the absence of consensus inbuilt limits to violence were eliminated.

Gordon’s quote illustrates the middle-class perception that the act of rioting had slid into a category outside of public consensus. Meanwhile, the linguistic shift and the frequency of house-breaking imply a major alienation of the poor from a concept of the house as something sacred, i.e., something outside the normal realm of property.

The shape of the riot changed with shifting political access and exclusions from public space. In the commercialized, diverse, multicentric town, only attacks on property were effectively statements of political presence.

Gradually the official mind came to incorporate a faction of Tory traditionalists interested in the preservation of order through the maintenance of local relationships. In the nineteenth century, the ‘Tory view of landscape’ would limit the use of military aggression in putting down riots. In 1842, the Rebecca Rioters of rural south Wales challenged the local turnpike authority by burning down tollhouses and breaking toll bars. Colonel James Frederick Love,

commander of the south Wales military district, ordered his troops to charge the rioters, but the Royal Commission for Inquiry sympathized with the rioters rather than the local authorities, and asked for the resignation of William Day, the Welsh poor-law commissioner in charge.

Riot and the British Built Environment

The political ideology of traditional moral economy had been virtually unchallenged since the 1680s. But the 1790s brought the threat of terror, which by coincidence seemed to substantiate all of Edmund Burke's dreary predictions about what would happen if property were not defended (Dinwiddy 1991). The violent suppression of riots was asserted as the only possible defense of property. Looking forward, the importance of property as the basis of rights was firmly established by the next generation of political philosophers. Property rights was a major contribution of Paley's generation of conservatives, and a most convincing reason for eschewing the Jacobin threat to readers convinced by Adam Smith of the importance of free circulation. Lord Melbourne, the new Home Secretary, retorted in response to the Swing Riots that "the whole duty of government is to prevent crime and to preserve contracts" (Philips and Storch 1999: 71).

The early ideology of the "Tory View" has been masterfully traced by Nigel Everett (1994). But by the 1790s, growing fear of Jacobin anarchism compounded the general panic to such an extent that the public right to space reached plummeted to its nadir

in British history. In 1795, the right to public meetings was revoked. Even private speech in debating societies came under fire (Epstein 2003).

The connection between the early eighteenth century "Tory View" of intellectuals and the later return to clemency for rioters was pieced together by examining the reaction of one contemporary, Uvedale Price. In 1793, he wrote about the political alliances most likely to resist an imminent French invasion.

Price preached in favor of visual intelligence. He argued for a visual awareness of how land could be defended. A good landlord, he said, had such a fine-tuned eye that he could tell where sheep had been foraging and what trails animals had followed. Just as the Tory landlord could understand where the sheep had been, the ruler needed to understand that members of the working class would only defend their property so long as the landscape convinced them that they had an effective interest in it.

Price epitomized the old Tory appreciation of traditional relationships between gentry and peasants, generally understood by social historians as the "Country Ideology." The squire was supposed to train himself to watch where his sheep had been grazing, and to maintain responsibility for the peasants under his care. The elite were a foregone conclusion to Price: he preached no utopian vision, no major challenge to tradition or capital. But he imagined an elite bounded by their acknowledgement of those who lived nearby, and denied the fantasy of sweeping away villages in the name of improvement. He

preached the joys of visual knowledge and casual interaction. He argued for intelligence about the landscape and for a politics that preserved the landscape as a territory shared by rich and poor. Was it possible that landscape could actually make a society politically intelligent?

Price's idea of a visually aware land stewardship of shared space was not realized. But if riots caused a reconsideration of private and public space throughout London, this reconsideration was preceded by an even clearer form of retreat by the elite. As discussed earlier, fences and troops demonstrated the West End's paranoia even as riot violence declined.

