



	T R A N 0 4 7 1	Operator: He Hong		Dispatch: 26.03.05	PE: Anna Winsley
	Journal Name	Manuscript No.		Proofreader: Xu Yuyan	No. of Pages: 18

But malice aforethought: cities and the natural history of hatred

Nigel Thrift

I take as my starting point the fact that Western cities are often depicted as on the brink of catastrophe. Indeed some contemporary authors would argue that they have never been closer to that brink. The first part of this paper argues against this tendency by focusing on the preponderance of activities of repair and maintenance. Having looked at the state of this forgotten infrastructure, in the second part of the paper I turn to an examination of why this Cassandra interpretation is so prevalent. I argue that, in particular, it draws on wellsprings of misanthropy which are rarely voiced in writings on cities because sociality is too often confused with liking. Yet it seems vital to me to tackle misanthropy head on. Then, in the third part of the paper, I argue that currently there is a coming together in cities of all kinds of affective politics of concern which can act, through all manner of small achievements, as a counter to misanthropy but which do not mistake the practice of this politics for a search after perfection.

key words maintenance repair affect misanthropy love cities

Division of Life and Environmental Sciences, University of Oxford, Oxford OX1 3PD
email: nigel.thrift@admin.ox.ac.uk

revised manuscript received 26 January 2005

Introduction

You may talk of the tyranny of Nero and Tiberius; but the real tyranny is the tyranny of your next-door neighbour. (Bagehot 1856, cited in Lane 2004, 15)

Perhaps he doesn't wait even for the end of the conversation, but gets up at the point where the matter has become clear to him, flies through the town with his usual haste, and, before I have hung up the receiver, is already at his goal working against me. (Kafka 1988, 425)

He who says neighbours says enemies. (France 2001/1908, 9)

The idea of the city as doomed is one of the common tropes of urban representation, as Mike Davis (2002) has illustrated at length in one of his latest books.¹ For Davis, the Western city is rapidly coming unglued. It is a runaway train fuelled by equal parts hubris and fear. It is Roadrunner suspended over the abyss. In tapping in to this anxious tradition of writing on cities, Davis is hardly alone. For example, he cites approvingly that rather idiosyncratic Marxist Ernst Bloch, in

equally apocalyptic mode, arguing much earlier that, in contrast to the adaptive and improvisatory pre-capitalist city, the capitalist city is in a continual state of radical insecurity and dread. Transfixed by the idea of a totally safe and calculable environment, the capitalist city is fixed and unbending in the face of unexpected events: 'it has rooted itself in midair'. And so it is heading for a fall: 'where technology has achieved an apparent victory over the limits of nature . . . the coefficient of known and, more significantly, unknown danger has increased proportionately' (Bloch 1929/1998, 307, 309).

Well maybe. I thought that I would begin this paper by arguing against these increasingly common nightmare scenarios which seem to be so prevalent that they are now producing all kinds of echoes – such as the growing historical literature on metropolitan catastrophes.² I believe that on many dimensions the contemporary Western city is more robust than it has ever been and I want to explain why (cf. Massard *et al.* 2002). But I am also sure that the inhabitants of Western cities often think the opposite and I will try to explain that too: my thesis is that it is not only the images of war



and disaster flooding in from the media that have generated a pervasive fear of catastrophe but also a more deep-seated sense of misanthropy which urban commentators have been loath to acknowledge, a sense of misanthropy too often treated as though it were a dirty secret.

This is not, I hasten to add, a Panglossian account. I do not think that all is well in the urban world or that all will be well – of course, cities are and will no doubt continue to be vulnerable to all kinds of catastrophic events, from terrorist attacks to earthquakes to influenza epidemics. Rather, I want to provide a qualified account which by excavating the everyday life and varying time signatures of cities might lead the discussion of the future politics of cities in slightly different directions.

To this end, I will begin the paper by noting that cities often bounce back from catastrophe remarkably quickly. I will argue that there are good reasons why that is: most particularly, the fact that Western cities are continuously modulated by repair and maintenance in ways that are so familiar that we tend to overlook them but which give these cities a good deal more resilience than Bloch, Davis and many others before and since have been willing to give them credit for.

In the second part of the paper, I take a more philosophical turn and address why urban inhabitants might have a sense of foreboding about cities. I am not sure that the evidence would suggest that cities are any more on a knife edge than they have ever been, but a Cassandra tendency seems to infect many of the recent writings on cities. Why might this be? I suggest that this requires an analysis of the prevailing urban mood. In other words, I want to turn to a consideration of affect arising out of a series of papers I have published recently³ which have attempted to engage with various technologies of affect. In particular, I will consider the sheer incidence of misanthropy in cities and how it has been framed since industrialization. My argument is that it is only by facing this misanthropy square on that we can start to understand kindness and compassion. I want to argue that a certain amount of dislike of one's fellow citizens is, given the social-cum-biological-cum-technological make-up of human beings, inescapable: the ubiquity of aggression is an inevitable by-product of living in cities.⁴ But I also want to argue that part of the impetus for the increasing interest in the misanthropic side of cities that may not celebrate but certainly does not shy away from the darker side of

human nature lies in the fact that modern urban spaces are increasingly seen as themselves implicated in human imperfectibility in that rather more of their substance than was formerly acknowledged takes its cue from models of organization that are founded on the systematic delivery of violence, which are so engrained that we hardly notice their dictates, yet alone understand their origins. Certain kinds of violence have become engrained in our 'natures' by these models of organization and our environment now simply confirms these truths.

Then, in the final part of the paper, I argue that there is a nascent politics of foreboding centred around the idea of a politics of hope which involves engaging with the sentiment of compassion but is not thereby sentimental.

In other words, in this paper I want to walk the line, veering between hope and then pessimism, and then hope again. To begin with I want to argue straightforwardly that, even though 'the myth of terrible urban vulnerability endures' (Konvitz 1990, 62), cities are much more robust entities than they are usually given credit for, continually being replaced by activities of maintenance and repair.

But I move on to argue, perversely some will say, for a more pessimistic view of the moral life of cities than is often put forward nowadays, for I do not believe that advances in material civilization necessarily lead to moral progress. This is hardly a novel position. After all, it was forcefully put forward by Rousseau in his *First Discourse*. But, even now, it is still an uncomfortable one, sometimes associated with fascism or various forms of mysticism, and most clearly articulated by an almost forgotten set of social theorists like Gobineau, Le Bon, Sorel and Schmitt whose politics were not always attractive, to put it but mildly (Llobera 2003). However, of late, it is possible to argue that there has been a largely unacknowledged revival of this kind of thinking as a result of a number of developments, of which I highlight just three. First, there has been a greater and greater interest shown in the biological constitution of human social orders. Whilst, arguably, a strain of eugenic thinking persists in modern societies (cf. Duster 1990), still it has become possible to talk about biology without being immediately accused of determinism and, in turn, to address issues like violence and aggression and hatred as though they might have biological determinants without immediate censure. Second, there has been a renewed interest, in the guise of

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work on so-called agonistic politics, in forms of politics which are willing to tolerate a depiction of societies as not premised on the maintenance of shared orders but as, in large part, being the result of the carving out of very different worlds, worlds which cannot be expected to reach agreement and which may obdurately disagree because they do not even hold in common shared premises about the world. Such work argues that politics is about disagreement as much as it is about consensus (cf. Ranciere 1999; Mouffe 2002).⁵ Third, there has been a general falling away of belief in the efficacy of large-scale projects of social change and their corresponding goals of forging a bourgeois or socialist heavenly kingdom, not just because they so often seem to crush difference, but also because they so often seem to unleash mythopoetic forces that their own proponents do not seem to understand.⁶

In conclusion, against this rather sombre background, I return to the later work of Ernst Bloch and argue for a politics of affective 'repair and maintenance' based around hope. This should not be interpreted as a call for blind optimism. Rather, it is an argument for a politics of disagreement which can still find a place for a sort of practical utopianism which cleaves to the idea that the 'the essence of the world is cheerful spirit and the urge to creative shaping' (Bloch 1959/1986, 16). Cities may have, as I will argue, a large reservoir of enmity but they also have a surplus of hope, an unconscious hunger for the future as well as the past.

