

# THE 100 MILE CITY

by Deyan Sudjic

## INTRODUCTION

"The thesis of this book is that a whole range of fundamental urban changes whose causes had been building up for some time took effect in the course of the 1980s and resulted in the recasting of the shape and character of the city. Some of these changes concerned the way people lived, some had an influence on the physical form of the city, and others were connected with the relationship of one city to another.

This book deals with **five cities in particular: London, Paris, Tokyo, New York and Los Angeles.** Together they dominated the world's economy and cultural life, but they also had to struggle to maintain their position, against each other and potential competitors."

It also "deals with housing statistics as well as with the changing nature of museums. It looks at the exhibitionist tendencies of expos and Disneyland, and the role of airports as contemporary stand-ins for the city square. It analyses architecture as well as the demographics of population, and transport. It looks at the impact of different attempts to control the form of the city, from the autocratic politics of Paris, to the apparent laissez-faire of Houston."

Sudjic has divided the book into **"three parts. The first deals with the attitudes** of various different groups such as theorists, developers, architects and politicians towards the city. **The second discusses a series of urban issues:** transport, housing, and employment. **The final section attempts to draw all these aspects together** to paint a picture of the way that life is actually lived in the city beyond its historic core."

## THEORY AND PRACTICE (CHPT 1)

### BACKGROUND

One of Sudjic's principal thesis's is that "Culturally, the successful cities have distanced themselves from their national contexts. Paris & London now have much more in common with each other than they do with their respective nations. Shops in the Rue St honore and Bond Street, or for that matter Madison Avenue, Rodeo Drive and Aoyama, have exactly the same names, and carry the same merchandise. In Knightsbridge and Beverly Hills the dentists and the tax lawyers lead similar kinds of lives, protected by the same burglar alarms, driving back and forth in the same late-model Mercedes. At the other end of the scale, the stress of daily life for the jobless of Brixton and Watts is similar too. And the concerns of middle-class citizens in big cities - for better schools and hospitals, lower property taxes and limits to the pace of development around them - are equally international.

The building of suburban railway networks allowed the nineteenth century city, shaped by the endurance of pedestrians, to spread far beyond its pre-industrial limits. Significant though that growth was, it did not fundamentally alter the ancient pattern of the city, radiating out from its historic core. But in the 1980s, when even the most conservative banks joined department stores and corporate headquarters in the exodus from the old city centers, the city changed out of all recognition."

...at least three of the world's five greatest cities began the decade apparently in the worst of shape. New York, Paris and London, previously the most successful of the mature metropolises, had lost the dynamism of the nineteenth century. Tokyo and Los Angeles, the two most significant newcomers who made up the rest of the group, offered entirely different physical and historical models, and looked to be their most threatening rivals.

**New York's economy**, like London's, seemed to be stagnating dangerously. In the 1970s, both cities failed to spend enough to maintain even their sewers let alone their public transport systems. The population of the city's core and the inner ring of suburbs had shrunk by 800,000 between 1960 and 1980.

London followed an uncomfortably similar pattern. More than a million people left the inner boroughs in twenty years. They left behind a population that, despite the arrival of the international super rich, was poorer, darker-skinned and increasingly likely to be without a job.

**The City of Paris** - as distinct from the Parisian region - had also seen its population fall steeply in the 1970s - by nearly twenty per cent. As in London and New York, its traditional employers were moving out. As in so many cities, jobs, particularly manual jobs, were evaporating as a centralized industrial system, one which dealt with physical things, their manufacture, processing and movement, gave way to a decentralized, quicksilver economy that dealt chiefly with information.

The middle classes in Paris, London and New York found themselves driven out by the polarization of the city between the very rich and the very poor. They fled from blight, runaway house prices and school systems in crisis. Corporate offices moved to business parks, rural enclaves and smaller cities. At the same time, what had been suburbs began to take on the characteristics of the old city center.

In New York, many of the big corporations did not stay long in the palaces they had built for themselves in suburban Connecticut during the 1970s. Lower taxes and more amenable workforce lured them as far afield as Texas, Florida and Colorado. The counterpoint to all this was the explosive growth of the American sunbelt cities - Phoenix, Miami, Atlanta, Houston, Dallas and, most of all, Los Angeles. ...they echoed the rapid urbanization of their forerunners in the nineteenth century, but they grew in a different way to the older cities. Development was in scattered clusters and on orbital roads, rather than in concentric rings or along railway tracks radiating from an established core.

**Even as late as the 1960s, Los Angeles was seen as irredeemably provincial. Now its size (its population grew by at least three million people between 1970 and 1986) and its financial and cultural clout make it undeniably a great city, yet by the lights of the more conservative of urban theorists, it is still not a city at all. Certainly, its success seems to place the very existence of urbanism of the traditional kind under threat.**

On the other side of the Pacific, Tokyo, as dependent as a nineteenth-century city on its suburban railways, and with a delirious mixture of traditional qualities and rampant innovation, is seeing the same forces at work as its western counterparts. Its center is still dominated by the Imperial Palace, department stores and a vast central fish market. Yet, it is also seeing a drop in the population of its innermost wards, as people shift westward, but Tokyo at least is prepared to accept the logic of those changes. In 1991 the city government moved out of Marunochi to a new gothic skyscraper home in Shinjuku, following the drift of its citizens.

While many of the bricks and mortar traces of the past are still intact, their significance for cities that are now shaped by freeways and airports, tourism and services, has become more symbolic than real. The changes that have taken place are not simply a question of degree. They are qualitative in their results as much as quantitative."

#### THE THEORISTS

"This book is an attempt to provide a framework for an understanding of the multi-layered new city. To do so it is necessary first to look at how the theorists have attempted to come to grips with the modern city. For most observers and interpreters, the point of formulating a theory to account for the way that the city has developed has been to initiate change. Their work has been based on the supposition that the urban world as it is presently organized is fatally flawed and that there is a pressing need for improvement.

