Feminism and Philosophy

EDITOR'S INTRODUCTION

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It is on a bittersweet note that I present to you this issue, which is a critical engagement with Quill R Kukla's groundbreaking book, *City Living: How Urban Spaces and Urban Living Shape One Another*. Bitter, since this will be my eighth and final issue as editor. Sweet, because, if I may say so, I'm going out with a BANG!

In what follows, you'll find a précis of *City Living*, followed by six incisive responses—really, important philosophical works in their own rights—by a wildly diverse group of scholars working across a panoply of areas in philosophy and beyond. Shen-yi Liao, C. Thi Nguyen, Sharon Meagher, Alexis Shotwell, Simona Capisani, and Daniela Sandler have engaged rigorously and beautifully with Kukla's book. This is philosophy at its finest: the authors intentionally transcend the boundaries of our field to show what's possible when we venture with our body/minds into the crevices of cities and beyond, shaped by our own environments, embodiments, experiences, and emplacements.

True to form, Kukla packs a punch with their response. And just as exciting as the content of this issue is what's left open for further discussion and debate. As Kukla notes, they were only able to engage with part of the rich questions, issues, and problems raised by the critics. It is my hope that this issue is just the beginning of many more fruitful and invigorating conversations about what makes a city, and how, and for whom.

Additionally, the issue includes a review of Carolyn McLeod's *Conscience in Reproductive Health Care* by Caitlin Reichard.

I've thoroughly enjoyed my last four years working as editor of the newsletter. I've had the distinctive honor and pleasure of collaborating with countless incredible, inspiring authors and thinkers. It's been a joy to showcase their work, to learn from them, and to raise the profile of the newsletter. I'm delighted to introduce Ami Harbin (Oakland University) and Barrett Emerick (St. Mary's College) as the new co-editors of this publication. Welcome, Ami and Barrett! I'm confident that you will improve and grow the publication in creative ways in the years to come.

I'm also happy to announce that in keeping with the high quality of publications that appear in these pages, the APA has renamed the publication to more accurately represent its content. Moving forward, we are now *APA Studies on Feminism and Philosophy*!

Thank you to all of the authors, reviewers, and guest editors with whom I have had the pleasure of working and who, over and again, have reminded me of all that is good in our profession. Deep thanks and profound gratitude to Erin Shepherd, who has been, without question, the most competent, compassionate, lovely managing editor that any editor could ever dream of.

ABOUT *APA STUDIES ON FEMINISM AND PHILOSOPHY*

APA Studies on Feminism and Philosophy is sponsored by the APA Committee on the Status of Women (CSW). The newsletter is designed to provide an introduction to recent philosophical work that addresses issues of gender. None of the varied philosophical views presented by authors of newsletter articles necessarily reflect the views of any or all of the members of the Committee on the Status of Women, including the editor(s) of the newsletter, nor does the committee advocate any particular type of feminist philosophy. We advocate only that serious philosophical attention be given to issues of gender and that claims of gender bias in philosophy receive full and fair consideration.

SUBMISSION GUIDELINES AND INFORMATION

1. Purpose: The purpose of *APA Studies on Feminism and Philosophy* is to publish information about the status of women in philosophy and to make the resources of feminist philosophy more widely available. *APA Studies on Feminism and Philosophy* contains discussions of recent developments in feminist philosophy and related work in other disciplines, literature overviews and book reviews, suggestions for eliminating gender bias in the traditional philosophy curriculum, and reflections on feminist pedagogy. It also informs the profession about the work of the APA Committee on the Status of Women. Articles submitted to the newsletter should be around ten double-spaced pages and must follow the APA guidelines for gender-neutral language. Please submit essays electronically to the editor. All manuscripts should be

prepared for anonymous review. References should follow *The Chicago Manual of Style*.

2. Book Reviews and Reviewers: If you have published a book that is appropriate for review in the newsletter, please have your publisher send us a copy of your book. We are always seeking new book reviewers. To volunteer to review books (or some particular book), please send the incoming editors, Ami Harbin (aharbin@oakland.edu) and Barrett Emerick (bmemerick@smcm.edu), a CV and letter of interest, including mention of your areas of research and teaching.

3. Where to Send Things: Please send all articles, comments, suggestions, books, and other communications to the incoming editors: Ami Harbin, Oakland University, at aharbin@oakland.edu, and Barrett Emerick, St. Mary's College, at bmemerick@smcm.edu.

4. Submission Deadlines: Submissions for spring issues are due by the preceding November 1; submissions for fall issues are due by the preceding February 1.

ARTICLES

Overview of City Living

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The central thesis of *City Living*, as its title indicates, is that spaces and dwellers quite literally *make one another*, and that this co-constitution happens in ecologically and phenomenologically distinctive ways in cities, and within that, in particular cities. I argue that we are ineliminably emplaced bodies: we are all constrained and shaped by the spaces we negotiate. But conversely, we exercise creativity and agency and shape the spaces we use to our needs. The book also has a central normative thesis, which is that what I call *spatial agency* is a fundamental need and right. Self-determination and justice require that people have access to places that suit their agency, and that they be able to shape space to their needs. Because we are fundamentally embodied and emplaced beings, where we can be and how we can move matter to us not just instrumentally (because these things affect other dimensions of well-being such as our health, safety, lifespan, and wealth) but as ends in their own right. In order to flourish, people (and non-human animals too) must have and be able to make *territories*: places where they belong and can express their agency and have it supported, places where they are insiders.

Chapter 1 is not specific to cities, but rather takes up the ontology and phenomenology of space and spatially embedded agency. It lays out a philosophical framework and builds a philosophical toolbox for exploring cities and city living. In this chapter, I argue against *spatial voluntarism*, which is the view that spaces are formed through the aggregation of the individual choices and preferences of agents, and *spatial determinism*, which is the view that spaces shape their dwellers' behavior,

preferences, and choices. Instead, I argue that spaces and dwellers co-constitute one another by building *ecological niches*. I defend the strong philosophical claim that as spaces and dwellers make one another, they also generate what I call *ecological ontologies*. Briefly, I claim that the kinds of *real things* that populate a particular environment are, in the most literal sense, to some extent constituted by the interactions between dwellers situated within that environment, and between dwellers and their environment. Real entities such as rush hours, boxing openings, and—importantly—territories only exist within ecological niches in which bodies use space in particular ways. I focus on how this process of co-constitution emerges out of what I call *micronegotiations*, which are the small, bottom-up motions of the body, such as gestures, posture, gait, direction of gaze, and other such miniature components of how we move through and use space.

In chapter 2, I turn to a philosophical account of what is distinctive about urban spaces and urban subjectivity. I propose four features distinctive of city life that concern dwellers' bodies and how they use and move through space: (1) *proximity* and *shared space* with many people, including a wide and diverse variety of *strangers*; (2) *unpredictability*; (3) *slow* locomotion combined with (4) *fast* switching between skills, stances, and perceptual expectations, which requires a *wide, fluid, and flexible set of meta-skills* for moving between skill sets. Drawing on empirical sociological literature, I explore how city dwellers see and judge risk and safety, order and disorder. I also develop the notion of an urban territory, and explore how territory is claimed, used, and bounded through bodily micronegotiations. This chapter also discusses what makes a space alive or dead; the distinctive uses of space associated with tourism rather than territory; and the way nonhuman animals dwell in and territorialize urban spaces.