In what ways vulnerable? The hum of maintenance and repair

In both old and more recent work, I have been trying to see the city as an object which has temporal extension into the future, rather than as a snapshot. It consists of a myriad of partially connected processes going forward at different rates and speeds (Amin and Thrift 2002) and across many 'scales' simultaneously.⁷ This vision has particular relevance in arguing about urban vulnerability. For it is often argued that cities are vulnerable and cannot survive the trauma of war and other dramatic events of destruction easily. This is an extreme judgement. To begin with, it tends to rely on thinking of cities as caught in the temporal aspic of the present, as if urban trauma only consisted of the act of destruction itself and its immediate aftermath. But there is another tradition of thinking about cities which thinks of them as

existing over the longer term, for example by using devices like building cycles with their various amplitudes, and would judge urban trauma using this longer-term perspective. This kind of work has fallen out of favour (for a review see Parkes and Thrift 1980), but it has the useful by-product of conceptualizing cities as having all kinds of periods of temporal return, many of which may extend over decades.⁸ Then, there is a simple empirical point. Cities generally tend to recover quite quickly from even the most damaging catastrophes. For example, back in the 1980s when I considered the history of large Vietnamese cities in the 1960s and 1970s (Thrift and Forbes 1980) and British cities in the Second World War (Thrift 1996), I was struck by the fact that their populations could survive repeated attacks quite well. Some decanting of population took place, but many people soon returned. This resilience existed for all kinds of reasons, of course, not all of them good. For example, many people, and especially working class people, had nowhere else to go. But there was one factor which was apparent at the time but whose wider significance I have only lately seen. Cities are based in large part on activities of repair and maintenance, the systematic re-placement of place, and this ability is still there in times of trouble to be adapted to the new circumstances. These activities provided a kind of glue, which hastened cities' recovery times, most especially because all kinds of processes are being intervened in, some of which are pretty easy to deal with quickly (e.g. broken power lines), others of which take far longer to mend (e.g. broken hearts). Cities, in other words, took hard knocks but with the aid of all these activities they could get up, dust themselves off, and start all over again. This is a point I want to develop in more detail.

Repair and maintenance covers a whole host of activities and it has become, if anything, more prevalent since I worked on the impact of war on cities. To begin with, Western cities nowadays are populated by large national and international companies⁹ which specialize in activities as different as various kinds of cleaning, all forms of building maintenance, the constant fight to keep the urban fabric – from pavements and roads to lighting and power – going, emergency call-out to all manner of situations, the repair of all manner of electrical goods, roadside and collision repair of cars, and so on. These mundane activities, the

quartermasters of urban culture as Loos (1898/1998) might have put it, may have been neglected by most urban commentators, but it is possible to argue that they are vital, not least because of the large and systematized knowledge bases that underpin them which are currently seeing an unparalleled expansion. That expansion is taking place in three domains: new materials and techniques that are extending the service life of all the infrastructure that surrounds us; new means of presenting and commodifying this knowledge (for example, there are now substantial degree programmes in topics like logistics and facilities, maintenance and repair); and the fact that what counts as repair and maintenance is constantly extending into new fields (for example, into the biological domain through activities as diverse as bioremediation (effectively, environmental repair) and the repair of DNA). To give some sense of the current spread of activities, consider only the vaguest of snapshots provided by Table I.¹⁰ Then, much of the general population is also constantly involved in maintenance and repair. The growth of activities like do-it-yourself (DIY) indexes the way in which home maintenance and repair (including the maintenance of gardens, cars, and the like) has itself produced a set of thriving commodity markets, made up of all kinds of electrical and other goods.¹¹ And, finally, these activities often involve a high degree of improvisation, even in their most systematized form. They involve solutions to very diverse situations which still resist standardization, and so may often retain a good deal of often un- or under-appreciated skill and all kinds of 'underground knowledges'.¹²

What is interesting is that we have little idea if the increasing reach and complexity of activities like these has made cities more or less vulnerable to catastrophe. Some 'risk society' commentators might argue that their contribution is piffling when compared with the new generation of global risks that are now emerging. But, equally, it would be possible to argue that cities are constantly adding new circuits of adaptability: the city is a knot of maintenance and repair activities which cannot easily be unravelled and which allow it to pick itself up and start again, so to speak, relatively easily. All we can say at the moment is that modern urban dwellers are surrounded by the hum of continuous repair and maintenance and that, furthermore, some of the quintessential everyday urban experiences are generated by them, from the noise

of pneumatic drills boring into roads to the knock or ring of a repairman come to mend a broken-down this or that.¹³ The point becomes even more germane if the emergency services are added in, with their knowledges of clearing up small but sustained disasters like accidents, fires, and the like, all the way from the actual incident itself to the smooth running of the aftermath, which may involve all kinds of allied actors from builders to insurance assessors.¹⁴ Again, the sight and sound of these services is a quintessential everyday urban experience.

Recently, this general hum of activity has been powered up by information technology. True, the speed, interconnectedness and complexity of information and communications technology has produced new vulnerabilities. For example, on one estimate, an average large firm's computer networks are down for an unplanned 175 hours per year and as much as '70–80% of [corporate] IT spending goes on fixing things rather than buying new systems' (Kluth 2004, 4). But, generally speaking, information and communications technology has probably made cities more robust by adding more degrees of redundancy and new forms of knowledge. Simple things like risk analysis and other institutionalized forms of diligence, booking systems, etc. have made the business of maintenance and repair easier to carry out and, indeed, are beginning to automate at least some of this activity (as in, for example, the instance of machines that send messages that they are breaking down). More to the point, in situations of breakdown, whether epic or mundane, the humble mobile phone has extended the city's interactivity and adaptability in all kinds of ways and may well have been the most significant device to add to a city's overall resilience by adding an extra thread to the urban knot. In addition, all kinds of knowledges of maintenance and repair which are heavily dependent upon information and communications technologies are coming to the fore, all the way from logistics to disaster planning itself (which, in certain senses, is a branch of logistics).

I want to argue that this activity constitutes an urban technological unconscious which helps to keep cities as predictable objects in which things turn up as they are meant to, regularly and predictably (Thrift 2004a). Modern Western cities are in many ways mass engineering of time and space and this engineering increasingly involves working with very small spaces (of the order of millimetres)

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Table I A sample of facilities, maintenance and repair jobs