**Urban theorists with an architectural bias have put many different glosses on their strategies for shaping the city, but there have been two fundamental and sharply opposed recurring themes in their models:** the high-density city set against the decentralized, low-density city. At one extreme are those who want to see existing urban densities maintained, or even intensified, and at the other are the decentralists. Both sides blame each other for all the perceived ills of the modern city."

Here the author illustrates his point by contrasting the "decentralizes" such as Sir Ebenezer Howard with those who argued for higher densities such as Baron Georges-Eugene Haussmann and Le Corbusier. He then pointed out that the

"paternalism of New Deal Liberalism had ushered in a surprisingly authoritarian planning system." And subsequently "the whole premise on which modern city building was based, whether of the Howard or the Le Corbusier camp, started to be questioned in an increasingly urgent fashion." According to Sudjic, the leader of which was Jane Jacobs who wrote "The Death and Life of Great American Cities" in 1961.

"Jacobs, whatever else she believed, was clearly in favor of the high density city. Her tract was one of the first attacks in the onslaught on professionals of all kinds that characterized the political climate of the late 1960s and early 1970s. Jacobs was by no means the first, nor the most sophisticated critic of the conventional norms of planning wisdom. But the passion of her book, and the timing of its publication, just at the point at which the first American urban renewal schemes were starting to come unglued, gave it enormous currency. Jacobs was the prototype for every activist, advocacy planner and community architect."

"Jacobs was an effective lobbyist and a dedicated petition raiser. By helping to mobilize the residents of a rapidly gentrifying Greenwich Village, she played her part in stopping plans for a highway across Manhattan. Yet her book is no more and no less than an examination of the minutiae of the pavement life of her corner of Hudson Street in Lower Manhattan. Jacobs's message was at heart simple. She had taken over a run-down house in West Greenwich Village, returned it to middle-class comfort with her architect husband and three children, and did not want to see a motorway driven past her front door. Clearly she enjoyed the life of Judson Street, with its delicatessens and bars, its familiar corner grocery store with its friendly - but not too friendly - proprietor, ready to look after her front door keys but not to pry into the details of her domestic arrangements.

Jacobs ridiculed suburbia in the conventional manner of the metropolitan intellectual of her day, and she scorned the attempts of the planners to reconstruct the city in its image. Curiously, much of the West Village around Hudson Street, with its small scale tree-lined streets, is closer to an English suburb than it is to the kind of metropolis she praises.

In essence, her position as advanced in Death and Life ... is a nostalgic one. She argues for a way of life that, if it ever existed, has disappeared. She looks back to the vitality of urban neighborhoods that she assumes were a vital part of the city in its youth. But economically and ethnically, cities are never static: rather they are in a constant state of flux.

Jacobs is a self-proclaimed enemy of suburbia, but the image of the big city advanced by The Death and Life of Great American Cities is as sentimental as the corny vision of utopia cherished by the boy scout garden city types she scorns.

Despite the much advertised charms of the densely built metropolis, whatever policy the planners and politicians have pursued, the inescapable background to the evolution of the city in the last twenty years has been accelerating decentralization. The population of the central core of every major city in Europe, America and Japan has fallen while that of the constantly spreading outermost ring around them has continued to grow.

Jacobs reserves special scorn for Los Angeles, a deprived city, she claims, because it has no street life and lacks a conventional urban centre: a casual inaccuracy of such a degree to suggest either breathtaking ignorance or blind prejudice."

Sudjic then articulates the writings of those who defend Los Angeles. Such writers as Reyner Banham, the English architectural historian whose book on Los Angeles, "The Architecture of Four Ecologies" of 1967, Frank Lloyd Wright and Robert Venturi and his wife Denise Scott Brown who wrote "Learning from Las Vegas" where they said "Many people like suburbia, this is the compelling reason for learning from Levittown".

Sudjic then describes the more recent work of Andres Duany and Elizabeth Plater-Zyberk's with their master plan for the holiday community of Seaside in Florida where they argue for "fabric" rather than "masterpieces." However, as Sudjic accurately points out Seaside "is minute: it is planned to have no more than a few hundred houses, a couple of hotels, shopping facilities, a conference center and recreation areas to be built over a period of ten to fifteen years..... with no provision for jobs for its residents. As a summer resort, Seaside is hardly a real test....."

Sudjic sums up his chapter on Theory and Practice by asserting that, "The agenda for urban theory has always been set by the European experience. But it is a model which has less and less relevance even for the cities from which it was developed. In the century since the Victorians discovered the grim state of their cities, countless billions have been spent on renewal and reconstruction. But it is hard to be sanguine about the outcome.

The city is a complex organism, never entirely comfortable, always a place with its dark corners and suffering. But it is precisely that edge of danger and instability that makes the city such an extraordinarily powerful force. In the final analysis it is in its role as an engine for change that the city is at its most alive."

#### **THE DEVELOPER AT WORK** (chpt. 2)

Sudjic differentiates the developer from the theorists by presenting the developer as someone who has little or no theory about either urbanism or the city. He also differentiates the earlier developer of the 18th century as primarily land estate owners looking to create long term investments versus the modern developer whose primary interest is creating an asset to sell. The former he associates with that of the farmer seeding crops versus the speculator seeking to quickly convert land from one use to another and then sell it for its greater value. As such, however, he doesn't attempt to make a case that even the "land estate developer" had anymore of a theory about either urbanism and the city form than the land or property speculator.

His main point is that "it is commercial development which shapes the city, it is in the hands of those who have no interest in using their powers for the long-term future. The commercial developers are in business to respond to opportunities. They are not interested in, or equipped for planning cities. Yet that is just what they are doing by default."

His primary examples of the role developers have in shaping our cities are Canary Wharf, London's biggest building site in a century and the World Financial Center at the tip of Manhattan Island both by the Canadian developer Olympia and York.