In chapter 3 I turn to gentrification, which is one of the most important ways in which urban spaces are transforming. Gentrification, as a phenomenon, is a powerful example of how dwellers and spaces change by shaping one another, and of the struggles and tensions that surround competing forms of agency that are simultaneously trying to establish territory in conflicting ways. In gentrifying neighborhoods, I argue, different territories for different groups of residents are often overlaid, with different groups struggling over the use and meaning of the same spaces. Moreover, gentrification almost always provides us with powerful examples of power differentials between dwellers, who are unequally able to exercise spatial agency or to enjoy a smooth fit between the spaces they inhabit and their own practices and needs. In keeping with the overall themes of this book, my primary method in this chapter is to look at gentrification through the lens of micronegotiations and movement through space. I look at how residents can be *displaced* from a neighborhood even if they don't literally leave or lose their home, when the neighborhood ceases to be *their place* in concretely embodied ways. People can be displaced by losing their territory and spatial agency within a place, not just by being forced to leave. Drawing on my own field work, I use Columbia Heights, a gentrifying neighborhood of Washington, DC, as a case study in this chapter.

Chapters 4 through 6 comprise the empirical heart of the book. Here, I turn to what I call *repurposed cities*. A repurposed city is one that was built to support one form of economic, social, and political relations—a form that has now collapsed, so that the city has to accommodate radically new uses, users, and purposes; in turn, residents have to find ways of using and adapting a material city built for something quite different. In repurposed cities, new dwellers must find ways of tinkering with urban spaces and reinvesting them with new meanings in order to use them in new ways. Their uses are constrained by the material forms of the past order, while conversely, they creatively remake those forms. My hypothesis was that the close study of micronegotiations, territory, and spatial agency in repurposed cities would provide a kind of magnifying glass for viewing how urban spaces and urban dwellers made one another, because they would be spaces that especially mismatched their dwellers, calling for a particularly intense and fast process of co-constitution.

After introducing the notion of a repurposed city in chapter 4, I dig deeply, in chapters 5 and 6, respectively, into the repurposed cities of *Berlin* and *Johannesburg*, in which I did extensive archival and field work. Both Berlin and Johannesburg spent the period of time from roughly the end of World War II to the early 1990s as sharply materially divided cities, with material infrastructure that tightly controlled people's use of space, separating them into groups, surveilling them, and shaping the flow of their movement. Both cities transformed radically when their respective social orders collapsed, through the fall of the Berlin Wall and the end of apartheid. The residents of both cities—which in both cases included huge numbers of immigrants new to the city—had to find ways of using spaces built for the previous order and living in them in new ways. I explore particular repurposed spaces within both cities, looking at how the material past shapes those spaces but also at how people reshape them and exercise spatial agency within them. Despite deep parallels in the histories of the two cities, they have dealt with their pasts very differently, with different material cultures of mobility, surveillance, privatization, and occupation, for instance.

Finally, in chapter 7, I argue that inclusion in a city or neighborhood requires more than the right to physically reside in it; it requires what Henri LeFebvre, Don Mitchell, and others have called the "right to the city." The right to the city is not just a formal right to be inside of a city without being thrown out; it should be conceived, I argue, as a right to *inhabit* the city. This requires that we have voice and authority within a city; that we be able to participate in tinkering with it and remaking it; and that we belong in it rather than just perching in it. I explore the complex relationships between public spaces, inclusive spaces, and the right to the city. I examine what sorts of territories city dwellers need in order to be able to have a flourishing urban life and to exercise their spatial agency. Drawing on disability theory and other anti-oppressive theoretical lenses, I look at some of the barriers that different kinds of bodies face to being included in urban spaces, and think about what it would take to build a more just and inclusive city.

Parks and Recreation

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Slides are for sliding down, not for climbing up!

Over the last couple of years, I have heard this thought in my head more than a few times and even said it out loud . . . also more than a few times. Like many other caregivers (of, admittedly, a certain socioeconomic status), I have spent quite a bit of time with my children at playgrounds in parks during the COVID-19 pandemic. Like many other children, they do not always play with these objects and spaces in officially sanctioned ways. They like to climb up slides, they like to swing on their bellies, and they like to seesaw with their hands.

As a prescriptive rule, "slides are for sliding down, not for climbing up" is sometimes explicitly written on signs next to slides. It is also sometimes explicitly expressed by other caregivers nearby. More often, it is left implicit. Still, even when there are no signs and no other caregivers, I—and I bet many other caregivers too—hear it in our heads and tell it to our children. And we often do so relatively effortlessly, automatically, and unconsciously.

This rule is not merely prescriptive, but also constitutive. Not every sloped surface on a playground is a slide. A slide is—one might say, by definition!—a sloped surface that is to be slid down. Iris Marion Young says that "[t]he inert material things and constraints we encounter bear marks of past praxis, but we experience this praxis passively, as having objective properties of its own, which may or may not correspond to our current projects and goals."[1] A slide, however mundane, is no exception: there is this rule that's embedded into this material thing, and we passively experience this rule as an objective property of it.

THEORETICAL TOOLS

Quill R Kukla's *City Living* (2021) exceptionally combines an innovative and insightful theoretical framework with detailed ethnographies of three cities on three continents: Washington, DC; Berlin; and Johannesburg. It has given me the tools for thinking in a brand-new way about my own negotiations with objects and my own movements in spaces, even when I am doing something as ordinary as bringing my children to play at the park. Kukla's careful attention to the ways that urban environments can enable agency for some dwellers while constraining others has also directed my own attention to everyday environments. Now, even when I am in a place as ordinary as a playground, I can't help but think about who it enables and who it constrains.

In the two foundational theoretical chapters of *City Living*, Kukla sets out to explain how "cities and city dwellers make one another [. . .] at the scale of particular bodies making small movements through particular spaces" (3). They argue against two opposing views about the relationship between cities and city dwellers. A *spatial determinist* insists on the primacy of the material: the objects and spaces set the rules, and we must follow them. A *spatial voluntarist*

insists on the primacy of the psychological: we set the rules, and we can do what we want with whatever objects and spaces. Instead, they argue for a novel framework on which spaces and subjects "*mutually condition, constitute, and accommodate one another*" (17).

To emphasize, a spatial *mutualist* like Kukla does not merely claim that there are reciprocal causal interactions between spaces and subjects. To say that "our spatial agency is enabled and shaped by city spaces, and also that through our spatial agency we remake the spaces we inhabit" is to make both a causal *and* a constitutive claim such that "neither spaces nor their dwellers can be properly understood independently of one another" (15). On this framework, there is a co-dependence between social practices and material objects (38).