Aircraft Electrician jobs	Level I Electrician jobs	Level III General Maintenance Worker jobs
Aircraft Maintenance Supervisor jobs	Level I Facilities Maintenance Manager jobs	Level III HVAC Mechanic jobs
Airframe and Engine Mechanic jobs	Level I General Maintenance Worker jobs	Level III Operations Research Analyst jobs
Assembly Supervisor jobs	Level I HVAC Mechanic jobs	Level III Painter jobs
Concrete and Terrazzo Finisher jobs	Level I Operations Research Analyst jobs	Level III Plumber jobs
Construction and Building Inspector jobs	Level I Painter jobs	Level III Rep., Electro/Mechanical Equipment Field Service jobs
Copy Machine Field Service Representative jobs	Level I Plumber jobs	Level III Rep., Electronic Equipment Field Service jobs
Dairy Processing Equipment Repairer jobs	Level I Rep., Electro/Mechanical Equipment Field Service jobs	Level III Rep., Telecommunications Equipment Field Service jobs
Electric Home Appliance and Power Tool Repairer jobs	Level I Rep., Electronic Equipment Field Service jobs	Level III Spares Coordinator jobs
Electric Meter Installer and Repairer jobs	Level I Rep., Telecommunications Equipment Field Service jobs	Level IV Operations Research Analyst jobs
Electric Motor Assembler jobs	Level I Spares Coordinator jobs	Level IV Spares Coordinator jobs
Electrical Powerline Installer/Repairer jobs	Level II Aircraft Maintenance Manager jobs	Level V Operations Research Analyst jobs
Electrical Utility Trouble Shooter jobs	Level II Aircraft Painter jobs	Level V Spares Coordinator jobs
Elevator Installer/Repairer jobs	Level II Carpenter jobs	Maintenance Supervisor jobs
Estimating Manager jobs	Level II Electric/Electronics Technician jobs	Operations Research Analysis Manager jobs
Facilities Maintenance Supervisor jobs	Level II Electrician jobs	Operations Research Analysis Supervisor jobs
Facilities Manager jobs	Level II Facilities Maintenance Manager jobs	Parking Lot Attendant jobs
General Labourer jobs	Level II General Maintenance Worker jobs	Security Guard jobs
Groundskeeper jobs	Level II HVAC Mechanic jobs	Senior Airframe and Engine Mechanic jobs
Head of Housekeeping jobs	Level II Operations Research Analyst jobs	Senior General Labourer jobs
Housekeeper jobs	Level II Painter jobs	Senior Groundskeeper jobs
Housekeeping Supervisor jobs	Level II Plumber jobs	Senior Janitor jobs
Interior Aircraft Assembly Manager jobs	Level II Rep., Electro/Mechanical Equipment Field Service jobs	Senior Security Guard jobs
Interior Aircraft Assembly Supervisor jobs	Level II Rep., Electronic Equipment Field Service jobs	Senior Structural Assembler jobs
Janitor jobs	Level II Rep., Telecommunications Equipment Field Service jobs	Spares Coordination Manager jobs
Jig and Fixture Builder jobs	Level II Spares Coordinator jobs	Spares Coordination Supervisor jobs
Lawn Service Manager jobs	Level III Aircraft Painter jobs	Structural Assembler jobs
Level I Aircraft Maintenance Manager jobs	Level III Carpenter jobs	Vehicle Washer/Equipment Cleaner jobs
Level I Aircraft Painter jobs	Level III Electric/Electronics Technician jobs	
Level I Carpenter jobs	Level III Electrician jobs	
Level I Electric/Electronics Technician jobs		

Source: <http://www.salary.com> (Accessed)

and times (of the order of milliseconds). At this scale, this means working on the structure of anticipation, producing a comforting sense of regularity and a corresponding (and probably amplified historically) sense of annoyance when things do not play out exactly as it is intended that they should.

In a sense, speed has produced a new landscape of anticipation. Some commentators see this landscape as a threat, likely to institute a new 'dromocracy'. I am more ambivalent. It seems to me that it offers possibilities too, and not least in providing rapid reaction to problems large and small. Indeed,

as information technology systems come in which are based on continuous updating of information, some degree of capacity to track and trace and the ability to forecast forward in a very limited way (for example, through profiling systems), so it seems to me that cities will add another landscape to their repertoire, one which works a few seconds or minutes or, in extreme cases, hours ahead of the present and which will add markedly to their resilience. Of course, there is a new repertoire of risk associated with this landscape of foresight, but whether it is that much larger than many other developments remains to be seen. Computer systems are vulnerable to attack just like any other system, but it is also important to remember the continuous amount of repair and maintenance which goes into these systems anyway, and reactions to attacks by worms or viruses are rapidly being incorporated into this burgeoning structure.

Of course, there is a partial exception to this story of relative resilience: cities in the South. It could be argued that some of these cities are in a recurring state of emergency (Schneider and Susser 2003). They have not benefited from many of the recent developments in information technology and may even have had much risk transferred to them by the vagaries of uneven development but, whatever the cause, such cities have much less in the way of repair and maintenance infrastructure to begin with.¹⁵ Writers like Koolhaas (2003) have celebrated the informality of these cities and argued that they present a new model of flexibility: I doubt it! It seems more likely to me that these cities, through general lack of resources, are likely to have less maintenance and repair infrastructure and that they are forced to make up this deficit through even more acts of inspired improvisation and the widespread use of informal networks of help like family and friends. Of course, in extremis, as in forced acts of 'de-modernization' such as are found in Palestine, repair and maintenance infrastructures may start to break down completely (indeed, it could be argued that one of the tactics of 'urbicide', to use Steve Graham's (2003) felicitous phrase, is to mount an assault on precisely these structures).

What cities of the South do illustrate is the importance of another kind of repair and maintenance to which I will return later in the paper. That is what we might call the social repair occasioned by social networks of various kinds, kin and friendship networks which may offer a range of

support. This is more, so far as I am concerned, than just so-called 'social capital'. It is practical political expression.

Dark feelings

So why, if the evidence for the increased vulnerability of cities is certainly ambiguous, and even at times downright tenuous, especially when compared with an everyday event like, say, global traffic carnage (now standing at well over a million killed per year around the world) does a certain sense of defencelessness and foreboding persist in the populations of many Western cities? Why is fear of and for the future seemingly so widespread, to the point where the level of anxiety has touched off what Davis (2002) calls a whole urban 'fear economy' of surveillance and security? Why do so many seem to feel that their definition of the real is under threat, such that, for example, the normative relays between personal and collective ethics have become frayed and worn? To begin to understand this dynamic of unease, we need to stray on to the territory of affect and begin to think of cities as emotional knots.

I have been involved in investigations of urban affect or mood for a number of years now, but can say that touching this sphere remains an elusive task, not least because so many definitions of affect circulate, each with their own problematizations. For example, affect can be understood as a simple or complex biological drive, a pragmatic effect of the pre-cognitive or cognitive interactions of bodies, a set of capacities for affecting or being affected by, the communicative power of faciality, and so on (Thrift 2004b). In other words, affect is as much a nexus of a set of concerns – with what bodies can do, with the power of emotions, with the crossover between 'biology' and 'culture' – as it is a finished analytic.

But even given this diversity of focus, we can point to obvious causes of a sense of defencelessness and foreboding, none of which I would want to gainsay. There is the evident peril of the current geopolitical conjuncture with all its pitfalls. More importantly, probably, there is the emotional aftermath of 9/11 and similar terrorist attacks. Images of these events have probably come to stand for something greater in many Western city dwellers' minds, not just the threat to life and limb but also the disruption of the pace and rhythm of everyday life, the sheer turn-up again-ness of each urban

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moment and the quantum of hope that goes with it. Further, these images have been amplified by the media, which has a constitutive interest in presenting them as inherently magnified. Why? Because fear sells. There is a market in anxiety.¹⁶ As Altheide (2002) shows in his seminal book on the subject, the overwhelming message of news reports is fear. Further, safety is increasingly promoted through association with fear. In other words,

Fear has shifted from concerns with the physical world and the spiritual realm of salvation during the last four hundred years to the social realm of everyday life. It is other people but not just immigrants – the historical other that have troubled previous immigrants-now-solid-citizens; it is the ‘other’, that category of trouble that can unseat solid expectations and hopes for a future that can never be realized in what is perceived to be a constantly changing and out-of-control world. Fear rests on the borders between expectations and realizations, between hope and reality. (Altheide 2002, 26)

But I want to go farther in to this sense of the future by considering the typical make-up of the ‘unconscious’ of the modern Western urban dweller. I shall argue that the current urban trauma is the particular expression of a more general set of affective potentials. But I shall not, on the whole, resort to Freudian explanations of this affective undertow. Rather, I will argue that the contemporary Western urban unconscious consists of sedimented cultural-cum-biological-cum technological (the clumsiness of these terms themselves suggesting that they are unsatisfactory representations) shortcuts which produce particular kinds of interactional intelligence, stances towards how the world is negotiated. Human interactional intelligence is, so far as we know, predicated upon five qualities. First, it assumes sociality. As Levinson (1995) points out, human is biologically and socially predicated upon co-ordination of action with others: ‘it is cooperative, mutual intersubjectivity that is the computational task that we seem especially adapted to’ (Levinson 1995, 253). So, for example, selfishness seems to be a secondary characteristic: ‘people care both about other people, and about how social transactions occur – not just the outcomes’ (Heinrich *et al.* 2004, 1). Second, and consequentially, human interaction recognizes and privileges the special kind of intention with which a communicative act is produced. Third, human assumes the presence of tools which will be actively used and which are assumed to be active.