He sums up his view of the role developers play in shaping the modern city when he says, "So it is that the shape of great cities is determined in the closing stages of the twentieth century. The developer is the prime mover, and yet he can only operate within the tight constraints of the economic system. Developers have the last word in shaping the city, but their room for maneuver is severely limited by what the market will bear. They have to work with the current, rather than struggle against it. ....Traditionally the developer has no interest in the city or the public realm; he concentrates instead on creating manageable chunks of development - an office building, or a shopping center, or an industrial park."

#### **COMMENT:**

Sudjic is correct when he says the developer has little or no theory about either urbanism or the city. As with any generalization, however, there are exceptions. Among the exceptions are those private developers who were part of the so called new town movement in this country during the 1960's and early '70's. During that period 13 "new towns" were launched by private developers as part of the federal new town act (I served on the Federal oversight board). Each had distinct theories of both urbanization and concept of city. Unfortunately 12 of those experiments went bankrupt. The only survivor is the Woodlands located near Houston, Tx. And it only survived because oil profits from its owner, Mitchell Energy subsidized the development (I currently serve on Mitchell's Board.)

In addition to the 13 government assisted communities such places as Reston, Va., Columbia, Maryland and Irvine, CA were launched during the same period. These three were not part of a government program and each followed their own clearly articulated urban and city theories. In fact I served as the chairman of a group of so called community builders

during this period and remember well the strenuous arguments over our respective theories. But for the most part Sudjic is correct. The vast majority of private developers have little or no interest in what constitutes a city. Their interest is project limited and market driven. To say, however, that the market doesn't also ultimately mold the character of the city, new or old, is to fall prey to the realities that ultimately doomed the 12 bankrupted experiments in the early '70's. In Irvine, the struggle to reconcile community and urban theories with market pressures has been never ending.

#### MESSENGER BOYS OF CHANGE (chpt. 3)

**Messenger BOYS OF Change is what Sudjic calls Architects.** It is not a complementary view of the role architects have played in the design of our contemporary cities. It's not that he believes the architect can make much more of an impact than they have its that he believes "no architect, despite the recurring attacks of messianic sense of mission which the profession is given to, can transform society." Rather, he says, architects are messenger boys, "caring the news of the often unpalatable realities of the changing nature of life to people who do not want to hear it. In a very few cases, he has the ability to transform that reality into poetry."

But, unfortunately for them, Sudjic believes that "Unwisely, architects have tried to present themselves as much more, and in the popular reaction against architecture in the 1980s, they paid the price. Critics took their messianic pronouncements at face value, and proceeded to blame architecture for everything from broken marriages to street crime."

He sums up his opinion of the profession by saying, "the role of the architect can still be a visionary one, offering a critical commentary on the state of society at large. But when he is too insistent, then he presents an easy target for those who believe in shooting messenger boys."

He illustrates his criticisms of the profession with a few examples of new towns such as Marne-la-Vallee in France, Milton Keynes in Great Britain and the rebuilding of Tokyo.

He attacks Bofill, the architect of Marne-la-Vallee, for creating an "empty shell of a city rather than an authentic slice of urbanism. As such it threatens to be the worst of both worlds. It is built to densities that make life difficult - enforcing proximity with the neighbors to the point that you can smell their toothpaste in the mornings - without offering any obvious compensations." He concludes his attack by saying, "Bofill's greatest significance is as the architect who has pursued the nostalgia for the monumental city to its ultimately futile conclusion. And in the wake of his failure to resurrect the past, we have begun to see the first steps towards an urban architecture that accepts the contemporary city for what it is, a fractured, incoherent place."

In contrast he claims that Milton Keynes "takes the opposite approach. Instead of using a few show-stopping gestures to try to make something out of the unpromising sprawl of housing, shopping and factories that characterize both towns, Milton Keynes opted for consistency. ....It was an attempt to make a whole that was more than the sum of its not very promising parts."

I might add my own comment by saying that any meaningful "vision" requires an understanding of the contemporary and constantly changing city life that few architects bother to either investigate or acknowledge. Sudjic is correct when he characterizes the contemporary city as "a fractured, incoherent place." But those architects who attempt to create coherent places by using the vision seen from a mirror reflecting an urban society without cars, telephones and national and international competition will, indeed, continue to produce "empty shells of a city rather than an authentic slice of urbanism."

#### THE USES OF POWER (chpt. 4)

In this chapter Sudjic points out the means by which "power" and its "uses" have influenced the form of our cities. From the personal power that Francois Mitterrand, General de Gaulle and Giscard d'Estaing, Presidents of the French Republic used to create the La Defense complex in Paris and that of Robert Moses's in New York to the governmental zoning and set-back rules born in New York.

Included in his description of "power" are the incentives (or subsidies) governments provide to encourage housing and other development.

Appropriately he makes both a negative and positive case for power. His point is that it is only when power is used with "the vision of a Mitterrand" that it produces meaningful results.

#### **THE WORLD OF WORK** (chpt. 5)

In this chapter Sudjic makes the point that "the daily ritual of going to and from work plays a decisive part in shaping a city." And that both the character and location of work is changing dramatically and rapidly. As he states, "The gap between the office worker and the factory worker has been all but obliterated. The office and the factory in Japan as in America and Europe look indistinguishable."

The core areas of our cities are losing jobs and the suburbs gaining them. He sums up the impact of this dramatic change when he says, "Work in the widest sense is what shapes the city. In the eighteenth century, before factories and offices became widespread, many people worked in their own homes, or at the homes of their employers. It made for very dense cities. Now the city is still reshaped by the changing pattern of employment, which more than anything else is behind the dispersion of the city and its ever larger geographical spread. We are still in the middle of a period of massive change in the pattern of working habits. Workplaces are simultaneously moving closer and further away from peoples's homes. Some people are commuting longer and longer distances, while others have the chance to live in outer suburbia and still be in reach of business parks.

The effect in the long run has yet to be seen, but already it is helping to turn the city into an amorphous blanket, dotted with high-intensity points of activity that function as quite different kinds of city center."

