



New landscapes of the postindustrial city

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Abstract:

This paper attempts to analyze modern urban space in the context of intercepting the effects of biopolitical production by means of a conceptual apparatus taken from urban landscape studies. Among the discussed sections of urban space, which illustrate the issue undertaken in this text, there are first and foremost places that focalize and intertwine practices of urban design, landscape architecture, design and media initiated by local governments, institutions, and private investors. All of these practices strive to create a new type of urban landscapes, characterized by their simultaneous functioning as sights and as "urban stages." Following from the above findings, this paper aims to describe the listed forms of land use in terms derived from cultural concepts of landscape, considering the latter to be a useful tool for explaining the relations between modern urban subjects and the environment they exist in.

Key words:

landscape, post-industrial city, work, biopolitical production, fatigue

One of the researchers conducting a participant observation during the Audioriver Festival in Płock wrote the following in her field notebook: "On Saturday morning I heard a guy leaving the festival through the main square and saying to his friend, 'look, people are going to work and I feel as if I were coming back from work'" (Szlendak and Olechnicki 2017, 159). This comment is a crystallization of the phenomenon of fading borders between work and pastimes, which is characteristic for post-Fordism. What is more, the information provided by the researcher allows us to note that we are dealing with a spatial phenomenon—namely, one that can be located by asking for links connecting it to the materiality of the context.

In accordance with autonomists' conceptions, among others, we can assign not only individual but also cultural character to the discursively conveyed experience of that man. Researchers related to this current of Marxism connect the phenomenon of proliferation of work spacetime with the real subsumption of labor under capital, carried out in the post-Fordist era, which designates the situation where

the power of capital stretches over the whole of the subject's life (Bednarek 2012, 238). In effect, according to Joanna Bednarek, "each activity becomes directly productive, the divisions into work and leisure, production and consumption, production and reproduction of the work force, productive and unproductive labor disappear" (Bednarek 2012, 238). Thus, we can say that in the era of *Empire* (Hardt and Negri 2000) all practices engaging the subject are in fact work. That means that their effects, regardless of the form they adopt, can be seen as a source of values, which makes them prone to interception.

One of the areas where the phenomenon of intercepting the effects of biopolitical production can be located and analyzed is modern urban space. It is within the administrative limits of the city that we currently find "devices" powered by "that which is alive" (Juskowiak 2015, 106). What I mean by that are those sections of urban space that focalize and intertwine practices of urban design, landscape architecture, design and media initiated by local governments, institutions, and private investors. All these practices strive to create a new type of urban landscape, characterized by their simultaneous functioning as sights and as "urban stages" (Rewers 2015, 53-56). Following from the above findings, this paper aims to describe the listed forms of land use in terms derived from cultural concepts of landscape, considering the latter to be a useful tool for explaining the relations between modern urban subjects and the environment they exist in.

Productive paradox

Landscape has come to be understood as an equivocal term, the use of which does not determine the subject of analysis. Referring back to Beata Frydryczak's findings, we can note that if the perspective adopted by a scholar coincides with the point of view of aesthetics, then when talking about the landscape we analyze "the view," discerning in the object of inquiry, first of all "the space of perception and visual experience" or "a topographic space mediated by images" (Frydryczak 2013, 43). Whereas, if we base the analysis upon geography, "the area" and issues related to "the terrain and the living environment" become the subject of reflection (Frydryczak 2013, 43). Frydryczak stresses that the differentiation between the two meanings of landscape has, most of all, an ordering character; aesthetics completes its understanding of landscape with geographers' proposals, including in its framework intuitions arising from thinking about landscape in terms of "environment," "place," or "territory," just as geography broadens its conception of landscape, devoting more attention to issues of symbolization and depiction (Frydryczak 2013, 42-43). This sense of broadening geographic takes on landscape can be observed, among others, in papers devoted to this issue by Sharon Zukin (1991) and Don Mitchell (2000), from whom I have adopted the belief that the spaces under discussion in the present paper can be considered landscapes.

According to Frydryczak, what speaks to the development of the connections between these two approaches to landscape are, first of all, those concepts that discern, in both its aesthetic and geographic perspectives, a *sui generis* cultural phenomenon. It is precisely on the basis of cultural conceptions of landscape that reflection on the paradox of the term landscape can evolve. Thus, we can note that this paradox is more than the effect of a diversity of perspectives among academic disciplines; it is also a lineament inherent to the experience of the subject situated in the world, who perceives the latter once as an image and once again as an absorbing process.