(Indeed it is arguable that certain human bodily characteristics like the hand and associated parts of the brain have co-evolved with tool use). Fourth, human interaction utilizes a massively extended affective palette which is learnt from birth (Gerhardt 2004). Fifth, human because of these characteristics tends to animistic thinking, which humanizes the environment and assumes that the environment interacts with it on similar terms, rather than as a series of partially disconnected and perceptually very different *umwelts*.

This interactional intelligence is perpetually criss-crossed by affect, which acts both as a way of initiating action, a reading of the sense of aliveness of the situation and an intercorporeal transfer of that expectancy. Affect, in other words, acts as the corporeal sense of the communicative act. In the literature, some prominence has tended to be given to euphoric affects like happiness, hope and joy. But, there are a range of dysphoric affects that also repay attention which have also been studied, like greed, cruelty and shame. I want to argue that interactional intelligence has therefore both a positive bias to sociality but also, in part precisely because of this, some misanthropic aspects.

One thing which is often neglected about affect is that it involves temporal extension. Perhaps because Freudian concepts of repression have circulated so widely, it is often thought that affect is solely concerned with projections of the past. But, there is every reason to believe that affect is as concerned with projection or thrownness into the future, as a means of initiating action, as the power of intuition (Myers 2002), as a hunger for the future (as found in, for example, daydreams), as a set of fantasies (for example, concerned with romantic love, which I will address again below), and as a general sense of physical motility (Balint 1959).

The rather longwinded preface to this section allows me to argue something about the nature of interactional intelligence which has often been neglected, namely that although it has a social bias, there is another side to that bias. That is that achieving sociality does not mean that everything has to be rosy: sociality is *not* the same as liking. In particular, it seems likely that from an early age interactional intelligence, at least in Western cultures, is also premised on exclusion and even aggression. Children tend to learn sociality and sharing, at least in part, through intimidation, victimization, domination and sanction. In other words, the kind of empathy required by interactional intelligence does

not preclude a good deal of general misanthropy. Though it hardly needs saying, sociality does not have to be the same thing as liking others. It includes all kinds of acts of kindness and compassion, certainly, but equally there are all the signs of active dislike being actively pursued, not just or even primarily as outbreaks of violence (e.g. road rage or Saturday night fights) but more particularly as malign gossip, endless complaint, the full spectrum of jealousy, petty snobbery, personal deprecation, pointless authoritarianism, various forms of *schadenfreude*, and all the other ritual pleasures of everyday life.¹⁷

None of this is to say that it is necessary to condone virulent forms of racism or nationalism or other forms of mass identification which often involve systematic exclusion and violence. It is to say, however, that we need to think more carefully about whether we really have it in us to just be unalloyedly nice to others at all times in every single place: most situations can and do bring forth both nice and nasty. Perhaps, in other words, we are unable to resist at least some of the forms of resentment and even cruelty that arise from the small battles of everyday life: recent work in the social psychology of childhood development, for example, shows how children gradually come to understand sharing and turn-taking but can also be 'happy victimizers' (Killen and Hart 1995). However, at some point, most (but by no means all) children link the two: the pain and loss of the victim begin to modify and reduce the victimizer's happiness. In other words, they begin to construct a practical *morality*.

Morality is not, of course, a purely cognitive process. It has strong affective components. It is quite clear that all kinds of situations are freighted with affective inputs and consequences that are central to their moral outcomes which come from affective histories that arise from complex histories of being victims and of victimization that produce a sense of fairness and concern that will build into a consensus in some situations and not in others. How is it possible to apply insights like this to the affective fabric of cities? That is what I will now begin to attempt to elucidate.

The misanthropic city

Cities bring people and things together in manifold combinations. Indeed, that is probably the most basic definition of a city that is possible. But it is not the case that these combinations sit comfortably

with one another. Indeed, they often sit very uncomfortably together. Many key urban experiences are the result of juxtapositions which are, in some sense, dysfunctional, which jar and scrape and rend. What do surveys show contemporary urban dwellers are most concerned by in cities? Why crime, noisy neighbours, a whole raft of intrusions by unwelcome others. There is, in other words, a misanthropic thread that runs through the modern city, a distrust and avoidance of precisely the others that many writers feel we ought to be welcoming in a world increasingly premised on the mixing which the city first brought into existence.

This is often framed in liberal accounts as a problem of alienation: the city produces solipsistic experiences which, in some sense, cut people off from each other and, presumably, from the natural condition of inter-relation they feel in smaller, rural communities.¹⁸ But, as is now clear, I would want to argue for a different course, one in which misanthropy is a natural condition of cities, one which cannot be avoided and will not go away and which may even have been amplified by the modern mass media with their capacity to extend the reach of what counts. I want to argue that cities are full of impulses which are hostile and murderous and which cross the minds and bodies of even the most pacific and well-balanced citizenry. Perhaps, indeed, we need to face up to the fact that this underside of everyday hatred and enmity and malice and vengeance may be one of humanity's greatest pleasures, sieved through issues as diverse as identity (as in who belongs and who doesn't), sexuality (as in unfettered masculinity) and even the simple turn-taking of conversation (as in rude interruptions and the like). In other words, humanity may be inching towards perfectibility but, if that is indeed so, it is an even slower progress than we might have thought, worked through daily lacerations and mutilations of social relations. In turn, perhaps we cannot simply explain away this malign background but must learn to tolerate it, at a certain level at least, as a moral ambiguity which is part and parcel of how cities are experienced, an ambiguity which cannot be regulated out of existence.

However, I do not want to be misunderstood. This is not to express some cathartic horror of urban humanity in a long tradition which stretches back to at least Victorian times and no doubt before. It is rather an attempt to write back into social science accounts of the city a thread of understanding which has for too long been left to

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with, a tradition which briefly flowered in the works of philosophers like Schopenhauer and Stirner,¹⁹ philosophical novelists like Dostoyevsky, and social scientists and political theorists like Le Bon, Sorel, Schmitt and others, but which has generally been left to novelists and poets to enquire in to. This is surprising, not least because it could be argued that the foundation of social science itself rests on the response to various religious crises which prompted the production of increasingly secular and societal remedies for what had once been considered theological and metaphysical concerns: as Comte explained, theology's 'treatment of moral problems [is] exceedingly imperfect, given its inability . . . to deal with practical life' (cited in Lane 2004, 5). Hence, his 'system of positive polity'.

What seems certain is that the actual expression of the misanthropy has been more or less excusable as an urban condition through the course of history. Thus, in eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century England, misanthropy was understood as a problematic state, but certainly not a state that was mad, iniquitous or perverse. For example, Hazlitt could argue that 'there is a secret affinity, a hankering after evil in the human mind [and] it takes a perverse, but a fortunate delight in mischief, since it is a never-failing source of satisfaction' (cited in Lane 2004, 9). But by the middle of the nineteenth century, such sentiments were fast going out of fashion in the face of a more pious stance to life which valued a controlled and benevolent heroism of the everyday and which increasingly regarded people-hating as a psychological affliction (often, indeed, caused by unrequited love) which must needs be combated by social programmes and self-restraint, although in mid- and even late-Victorian literature a series of radical or maudlin haters still continue to crop up as characters and attitudes, as instanced by authors like Dickens, Brontë, Eliot, Browning, Hardy and Conrad. The turn against misanthropy may have been hastened as well by other cultural shifts and, not least, the discovery of evolution and of animal passions that might seem all too natural if not shackled by reason (Gay 2002).

In general, one might argue that this Victorian attitude to intolerance or even hatred of others as failed civility still inhabits Euro-American cities, leaving a large amount of *surplus enmity* as hard to express and likely to be interpreted as a sign of a subject not fully in control of their behaviour. Western cities are, indeed, chock full of institutions and mechanisms that are intended to channel and

domesticate anger towards and hatred of others, all the way from institutions of socialization like schools through to all the paraphernalia of emotional control or appropriate expression that occur subsequently. But Western cities are also full of outbursts of violence and rancour, from seemingly all but random outbursts of road rage through the drunken mayhem typical of, say, British cities on a Saturday night, which suggest that a certain amount of hatred and rancour can still be generated in and by cities surprisingly easily. I would argue that the sense of defencelessness that is now being felt in large part is being channelled by and from this underside: it actually consists of the victimizations of childhood and the run of daily life more generally feeding back into the city's fabric as an undertow of spite. It is ourselves turning back on ourselves. It is the thin veneer of altruism at its thinnest.