The evidence of architectural retreat increased in the last decades of the eighteenth century, as polite buildings indicated a hostility to unregulated public interaction. In London, the same development occurred in the formation of exclusive enclaves around Pall Mall. After 1755, a handful of conservative coffeehouses began moving away from the financial center of the East toward the residential district around the Palace of St. James'. The architecture of the club was decisively established in the period after 1780 as a repressive indoor agora for those who wanted to retreat from the street (Arnold 2000; Watkin 1982). As if in affront to the public places without, the clubs offered a virtual public within. The clubs established a rhetoric of sight that would hold the British imagination: ground-story bow windows let the members survey Pall Mall as if from an opera box; a grand stair displayed members to

each other as they entered a great, open hall (Bolton 1913; Ramsey 1913, 1921; Rendell 1999).

Habermas (1989) reminded us that the new commons constructed of money placed demands for entry such that it widened the gap between those allowed to participate and those not. We see here that this was equally true of the spaces. Eighteenth century civil society, as epitomized by the coffeehouse, was a model of how governing institutions could exclude those they governed. But the coffeehouse model sowed the seeds of its own destruction. The coffeehouse's public sphere was only open to those able to live up to the requirements put in place by the market. London at the end of the coffeehouse era was a warren of enclaves inaccessible to most. The public space they left behind was policed. The city that had begun as the epitome of enlightened interaction had been persuaded by riot to retreat. The elite retreated to their city; the middle class to theirs. The coffeehouse had theoretically promised informal interaction between the classes, but that now was impossible.

To summarize what was said about the changing shape of the city after these riots, when local consensus about the riot's legitimacy ended, there was division in terms of the classes' ideas about land. When the working class was formed as such, one part of its identity became its comparative placelessness, comparative mobility, and comparative exclusion—all to a much greater degree than before—in a monocentric world where frequency of encounters characterized interactions between rich and poor. Meanwhile, the

rich withdrew into enclaves where they would not see the poor, recreating freedom of movement and the variety of a wider social mixture through the artificial devices of consumption and masquerade. The social division begat spatial division.

Between the two halves were contested public places: streets, commons, and parks. In the cases of Bristol and London, parks were claimed as the preserve of the rich, policed by military forces, fenced and guarded. Streets, the ways of capital and exchange itself, could not be technically enclosed. They became a domain of symbolic violence, which was apparent in the nineteenth century pedestrian's ever more guarded and anonymous means of getting across the city: hidden behind hats, umbrellas, arcades, coaches, and a new set of manners that kept the eyes to the ground.

American Feudalism and the Alternatives

This spatial manifestation of social division has continued into the current time. Those who lost homes after the movements of capital were those most likely to become terrorists, and they were quick to lose public sympathy (Harmon 2000). The ruling classes barricaded themselves in geographically specific locations (Blakely and Snyder 1997). Such lessons at least teach us to see local *posse comitatus*, as well as terrorists, in their own light, to propose an escape from the racing loop rather than its repetition, and to contemplate what it would be like to intervene on behalf of capital or human rights while emphasizing place and local authority. To redevelop neighbor-

hoods instead of wrecking them with housing projects, we might lay plans for the reenfranchisement of the global oppressed, whether through education or the market. This argument leads us back to the contemporary call of so many architecture critics: give us more public space. Instead, I will recall Price and use this problem to open up another, more practical question: how does architecture encourage or deter a community from interaction?

Cities are currently experiencing a shift analogous to that seen in early nineteenth century Britain. In the last ten years, violence abroad has caused a massive redesign of America's embassies. Embassies now nestle like feudal villages within 100-foot setbacks and twelve-foot blast-proof walls. A single entrance helps personnel screen visitors. Car parks, residential areas, and offices are carefully segregated. In Jordan and elsewhere, new embassies have been moved to the borders of the city, where they will be less susceptible to assault. The pattern was established under the 1986 security requirements mandated by the State Department's Foreign Buildings Operations division (Nesmith 1990). After 9/11, standards for embassy design abroad were the prototype to which those trying to design secure buildings at home turned. But architects are now crying out that each successive year brings worse design, as windows are narrowed and communication curtailed. The architectural standard of America abroad is now the domain of the bunker (McKee 2003; Isenstadt 2005). What does this augur for architectural standards at home?