Here I believe that Sudjic's use of "city center" to describe the new work places is misleading. The vast majority of the new work centers, whether they be high or low rise would never be described as "city centers" by the average resident. Only when significant commercial shopping also is included in the "center" would the term "city center" seem appropriate. Certainly both South Coast Plaza and Newport Center have become recognized as "centers" while Irvine's Spectrum would not because little of any commercial space exist. As such space is added, however, then the character and identity of Spectrum could change.

However, Sudjic's main point is valid. Both the nature of work and its location shapes the city and both are changing dramatically.

#### **THE MUSEUM AS LANDMARK** (chpt. 6)

Sudjic describes the role museums have played in city life. And he points how their use, design and locations are changing. He points out that "The museum has become a central part of the way of life of the modern city, less a storehouse of scholarship and treasures than a place in which many of the conventional parts of civic life can take place, public spaces in which families and individuals can promenade to meet each other and to encounter stranger. A place to eat out, and in which to go shopping, or to browse in a bookshop."

The fact that museums are decentralizing is illustrated by the new Getty museum and both the Laguna and Newport museums. Places to view art, eat, buy books and have meetings.

#### **THE AIRPORT AS CITY SQUARE** (chpt. 7)

Sudjic calls the airport as the new gateway to the city. That "new airports have become the focus for national and civic prestige, just as railway stations once were. He points out that "The usual strategy of the architect has been an attempt to stamp a sense of urban normality on the land side of an airport, to create a fragile illusion that this is a familiar environment: that the terminal is just another concert hall, or university library, rather than a transition between the ground and the air." But then he makes the point that "the airport is a hybrid kind of space, one for which there are no conceptual frameworks, just the pragmatic expediencies of keeping traffic moving.....high-stress landscapes, full of anxious people on unfamiliar territory." He concludes by saying, "The next stage of the development of the major airport looks as if it will be its most interesting."

### LIVING IN THE PAST (chpt. 8)

Sudjic main point in this chapter is expressed in its first sentence. "The attitudes of a city towards its own past are as much as anything the product of the way that it views its prospects." He reminds us that at their peaks, London and New York had less interest in preserving vestiges of its past than building its future. "There was little enough interest in preserving individual buildings, still less in maintaining the character of whole areas." In those days, "Property rights were sacred, and it was up to the individual owner to decide what to do with the buildings that he owned, as much as it was with his livestock, or his bank balance. ....The belief in the idea of progress, with its equation of prosperity and prestige with change, was a powerful one. But when the outlook darkens, physical change starts to seem more threatening, and buildings identified with the past, whatever their intrinsic quality, are seen to offer a sense of continuity and stability."

He reinforces this view by contrasting Tokyo to London. Currently there is much more interest in restoration in London than Tokyo. And he explains this by stating, "These attitudes clearly have much to do with the confidence with which Japan views its future. The Japan of the 1990s sees things much in the same way as Victorian Britons in the 1890s, Los Angelenos in the 1950s and Houstonians in the 1960s.

However, he then allows an "opposing view, put into words by the American critic Vincent Scully, is that whenever we see a building being demolished, we automatically expect that it will be replaced by something worse." And goes on to say that "As conservationist movements grew in strength, so the motivation for the stage army of pressure groups that sprung up to protect all these buildings was less for their individual quality than for their familiarity.....the role they had to play in providing a sense of continuity in the city were regarded as their greatest virtues."

He then contrast this preservationist movement from the "disdain for the tastes of our immediate predecessors." As he says, "Each generation, it seems, has to learn to despise its predecessors as an inescapable part of its adolescence, and it is only with maturity that it becomes capable of seeing beyond its prejudices to perceive the real merits of the recent past."

In the world of restoration he distinguishes between "those buildings restored by purists, where the whole point was to maintain as far as possible the character of the building....and at the other extreme .....take existing buildings as the starting point for more drastic surgery....creatin "hybrids". His example of a "hybrid" restoration was Quincy Market in Boston by the Rouse Company. To which he says, "Quincy Market has actually been the subject of the most ruthless rebuilding imaginable, in which very little is left of the original structures." But as he concedes, "the huge popular success of the project helped make conservation of a sort respectable in America."

He concludes his views on this subject by saying, "Clearly the past is going to go on having an important part to play in the shaping of the city. But our views of the past, and our judgments of the quality of its remains, are permanently provisional."

### A ROOF OVER THEIR HEADS (chapt. 9)

Housing is the subject of this chapter. Sudjic explores public policy (public housing for the poor) and the conflict between professional and public opinions on style and location. And the on-going argument about suburban housing.

He briefly reviews the "retreat from public housing" when he opens the chapter by declaring that the 1980s "was the decade in which the retreat ..... turned into a rout. With a remarkable degree of unanimity, governments in America, Britain and France decided that the policies of the post-war consensus on housing had been disastrously misguided."

In the United States he lays the blame at the feet of the republicans when he says, "Ronald Reagan cut the Department of Housing and Urban Development's budget from \$35 billion in 1981 ..... to \$7 billion in 1988. The number of homes built with federal assistance in America dropped from 550,000 in 1976 to 225,000 in 1981 and to little more than 100,000 in 1985." Although he infers this lack of

public support for housing is an exclusive Republican position Clinton and the democrats now in office appear to have no greater interest in providing funds for housing.

Sudjic assigns the dramatic shift away from support for public housing support to "the widely accepted belief that it had been an ignominious failure." And that "A masochistic outburst of architectural myth-making in both America and Britain conspired to help the process along. ....even the dynamiting of the Pruitt Igoe flats in St Louis to be seized on as evidence that the ills of post-war development were fundamentally architectural. And in the process it was assumed that public housing was in itself a fundamentally flawed building type."