But I want to go farther than this and suggest that this sense also arises from the fact that modern cities are criss-crossed by systems that channel and control anger and hatred in ways which are likely to produce random outbursts and occasional mayhem on a fairly regular basis amongst the citizenry which go beyond acts which are necessarily labelled as 'criminal'. I want to argue, in other words, that the potential for different combinations that are brought into existence by cities has, as an inevitable correlate, a dark side that we have too soon wanted to label as pathological. There are a number of sides to this problem. First, some of this dark side can be ascribed to biological pressures that we can only probably abate. Frankly, we cannot tell because we do not know what kind of animal we are and the range of territorial and other adaptations we can comfortably make. For example, it is by no means clear what the range of intuitive spatial behaviours of human beings can be (Levinson 2003). Second, many social structures themselves may generate enmity as they try to damp it down, a point close to Freud's (1930/2002) argument in *Civilization and its discontents* that civilization is a key cause of antagonism: 'society, in trying to protect us from what we want (ultimately, an end to internal tension), instills in subjectivity a profound malaise, while providing "an occasion for enmity"' (Lane 2004, 28).²⁰ Third, the issue becomes even more complex because some of our dark side comes from formally structured cultural behaviours which tap into these pressures and constraints and work with them to deliver anger and hatred in a

structured and predictable way.²¹ Engrained within cities are all kinds of imperatives towards enmity and rage which arise out of social institutions of feeling which are only just beginning to be understood.²²

Let me take a particularly relevant example. That is the echoing presence of armed force and, in particular, militaristic organization. I think it could be argued that military organization has had rather more influence on cities than is conventionally allowed in most accounts. This is not just about the matter of the presence of armed forces, trained in ways of structuring violence that can have lasting impacts, though this presence can be extensive (see Woodward 2004). It is not just about a series of military innovations which have made their way into the everyday life of cities, such as logistics.²³ It is not even just about the construction of militarized bodies through the proliferation of disciplined routines which have at least some military forebears, like boxing and martial arts, bodybuilding, and even some of the forms of warrior charisma beloved of business (see Armitage 2003). And it is not, finally, just about the apparent ambition of so many forms of modern entertainment to recreate the heat of the battlefield by battering the senses into a non-representational sublimity (Ferguson 2004).

I want to suggest that military imperatives are much wider even than this and have led to the deployment of anger and hatred and resentment in cities on an even more systematic basis. In particular, I want to point to the way in which domesticity has been organized on military lines through the institution of the suburb and other normalizing spaces to enforce a particular notion of domestic normalcy which at the same time very often leads to everyday violence. Here I want to draw on the provocative work of writers like Lauren Berlant and Laura Kipnis to argue, provocatively I hope, that militarized imperatives are a part of the structure the domestic system (and especially its spatial correlates) and produce and channel a surplus enmity which cannot easily be satisfied but tends to reveal itself in petty acts of cruelty, as well as actual violence.

Thus, the figures demonstrate that domesticity is associated not just with love and care but also with violence so widespread that it is difficult not to believe that it has a systematic nature based on 'happy victimization'. For example, in the UK one in four women will be a victim of domestic violence in their lifetime and domestic violence

accounts for more than a quarter of all violent crime (including over 150 murders each year). In the EU, one woman in five has been at least once in her life the victim of violence by her male partner and, as in the UK, a quarter of all violent crimes involves a man assaulting his wife or partner. And this is before we arrive at the figures for child abuse.

This system cannot be easily undone because, ironically, of the surplus of hope that also structures the system of domesticity in Euro-American societies in the shape of the notion and practices of romantic love. There is no doubt that romantic love has its positive tropisms. It clearly represents a kind of last and best hope in many people's lives, providing an emotional world to which they can escape or which they can use as a goal to escape to, an imagined future outside of the humdrum world. 'Romance is, quite obviously, a socially sanctioned zone for wishing and desiring, and a repository for excess' (Kipnis 2000, 43). Thus, as Kipnis points out, adultery is very often a kind of affective escape attempt founded on the notion of an irresistible romantic love:²⁴

Among adultery's risks is the plunge into a certain structure of feeling: the destabilizing prospect of deeply wanting something beyond what all conventional institutions of personal life mean for you to want. Yes, all these feelings may take place in the murk of an extended present tense, but nevertheless, adultery, like cultural revolution, always risks shaking up habitual character structures. It creates intense new object relations at the same time that it unravels married subjects from the welter of ideological, social, and juridical commandments that handcuff inner life to the interests of orderly reproduction. It can invent 'another attitude of the subject with respect to himself or herself'. In adultery, the most conventional people in the world suddenly experience emotional free fall: unbounded intimacy outside contracts, law, and property relations. Among adultery's risks would be living, even briefly, as if you had the conviction that discontent wasn't a natural condition, that as-yet-unknown forms of gratification and fulfilment were possible, that the world might transform itself – even momentarily – to allow space for new forms to come into being. Propelled into relations of non-identity with dominant social forms, you're suddenly out of alignment with the reality principle and the social administration of desire. A 'stray'. (2000, 41–2)

But it is not difficult to argue that romantic love is also oppressive because it blots out so much of the affective else which may be less intense but socially

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more important, making everything else appear an insufficiency. Yet, in a striking parallel with misanthropy, anyone who declares themselves incapable of romantic love would be regarded by the majority of people as abnormal: 'all of us [are] allied in fearsome agreement that a mind somehow unsusceptible to love's new conditions is one requiring professional ministrations' (Kipnis 2003, 26).²⁵ Thus, as Kipnis puts it:

It's a new form of mass conscription: meaning it's out of the question to be summoned by love, issued your marching orders, and then decline to pledge body and being to the cause. There's no way of being against love precisely because we moderns are constituted as beings yearning to be filled, craving connections, needing to adore and be adored, because love is vital plasma and everything else in the world just tap water. We prostrate ourselves at love's portals, anxious for entry, like social strivers waiting at the ropeline outside some exclusive club hoping to gain admission to its plush chambers, thereby confirming our essential worth and making us interesting to ourselves. (2003, 3)

Yet, at the same time, it would be difficult to deny that romantic love can also contain large amounts of care, compassion and intimacy and it is to values of attachment like these that I now want to turn, values which exist somewhere between the poles of romantic love and misanthropy but which aren't quite so demanding, perhaps, so difficult to live up (or down) to.

The politics of urban trauma. From love to kindness

The notion of cities as potential nests of kindness has been at the root of the notion of social science since its inception. For example, Comte's *System of positive polity, . . . instituting the religion of humanity* argued that 'in human nature, and therefore in the Positive system, Affection is the preponderating element' (ref). Comte wanted to transform self-love into social love by promoting what he called, coining a new word, 'altruism'.²⁶ From there, it was but a short step to the notions of 'community' which have so entranced writers on cities who have been trying to increase the sum total of altruism in cities, from Park through Jacobs to Sennett.