The connection of the two meanings of landscape proposed by Frydryczak the aesthetic and the geographic—becomes especially necessary when testing its productivity in the analysis of particular spatial environments, just like the new post-industrial landscapes of the city that are of interest here. As I noted before, they constitute phenomena characterized by simultaneously functioning in the role of views and urban stages, where the performance of biopolitical production takes place. The material base or canvas of the view is urban land under development and the Internet, where we find photographic and cinematic representations of new landscapes, which create a second-degree view of sorts. A critically oriented analysis of the new landscapes of the post-industrial city that I am proposing here cannot ignore the fact that these are spaces which we can enter and in which we can immerse ourselves; hence, they constitute a context for sensory experience. So, if they create images expressed in the medium of the earth, then these are very special images, which can be entered—to use the language of experience. Only noticing the dual nature of these new landscapes of the post-industrial city allows one to capture the specificity of their intermedia influence on the subject and to note, in this influence, the procedures of authority intercepting the effects of the work that is being done therein.

Four Cases

The list of places that present an example of the forms of land use that interest me here is very long, but the aim is not to fully reconstruct it, although it might be worth doing so elsewhere. Hence, I will concentrate on several chosen examples, which I am not treating as synecdoche for the analyzed phenomenon but rather as elements of the series created by it. These numerous spaces constitute an indication of a more general trend in land-use policies, which makes their particular realizations relatively similar to each other. What is important is that this similarity does not result from some uniformity in applied design principles, although here too conformities can be found, for instance in terms of the construction and finishing materials or the type of planting. It rather follows from the similarity of their functional programs, or more precisely, the manner in which these programs are

being used in producing a view. At the source of this similarity lies, presumably, a sort of linkage, which is currently being implemented on a global scale, between urban land-use policies and the aesthetics of capitalism. Within their scope, there are views being constructed, and humans in motion constitute an important component, transforming that which is alive into an image. The relation of equivalence that we observe by taking under consideration the functional dimension of these landscapes allows one to see them as global creations, even though we find them when walking the streets of particular cites or browsing the Internet for information.

If, among the already existing representations of urbanity, we were to search for an analogue of our spaces of interest or the climate created by them, we might notice a certain problematic overlap with the vision presented in a poster made by Ecologistes, a neighborhood movement, a nostalgic description of which opens the book Rebel Cities by David Harvey: "I came across a poster put out by the Ecologistes, a radical neighborhood action movement dedicated to creating a more ecologically sensitive mode of city living, depicting an alternative vision for the city. It was a wonderful ludic portrait of old Paris reanimated by a neighborhood life, with flowers on balconies, squares full of people and children, small stores and workshops open to the world, cafes galore, fountains flowing, people relishing the river bank, community gardens here and there" (2012, IX). What allows us to associate this poster scene with the new landscapes of the post-industrial city is its dynamism, coming from the fact that it is full of various activities, people, and the movement of nature. As I intend to prove, this connotation is only partially accurate. For the vision of the city in the Ecologistes poster is characterized most of all, as Harvey stresses himself, by its "alternativeness." Hence, the dynamism penetrating the vision is of a special character. It is an aesthetic effect of a bottomup manner of governing over urban space; therefore, standing behind it, there is an ethical component different from the one on which designs of new landscapes are founded. For dynamism, characteristic for the latter, is an effect of participants' mobilization occurring in a gesture accomplished through aesthetic measures that resembles Althusserian "interpellation" (Althusser 1971). Hence, although the designs of these new public spaces often times make use of aesthetics characteristic for urban movements, they are not spaces of actual autonomy. Because of that, we can say that they are defined by some type of semantic ambivalence, consisting of apparent similarity to the bottom-up enclaves.