The architectural community has spoken with a solid voice against the “city as bunker” (Ivy 2002; Vidler 2002; Nason 2000; Hart 2002). But two major strategies have characterized post-terrorist urban design. Israeli architecture has established a pattern of setbacks, blast-proof engineering, and built-in checkpoints with accommodation for long lines. Energy absorbing building materials, masonry reinforced with steel, and single-entrance buildings are now prevalent in Jerusalem and Haifa, and increasingly they appear in the United States (Horwitz-Bennett 2003).

Britain effectively killed the market for urban setbacks and blast-proof engineering with a federal injection to private terrorism insurance under the Acts of Terrorism Bill of 1993 (Evans 1993). Instead, British and Canadian architects called for creative design to improve safety, while not substantively changing the way people moved in buildings. They recommended design for safer escape from skyscrapers, the elimination of stairwells that served as smoke chimneys, and design tactics that would force building occupants to use stairs instead of the elevator (Sandori 1993). British architects speculated about insurance rates killing the skyscraper (Pawley 2002). British planners studied Manchester’s recovery and made recommendations for municipal building codes that would enable swift rebuilding for the recovery of urban community in the event of a terrorist attack (Kitchen 2001). In Britain, the major question for secure designs remains: is a city center worth having if people do not feel safe and happy there?

America has largely followed Israel, with some concessions to the British idea of perceived safety. The result is invisibly paranoid architecture designed to promote calm. Jersey barriers disguised as flowerpots, twenty-first century moats, more policing, more scrutiny and ever more separation of the landscape (Hart 2002). Yet these concessions are mere Band-Aids over the gaping hole left in American architecture as it abandons its ideas of openness. American architects cry out against bunkers, but happily limit the number of entrances when told to do so. They have yet to respond to the rich creative response of Britain, and they seem incapable of thinking about a defensive architecture that would make its inhabitants more aware of potentially threatening changes in their immediate surroundings.

Consider the shift in aesthetics implied by the single entrance checkpoint. The Western exemplar of the building accessible from all directions was the Greek temple, whose peripheral screen of columns seemed to invite continuity with the landscape from every direction, as if a spatial reflection of Athenian concept of democracy. Nineteenth century Britain and America opened up buildings by applying the ideal of Greek accessibility to institutional forms. In so doing, the single-entrance building vanished, and in its place were university and state buildings with a variety of entrances. The Beaux Arts ideal body was one that passed freely through walls, disciplines, and departments, moving through the city inside and outside, looking at the same vista from a dozen points of view. It inherited an aesthetic and an idea

of landscape intelligence from the same school of the Picturesque characterized by Uvedale Price. Through modern architecture, the aesthetic of the multiple-sided entrance invited car owners to use the entire circumference of a building as a point of access, promising democratic access from all sides. Modernist screens of columns diffused a single entrance into the illusion of a wide, welcoming arm.

The reversal of such an aesthetic threatens to accidentally do away with the ambience of welcome that buildings once had. Courthouses once accessible from four sides now greet confused visitors with angry signs pointing them to the long queue at the other end. Whatever the good intentions of the security line, the building now announces its hostility to all who approach. The building tricks them, lies to them about how they should approach, and then marshals them to move anonymously in a single direction along with a mass of strangers, venerating the entrance with their bodies and eyes.

In telling the story of London's shift to a city built for less rather than more information, another possible story has been shunted. Gentry in the countryside realized they had lost the ability to reconcile the crowd to their own aims. They objected to the idea that better policing and better identification of potential threats were better strategies than seeking a resolution with the lower classes (Philips and Storch 1999).⁵ Cobbett and the rest of the radicals would also take sympathy with the lower classes and lobby for their universal rights, to the tune pursued to this

day by embattled liberals fighting for acknowledgement.

Yet the Tories recognized the fundamental disjuncture between people and land as a major problem. Those who live as neighbors should band together in recognition of the fundamental commonality of lot. Rich or poor, they are equally susceptible to anarchy and invasion. Recognition of this should make the rich amenable to riot and the poor amenable to petitioning the government. Ideally, Price's vision is one of dialogue, glued together by place.