I am perhaps less starry-eyed about the practice of altruism than these authors (though none of them could be counted as romantics). I have already rehearsed some of my reasons: for example, the prevalence of misanthropy and romantic

love and the fact that we live in heavily militarized societies which are based in part around understanding cities as if they were armed camps – the model of armed force and the armed camp can be argued to be one of the organizing principles of the modern city, rather than being a new alternative (Agamben 2001). But there are others too. For example, most subjects most of the time are clearly the receptacles of all kinds of contradictory desires; 'contradictory desires mark the intimacy of daily life: people want both to be overwhelmed and omnipotent, caring and aggressive, known and incognito' (Berlant 2004b, 5). Then again, most subjects are more often than not ambivalent about the dilemmas that they face and often prefer that things should remain that way: they don't necessarily want them to become 'issues' that they have to explicitly address. As Berlant puts it with regard to intimacy;

When friends and lovers want to talk about 'the relationship'; when citizens feel that the nation's consented-to qualities are shifting away; when newsreaders or hosts of television shows bow out of their agreement to recast the world in comforting ways; when people of apparently different races and classes find themselves in slow, crowded elevators; or when students and analysts feel suddenly mistrustful of the contexts into which they have entered in order to change, but not traumatically, intimacy reveals itself as to be a relation associated with tacit fantasies, tacit rules and tacit obligations to remain unproblematic. (2004b, 6–7)

But I also believe that a politics of disagreement of the kind formulated by writers like Rancière (1999) can take the practice of altruism under its wing and forge a critical politics of feeling which is inherently optimistic (Berlant 2004) but also realistic; that is, it does not demand too much – which is not, of course, the same as saying that it demands nothing at all! Thus, in what follows, I want to argue that it is possible to think about a practical politics of the maintenance and repair of the city's structure of kindness. In turn, such a politics can begin to understand rather better what makes cities tick.

So far, we have mainly considered the temporal politics of foreboding, the sense that round the corner lies something rotten, something to be fearful of. But there is another kind of temporal politics that is also possible, a politics that amplifies the sense that around every corner is an opportunity – to open up and take hold of the future, to endow it

with values like care and compassion, to value expectancy. I want to begin to open up this problem by returning to the work of Ernst Bloch.²⁷ Bloch is probably best known not for his apocalyptic comments on cities but for his much later work on the politics of hope.²⁸ Bloch was concerned with a temporal sense that he called the method of 'hope' whose 'goal' was the amplification of moments of hope:

any attempt to objectify these moments and turn them into outcomes of some process, as philosophy and history tend to do, are destined to fail to capture the temporality of these moments. (Miyazaki 2004, 23)

Thus, for Bloch, 'hope' signified a kind of thirst or hunger for the future, a venturing beyond, a forward dreaming which mixes informed discontent with an ineluctable forward tendency; 'a heap of changing and mostly badly-ordered wishes' (Bloch 1959/1986, 50). What Bloch wanted to foreground was a politics of anticipation, a feeling of striving towards the future, an eager looking-forward and reaching forth, a source of fresh strength, a production of the New, a dawning. And, for Bloch, this fresh strength could be mapped: it would be found particularly amongst youth, in times on the point of changing, in moments of creative expression, and so on.

Using this framework amongst others, I want to turn to the embryonic politics of this paper by considering some of the ways in which an *active*, so-called 'prosocial' everyday form of kindness might be installed in cities as a value which goes beyond 'simple' civility. This would not consist simply of the installation of good manners, as in certain middle class mores, or of the inculcation of a kindness militant, as in certain religions, or the installation of a forced state project, as in the proposals to build up 'social capital' being proposed by many governments around the world currently. Rather, it would be a way of producing generosity in the body from the start by emphasizing what Bloch calls 'productivity', the construction of a new horizon out of the subconscious, the conscious and the not-yet-conscious. Writing from another context, Diprose (2002) has called the ethical correlate of this kind of transhuman approach, which privileges emergence and becoming,²⁹ 'corporeal generosity', but I think that this phrase runs the risk of falling back into the domestic model of kindness that I am concerned to escape, a model that too often ignores the fact that force and violence permeate political life

and, to an extent at least, define politics as a domain and that mean, to use a classically Weberian insight, that nicely-honed ethical actions do not necessarily lead to morally desirable consequences (Walker 1993). This is not, then, intended to be some starry-eyed account. I am quite clear that such a stance would not only be utopian in the worst sense, but may also be trying to act against the basic features of interactional intelligence.

Of course, it would be possible to argue that certain kinds of generosity are being installed in cities continually in the many daily acts of everyday life. For example, a mother instructs her child not to pull another child's hair. Or someone helps a frail person to cross the road. But I want to go a little farther than this in that it seems to me that a kind city has to work on a number of dimensions, not all of which are conventionally 'human'.³⁰ Kindness has to be extended to other kinds of urban denizen, including animals. More to the point this kindness has to be built into the spaces of cities. Thus cities have to be designed as if things mattered, as if they could be kind too. Cities would then become copying machines in which a positive affective swirl confirmed its own presence.

So what kinds of relationships should be possible in cities, given that there is rather more misanthropy than commentators are willing to own up to, and equally rather too much romantic love?³¹ I have tried to argue that too little has been made of kindness and compassion as a means of structuring cities in the race for a higher plane which just isn't there. In turn this suggests a twofold political task. On one side, we obviously need to continue to pursue a conventional macropolitics of urban care which draws on the deep wells of caring and compassion that currently typify many cities, the result of the often unsung work put in by the employees of various welfare systems, all manner of voluntary workers, and the strivings of an army of 'carers'. On the other side, we need an affirmative micropolitics of productivity which attempts to inject more kindness and compassion into everyday interaction, the arena on which I will concentrate (see Thrift 2004b). In other words, I want to think of kindness as a social and aesthetic technology of *belonging to a situation*, rather than as an organic emotion.

To illustrate the point, I want to return initially to the military. For what is clear is that the military demonstrates the way in which kindness and compassion is able to be systematically generated and

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amplified by war – but, generally speaking, in small combat groups only. In these groups, which usually consist of six to ten ‘buddies’, people routinely look out for each other, even die for each other, bound together by learned mechanical behaviour and tight social bonds which are able, at least to an extent, to banish fear (Holmes 2003; Ferguson 2004). Indeed it has been argued, ironically, that these tight-knit groups are the bedrock of the deployment of successful armed force; their intense sociality acts as a structured means of producing death. Many other social orders have this same intensity, but that intensity sometimes seems to summon up too much love/hate. Which is why, perhaps, lighter touch forms of sociality are now receiving so much attention, what one might call, following Latour (2004), ‘gatherings’. These systems of more intensive encounters are not attempts to build utopian realities so much as they are attempts to ‘produce ways of living and models of action within the existing real’, thereby ‘learning to inhabit the world in a better way’ (Bourriaud 2002, 13). They can, in other words, be counted as attempts to privilege a little more expectation of *involvement* which do not, however, try to go over the affective top, to continue the military metaphor: these are attempts to construct affective shortcuts which can add a little more intensity. Equally these are attempts to foster an expectation of civility which does not try to set its hopes too high. Instead of performing opposites like stranger–intimate (Warner 2002) by building categories of inclusion and exclusion that are too categorical, and that immediately begin to make rights-based claims on the state, the ‘goal’ is to construct counterpublics that are based on a certain conviviality arising out of a mutable, itinerant culture. As Gilroy puts it,

the radical openness that brings conviviality alive makes a nonsense of closed, fixed and reified identity and turns attention towards the always unpredictable mechanisms of identification. (2004, xi)

But how to construct this lighter-touch urban politics of assembling intimacy, kindness and compassion, understood as a range of social and aesthetic technologies of belonging? This practice of ‘relational aesthetics’ (Bourriaud 2002, 2003) is both a difficult one to uncover and a difficult one to demonstrate.³² For a start, it can easily be confused with other agendas, for example in attempts around the world to build ‘social capital’ or simply to enforce civility, as in the United Kingdom’s current

war on anti-social behaviour.³³ Then, compared with other forms of politics, it can appear to be such a faint proposition that it may seem to be hardly worth pursuing (Bennett 2001). And finally, it operates in a domain of hope and expectation which is hard to see and whose results may be hard to discern until long after the event. It operates in the background – which is, of course, the point. Such a politics, in other words, is bound to provoke cynical reactions of various kinds. It’s too prim and proper. It’s now you see it, now you don’t stuff. It’s weak and feeble: what do you say to racist thugs or vigilante groups? But just because cynical reactions can be predicted is no reason not to begin the task.