Kukla centers the final chapter of *City Living* on an explicitly normative aim: "a city that is *for everyone* will also have to be made *by everyone*" (257). While spaces and subjects make one another, they do not do so equitably. The same space can enable some subjects but not others to flourish. The same space can also be more accessible for some bodies but not others, depending on the particularities of different bodies.

In some cases, such patterns are merely spatial differences. However, when they are in congruence with other patterns of social inequality, then they become spatial inequalities. Moreover, depending on the particularities of different social identities, some people are more able to reshape, repurpose, and remake the same space than others. When that happens, the reciprocal causal interactions—and mutual constitutions—between inequalities at different levels end up sustaining oppressive systems such as racism, sexism, ableism, and classism.[2]

Indeed, Kukla addresses the spatial inequalities that occur in congruence with racism, sexism, ableism, and classism. But I learned the most from their discussion of spatial inequalities that occur in congruence with ageism. In particular, I was struck by their observation of how teenagers are systematically denied access to *third places*, "a place that was neither our home nor our place of business (our work or school) but that was *ours* in a communal sense" (271). Kukla's insight is that many so-called public spaces are not, in fact, for all. Through explicit and implicit markings, they are rendered more or less accessible by social identities such as race, gender, ability status, class, and—yes—age. In this respect, teenagers are often denied a *territory*, "a space in which a group of people feel at home and experience themselves as having voice and agency within and over that space" (59).

CHILDREN'S THIRD PLACES?
Where are children's third places? Kukla rightly notes: "It is important to understand how few spaces there are in the neighborhood that are comfortable territory for children—places where they can enjoy spatial agency and territory" (110).[3] In many cities (and suburbs, for that matter), playgrounds seem to be the exceptions—spaces that are more or less exclusively *for* children. Adults with their soccer league and adolescents with their football game

might fight over who gets to use the same field in a park, but the only ones that are fighting with kids about who gets to slide, swing, or seesaw are other kids. Yet can children really claim playgrounds as their *territory*, within and over which they can exercise their agency? I am not so sure.

It might seem absurd to say that children exist in an oppressive relationship with their caregivers. However, in "Taking Children's Autonomy Seriously as a Parent" (2020), Kukla argues that many culturally dominant conceptions of parenting, in fact, do not fully acknowledge children as full moral persons. Everyone acknowledges that caregivers have immense power over children because children typically do not yet have the full capacity to satisfy their own basic needs. However, not everyone acknowledges that many caregivers also think—as culturally dominant conceptions of parenting inculcate them—that "with this power comes the right to restrict our children's mobility and their choices."[4]

Why is it wrong to climb up slides? A typical answer that you get is that it is not safe to do so: "parents need to *protect* their children!" This is an answer backed up by a deeply-felt, almost-instinctive emotion that I, like most other caregivers, understand well. There's nothing wrong with this emotion. The danger, as Kukla points out, is when it produces behaviors that limit children's exercise of agency.

Notice that there are two assumptions that lie behind the typical answer.

First, there is the assumption that children are not very good judges of their own safety. In my experience, this is most often not actually the case. Slides are most often not actually that unsafe to climb on, and children most often refrain from seriously unsafe behaviors on the playground. Moreover, we should also be suspicious of this assumption since analogous ones have long been used to justify the attribution of mere partial agency to people in oppressed groups and, in turn, justify paternalism by people in oppressive groups. Behind many calls to protect non-white people, women, disabled people, and the working class is the assumption that they, too, are not very good judges of their own safety.

Second, there is the assumption that safety is more important than other values. Adults typically do not make this assumption about their own lives. I play basketball at the park even though I might get injured. Other adults engage in other risky behaviors too. So even if it is actually unsafe to climb up slides (which, to reiterate, most often it is not), that alone cannot justify telling children to not do so. To take children's autonomy seriously is to allow them to engage in some risky behaviors, just like you and me and other people.

Obviously, I do not think caregivers should never set any boundaries for children. But if Kukla is right that the culturally dominant conceptions of parenting do not take seriously children's autonomy, then it is worth interrogating our emotional responses in this domain, even when—or perhaps, especially when—they are so deeply felt. Consequently, it is also worth interrogating whether the

boundaries we set are really the ones we should be setting. However well-intentioned, we caregivers can sometimes restrict our children's mobility and their choices in the name of protecting them. That is, after all, the essence of paternalism.

Young says that "in the most general sense, all oppressed people suffer some inhibition of their ability to develop and exercise their capacities and express their needs, thoughts, and feelings."[5] Playgrounds may seem insignificant because play may seem insignificant. But this is not true, as so many educators who emphasize the importance of childhood play would tell you. Children very much develop as agents at playgrounds: it is through play that they learn to make decisions about their own bodies, express their own values, and negotiate with others. So when caregivers inhibit their ability to develop and exercise these capacities, what should we call that but "oppression"? Indeed, the apparent absurdity of saying that children exist in an oppressive relationship with their caregivers might be itself symptomatic of the fact that adults routinely discount children's testimony.[6]

If an oppressive relationship can exist between children and the caregivers who love them very much, it is unsurprising that it too can exist between children and other adults. Not only can other adults possess similar power over children, but they can also think that they know better about the safety of bodily movements that are not their own, and about the right balance of competing values that are not their own. It is not uncommon for me to observe at playgrounds other adults who restrict children's mobility and their choices, even children who are not "theirs." They don't even have to yell, "slides are for sliding down, not for climbing up!"; a stern look or even an ominous presence can have the same effect. There is co-dependence between social practice and material object: the latent surveillance by adults enforces and reinforces the rule that has been built in.

Oppression is interlocking. So the power dynamic that exists between children and adults on playgrounds can be further exacerbated by how children are racialized, gendered, disabled, and classed. Even when adults, including primary caregivers, exhibit respect for children's autonomy, they might only selectively do so for children who fit the norm. Conversely, they might selectively enforce the rule via surveillance—and, indeed, sometimes punishment—for children who do not. While many white boys get to climb up slides, many Asian girls get told "you can't do that—it's too dangerous!"

Where are children's third places? Even though playgrounds are for children, they are not—as things stand—really places that children can call their own. As we have seen, children are often prohibited by explicit or implicit rules to reshape or repurpose the space. And so, even though children are whom playgrounds are made for, they are still denied its territorial rights because they cannot remake it into truly theirs. If a city that is for everyone will also have to be made by everyone, then playgrounds that are for children will also have to be made by children.

Social and spatial inequalities can constitute self-amplifying feedback loops that sustain oppressive systems. Playgrounds do not merely reflect the social fact that children's autonomy is not always taken seriously, they also condition and constitute this social fact. Given that spaces and subjects make one another, playgrounds do not only shape children's agency, they also shape adults' cognition. I am convinced that we should take children's autonomy seriously. Yet, when I am at the playground, I still—relatively effortlessly, automatically, and unconsciously—hear it in my head and say it to my children, especially when I notice other caregivers' disapproving glances, "slides are for sliding down, not for climbing up!"