Probably the most famous, emblematic example of these landscapes is New York's High Line park located on a closed railway line that crosses Manhattan over 23 street. What makes this area stand out is not only competently composed greenery and street furniture, but most of all the fact that it is elevated above street level and that its linear structure invites one to rest on the wooden seats by the path or to walk along it. The spectacular nature of High Line follows mainly from local conditionings of

spatial context, which in fact strengthen the aesthetic impact of this place and amplify its special quality, that is, the picturesqueness that transforms the landscape into an object of interest for photography (Frydryczak 2013, 10-11). Taking into account the high tourist flows generated by High Line, we may note that this space confirms the thesis formulated by Zukin in the 1990s—namely, that the materiality of the city, which creates a type of an intermedia canvas, nowadays constitutes the basic medium of its promotion (Zukin 1995, 16). Among realizations inspired by High Line, there are parks like Lines of Life in Singapore, the Promenade of Curiosities in London, and Skygarden in Seoul. In New York there are plans to create a reverse High Line, dubbed Low Line, which is to be constructed in the underground trolleybus station by the Williamsburg Bridge in 2021¹.

The presence of water is something that, next to abandoned transport infrastructure, draws the attention of creators of new urban spaces, which can be confirmed be the number of waterfronts that have been completed. Among them we can point out the design of Vistula boulevards, especially the part lying beside the Copernicus Science Centre and the temporary premises of the Museum of Modern Art, in the background of which we can see the frontage of Wybrzeże Kościuszkowskie along with the postmodern façade of the Warsaw University Library. Both the boulevard area and the practices related to the cultural consumption it promotes are interesting, where the area itself concentrates various forms of leisure activities and sets the stage for practices like antique book fairs. The architectural design of the boulevards, which are paved with light granite, does not leave much space for greenery. However, it does constitute an important compositional element of two of its green areas, located by the two museum buildings—the Discovery Park by the Copernicus Science Centre and the Skwer Kapitana Stanisława Skibniewskiego "Cubryny" by the Museum of Modern Art. The structure of the Vistula boulevards is not as compact as it is in the case of High Line, not only because of the differences in their planting, but primarily because of the fact that the boulevards are not unified by a media-communicated vision. They do not have a website, and their landscape is divided into many smaller spaces, characterized by the institutions located at their center. That is why the boulevards' audience is rather diverse, and it is harder to navigate its movements.

The river bank, as an organizing structure of the designed landscape, is also a component of the Chicago Riverwalk. The boulevard stretching along the southern bank of the Chicago River is located between State and LaSalle street. Ross Barney, from Jacobs/Ryan Associates, is the creator of the waterfront design.² Apart from a walking path, there are various micro-recreational-areas, which are a convenient spot from which to observe boulevard life. Especially distinctive elements of this space are the amphitheatrical River Theater and a cascading embankment split by

¹ https://theweekendguide.com/urban-projects-inspired-by-nyc-high-line/

² For more information, see JRA Jacobs/Ryan Associates Landscape Architects' website: http://www.jacobsryan.com.

an illuminated crevice, both located on the block between Clark and LaSalle street. Both structures serve as sitting areas, which, along with an additional diagonal traffic corridor, creates an impression of energy and dynamism. This feature manifests itself in particular when looking at the Riverwalk from a distance, for instance from one of the bridges. This way of looking at the waterfront is suggested by its administrators in the visual material available on the website of the project.³

A slightly different strategy for depicting a newly created public space is proposed by the administrators of New York's Franklin D. Roosevelt Four Freedoms Park, which serves as a park space and as a memorial dedicated to Franklin D. Roosevelt.⁴ The first impression of the park's website convinces the observer that they are part of the story told by the park landscape. The website opens with a panoramic picture of Manhattan being photographed by a tourist standing in the center of the frame. The silhouette of the city is, therefore, presented as a sprawling view, seen from a particular point of the park's landscape. The impression of being within the landscape is additionally stressed by the Chinese box structure of the presented scene. The observer looks at Manhattan through the lens of the person that took the photo posted on the website, as well as through the camera display of the photographed tourist. The technical specifications of the two pictures, their high contrast and resolution, in conjunction with the way they present architectural detail always in a close, tactile relation with users—build the particular atmosphere of this landscape already at a visual level. It is defined most of all by the experience of immersion. What is more, the close-ups of the tourists, mostly presented in the foreground of the photograph, not only complement the landscape but are its inalienable elements.