So, as an envoi, I want to highlight four of the sites – sites which can be built upon – at which these kinds of gatherings can be found currently, gatherings which are mobile, often times ambiguous, and which encompass a multivalent host of forms. In each case, as I have argued elsewhere, the gathering operates as much in the precognitive realm as the cognitive, based around forms of expression which are not conventionally regarded as political but which may well conjure up all kinds of sometimes ill-formed hopes and wishes that can act to propel the future by intensifying the present. This proto-political domain of added strength aforethought, of a politics of readiness, of what Lefebvre called *the politics of small achievements*, is now hovering into view as a much more explicit site of political effort than in the past, one which has much more time for affect since it is in this domain that so much affect is generated (see, for example, Connolly 2002; Thrift 2004b).

The first site concerns *the domain of politics itself*. In the past, politics has often been considered to be a case of building local coalitions which are able to be assembled into ever larger movements which in time will become political forces in their own right. But I am struck by how many recent forms of politics do not necessarily have this goal in mind. They are determinedly local and have no necessary expectation of wider involvements. An example might be the growing number of urban environmental struggles based on fauna and flora that has usually been considered as mundane and/or disposable but for which people may have considerable affective bonds, or on leisure activities like gardening which require considerable expressive capacities but, until recently, have been seen as without the right kind of cultural authenticity.

Another example might be the choice of minor key targets for political action which are unexpected but have grip, such as garbage (Chakrabarty 2002) or even paving stones (Massey 2001). These are forms of politics that can work round emotional impasses, that can boost expressive capacities and that can generate trust and familiarity for their own sakes. This is not to say that they do not relate to wider concerns – they do – but their main concern is, to repeat Bourriaud's little/big phrase, 'learning to inhabit'.

The second site is the city's light-touch, partially engaged, partially disengaged *modes of social interaction*. Long derided as the fount of blasé attitudes or cynicism or various other forms of alienation,³⁴ it might just be that they can be perceived as something quite different if they are understood as spaces of affective display and style in the manner recently argued by Charles Taylor (2004), as a kind of continuously mobile sphere of public opinion expressed as much through mood as through any definite cognitive process.

Spaces of this kind become more and more important in modern urban society where large numbers of people rub shoulders, unknown to each other, without dealings with each other, and yet affecting each other. As against the everyday rush to work in the Metro, where others can sink to the status of obstacles in my way, city life has developed other ways of being, as we each take our Sunday walk in the park or as we mingle at the summer street festival or in the stadiums before the playoff game. Here each individual or small group acts on their own, but with the awareness that their display says something to others, will be responded to by them, will help build a common mood or tone that will color everyone's actions. (Taylor 2004, 168)

Taylor shows that these light-touch gatherings³⁵ are different from their nineteenth-century forebears in a number of ways. Most particularly, through the power of the modern media, they often rely on audiences dispersed beyond the space of the immediate event. But what seems clear is that these gatherings can constitute a binding affective force which, though 'not enframed by any deeply entrenched if common understanding of structure and counterstructure' can still be 'immensely riveting, but frequently also wild, up for grabs, capable of being taken over by a host of different moral vectors . . .' (Taylor 2004, 170).

A third site is the institution of *friendship*. It seems to me that in the end it is the kind of lighter touch social relationship signalled by the notion of

'friend' that probably has most to offer cities in making them resilient. Of course, the notion of 'friend' has changed historically over time (Pahl 2000; Traub 2002; Bray 2004; Vicinus 2004) from the remarkably intense relationships signalled by the term in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, but I think that it is possible to suggest that the looser ties of friendship and conviviality, and the kind of stance implied by the term now, have had the most to offer in keeping cities resilient and caring. For, in the end, cities have survived trauma because they are concentrations of knowledges of routine as found in activities like repair and maintenance, and also of the kind of energy and resourcefulness which has a large part of Bloch's quality of hope engrained within it, mediated by mundane but crucial social ties like friendship.

Friendship has three main things to recommend it. First, it is still widespread. For all the stories of the demise of sociality in alienated Western cities, the evidence suggests that friendship is still thriving, though inevitably mediated by all kinds of factors such as stage in life course (Pahl 2000). Then, the practice of friendship offers a model for intimacy and compassion which is achievable and which offers an automatic reaction to distress: a friend acts to help. It offers, in other words, a model of the future in which bad, even terrible, things may still happen but one in which 'my friends will still be there for me'. At its best, the help of friends is often given automatically as a subconscious attachment to a situation. Finally, it can be shown that these kinds of networks do work when catastrophe beckons. For example, in a recent brilliant book, Eric Klinenberg (2003) has looked at the way in which the populations of two relatively alike areas of Chicago reacted to the catastrophe of the week-long 1995 heatwave in which over 700 died. In one area, the death toll was low, in another it was high. The difference could be explained by a number of factors, including poor or unresponsive public services but also, pivotally, by the actions of friendship networks. In one area, these were active and acted as both glue and as a means of social maintenance and repair. In the other area, no such networks existed and the area proved correspondingly brittle.

Again, it is important not to be starry-eyed. Friendship can involve all kinds of negative emotions and tensions. It may involve quite high degrees of competition. It does not necessarily do anything to lessen social divides.³⁶ But friendship

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can also form a kind of moral community, whose power should not be underestimated in its reaching across.

Then, as a final site, I want to point to the outpouring of various kinds of *practical affective politics*. I have reviewed these elsewhere (see Thrift 2004b), so I will only briefly reprise them here. What is important to note is the increasing range of performative methods that are now going to make up the practices of politics, many of which involve the explicit mobilization of affect. These methods are often precisely involved in the stimulus of kindness and compassion and range from various kinds of work on the body (including manifold trainings, new means of showing awareness, various forms of pedagogic and co-operative psychology, and so on) to attempts to use urban space in ways that will produce new understandings of the moment (as in various kinds of performance art, psychogeography, and other forms of spatial play). In every case, the intention is to engineer intention and increase capability by constructing automatic reactions to situations which can carry a little more potential, a little more 'lean-in', a little more commitment.

To summarize, in this paper I have wanted to see cities as oceans of hurt resulting from the undertow of the small battles of everyday life, but also as reservoirs of hope resulting from a generalized desire for a better future. My intention has been to consider the darker sides of cities by concentrating on the subject of misanthropy but equally to balance this picture by injecting a wash of kindness. My intention has therefore been to approach, or more accurately sidle up to, the subject of moral progress but to discuss this issue in a much less grand way than is normally found in the literature.

In alighting on the difficulties of making moral progress I am not, of course, giving up all hope of such progress. Rather I have wanted to approach the subject by considering qualities like kindness and compassion which are far from the unstinting love for others that is often envisaged as the ultimate measure of such progress. Put very simply, I want to conceive of kindness and compassion as elements of urban life we would want to nurture and encourage, against a background that often seems to militate against them. I want, in other words, to argue that in an agonistic city, where agreement is thin on the ground, a little more kindness may be what we should hope for and what we can get, whereas love is a bridge too far.³⁷

As a parting thought, over the years, cities have

been routinely lauded or deplored for the feelings they induce. Some cities have come to be regarded as generous or friendly. Others are regarded as hard-edged and hyper-competitive. Wouldn't it be interesting if, in the future, city spaces were increasingly pulled out of the mass on criteria such as some of the ones I have just mentioned? These spaces would become known in new sensory registers, through haptic maps of affective localities (Bruno 2002), and not least as geographies of kindness and compassion, geographies that might then leak out into the wider world.

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank Ash Amin, Ryan Bishop, Søren Buhl, Verena Andermatt Conley, Steve Graham, Paul James, Steen Nepper Larsen, David Midgley, Brian Morris, Meaghan Morris, John Phillips, Peter Slojterdijk, Bent Sørensen, Frederik Tygstrup and Deb Verhoeven for their comments on this essay. In particular, this essay benefited – like so many others – from a close reading by Chris Philo. I have not been able to take up all of his comments here, but I will hope to do so in subsequent work.