In 1793, the only perspective able to forge a common ground on which classes could unite emphasized place and displacement. In one of history's ironies, it did so in an outmoded form. Poor old Uvedale Price would be relegated to the realm of cultural history as one of the founders of the Picturesque movement in garden design, only to be dismissed as a hopeless aesthete even within the tiny bastion of Landscape History. Yet over the next century, writers fascinated with the sharing of particular places would flourish amidst the very cities plagued with adversarial space. Cobbett, Hone and Dickens would take such thick description of place as a means of wooing readers back to an interest in their fellow men, encountered as equals on public thoroughfares and highways.⁶ This underground of nineteenth century Situationism typifies a fierce movement in early romantic literature, but its speculation about the built environment is rarely encountered by students of urban history. Still less are any of these conversations

noticed by those restructuring access to official buildings abroad.

To talk about the eighteenth and nineteenth century politics of place is to talk about one of the subterranean passages in history, about a country ideology that technically failed and disappeared, and to take up an antiquarian curiosity in examining the nineteenth century roots of Situationism. But now, when the academy's most livid critics of globalization are geographers like Mike Davis and David Harvey, and when the critique of place again damns our rash actions and offers a clearer explanation of why we find ourselves in increasing cycles of violence, now seems to be a time to return to these dark side-shows of history and to ask what alternatives they saw to the high road we took.

Notes

¹ Charivaris (in west England they were known as "skimmingtons") were extralegal public shaming rituals designed to punish behavior that was outside existing social mores. Often this unacceptable behavior involved women who did not conform to society's expectations of female passivity and docility. During charivaris "rough music" was played outside the offender's home—rough because it was created not with instruments, but through banging household objects (i.e. pots and pans) against one another.

² Roger Wells gives a few examples of evidence of everyday fear on the streets. In 1799, a clergyman goes about London incognito to not be insulted.

Aristocratic diarists record a feeling of being "nervous" in 1800 (Wells 1991: 206-207). Ronald Paulson has argued that satire in the 1790s shows a shift to a more disparaging view of the crowd than the lightly humorous pictures of Hogarth's generation (Paulson 1972: 25-30). The middle class in Birmingham reacted as forcefully against Priestley as the same demographic had reacted in Wilkes' support twenty years before—this time scared by the violence of the Gordon Riots and the lurking threat imagined in the Jacobins (Sheps 1989: 46-64). Those in power protected themselves against everyday violence in the escalation of riots in London of the 1790s. The king's coach was flanked with an immense guard and bullet-proofed in 1796. Pitt began to go incognito everywhere in the provinces, and even in London riot erupted wherever he was seen. At the same time, distrust of the badly disciplined urban infantry developed, possibly in response to the fear of an armed urban poor (Wells 1991: 206, 208, 210).

³ In Tilly's argument, changing use of space comes out of a period of "negotiation." As the object of riots shifted from the local magistrate or miller to the national Parliament or class of employers at large, rioters begin to find new ways of operating so as to act more efficiently. This means less street theater, perceived as chaotic tumult, and more targeting of specific issues. The political construction of coherence corresponds to a structural building of coherence. Street theater gives way to lobbying. Harrison offers a similar argument, suggesting that

the shape of the crowd had largely to do with its intention, not so much with its composition (polite/not) or with a historical era. To evidence this he offers the parades that often ushered in political candidates. Tilly himself admits that his argument, if too simplified, may boil down to “modernization theory.” Thus in his 1993 redaction of his work in the 1970s, Tilly leaves open the possibility that the new “repertoire” is not forcibly “better” than the older version, but is simply characterized by a kind of coherence appealing to the middle-class target. In fact, the later version may be less responsive to local issues (Tilly 1993: 269, 276).

⁴ Reversing an earlier trend. Religious faction within London and Birmingham united the rioters with their middling-sort sympathizers against minority religious groups.