Maybe these ills are just symptoms of today's hyper-anxious helicopter parenting (of, admittedly, a certain socioeconomic status). I remember, as a child in Taipei, going to local parks by myself with friends. Maybe we had more freedom and autonomy back then. But I don't think the ills can be so easily explained away, at least not entirely. Just because my caregivers were not around doesn't mean that there were no adults. And insofar as there were adults around, the same power dynamics—the same stern looks and the same ominous presences—may still be around. Furthermore, even when there were no adults around, the rules that adults wrote could still often be found on the adjacent signs, or internalized by other children on the playground.

Kukla cautions against spatial libertarianism as the solution to spatial inequality (284). Building an inclusive space requires deliberate effort. The fragility of children's autonomy means that they demand active care. An inclusive playground is not one where no adults are around, but one where adults consciously check their impulses and constantly work to respect children's agency. Only then can children have third places that they can claim as their own territories.

GAMES OR TOYS?
Will Wright, the legendary designer of *SimCity* and *The Sims*, has said, "People call me a game designer, but I really think of these things more as toys."[7] Games are structured by constitutive rules.[8] Games give goals to players, designate abilities for them, and place obstacles in their way.[9] In contrast, toys are environments that can *afford* different types of games. In the classic sense introduced by James J. Gibson, "The *affordances* of the environment are what it offers the animal, what it provides or furnishes, either for good or ill. . . . It implies the complementarity of the animal and the environment."[10] There is no one right way to play *SimCity*: you can meticulously plan the layout to maximize the population, or you can just turn on all the natural disasters to destroy everything. Neither the population-maximizer nor the city-destroyer is missing the point because neither population maximization nor city destruction is a constitutive rule of *SimCity*. These are simply two (among many more) ways that the player can relate to this toy, as Wright thinks of it.

A slide is a toy to children, but a game to adults. To the bureaucrats who wrote the rules on the sign or the caregivers with watchful eyes, slides are structured by a constitutive rule: they are for sliding down, not for climbing up. But this is not the case for children, who see multiple affordances

in the same material things. Slides can be for sliding down, for climbing up, for hiding under, for throwing pebbles on, and for so many other playful interactions. A slide is oppressive—in the sense that it becomes a component of an oppressive system that is psychological, social, and material—when adults insist that it is a game, with a rule set by them, and not just a toy. A different reality is possible: sculptor Isamu Noguchi's ideal playground is constituted solely of a giant public sculpture, which he calls "Play Mountain," that is variously described as "a cross between a Mayan temple and a mountain" or as "an asymmetrical Egyptian step-pyramid" with no rules built in.[11]

To be clear, I am not arguing that toys are always better than games. While there are those who systematically champion free play over structured games, C. Thi Nguyen persuasively argues that games are valuable in fostering different modes of agency precisely because they impose restrictions and specifications.[12] By communicating different modes of agency, they "offer a special path to enriching our long-term freedom and autonomy."[13] My point is only that games can only do so when playing is the player's choice. Games might be agency yoga, but yoga only works when *you* move your body, and not someone else. A slide, as a game, is not exactly freely chosen when it is situated against the backdrop of an oppressive relationship between children and adults. By trying too hard to sculpt children's agency, traditional conceptions of parenting end up limiting children's freedom and autonomy.

Over the last few years, playgrounds in Taiwanese cities have undergone a dramatic change. The replacement of cookie-cutter playground equipment with multimodal ones came about because a grassroots organization called Parks and Playgrounds for Children by Children has worked to defend children's right to play, which is traditionally neglected everywhere, but arguably especially in Taiwan.[14] As the name indicates, the organization's guiding philosophy is that playgrounds are not only to be made for children, but also to be made by them. Although the implementation of this guiding philosophy is uneven in practice, in the best cases—exemplified by the design and construction of the playground at Huashan 1914 Creative Park in Taipei—children are consulted in the initial design of the park through multiple workshopping processes.[15]

The involvement in the remaking of playgrounds surely improves the status quo. Yet it still seems to fall short of Kukla's requirement that a space is only an agent's territory if they can reshape or repurpose it. Perhaps the worlds of *Minecraft* are especially popular among children as virtual third places because they enable what the real world mostly cannot: the capacity to constantly "reshape space to [. . .] suit our needs and desires of the moment" (20). As things stand, playgrounds remain available only for children's recreation, but not re-creation. Even at the Huashan 1914 Creative Park playground, slides are still for sliding down, not for climbing up.

Again, a different reality is possible: adventure playgrounds—sometimes also called "natural playgrounds" or "junk playgrounds"—do enable children to reshape, repurpose, and even remake the objects and spaces of play.[16] Designated adults, called playworkers, are present but refrain from saying or doing things that might unduly constrain children's mobility and their choices. Although the idea behind adventure playgrounds is nearly a century old, they remain hard to find in the real world. There are currently none in Taiwan, and not even Parks and Playgrounds for Children by Children are vocally advocating for them yet.[17]

In the meantime, caregivers like myself can bring the adventure spirit to the playgrounds that we do have. Unlike spatial voluntarists, we should recognize that our environments can shape us. Unlike spatial determinists, we should also recognize that we can shape our environments. We do not have to tear down every slide to modify its objective property; we caregivers can reshape the material environment, and invite our children to do so too, by reshaping our social practices.

Slides are for sliding down, *and* for climbing up!

Figure 1. Twin Tower Slides at Huashan 1914 Creative Park in Taipei, Taiwan, which are partly designed by children through multiple workshops.

Figure 2. Signage at Huashan 1914 Creative Park in Taipei, Taiwan which illustrates and explains the workshopping process with children.

NOTES

1. Iris Marion Young, "Structure as the Subject of Justice," 54.

2. Compare Shen-yi Liao and Bryce Huebner, "Oppressive Things"; Shen-yi Liao and Vanessa Carbonell, "Materialized Oppression in Medical Tools and Technologies."

3. To be clear, Berlin—one of the three cities central to *City Living*— is a notable exception. Thanks to its 1979 Children Playground Law, there are about 1m² of playground space per inhabitant in Berlin. Mitra Anderson-Oliver, "Play Matters: The Style and Substance of the Berlin Spielplatz."

4. Kukla, "Taking Children's Autonomy Seriously as a Parent," 15.

5. Iris Marion Young, "Five Faces of Oppression."

6. Kukla, "Taking Children's Autonomy Seriously as a Parent," 14.

7. Will Wright, "Spore, Birth of a Game."

8. C. Thi Nguyen, "The Right Way to Play the Game."

9. C. Thi Nguyen, *Games: Agency as Art*, ch. 1.

10. James J. Gibson, *The Ecological Approach to Visual Perception* (Classic Edition), 119.

11. 99% Invisible, "Play Mountain."