Notes

- 1 As well as gleefully adding more such representations to the stock, I might add.
- 2 As in the recent conference on metropolitan catastrophes held at the Institute of Historical Research by the Centre for Metropolitan History, which featured a series of historians who were moving their attention from the battlefield to the city as battlefield.
- 3 I hope that my intention in these papers is clear. I want to begin to place side-by-side a series of themes in my work which have remained relatively separate, notably the articulation of non-representational theory, and especially the exploration of affect, with the changes now taking place in the nature of technologies and the technical. I have consistently tried to bring themes like these (and others, like time) back to the living fabric of the city, but what the juxtaposition of these themes has pushed me to do, in turn, has been to challenge what is meant by the 'living' in the city. In making this rapprochement, I wanted to take particular account of a criticism sometimes made of non-representational theory – and the politics of performance that flows from it – that it is entirely too optimistic. As I hope is clear from what follows, I think that this is a valid criticism and at the same time names an important political task: to construct a positive politics of affect in what is an increasingly 'intimate public

- sphere', to use Berlant's phrase (cf. Cvetkovich 2003).
- 4 This is, of course, a classical Freudian point, as is the point made later that destructiveness is very close to love. Freud's work acts, fittingly perhaps, as a perpetual undertow in this paper.
 - 5 Mouffe's work has, of course, been much influenced by Schmitt.
 - 6 None of this, of course, is to suggest that no attempt should be made to rid the world of all manner of horrors: wars, genocides, tortures, famines, and so forth. Rather, as will become clear, it may be better to attempt to institute lower-level forms of kindness, as a first step at least.
 - 7 In other words, and importantly, I want to stay faithful to Tarde's micrometaphysics which refuses to make a distinction between the complexity of 'large' and 'small', nor necessarily therefore their transformative powers. Following Tarde's reading of Spinoza, everything can be a society.
 - 8 It also points to the fact, often forgotten, that *demolition* is as much a part of the history of cities as construction. But I know of remarkably little work on this aspect of cities, even after recent traumatic events, except that centred around sense of loss (e.g. of the byways of pre-boulevard Paris).
 - 9 There is beginning to be some work on these companies and their workforces. See, especially, Allen and Pryke (1994) and Coe (forthcoming).
 - 10 For the record, I have used this pragmatic classification in preference to other such classifications because it seems to me to get closer to the sheer diversity of this sector than other attempts. However, it is worth noting that the labour force statistics of many countries do include some kind of relevant statistics. For example, the US Bureau of Labor Statistics includes 'Installation, maintenance and repair occupations', subdivided into electrical and electronic equipment, vehicle and mobile equipment, and other.
 - 11 See, in particular, Gershuny (1978) on the self-service economy. I do not make much of it here, but there is also an obvious connection to the second-hand market which requires repair and maintenance as a matter of course.
 - 12 For example, when Broadband was first introduced, telecommunications engineers would tell each other of the different solutions and shortcuts they had discovered. Later, their telecommunications companies provided them with electronic bulletin boards so that this information could be more widely circulated.
 - 13 Indeed, the standard devices of novels and films often include repair and maintenance workers as quintessential minor characters (Woloch 2003), iconic urban non-icons, from chimney sweeps to plumbers to car mechanics to window cleaners.
 - 14 This is to ignore the plethora of major incident and disaster recovery plans which are periodically rehearsed.
 - 15 Of course, this is a highly debatable statement. In many such cities, it may be that there is *more* repair and maintenance infrastructure oriented to the much greater problems of simply reproducing everyday life. I know of no evidence that would resolve this debate. I am indebted to Stuart Corbridge for this point.
 - 16 Indeed, we might see the expectation of danger as constituting a kind of contract with the future (cf. Salecl 2004). Or perhaps the past. As Robin (2004) points out, the contemporary 'liberalism of fear' that infects too many polities argues that it is fear that motivates public life and structures its exertions. The memories of cruelties past and the threat of cruelties present can be used as justification for liberal norms to colonize the future. As Ignatieff puts it: 'In the twentieth century, the idea of human universality rests less on hope than on fear, less on optimism about the human capacity for good than on dread of human capacity for evil, less on a vision of man as maker of his history than of man the wolf toward his own kind' (1997, 18). Needless to say, I want to argue against this tendency.
 - 17 As Dalrymple (2004) points out, some of this may even be excusable, given how few people have any control over their lives. But certainly, once one starts looking, it is possible to see small acts of cruelty everywhere.
 - 18 The fact that small rural communities are often shot through with feuds and vendettas is conveniently forgotten, yet alone the fact that cities are shot through with eavesdropping and general nosiness: sometimes I wish that cities were a bit more alienated!
 - 19 Thus Schopenhauer argued in 'On Human Nature' that 'to the boundless egoism of our nature there is joined more or less in every human breast a fund of hatred, anger, envy, rancour and malice, accumulated like the venom in a serpent's tooth, and waiting only for an opportunity to vent itself' while Stirner wrote of 'surplus rage' and of the value of 'repelling the world' (cited in Lane 2004, 27).
 - 20 And, it might be added, to Elias's argument in *The civilizing process*.
 - 21 Notice here that I am not arguing for a reductionist notion of the biological which could simply read off behaviour rigidly from (say) genetic and/or evolutionary predispositions, as if there were a fixed relation of logical or empirical necessity (Oyama 2000).
 - 22 There are obvious gender connotations in this paper which I am leaving to a later paper.
 - 23 This military art began to migrate into civil society sometime in the nineteenth century, but made more specific and extensive inroads after the Second World War when a whole series of logistical practices which had been invented in or just after that war became general means of planning and operationalizing urban movement (Thrift 2004).
 - 24 There is, of course, a rich urban literature founded

But malice aforethought

- on the mixing of the practices of adultery with the contours of the city, all the way from the urban passions of *Madame Bovary* to the suburban angst to be found in the novels of Richard Ford. Much the same point can be made with regard to film.
- 25 Though I do not attempt it here, it would be possible to situate misanthropy and romantic love in a grid which takes passion as one axis and affect as the other. In turn, such a mapping would allow other kinds of passion (e.g. the revolutionary passion of the early Marx) to be mapped. See Sørensen (2004).
- 26 Comte coined the noun from the Italian *altrui* ('to or of others') and a phrase in French law, *le bien, le droit d'autrui* ('the well-being and right of the other').
- 27 I could no doubt have fixed on other authors than Bloch. For example, there is Levinas's extended commentary on war and peace in *Totality and infinity*, and especially his explorations of exteriority and enjoyment which stresses the constitutive role of the future (see Caygill 2002). But I prefer Bloch's more concrete approach.
- 28 Though it has to be said that this work is prefigured in numerous ways in Bloch (1923/2000).
- 29 Though I am aware that Diprose is intent on exposing a more general debt to life in a way that is reminiscent of both Bergson and Bloch.
- 30 I want to understand the city as an organization that exceeds the human, conventionally defined, at every juncture. My sense of kindness therefore exceeds the human, in part because the human has become bogged down in precisely the kinds of stay-at-home ethics that I am most concerned to avoid. In particular, in what is by now a familiar move, I will be stressing the importance of 'thingness' as a determinant of human relationality.
- 31 Perhaps, indeed, the two are linked in much the same way as loneliness and communication.
- 32 Yet, it can be said that it is being pursued by a whole series of authors interested in the politics of singularity, from Agamben through Deleuze to Žižek, though often in radically different ways.
- 33 Which, in a number of its emphases, seems to me to show just how misanthropy can bubble up as a formal government policy. Even as many indicators of such behaviour (e.g. vandalism) seem to be in decline, this policy is forging ahead.
- 34 Though it is important to point to the more positive contributions of Benjamin and Kracauer.
- 35 Though I do not go into it here, there is a whole literature on the profusion of 'familiar strangers' dating from the work of Milgram which shows up a similar kind of shadow presence.
- 36 Although this is often very difficult to know. For example, a recent UK survey showed that 94 per cent of white Britons said that most or all of their friends were of the same race, while 47 per cent of ethnic minority Britons said white people form all or most of their friends. Fifty-four per cent of white Britons did not have a single black or Asian person that they considered as a close friend, while 46 per cent had at least one such friend (*Guardian* 2004). But debate then raged about whether these results were actually a bad or a good indicator, given the overall ethnic make-up of the population and its spatial distribution.
- 37 Indeed, love may be part of the problem, insofar as it provides us with a vision of the world which we cannot possibly live up to.

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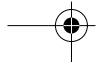
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