Activation of "passive negatives"

New landscapes of post-industrial cities are created as an effect of urban revitalization or subsidized infrastructural projects, as well as projects based on public-private partnerships. They are supposed to function as recreational spaces that accommodate meetings and exchanges, while forming a picturesque *mise-en-scène*. In terms of typology, their locations are rather diverse. They often include areas around the premises of cultural institutions such as museums, cultural centers, libraries, the surroundings of universities, business centers or shopping malls, the neighborhoods of disused workplaces, factories or mines, or—as the examples cited before show—areas of railway wastelands in city centers, and ever more often waterfronts.

The popularity of urban revitalization programs results from local governments being aware of the potential returns on investments in the urban fabric—its modifications, aestheticizing adaptations, and modernization of the infrastructure.

³ See https://www.chicagoriverwalk.us/.

⁴ See http://www.fdrfourfreedomspark.org.

What is interesting is that nowadays these programs span over urban spaces long escaping the attention of government officials and investors. Namely, spaces that, according to the terminology proposed by Oskar Hansen formulated in order to define a symbolically undeveloped residential interior, could be called "passive negative," while taking under consideration the complexity of the implications that this term entails. Hansen wrote that "if ... we were to open the ceiling and pour plaster in, we would get a mechanical, passive cast of the room. The active negative is a conversion of the passive negative with the use of our visual needs and our impressions into a humanistic tool for visual impact" (Quoted in Wasieczko 2013). Of course, it should be stressed that Hansen's research concerned, most of all, culturally activating the users of the architectural space of real socialism and was related to giving them more power over the forms of their everyday lives. However, I think that, with an appropriate accentuation of perspectives, the term proposed by Hansen could also be applied to urban interiors. In the times of symbolic economy, the latter have become the subject of an increased effort aimed at creating meaning, undertaken by the administrators of spaces and the creators of urban policy in cooperation with city users. Investing in public spaces of the city could therefore be considered a sign of urban policy makers noticing the potential of what Jan Gehl, in a slightly different context, called "life between buildings" (Gehl 2011). One should note that the development of this awareness among city officials is beneficial in equal measure as it is controversial for the residents. It is consistent with the logic of a neoliberal city—a logic based on intercepting the effects of biopolitical production, which is carried out in the processes of "the urbanization of capital" identified by Harvey (2012, 66). This process generally involves a tight coupling of the domain of urban projects with initiatives aiming at the extraction of rent. Importantly, that which is to potentially generate value is not only the urban land for investment, but also its future uses, the nature of which is determined by the functional programs provided for these spaces. Hence, the urbanization of capital is based not only on the transformations of the built environment, but also on modeling socio-cultural attitudes so as to guarantee their compliance with the dominant idea for a city at a given time. Harvey writes that "the reproduction of capital passes through processes of urbanization in myriad ways. But the urbanization of capital presupposes the capacity of capitalist class powers to dominate the urban process. This implies capitalist class domination not only over state apparatuses (in particular those aspects of state power that administer and govern the social and infrastructural conditions within territorial structures), but also over whole populations—their lifestyles as well as their labor power, their cultural and political values as well as their mental conceptions of the world" (2012, 66). As I intend to demonstrate, the landscape, and the fact that it can be used to model experience, is one of the more effective techniques for achieving the hegemony mentioned by Harvey.

Social production of a view

New landscapes are locations where the socio-cultural dimension of the urbanization of capital, recognized by Harvey, manifests itself particularly clearly. The life of these places, both in the case of privatized spaces⁵ and those remaining in the public domain, is not only the result of the efforts of landscape architects, design specialists, and greenery designers; its rendering is possible mainly due to the activity of the users, giving, more or less consciously, their consent to co-create a capitalist performance by lending their time and consuming the energy of their bodies within the boundaries of the location. Because of the close dependence of new landscapes on the labor of their users, in some respects they are for post-industrial cities what factories were for industrial metropolises. This analogy is based on the observation that in both cases we are dealing with figures representing the use of the medium of space in the organization of production practices. Because the interactive and multisensory scenography of the new landscapes would suggest that we are dealing with recreational spaces, their functioning as a space of work is not visible at first glance. However, that changes if we treat the activities indicated here as production practices, associating them with the notion of "immaterial labour" proposed by autonomists (Hardt and Negri 2000, 29).

Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri distinguish three main "aspects of immaterial labour." They include "the communicative labor of industrial production that has newly become linked in informational networks, the interactive labor of symbolic analysis and problem solving, and the labor of the production and manipulation of affects. This third aspect, with its focus on the productivity of the corporeal, the somatic, is an extremely important element in the contemporary networks of biopolitical production" (Hardt and Negri 2000, 30). Although the authors of Empire do not give any examples of specific practices that could fall within the model they propose, I think that it is possible to link the activities of the users of new landscapes with the third aspect of immaterial labor. This interpretation is supported by the fact that these activities are defined by the "productivity of bodies and the value of affect" which according to the authors should be included in analyses of immaterial work: "One of the most serious shortcomings has thus been the tendency (...) to treat the new laboring practices in biopolitical society only in their intellectual and incorporeal aspects. The productivity of bodies and the value of affect however, are absolutely central in this context". (Hardt, Negri 2000, 29-30)

Seemingly trivial practices, which we will call "everyday urbanism" (Chase, Crawford, and Kaliski 2008), a term proposed by the Californian architect Margaret Crawford, are a specific form of work that sustains the existence of the landscape. These practices

⁵ What I mean here are forms of land use, popular in the US and in Western European countries, consisting in putting private spaces into public use, called POPOS—Privately Owned Public Open Spaces.

include just being within the landscape, which consists of simply having picnics or sitting on a bench, as well as the whole spectrum of practices related to fitness, such as the rather urban phenomenon of jogging and also various media practices: listening to music, taking pictures, video recording, and field recording. Anthony Flint notes the key role of the physical co-presence of users in constructing the brand of a given landscape. When analyzing the space of High Line, he notes that the presence of people, the fact that they spend their time there, wandering around or resting, has become a recognizable sign of that place—its "signature" (Flint 2014). Therefore, if, in accordance with the intentions of administrators of urban space, new landscapes are becoming recognizable icons of the city, it is also happening due to the users carrying out the work of direct landscape production through the practices of everyday urbanism. The presence of people, which is part of the designed view, makes these spaces attractive for other visitors, and the popularity of a given landscape is also its advertisement. The material dimension of landscape production is also accompanied by the communicative dimension. New landscapes exist in the minds of residents and tourists as noteworthy places because of the exposure they get through social media practices that coalesce around them: pictures, sound recordings, video, or recorded running routes.

The thesis on the social production of landscape view proposed here calls for asking questions about its collective subject. Bednarek notes that "the hegemonic form taken by labor in the post-Fordist economy creates conditions for the establishment of a new universal political subject, an equivalent of the proletariat of the industrial phase of capitalism" (Bednarek 2012, 243). This observation is the basis for a reexamination of Zukin's thesis, formulated in Landscapes of Power, that "these days, workers are important because they consume, not because they produce anything that culture values" (Zukin 1991, 4). Granted, Zukin formulated this thesis in regards to the transformations undergone by cities as a result of the crisis of Fordism while bearing in mind the fate of former industrial workers. However, this thesis cannot be maintained if one takes into account the productivity constitutive of new landscapes, the productivity of that which is bodily. A subject caught in an environmental relationship, who is proposed specific action scripts within the landscape, not only consumes the place he finds himself in but also actively creates it. On this approach, the figure of the worker loses its connection to the class structure model that was in force in the times of Fordism, because anyone who uses these areas becomes a laborer producing landscape through everyday practices.

If new landscapes and the figure of the factory are linked by some additional qualities, then it is primarily due to the fact that these are spatialities of alienated labor. It should be noted that the exchange between the materiality of new landscapes and their users does not have the trappings of a creative experiment because it is subject to the control exercised by the tactical and strategic tangle characteristic of biopower. Hence, these are spaces that aspire to function beyond time, protecting themselves from changes that could be brought about by the transforming

activity of users. Thus, the view that is being constructed here is to communicate the idea of immutability. This significantly limits the scope of critical practices possible here, which at the same time makes new landscapes of the post-industrial city spaces of invisible cultural oppression, emblematic environments of "the society of control." According to Hardt and Negri: "The society of control might thus be characterized by an intensification and generalization of the normalizing apparatuses of disciplinarity that internally animate our common and daily practices, but in contrast to discipline, this control extends well outside the structured sites of social institutions through flexible and fluctuating networks" (Hardt and Negri 2000, 23). Franco "Bifo" Berardi in *The Uprising* presents an analysis of the problematic situation of the subject trying to resist neoliberal networking—the materialization of which we are also dealing with, in my opinion, in the case of new landscapes. Berardi believes that in the times of "hypercomplexity" and "overcrowded infosphere" (Berardi 2012, 10) the logic of social behavior becomes the logic of "swarm": "you can express your refusal, your rebellion and your nonalignment, but this is not going to change the direction of the swarm, nor is it going to affect the way in which the swarm's brain is elaborating information" (Berardi 2012, 16).