Sudjic belief that the assignment of blame for the failure of Pruitt Igoe to its design is misguided is supported by an article in the St Louis Post Dispatch which "pointed out at the time, its destruction in 1974, fifteen years after it was completed, can be explained because "there was no maintenance fund, and the broken windows let in wintry air freezing water and bursting the pipes." The development was the victim of brutal budget cuts while it was still under construction, suffered appallingly bad management, and was occupied almost entirely by poor blacks without the resources to make life in Pruitt Igoe tolerable."

Sudjic positions the debate when he says, "The precise number of people who literally have no roof at all is the subject of endless and largely inconclusive arguments between governments who profess to see the homeless as a minor, if annoyingly conspicuous problem and housing activists, to whom the phenomenon is the denial of a basic human right."

Sudjic then moves from the failure of the public sector to provide housing to that of the private sector when he states, "Equally dismaying is the dawning realization, in both America and Britain, that the private sector cannot supply large numbers of people in ordinary jobs with decent, affordable housing. ....The difficulty that the private housing market has in meeting the aspirations of people is not confined to Britain. According to the Joint Center for Housing Studies at Harvard and MIT, the average American thirty-year-old spent 14% of his income on a mortgage in 1955. But in 1987 the equivalent thirty-year-old was spending 44% of that income. For a substantial number of Americans, that is not enough to buy a house."

And Sudjic assigns blame for not providing enough housing at an affordable price to "zoning restrictions which have been used ....to keep all but the most affluent newcomers out."

Sudjic then uses examples of large lot zoning and minimum house sizes to prove his point. That certainly is true in many incidences but my experience is that the currently popular political position of attacking the "pace of housing growth" has restrained the supply of housing below new demand created by job growth and thus increased housing prices much more than the much maligned zoning practices. Slowing down the "pace of growth" has far more broad political appeal and support for this anti-market position more frequently than not is also supported by those who historically have supported "affordable" housing.

Sudjic also touches on the impact of gentrification on housing availability and as he says is the mirror image of the "tendency for those Americans who can afford it to live in surroundings further and further removed from the traditional idea of the city," and supported his view by citing: "Peter Marcuse, a planner at Columbia ....(who claims to have) found chilling evidence that gentrification in New York City is just another version of white flight. But instead of moving out to the suburbs, here the flight is from the Bronx, Brooklyn and Queens into the gilded stockade of Manhattan."

As for suburban housing Sudjic again states the architectural biases against suburbs when he says "Suburbs have never had much appeal for architects.....Le Corbusier claimed that in reality the garden city leads to an enslaved individualism" And "Lewis Mumford attacked post-World War Two suburbia because, "it caricatured both the historic city, and the archetypal suburban refuge, a multitude of uniform distances on uniform roads in a treeless communal waste." While "the same condescension still comes from the American Institute of Architects, which claims that "These new areas are populated by transient, career-minded families who have not developed allegiances to these areas beyond a concern for property values."



Sudjic sums up his chapter on housing defending the market systems response to the "fantasies" and "dreams" of the public despite the continued criticisms of self proclaimed members of "the high culture of society" when he says; "The truth is that the market does provide an infinite variety of aesthetic expression for homes. The messages that people use their homes to express may not be very comforting for the metropolitans - (i.e.) Milton Keynes has a weakness for thatched roofs, the suburbs of Houston betray every kind of fantastic dream from Scots baronial to New England fisherman's cottage - but the choice of a house is a chance to reflect these fantasies about life, dreams which are ignored by those who shape the high culture of a society at their peril."

#### WALT DISNEY AS A CITY PLANNER (chpt. 10)

This chapter is more about the impact (or lack of) of expositions on cities than about Walt Disney as a city planner. Although Disney played with the idea of building the "ideal" city in earlier versions of EPCOT its clear that Walt's "model city" plan didn't mesh with the commercial criteria of the exposition idea which ultimately prevailed.

After he takes us through the successes and failures of international expositions and the impact of a private exposition such as Disneyland Sudjic sums up the chapter as follows: "As a model for the new city, it is a synthesis of the Disney and expo-traditions, a blend of escapism and cynicism that tells us all a great deal about the psychology of urbanism." **Frankly, Sudjic's message in this chapter isn't that clear to me.**

#### THE ARCHITECTURE OF CONSUMPTION (chpt. 11)

What Sudjic calls "The Architecture of Consumption" are the urban consequences of the changing public consumption patterns as supported by the mobility of the automobile and the response of the commercial enterprises who seek to satisfy the publics tastes. He moves us around the world from Europe to Tokyo to demonstrate that the dramatic changes in where and how the public shops is universal and the impact that it has had on our view of just what is a city.

He brings the subject to a conclusion by asking what he calls "The central question about shops is whether it is the form of shopping that dictates the nature of a city, or if it is the city's nature that dictates how shopping, its primary communal activity, is carried out. Perhaps the truth is somewhere in between; that the different incarnations of shopping, from the market to the department store, the high street to edge-of-town, are the signals that confirm the direction a city has taken. Vast shopping sheds that serve people from more than one city demonstrate that urbanism has already become an amorphous landscape in which mobility allows anything to happen anywhere. Paradoxically, while the city itself has decentralized, shopping has become ever more concentrated."

#### SUCCESS AND FAILURE (chpt. 12)

Here Sudjic distinguishes between the world macro-economic forces that now more and more govern the viability of the modern metropolitan city and the micro-economic forces that local officials who actually govern them have deal with.

"Success and Failure is a macro economic view of competition between the world's major cities and the forces, much of which are beyond the ability of local officials to impact, that may spell either success or failure for their future."

Measured in terms of economic power the major cities of the world still dominate. That is so long as you attribute an ever widening area as part of the economic city. As Sudjic puts it; "Even if the cities are spreading themselves over ever larger areas, power is concentrating in fewer and fewer of them."