12. Nguyen, *Games: Agency as Art*, ch. 4.

13. Nguyen, *Games: Agency as Art*, 76.

14. Disclosure: I provide a tiny amount of funding to this organization.

15. In 《公園遊戲力：22個精彩案例 × 一群幕後推手，與孩子一起翻轉全台兒童遊戲場》the members of Parks and Playgrounds for Children by Children provide 22 case studies of their efforts to remake playgrounds across Taiwan. In《遊戲場發生什麼事？》the children in the preschool "Super Cute Moon" class illustrate their design ideas, some of which eventually went into the playground at Huashan 1914 Creative Park.

16. Tony Chilton, "Adventure Playgrounds: A Brief History."

17. There are discussions of alternative playground models and cases at the end of 《公園遊戲力：22個精彩案例×一群幕後推手，與孩子一起翻轉全台兒童遊戲場》. While some adventure playgrounds have existed in Taiwan, existing legal regulations—and perhaps the dominant parenting philosophy they embody—pose a challenge to their continuing operation.

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The Aesthetic Homogenization of Cities

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I've been noticing, in my life with cities, a steady drift towards aesthetic homogenization. Twenty years ago, if you dropped me at any random spot San Francisco, Los Angeles, Seattle, or Brooklyn, I could have told you which city it was in a split second. The basic look, the feel—the whole aesthetic sensibility—were so different between the cities. Bone-deep different. It showed up in a thousand little ways, from the flow of the space, to the relative neatness or casualness of storefront displays, to the font choices of the signage.

This deep variation seems to be fading. The deep variation is certainly not completely gone—there are still plenty of wonderful holdouts. But more and more often, I have found myself exploring new cities and finding precisely same aesthetic sensibility. The storefronts, the restaurants, the fancy coffee spots so often have the same look and feel— the same clean modern fonts, the same clean modern seating, the same balance of light and space. You can show up in a hundred different cities and find basically the same clothing boutique. It'll have that Ikea-but-pricier sensibility in its shelving and display units, with crisp geometric lines and subdued colors. There will be large white cubes, functioning as display tables, topped with carefully folded clothing. There will be subtly defocused white lighting, and carefully spaced clothes hanging on a spare number of racks. Sometimes you'll get exposed brick walls, sometimes you won't. But the core sensibility seems to be converging. Privately, I've been calling this the Pinterest Effect. (Seriously, go look up the "Clothes Shop" tag on Pinterest and have a scroll.) I've been quietly chewing away at what could possibly explain it. And Quill Kukla has recently given us an excellent explanation of this aesthetic homogenization in their lovely new book, *City Living*.[1]

One of the central ideas of *City Living* is that rigid, top-down city planning can't accommodate the diversity of needs and interests of the real-world city dwellers. In order for a city to function, it needs to be deeply responsive to its inhabitants' varied needs. But the city can't do this all through top-down pre-planning. So this spatial responsiveness requires, in many cases, that the city be open to being modified by

its inhabitants. Some features of the city will certainly demand some top-down city planning (ideally as part of a properly representative and democratic procedure). But a substantial amount of city design should be bottom-up, should bubble up from a process of particular redesigns, adaptions, and accommodations made by the inhabitants themselves. City dwellers, says Kukla, need a substantial degree of agency and control over the details of their living spaces so that they can tailor their urban spaces to their own particular needs. Kukla provides a bevy of examples: reconfiguring spaces with graffiti and street art, changing the flow of street traffic with sidewalk tables, repurposing burned-out buildings as communes. And a good city—an accommodating city—makes the space for such bottom-up spatial agency. It permits substantive spatial agency in law, and leaves room for it in the material. When spaces are "preplanned and resist reshaping, this can actually make them difficult to use, because they do not organically adjust to users' dynamic needs and purposes" (44).

Here, Kukla is developing a key idea from Jane Jacobs. For Jacobs, many of the harms of urban planning came from the attempt to create an entire city from the top down, guided by a singular design sensibility and a singular design perspective. Some single urban planner, or small team of urban planners, thinks that they can rationally plan out an entire city, that they can plan for and accommodate all the various uses and needs of the city's inhabitants, from their planning desk. In Jacobs's era, her main target was often urban planners who thought primarily about how a city would look from above—the view from the blueprint, so to speak. These top-down planners cared deeply that a city might be divided into neat zones—all the homes here, all the factories there, all the shopping malls over here—so that it can be legible to the urban planner's eye-from-above.

The urban planner's eye-from-above will, thinks Jacobs, always be insensitive to any number of vital, small-scale considerations. People who live in a place, who spend their lives walking and using a space, understand the little details of that space, and the relationship of that space, that are invisible from the urban planner's eye-from-above perspective. For Jacobs, for example, the eye-from-above misses so many details that are obvious from the ground. The eye-from-above often wants to separate the zones of the city into a residential zone and an entertainment zone to make for a neater blueprint. But the eye-from-above misses so many of the details: like the fact that late-night bars embedded in a residential neighborhood added to the safety of a neighborhood, by guaranteeing a steady stream of pedestrian traffic, and so a steady stream of observers moving through a street at night.[2]

Jacobs's view is, I think, a deeply ecological one. (Jacobs doesn't use the term "ecological," as far as I know, but Kukla does in developing Jacobs.) A city grows organically. A city is an incredibly rich environment that has accreted layered functions over the years. And those accreted functions are complexly networked. A city should be respected, in Jacobs's view, as the product of accreted evolution—as a carefully balanced complex organism, rich in peculiar adaptations to its particular time and place. Each element

may participate in a hundred different functions, many of which look like unintended side-consequences. But these "side-effect" interactions deeply structure the way the city works. An example from Jacobs: the lack of stores around a particular park makes the park more insular, since the only people who can use it for any length of time are those who know somebody who lives in one of the surrounding houses. If there was any kind of store there—a café or little grocery store—then there's usually a semi-accessible restroom and a public phone. But the lack of the semi-public space of a store changes things. Potential park users who don't know anybody who lives in those houses have no place to use the restroom or make a call. So, for good or ill, that storeless perimeter of the park functions as an invisible filter, supporting local insider use and quietly deterring outsiders.[3]

Re-designs from the eye-from-above, which have not taken the time to study the details and organic unity of a city, will trample on many of these subtle interactions. I particularly like Kukla's summary of Jacobs on this point:

> As Jane Jacobs (1961) explored at length, if a space is overplanned, it can strangle the room for creative uses, and no one has the opportunity to participate with agency in niche-building and place-making. The result is an alienating and sterile space—one that doesn't feel like home territory to anyone, as none of its users participated in its making. (44)

Why does overplanning strangle a space? There are two (deeply interrelated) factors. The first, we might call the *epistemic* factor. That is, the distant perspective is unaware of the way the city works, and so will make poor decisions that don't respect the particular details of the organism. The distant planner doesn't have the requisite detailed, place-specific knowledge to accommodate for all the particular needs of local users. The second we might call the *agential* factor. Because the distant perspective is distant, then the people living in the space aren't in direct control of many of the features of the space. So the changes made to the city won't reflect the particular details of the inhabitants' needs or values. Separating out the epistemic and agential factors here is something of an artifice. For one thing, the city is made up in part of its inhabitants and so having good epistemic access to the city involves knowing its inhabitants. And also, because exercises of agency from local inhabitants will typically express their contextual epistemic sensitivity. But I think it is somewhat useful to separate our *knowledge of the details of the city's complex ecosystem* from our *agency in producing changes to that ecosystem*.