Instead of conclusions: The critical potential of fatigue

The manner in which new urban landscapes function partially confirms the negative diagnosis put forward by Berardi. Their being open to the practices of everyday life, which become a component of the view, does not mean consent to all their forms, including, among others, those that could disrupt the coherence of the landscape projection, achieved by recreating the impression of its ahistoricality and naturality. Among the practices that are particularly dangerous for the coherence of the view, one can single out, above all, those that are manifestations of fatigue. This is evidenced by, among others, the strategies of supervision and control exercised by administrators and users over the continuity of the spectacle taking place on urban stages. Let us note that striving to eliminate all signs of fatigue is another element, besides productivity and alienation, linking the new landscapes of the post-industrial city with the modern factory.

Anson Rabinbach in *Human Motor: Energy, Fatigue and the Origins of Modernity* shows that the modern factory dealt with fatigue with the use of findings of researchers co-creating the so-called "European science of work" (Rabinbach 1992, 182-88). It was grounded in the conviction, characteristic for modern productivism, that fatigue is the last obstacle on the path to progress, which will be achieved when the energy expended by muscles in the course of labor reaches a consistency resembling the work of a machine (Rabinbach 1992, 2). Thus, fatigue, as a state that prevents work, stood in obvious contradiction with the idea of the continuity of the production process, which made it the subject of practices aimed at its elimination.

In the case of the new landscapes of the post-industrial city, progress, as the goal of fatigue reducing practices, is replaced by the idea of an uninterrupted circulation of bodies and information, which is to take place 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, to use the Jonathan Crary's (2013) phrasing. Fatigue threatens this constant movement because of its ambivalent relationship with time. The analysis of this ambivalence embedded in fatigue can be found in a short book by Emanuel Levinas Existence and Existents (1978). According to the philosopher, we can think of fatigue as a state in which the subject realizes their spatiotemporal condition: "Fatigue —even, and above all, the fatigue that is unthinkingly termed physical —presents itself first as stiffening, a numbness a way of curling up into oneself. Conceived as muscular exhaustion or toxicity by psychologists and physiologists, it comes to the attention of philosopher in an entirely different way. A philosopher has to put himself in the instant of fatigue and discover the way it comes about. Not its significance with respect to some system of references, but the hidden event of which an instant is the effectuation and not only the outcome" (Levinas 1978, 30). The discussed phenomenon is in this sense the experience of a desynchronization of sorts, consisting in a lag that occurs between being and itself (Levinas 1978, 30)—it is the experience of mortality, end, debility, fragility of the body, implicating the necessity of rest, withdrawal, and cessation of work: "We shall show later that this lag that occurs between a being and itself, which we have brought out as the principal characteristic of fatigue, constitutes the advent of consciousness, that is, a power to 'suspend' being by sleep and unconsciousness" (Levinas 1978, 30). We can therefore note that fatigue, as an experience of existential character, becomes dangerous because it destabilizes and desynchronizes the "automation" that govern the system (Berardi 2012, 17). Thus, it is not surprising that the aim of discourses focused on maintaining the stability and continuance of these hegemonic views is the elimination of fatigue, which in the case of the new landscapes of the post-industrial city consists in producing attractive and multi-sensory spatial environments that encourage defering fatigue and devoting oneself to the view producing circulation. We can also perceive fatigue as a type of temporary deficiency, a phenomenon creating a situation that Berardi calls "insolvency" (Berardi 2012, 16)—according to whom, it is: "not only a refusal to pay the costs of the economic crisis provoked by the financial class, but it is also a reject of the symbolic debt embodied in the cultural and psychic normalisation of daily life" (Berardi 2012, 16). Fatigue, not fitting in with the visual order of designed views, acquires the status of a phenomenon of critical potential. It calls for the subject to resign from participating in the cultural production of emotions and affections, whereas to participate is precisely what he is being encouraged to do by the new landscapes of the post-industrial city.

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