But, "There is a widening gulf between the dwindling number of cities which are able to operate on a world scale and those that can't. London, Tokyo, Paris, New York, Los Angeles and, a few steps behind them, Frankfurt, Milan, Rotterdam, Hong Kong and Brussels thrive by attracting people and money from around the world. These are the cities in which the multi-nationals cluster together their so-called command and control functions. The media and communications companies, the corporate lawyers, the important bankers and the lobbyists all have to be in one of these cities. Their continued presence confirms the status of a world center, just as the arrival of an emerging company or an ambitious individual in London or New York is a signal of intent."

"Cities depend for their very existence on the concentration of people and power that has always been the underlying theme of development in the industrial world. (Although LA continues to be a power Hub the question is "how far from the core can a company locate to still be in "the Hub?")

".....economic power in the post-industrial world has become concentrated in even fewer centers than it was a hundred years ago, sharpening the competition between the survivors. ....In the nineteenth century, even the smaller European capitals all had a stock exchange, an opera house and an architecturally grandiloquent railway terminus. Now there are only three really important stock markets in the world, the vast majority of Europe's international travel is channeled through just three hub airports, London, Paris and Frankfurt, and most of its entertainment comes from California."

After going from major city to major city to make his point about why they do or do not qualify as international power centers he makes his most important point when he says, "The world city needs far more to fuel its growth, and its continuing economic health, than homespun remedies." And, "Without the economic buoyancy that makes a city a desirable place, it's very hard for a city administration to achieve much. A mayor can try to put in place the funding for a hotel to be built, or persuade the government to put up the cash for the construction of new warehouses, but he can't get the employers to occupy them. He can fund convention centers in the hope of attracting high-spending businessmen, but the solutions of the 1980s, a festival market, a convention centre, an atrium hotel, don't amount to a very great deal as an economic turn around."

#### **THE FREEWAY VERSUS THE METRO** (chpt. 13)

Sudjic's discussion about "the freeway versus the metro" centers more on the impact each has made on the cities form and the recognition that the means by which the public transports itself is changing and thus does the city. He spends some time reviewing the efforts of some cities to bring back rail and the generally mixed success of such efforts when he says, "The 1980s saw an explosion of investment in public transport as the world's cities rediscovered mass transit. But whether all the money was spent wisely or not is debatable. The tram, optimistically rechristened the light railway .....suddenly became as much a part of the repertoire of every modishly ambitious city as its festival market and conference center. Not every mayor can persuade his electorate to foot the bill for a subway, but for a fraction of the cost a light railway can be just as conspicuous a prize."

But he puts all the recent rail building into perspective when he says, "For all the excitement about public transport, the reality of the 1980s in most cities was the troubling combination of ever larger numbers of private cars coupled with a drastic cutback in road building. Roads were not the vote winners they had once been, they involved recasting the city in ways that were no longer palatable, and governments became much less enthusiastic about building them, especially in urban areas." .....(because the perception was that after) "fifty years of building urban motor ways they had achieved little more than gridlock."

He makes an interesting point about the importance of higher densities to the subject of public transportation when he revealed that, "Despite Los Angeles's image of endless sprawl, of all American cities only New York has higher densities. Its built-up areas average 5200 people to the square mile. The city core ....averages 12,000 and peaks at 28,000 people to the square mile.....The figures underscore the problem that faces Los Angeles. It has grown too big and too dense to function as a car-based city, as Houston and Phoenix still can, but at the same time it is too spread out for a new mass transit system....."

He sums up this subject by saying the obvious, "The physical form of the city is clearly shaped more and more by the need to accommodate the vehicle. The way buildings are now experienced, entry first involves warehousing a large machine: a far more complex and nuance business than is conventionally realized." And, "On the wider scale, it is these interchanges from one form of transport to another, and to buildings and public spaces, that are what really create the public life of a city. Both in terms of movement across a city and the starting point for building a sense of civic cohesion."

#### **LOOKING AT THE WORLD THROUGH INVERTED COMMAS** (chpt. 14)

**The impact of tourism on our cities is the subject of this chapter.** Sudjic believes that, "As a force for social change, tourism has had an impact of the same order as the industrial revolution. In less than three decades, tourism has transformed the way that the world looks, and works." And that, "Tourism has the power to reduce the most potent of symbols to an empty cliché. The pyramids, St Peters and the Kremlin are principally tourist icons now, invoked to persuade people to travel. Religion, culture, art and history are all reduced to a spectacle." .....We long for "authentic" experiences, the cafe that only local workmen go to, the restaurant that sells local cuisine which nobody else knows about, the bar in which you can meet real people. It's a curious dream of the thinking classes, which exerts just as powerful an influence on the way that the big cities are seen as it does the resorts. And it is the idea of authentic spontaneity which is behind the idealized view of the city."

And he uses Venice to reinforce his point. "Venice, of course, has lived out a prosperous twilight for the past three hundred years or so based on an entirely artificial economy. From world-wide trading empire, with the political and financial clout to go with it, which has a good claim on having invented mass production with its galley-building factories in the Arsenal, Venice declined into a gilded tourist honey pot."

But he doesn't dismiss Venice because of what it has become but rather says, "It is futile to bemoan what Venice has become. .... The struggle now is to ensure that the place goes on being attractive enough to bring in tourists, the only economic asset it has left."

He concludes this chapter on tourism and the city by arguing that, "The city has always been a spectacle. It has grown in part because of its very attractiveness, its sense that it has something special to offer. And this spectacle has always been consciously manufactured, from the circuses of ancient Rome to the more recent inventions of the tourist industry. They have become an essential part of the economy of cities. But the last two decades have seen the process whipped up to fever pitch in the world cities, where the impact of mass tourism has started to bring about structural changes. As long as travel remains widely available, the change is likely to be irreversible."

#### **THE MYTH OF COMMUNITY** (chpt. 15)

The "myth" that Sudjic attacks is the "sentimentality with which it is usually discussed. ....(the) fantasy that celebrates the corner shop, borrowing a cup of sugar from the neighbors, and all those other unimpeachable suburban virtues that range from motherhood to apple pie."