With all that in mind, let's return to the opening question: Why does gentrification bring with it aesthetic homogenization? Let's start with a slightly simplistic story, spinning off from the above analysis. Gentrification, we might say, involves the *invasion of an outside perspective,* in the form of the invasion of urban developers who aren't city locals. So: such outsider gentrifiers enter a neighborhood with its own particular character and impose their sensibility, which doesn't meet the needs of the actual inhabitants of the neighborhood.

But this can't be the entire explanation, for a few reasons. First, it doesn't explain the *monotony* that comes with gentrification. Different gentrifiers could very plausibly have different sensibilities, and transform spaces in different ways. These transformations may be insensitive to the needs of the people who already live there, but why think they're monotonous? After all, rich people can have wildly different tastes. Some like Wagner, some Warhol, and some like Ikea minimalism. Think, for example, about the incredibly different aesthetic sensibilities on display in the various Las Vegas hotels—many of which are funded from different groups of external investors—from the cutesy faux-realism of Paris, to the overt luxurious classiness of the Bellagio, to the over-the-top baroque ridiculousness of Caesar's Palace, including faux-Roman animatronic statues.

Second, as Kukla points out, gentrification is a complex phenomenon that involves both top-down and bottom-up gentrification. Top-down gentrification involves, say, distant developers coming and imposing development plans on a city, without particular knowledge of the city's details. Top-down gentrification is clearly problematic, on Kukla's analysis, because it misses out substantially on both the epistemic factor and the agential factors. Bottom-up gentrification, on the other hand, is often enacted by locals—sometimes from other parts of the city, but sometimes from the very same neighborhood in which they're building their boutique coffeeshop. Consider a case of fully local, bottom-up gentrification, where the inhabitants of a particular neighborhood create boutiques and coffee shops in their own neighborhood to serve a hopefully increasingly gentrifying customer base. And I know that fully local bottom-up gentrification can yield the aesthetic homogenization. In my own (rapidly gentrifying) neighborhood, I know many of the store-owners. They live around the block—but they look to Pinterest when they design their stores.

Kukla suggests that "top-down gentrification tends to lead to a familiar constellation of chain stores, loft condos, pedestrian plazas, and the like, whereas bottom-up gentrification leads to 'quirky', 'hip' independent businesses and specialty stores" (96). But what's important to me is that both forms of gentrification often lead to a homogenization, albeit homogenization of slightly different kinds. Top-down gentrification leads to large, sprawling mega-malls with the same Cheesecake Factories and P.F. Changs and Urban Outfitters. Bottom-up gentrification, on the other hand, may be the product of individual exercises of agency by a city's inhabitants, but it still seems highly subject to the Pinterest Effect. At least in my own (non-rigorous and untrained, but very interested) observations from city-wandering, though bottom-up gentrification doesn't lead to the kind of aggressively monotonous corporate chain-store effect, we still get something of a close cousin: a thousand independent coffee stores in a thousand cities owned by a thousand different owners, all city locals—but all with that same post-Ikea clean look. We also get a thousand clothing boutiques whose shelves and spacing and lighting could have been cut-n-pasted from the same Pinterest photo gallery. (Kukla may be sympathetic to this observation. They did put scare quotes around "quirky" and "hip" independent businesses.)

And, if that's right, then our simple explanation is inadequate. The simple explanation was that the aesthetic homogenization resulted from gentrification in the form of invading outsiders. But we're also seeing aesthetic homogenization via bottom-up gentrification. If our indie coffee shops and clothing boutiques are the creations of people who live in the neighborhood and those shops qualify as exercises of the locals' agency, where does the aesthetic homogenization come from?

Kukla's analysis gives us a very good lead. Here is one of my favorite passages from *City Living*:

> In the aptly named *How to Kill a City*, Peter Moskowitz argues that top-down gentrification of living neighborhoods disrupts their living ecology and the networks that allow citizens to participate in building the. "Gentrification is a void . . . a trauma, one caused by the influx of massive amounts of capital into a city and the consequent destruction following in its wake" (2017, 5). The problem with this kind of gentrification, from the point of view of its ecological integrity and flourishing, is that it *redesigns a space*, *not for the people who are already using it*, *but for a hypothesized set of users who have more money*, with the goal of maximizing the ability of the space to attract these rich users and then extract capital from them. Because this profit-maximizing goal has no particular connection or responsiveness to the ecology as it is found, such spatial repurposing with the goal of gentrification often ends up killing a place in the act of trying to pretty it up and make it 'appealing.' (45) [emphasis mine]

Here, now, is our explanation for how both top-down gentrification and bottom-up gentrification can both yield aesthetic homogenization. Even if the gentrification is bottom-up—even if a hundred different local business owners open their own independent boutiques and coffeeshops and vinyl stores—the *aesthetic target* has been homogenized. This is because the local gentrifiers are not trying to express their own aesthetic sensibility or meet the local aesthetic sensibility. Rather, they are trying to satisfy a "hypothesized set of users"—some imaginary set of rich folks. And I take Kukla's suggestion to be that catering to a hypothesized set of users will involve catering to a *generic* taste. Even if you have your own aesthetic sensibility, if you're trying to catch the globetrotting rich, you better adapt your aesthetic target to what you imagine they want.

This is something we know in our hearts. A tourist trap looks like a tourist trap. A tourist trap made out of independent local businesses might be a little more aesthetically varied than one planned from the ground up by a global development company, but it still smells of tourist trap. Because, I take it, a *tourist* is another hypothesized user, not somebody well-known to the local inhabitants. The tourist customer is a kind of abstracted and aesthetically generic target.

Here's a similar observation from my days of scouting restaurants and food-writing. In LA, there was a lot of variance between the decor of different particular Mexican restaurants catering to the local Mexican community, and between different particular Chinese restaurants catering to the local Chinese community. But the ones that served Americanized food often looked much more similar, because they tended to use the same small cluster of outward-facing cultural signifiers (sombreros, chili peppers, and donkeys, in the case of Americanized Mexican restaurants; dragons, pandas, paper lanterns, and latticed wood, in the case of Americanized Chinese restaurants.)

Local gentrifiers aren't subject to the epistemic problems of top-down planning. They live there, and they know the ground. What seems to be lacking is full spatial agency. This all suggests a quite robust notion of spatial agency. Kukla defines *spatial agency* thus:

> *Spatial agency*, as I use the term, is our ability to autonomously occupy, move through, and use space, as well as our ability to mark and transform it *in accordance with our needs and desires*. (15) [final emphasis mine]

I take Kukla's analysis of the bottom-up gentrification to really fill out what the last part of that definition means. The demand here is not simply that inhabitants have some minimal degree of autonomous control, but that they exercise their powers in response to *their own* particular needs and desires. In bottom-up gentrification, city inhabitants are exercising their agency while aiming at servicing an external set of needs and desires.