⁵ Among the gentry a general reluctance to police the rioters by any centralized authority lasted through the early nineteenth century unto the threshold of Peel’s Police Act of 1848. Even Paley, a reasonably conservative advocate of property, was convinced that civil liberty could not survive a state run police, as he wrote in 1785. In part this was always about fear of losing gentry’s authority to a centralized government. In the provinces, resistance to a centralized police lasted through the 1820s, amid major fears about the dissolution of local relationships between the gentry and the people (Philips and Storch 1999: 59ff).

⁶ In 1826, the radical satirist William Hone published his *Everyday Book*, a project meant to encompass all

useful information, to be posted to him by anyone interested and anthologized in a great compendium of experience. Hazlitt’s *Table Talk* essays followed, exhorting the reader to travel and take in experience on his own. William Cobbett’s *Rural Rides* similarly complained of the evil that the linear highway had done, making merchants and politicians accustomed to traveling quickly over a smooth road rather than interacting with the great variety of farmers whom they passed on their journey, and by consequence, developing a great sensitivity to the variety of living conditions in their nation. (Hone 1826; Hazlitt 1821-22; Cobbett 1830).

References

- Arnold, Dana. 2000. *Re-Presenting the Metropolis: Architecture, Urban Experience, and Social Life in London, 1800-1840*. Aldershot, England: Ashgate.
- Blakely, Edward James, and Mary Gail Snyder. 1997. *Fortress America: Gated Communities in the United States*. Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institution Press.
- Bohstedt, John. 1983. *Riots and Community Politics in England and Wales, 1790-1810*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.
- Bohstedt, John and Dale E. Williams. 1988. The Diffusion of Riots: The Patterns of 1766, 1795, and 1801 in Devonshire. *Journal of Interdisciplinary History* XIX(1): 1-24.
- Bolton, Arthur Thomas. 1913. The Older Club-Houses of London. *Country Life* 33: 13-18.

- Borsay, Peter. 1989. *The English Urban Renaissance: Culture and Society in the Provincial Town, 1660-1770*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Brewer, John. 1997. *The Pleasures of the Imagination: English Culture in the Eighteenth Century*. New York: Farrar Straus Giroux.
- Charlesworth, Andrew. 1994. The Spatial Diffusion of Riots: Popular Disturbances in England and Wales, 1750-1850. *Rural History* 5 (1): 1-22.
- Cobbett, William. 1830. *Rural Rides*. London: W. Cobbett.
- Curry, Michael R. 1997. The Digital Individual and the Private Realm. *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 87 (4): 681-699.
- Dinwiddy, Joan. 1991. Interpretations of anti-Jacobinism. In *The French Revolution and British Popular Politics*, edited by Mark Philip. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Epstein, James. 2003. *In Practice: Studies in the language and culture of popular politics in modern Britain*. Stanford: Stanford University Press.
- Evans, Barrie. 1993. Repairing Bomb Damage. *The Architects' Journal* 198 (7): 39-41.
- Everett, Nigel. 1994. *The Tory View of Landscape*. New Haven: Yale University Press.
- Habermas, Jürgen. 1989. *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere: An Inquiry into a Category of Bourgeois Society, Studies in Contemporary German Social Thought*. Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press.
- Harmon, Christopher C. 2000. *Terrorism Today*. London: Frank Cass.
- Harrison, Mark. 1988. *Crowds and History: Mass Phenomena in English Towns, 1790-1835*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Hart, Sara. 2002. In the Aftermath of September 11, the Urban Landscape Appears Vulnerable and Random. *Architectural Record* 190 (3): 135-57.
- Hay, Douglas, and Nicholas Rogers. 1997. *Eighteenth-Century English Society: Shuttles and Swords*. Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press.
- Hazlitt, William. 1821-22. *Table Talk: Essays on Men and Manners*. London: John Warren..
- Hone, William. 1826. *The Every-Day Book: Or, Everlasting Calendar of Popular Amusements, Sports, Pastimes, Ceremonies, Manners, Customs, and Events, Incident to Each of the Three Hundred and Sixty-Five Days, in Past and Present Times; Forming a Complete History of the Year, Months, & Seasons, and a Perpetual Key to the Almanack*. London: Hunt and Clarke.
- Horwitz-Bennett, Barbara. 2003. Security State. *Architecture* 92 (9): 35-36.
- Isenstadt, Sandy. 2005. Ground Plan for the Future: Time on the Site of Sert's American Embassy in Baghdad. In *The Architecture of Josep Lluís Sert*, edited by Josep Maria Rovira and Jaume Freixa. Barcelona: Miro Foundation, c.Fall.
- Ivy, Robert. 2002. Editorial: 'the Security Paradox'. *Architectural Record* 4: 15.