Sudjic points out that the idea that a community is where "everybody knows everybody else, where people stay close to home and families keep in touch" has been expressed by many in the past. As he puts it, "The comforting conviction that there is an underlying sense of continuity, of collective memory and shared experience to give meaning to the aimlessness of everyday urban life was an essential part of the repertoire of the sentimental writers on urban affairs, long before Jane Jacobs. Even Steen Eiler Rasmussen, London's otherwise highly perceptive Danish biographer, claimed to see the city as a network of villages, whose residents have always identified with their community, not with the city as a whole."

He then makes the point that this view of community is what causes "homeowner groups (to) build walls around their communities to defend themselves against the outside world." and as a result become the "underpin (for the) hostility of the intellectual for suburbia, a stick for metropolitans to beat the backs of the hicks, rather than to get to grips with the actual nature of the city. Suburbia is held to lack the sense of community that "authentic" cities have."

He concedes, however, that "To argue that "community" does not exist does not rule out the possibility of collective action and shared responsibilities. But the concept needs to be subjected to rather sharper scrutiny than the sentimentality with which it is usually discussed. ....the idea of community has its roots in behavioral and anthropological studies. But this is an inadequate basis on which to build a theory about the nature of the city. It fails to deal

with the nuances that are involved in the continual movement that is an essential part of urban life."

Sudjic sums up his discomfort with the romanticized image of community by acknowledging that he has no clear view of just what a community is in later part of this 20th century when he says: "Clearly the understanding of how a city functions must be based on a sense of the people who live in it. But those kinds of definitions are far subtler than the primitive notion of community. The same phenomena of internationalization re overtaking the world's largest cities, which has led to the creation of new versions of the old idea of the community. It is too early yet to say how they will evolve and develop.

In the long term, however, it is a tendency which seems to be cutting across the most universal tendency of all, the decentralization of the city. Clearly, the amorphous suburb, and the sharply focused ghetto, look set to coexist for a considerable time to come. Their meanings, however, are not to be found in sentimental visions of community."

Sudjic appropriately rejects the Duany and Plater-Zyberk's sentimental and stylistic notion of community but in so doing overlooks the human desire to identify with their living community. In Irvine we have responded to that desire by creating what we call "Villages" which are but enlarged neighborhoods. However, we reinforced the visual and administrative distinctiveness of each through landscaping, architecture, paths and walkways, local shopping, schools and parks and "village" governing boards that are held responsible for their governance.

The local "community" provides the intimate identity that because of their size the megalopolis no longer can provide. The problem with the "Seaside" example is that it overlays this simple idea of visual identity with myths of neighborliness that do longer exist if they ever did.

#### THE IMAGE OF THE CITY (chpt. 16)

Here Sudjic makes two major points about the "city." First he argues for a 20th century view of the 20th century "megalopolis" city rather than coloring it by our historic perceptions of what they were. That "the public realm of the city is no longer defined by the church, the legislature, the market or the agora" nor is it an "accretion of streets and squares that can be comprehended by the pedestrian."

His other point is that the changes that the major "megalopolis" cities of the world are under-going, such as Paris, London, Tokyo, New York and Los Angeles, "go beyond appearance." That "it is the affluence of the society that builds them, the patterns of living that its citizens adopt, and perhaps most critically, the struggle for economic advantage by one city over another that have been the driving forces behind change."

He begins the chapter by acknowledging that "Pinning down a city with statistics is a notoriously difficult undertaking. There is no international yardstick to define a conurbation, and some countries don't even have a national standard with which to do it. The lack of definition helps to perpetuate myths about cities. Santa Monica, Pasadena and Irvine are counted physically, if not politically, part of Los Angeles. Yet London is defined by the boundaries of the old Greater London Council area. As so defined it lost 739,000 of its seven million people during the 70's but if the surrounding areas were included as part of London it would actually have increased in population."

He introduces the idea of the "megalopolis" city when he says, "The major invention of urban historians of the 1960s was the idea of the megalopolis, introducing a perception of great cities metamorphosing into amorphous urban regions. But continuous urbanization does not always satisfactorily define a city. Large numbers of people living in close proximity do not in themselves constitute a city. But when a conurbation does have a sufficiently strong focus, then the whole sprawl takes on its identity.

To make sense of this kind of city it's important to grasp the new landmarks that define it. The public realm of the city is no longer defined by the church, the legislature, the market or the agora, but is now the restaurant and the bar.

Reaction to these shifting definitions has, to say the least, been mixed just as was the response to the no less dramatic transformations that London, Paris and New York went through in the nineteenth century.

It is true that in its new incarnation the diffuse, sprawling, and endlessly mobile world metropolis is fundamentally different from the city as we have known it. But for the architect and the urbanist to turn their backs on this new form, which is the backdrop to everyday life for the vast majority of people, is both condescending and self-defeating. This new species of city is not an accretion of streets and squares that can be comprehended by the pedestrian, but instead manifests its shape from the air, the car or the mass transit railway.

The equipment we have for making sense of what is happening to our cities has lagged far behind these changes. Both the popular and the academic views of what the city is, are colored more by historical perceptions than by present-day realities. Painfully little work has been done what is really like to live in such a city, with its diffuse focuses, and its enormous distances. Instead, the image of London that persists is the historic crust that tourists see, defined by the area between Tower Bridge and Marble Arch that they can comfortably cover on foot or negotiate by bus and taxi in the interval between breakfast in the hotel and lunch in the mock-Edwardian pub. To continue to contain our image of the city to this view neglects the more fundamental truth that the modern city is a collection of landmarks that have different meanings to the different people who live in it or who use it, some shared, others with more private significance."

Sudjic then moves from the visual to the economic view and influences of the city. "The changes that have taken place in the world's mature cities go beyond appearance. It is the affluence of the society that builds them, the patterns of living that its citizens adopt, and perhaps most critically, the struggle for economic advantage by one city over another that have been the driving forces behind change."