Kukla's concern here runs interestingly into something I've been thinking about, from an entirely different angle. I've written about our demand for *aesthetic sincerity*. My analysis is trying to understand how we trust artists, and why we might feel betrayed by artists. In the normal moral analysis, philosophers have tended to think that we trust people when we think they have *goodwill and are thus responsive to our needs*. But, I suggested, something very different happens with artists. We trust artists, but not in the usual moral manner. That is, we don't trust them to be kind to us, or to take our interests to heart. Instead, we trust them to be *aesthetically sincere*—to be true to their own aesthetic sensibilities. In fact, if they were trying too hard to be responsive to our interests, we would be disappointed. In aesthetic life, we often don't want our artists to just give us what we want. We call that pandering. And I have suggested that one of the reasons we want that aesthetic sincerity is precisely because it fosters aesthetic diversity across an aesthetic community.[4] Kukla's analysis though, suggests an important amendment to my analysis: what matters often is not loyalty to *one's own* sensibility, but to at least some known, lived, particular sensibility. The store-owner who expresses their own aesthetic sensibility, and the store-owner who is satisfying their neighborhood's particular aesthetic sensibility, both partake in a kind of aesthetic sincerity. It's the store-owner who tries to service that vague, generic target, that might seem aesthetically insincere.

So if you put Kukla's analysis and mine together, you get a picture of the complex aesthetic downside of gentrification. Gentrification remodels a neighborhood, sometimes from the top-down and sometimes from the bottom-up. Bottom-up gentrification doesn't generate the usual goods of spatial agency because it isn't aesthetically sincere (and, we might think, insincere in some non-aesthetic dimensions too). It doesn't seek to express the genuine sensibility and answer the particular needs and desires of the inhabitants. Instead, in bottom-up gentrification, locals aim to satisfy a generic eye. Even if the gentrification isn't imposed from the top down, the eye of the outsider is modeled in bottom-up gentrification. And, crucially, it isn't a particular outsider's particular tastes, but some hypothesized outsider's taste, that gentrification tries to meet. And this creates two problems. Locally, gentrification no longer serves the particular interests of the local community. And globally, it generates a profound lack of aesthetic diversity, as neighborhoods are reshaped—or reshape themselves—to satisfy some generic hypothetical eye.

NOTES

1. Quill Kukla, *City Living* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2021).
2. Jane Jacobs, *The Death and Life of Great American Cities* (New York: Vintage Books, 1992 [1961]), 33–41.
3. Jacobs, *The Death and Life of Great American Cities*, 63.
4. C. Thi Nguyen, "Trust and Sincerity in Art," *Ergo* 8, no. 2 (2021): 21–53.

Anarchist Collective Practice for the Win

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City Living opens so many avenues for engagement— everyone who comes to the book will find a space for their abiding preoccupations. For me, these are questions of implicit understanding, the exercise of freedom in conditions not of our own choosing, and how to constitute collectivities that defy individualism and extractivism. There is so much fodder for these questions in this book! Quill Kukla's work here dwells with the mutual constitution of cities and the beings who live with/in them, opening questions such as the following: If we shape cities and they shape us, how might we choose to shape our cities such that they make us into something we want to be? Do only cities have this capacity for co-creation? How do we decide what we collectively want to be?

I'm not a geographer, but some of the anarchists I most love are; I live in a city but have learned my most important lessons in political dreaming and organizing from people living rurally. In this short engagement I want to offer some threads of conversations from these spaces to the important issues Kukla addresses. *City Living* pushed me to think about what is beyond cities, to farmlands and server farms, the constitutive outsides of what Saskia Sassen thought of as "global cities"—metropoles in which traditional gentrifying elites have been replaced by international flows of capital, disconnected from people living in cities marked for profit.

It called me to think about what's within the ambit of cities and how that matters politically.

I've lived in cities that are in the same general vibe/size category as two of Kukla's examples, Berlin and Johannesburg (Montreal and New York City), and I could transpose much of the argument for *City Living* to those places. I've also lived in small cities (Boulder, Colorado; Halifax, Nova Scotia; Sudbury, Ontario; Santa Cruz, California) as well as rural places (Homer, Alaska; Barnet, Vermont). I live now in Ottawa, Canada, similar in some ways to their third exemplar city, Washington, DC, in that it is a capital city, but super different in every other way. I read *City Living* in conversation with the memories of these places. Pulling them along with me through this text, I remain uncertain about how to think about the space between Sudbury, ON, (population ~166,000) and Boulder, CO, (population ~105,000), for example. Sudbury is a working-class city bearing the ongoing depredations of nickel mining and currently having its university system plundered; Boulder is a rich university city enacting a kind of perpetual dispossession-by-gentrification Ouroboros loop. Neither of them have the exclusive nightclubs or interesting graffiti of Kukla's examples, but Boulder has quite a lot of shared space, not all of it commercialized. Homer, Alaska (population ~5,500) is vastly more racially complex than Boulder and with an infinitely wider class composition and cosmopolitan population, though many of the workers there are seasonal, undocumented, and precarious workers in the fishing and tourism industries. It too has many shared public spaces for encounter. So I got quite hung up on which of the cities, towns, and rural places I've lived in and loved "counted" for the purposes of *City Living*. I kept trying to decide if the cities I called to mind were cool enough to be interesting to this book, or if they'd be deemed too boring, small, dirty, or homogenous.

Then I decided this was silly. Kukla's claims that places and dwellers are mutually shaped, producing ecological ontologies through micronegotiations that are themselves embedded in struggles against international flows of capitalism hold, even if we move these arguments into different places, including rural and suburban places. The polluted small city and the house without running water I lived in six miles down a road that literally just ends deserve the same kind of loving appreciation for the inter-being of self and place that Kukla offers DC, Berlin, and Johannesburg. This book could just be called *Living*! Indeed, shifting from trying to decide if something counts as a good-enough city to asking how all dwellers and places mutually constitute one another, and what it means to relate to the spaces of our lives as shared spaces, opens up more interesting normative scope than we would get from behaving as though Kukla's analysis only applies to obviously cool cities. It gives us a way to critique what is wrong with suburbs and to value what might be nourishing about rural places. All spaces are shared, whether they're shared with many humans or mostly with other fauna and flora.