- Kitchen, Ted. 2001. Planning in Response to Terrorism: The Case of Manchester, England. *Journal of Architectural and Planning Research* 18 (4): 325-40.
- McKee, Bradford. 2003. Design-Build Diplomacy. *Architecture* 92 (1): 45-46.
- Nason, Randy. 2000. Maintaining Security in an Insecure World. *Architectural Record* 188 (12): 153-54.
- Nesmith, Lynn. 1990. Safe Diplomacy: Security: New Safeguards Established by the U.S. State Department. *Architecture: The Magazine of the American Institute of Architects*. 79(5): 78-83.
- Paulson, Ronald. 1965. *Hogarth's Graphic Works*. New Haven: Yale University Press.
- Pawley, Martin. 2002. Are Our Tall Buildings Simply Going to Become Uninsurable? *Architects' Journal* 215 (8): 26.
- Philips, David and Storch, Robert D. 1999. *Policing Provincial England, 1829-1856: The Politics of Reform*. London: Leicester University Press.
- Plumb, J. H. 1973. *The Commercialisation of Leisure in Eighteenth-Century England*. Reading: University of Reading.
- _____. 1980. *Georgian Delights*. Boston: Little, Brown.
- Ramsey, Stanley. 1913 London Clubs. *Architectural Review* 33: 87-90.
- _____. 1921. London Clubs. *Royal Institute of British Architects* 29: 417-36.
- Rendell, Jane. 1999. The Clubs of St. James: Places of Public Patriarchy - Exclusivity, Domesticity and Secrecy. *Journal of Architecture* 4 (2): 167-89.
- Rogers, Nicholas. 1998. *Crowds, Culture, and Politics in Georgian Britain*. Oxford, New York: Clarendon Press, Oxford University Press.
- Rudé, George. 1959. The London 'Mob' of the Eighteenth Century. *The Historical Journal* 2 (1): 1-18.
- Sandori, Paul. 1993. Terrorists and Tall Buildings. *Canadian Architect* 38 (6): 25.
- Shoemaker, Robert. 1987. The London 'Mob' in the Early Eighteenth Century. *Journal of British Studies* 26(3): 273-304.
- Sheps, Arthur. 1989. Public Perception of Joseph Priestley, the Birmingham Dissenters, and the Church-and-King Riots of 1791. *Eighteenth-Century Life* 13(2): 46-64.
- Stevenson, John. 1992. *Popular Disturbances in England, 1700-1832*. 2nd ed, Themes in British Social History. London: Longman.
- Tilly, Charles. 1993. Contentious Repertoires in Great Britain, 1758-1834. *Social Science History* 17(2): 253-280.
- Vidler, Anthony. 2002. A City Transformed: Designing 'Defensible Space.' *Grey Room* 7: 82-85.
- Watkin, David. 1982. *The Buildings of Britain: Regency*. London: Barrie & Jenkins.
- Wells, Roger. 1991. English Society and Revolutionary Politics in the 1790s: The Case for Insurrection. In *The French Revolution and British Popular Politics*, edited by Mark Philip. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Joanna Guldi, a former Gates Scholar at Cambridge, is working on a PhD in British History at the University of California, Berkeley. Her dissertation will focus on the evolution of the eighteenth-century road network and the concomitant creation of a modern governmental and social apparatus.