The drive to construct new developments in the image of the classical city will do nothing to change those basic patterns, unless their inhabitants are parted not just from their motorcars but from their taste for supermarket shopping and exotic imported products."

He sums his multi-images of the modern city when he says, "The image of the city is simultaneously endlessly attractive, and threatening and repellent. It's a place where the poor can make their fortune, it's a honey pot for the adolescent looking for excitement, it provides the freedom of the bachelor for the suburban husband escaping his responsibilities, it's sex and glamour. It's also poverty and menace, beggars and muggers, dirt and squalor."

The architectural historians have only just begun to get to grips with the way that the modern city functions, to be able to formulate as multilayered a view of the city as that which the cinema has always been able to offer. The specifics of place and climate are still crucial - Los Angeles is not yet New York. London is not New York. Each has its differences in the way in which people live determined by the grain of the city - the size of the average home, its configuration, and the rest. Yet, as this book has argued, the world's cities are inextricably linked as a single system, one which demands sharper and sharper competition between them."

#### THE HUNDRED-MILE CITY (chpt. 17)

Sudjic sums up his thesis on the changing form and nature of the city by asking his readers to "Imagine the force field around a high-tension power line, crackling with energy and ready to flash over and discharge 20,000 volts at any point along its length, and you have some idea of the nature of the modern city. The energy that powers the force field is of course mobility. The wider ownership of the car that has come since the 1960s has finally transformed the nature of the city. The old certainties of urban geography have vanished, and in their place is this edgy and apparently amorphous new kind of settlement. The chances are that the force field couldn't have come into being without a downtown, or historic crust, but in its present incarnation, the old center is just another piece on the board, a counter that has perhaps the same weight as the airport, or the medical centre, or the museum complex. They all swim in a soup of shopping malls, supermarkets and warehouses, drive-in restaurants and anonymous industrial sheds, beltways and motorway boxes."

Having presented us with the "100 mile city" as a place without any single dominate center as its focus he concludes that "the home" has become "the centre of life - though given the astonishing increase in household mobility, it's not likely to be the same home for very long. From it, the city radiates outwards as

a star-shaped pattern of overlapping routes to and from the workplace, the shopping center, and the school. They are all self-contained abstractions that function as free-floating elements. Each destination caters to a certain range of the needs of urban life, but they have no physical or spatial connection with each other in the way that we have been conditioned to expect of the city."

As for the architecture and urban spaces of our historic cities he says they have become "overwhelmed by the sheer scale of new buildings." Because a "new race of giant boxes has descended, warehouses, discount superstores, shopping malls and leisure centers that it is hardly possible to differentiate one from another." And as a result "they have swallowed up most civic functions." Sudjic says this not in the tone of the traditional nostalgic architectural lament but rather as a description of what the city in fact has become. In fact the main thrust of his book has been to describe what he calls "the force field" that has ushered in these changes and to argue that those "forces" are so powerful that they have forever swept away the historic concepts of the walking city with its dominate cultural, governmental and commercial core.

Whereas Sudjic accurately describes how the automobile has allowed the individual to live, work and shop where they choose and thus they have created the "100 mile city" he also makes the point the even this changed city may be in jeopardy unless it can successfully compete with other "100 mile cities" in our increasingly global economy when he says that the long term (maybe even short term) survival of a city may well depend on its ability to "compete" with other "great cities." And as a consequence there is a "widening gap between those cities that are successful, and those that are not. Their treasuries teeter on the edge of bankruptcy, they fail to attract new employers, they have little to recommend them culturally."

Almost as an after thought Sudjic raises the issue of "what happens if the supply of energy is shut off - if the private car on which so many cities depend is made obsolete by future energy crises."

In fact very few urban writers spend much time analyzing this prospect. But the prospect of a "future energy crises" is nearer than we may think if Daniel Yergin's estimate of the world's reserves is correct. In his book "The Prize" which traces the discovery and ultimate dependency on oil he estimates the world supply is less than 1000 billion barrels. With the world currently using over 60 million barrels each day that says we have less than a 50 year supply. And with the U.S. having gone from a country which exported its excess production in 1945 to one that now must import 50% of its needs the possibility of an energy crises is not whether but when.

The word "crises" may even be misleading because most think of a "crises" as something that is temporary which when properly addressed allows one to return to "normal." But in fact it is highly unlikely that once the world's supply of oil diminishes to the point where OPEC no longer can supply the world with "cheap" energy the form of the city may again need to change. In fact, in my view, it is not the automobile which has created the "100 mile city" but rather the incredibly cheap fuel that drives the pistons that run them. It is "cheap fuel" that allows the individual to drive alone 30 to 50 miles each way to work. Energy "experts" estimate it will be 30 years or more before the economics of energy including all known alternatives will change. But in the history of our cities that's but a blink of our eye.

Perhaps, Sudjic's reason for writing this book could be summarized in the following two sentences from his concluding chapter. "For the planner or the architect to ignore the currents that are shaping the city is clearly futile. Enormous amounts of energy have been expended on means of reconstructing the traditional European city, as if this were possible by the simple exertion of will."

He concludes by reminding all of us that "To accept this image of the city is to accept uncomfortable things about ourselves, and our illusions about the way we want to live. The city is as much about selfishness and fear as it is about community and civic life. And yet to accept that the city has a dark side, of menace and greed, does not diminish its vitality and strength. In the last analysis, it reflects man and all his potential."

The 100 Mile City by Deyan Sudjic, Philip Sayer and a great selection of related books, art and collectibles available now at AbeBooks.com. In Murder in the Mile High City: The First 100 Years, author Linda Wommack, aided by fellow writer and researcher Linda Jones, describes forty-two of riveting murder cases that made headlines during Denver's first century. The cases range from the married socialite who was the cause of the death of one of two of her lovers neither of whom was her husband to man who planted a bomb on the United Airlines plane carrying his mother, giving him the dubious distinction of being responsible for the first airborne terror attack.