There's one hitch in my confidence that one can read *City Living* and apply its insights to thinking about everywhere: It might be that reading them this way wrongs Kukla's evident love for *cities*. Kukla's normative claims about what makes cities good—and how then to make them better—rest on the idea that there is a real difference between cities and not-cities. They characterize city living as fundamentally shared in ways rural and suburban lives are not: "While most urban dwellers have private homes, distinctively, urban life is life that happens in shared spaces" (258). This is meant to be a descriptive fact—that in cities, even rich people have to interact with other people more than they would if they lived rurally or in suburbs. So, for Kukla, sharedness is one defining characteristic of cities, with the implication that non-cities are not shared. They argue that shared space means that "[c]ity dwellers are constantly, as a matter of course, accommodating themselves to others" (258). They think this sort of accommodation work produces particular sorts of people—"more open-minded and flexible" people—arguing for the following position:

> Despite serious issues around exclusion and unequal agency in cities, it is well-documented that urban dwellers are consistently farther to the left politically, more tolerant of difference, and more positive about social diversity than suburban and rural dwellers. One empirical hypothesis is that living in a city in close proximity to many kinds of people, and needing to share and negotiate space with them, develops our skills at coping with complexity and difference. For city dwellers, complexity, unpredictability, and diversity are part of our *home*. (53)

Although they note that it is possible that people move to cities because they are already inclined to appreciate difference and proximity, Kukla is "attracted to the hypothesis that the causality is at least partially the reverse—that explicit openness to diversity and change begins at the level of prereflective bodily habit and skill development, developed and ingrained over the course of city living" (53). On this view, being skilled city dwellers makes us skilled at living with diversity. Let me detour for a bit and then come back to this claim.

I'm sympathetic to Kukla's frequent attention to prereflective bodily habit and skill development. Actually, maybe it's more honest to say that I've been obsessed for a long while with the political and epistemic salience of what I've called in my own work "implicit understanding." It's affirming to find a shared appreciation for more-than-propositional knowledge in *City Living*, and I agree with Kukla that "we don't count someone as *knowing* a city unless they know how to negotiate it, how to move through it and use it and interact with it, from first-personal experience" (37). Kukla frames this sort of knowledge as know-how and also as something stronger than knowledge by acquaintance. They are interested in the ways that the forms of agency we practice in city living can be "habitual, unreflective, and nondiscursive" and "manifested at the level of bodily motion and gesture rather than in explicit decision-making or speaking" (76). They speak of the kind of knowledge necessary to being a city dweller as "explicit and implicit skills for competently negotiating urban spaces" (52), which they understand as developing "our skills at coping with complexity and difference" (53).

I have found it important to thematize the nonpropositional knowledge at play in our lives precisely at this transit point between how we might competently negotiate the shared spaces in which we live and how we might politically engage or delight in complexity. Focusing on the political dimension of transformative knowing, I've thematized implicit understanding as including "practical, skill-based knowledge; somatic or bodily knowing; potentially propositional but currently implicit knowledge; and affective or emotional understanding."[1] There's a lot of overlap in the ways Kukla thinks practically about "bodily and effective knowledge of how to navigate a space—the kind of knowledge that accrues over years of practice" (95) in the context of cities and the ways I have written about the salience of implicit understanding to political transformation. And at precisely these sites of overlap, there may also be some friction.

Thinking on how racialized and gendered implicit understanding forms and transforms, I have come to believe that it's important to name the multiplicity and incommensurability of different matrices of implicit understanding. Following Antonio Gramsci, Wahneema Lubiano, and Himanni Bannerji, we can identify the ways opposing, orthogonal, incommensurate, or mutually occluded common senses operate in the same places. Kukla explicitly discusses this, naming the ways that Berlin and DC and Johannesburg all contain multiple cities, crosshatched, to echo China Mieville's phrasing—places that have "multiple place identities and place ballets simultaneously superimposed" (189). This can manifest, in DC, in Tubman Field being "contested territory" between registered adult soccer players who drive in to use it and racialized neighborhood kids who live near it, or, in Berlin, with Hermannplatz as a site where at least five different groups make "complex territorial claims" (185). One reason Kukla attends to cities is precisely because they are sites for this kind of complexity. It may be that in order to translate that complexity into political justice, however, we need more active work on the space between accommodating diversity and practicing joyful justice.

As Patricia Hill Collins argues in a long-ago symposium on feminist standpoint theory:

> proximity in physical space is not necessarily the same as occupying a common location in the space of hierarchical power relations. For example, Black women and women of color routinely share academic office space with middle-class and/or white women academics. It is quite common for women of color to clean the office of the feminist academic writing the latest treatise on standpoint theory. While these women occupy the same physical space—this is why proximity should not be confused with group solidarity—they occupy fundamentally different locations in hierarchical power relations.[2]

I agree with Collins that proximity can't be counted on to produce any particular politics. Anyone who's struggled with NIMBY gentrifiers in their neighborhood knows this—a strong opponent to making my neighborhood more actively welcome drug users is a woman down the block who has lived on my street for many years. Rooming houses and drug users feel like good parts of my neighborhood to me; they feel dangerous to her. We have multiple, conflicting implicit understandings of the places we live, and complexity is as likely to produce injustice as justice.

Now, I think that Kukla would agree with me on the general claim that the same places can produce different matrices of implicit understanding and that those differences are political. Their book is consistently concerned with struggles over who is welcomed to practice agency, flourish, and be meaningfully at home in the places they live. Capitalists will always aim to develop versions of the city that reject and punish the poor, in tandem with racism and border militarization reaching to the school door where undocumented kids try to learn. Proximity, as Collins put it, should not be confused with group solidarity. But if this is true, simply living in a city will not change people's politics through some kind of diversity osmosis. Rather, politics are a collective project and achievement, and the kind of city we have comes out of a struggle between ordinary residents and rich people, including social parasites from developers to landlords.

I think Kukla would agree with me also about the idea that pursuing the kind of place to live that we long for is an open project, ongoing, collectively built. They close the book with Henri Lefebvre's formulation of what he called "the right to the city," which is not about the formal rights the state accords official citizens, but rather the collectively achieved standing to meaningfully participate in the life of a place. Kukla cashes out a relevant part of the right to the city with Roy Oldenburg's conception of "Third Space"—"a space for socializing, playing, and just existing together in a fluid and unstructured but patterned way" (271). For Oldenburg, the prototypical third place was the bookstore/café; Kukla expands his approach to theorize third places not along a public/private dichotomy but instead in terms of their "fluid, territorialized, and social character and their separation from work and home" emphasizing "They are their own kind of space, and they seem to be essential to flourishing urban life" (272). They emphasize that "Public space, in all its incarnations, has to be *carved out* and *produced* within urban life, and it is part of the distinctive ecological ontologies of cities. Often it is the product of struggle and conflict" (270). So the question then might be how do we decide who shapes the places we live?

Asking and answering this question requires talking about how we constitute collectivities, make decisions together, and enact iterative change. Kukla posits that there is a place for urban planners and users of space in this kind of thinking: "I strongly suspect that it is not possible to figure out all obstacles to inclusion and agency in an urban space a priori, either as top-down planners or as bottom-up users of space" (285). They frame the needed work as primarily about inclusion. In the final sentences of the book, they argue:

> Urban planning must build in recognition of its own limitations; we need to design spaces that are made to be redesigned through their bottom-up uses, but a wide variety of users. Diverse city

dwellers need to make and remake the wide variety of spaces that constitute a flourishing city—a city that, as we have seen, makes and remakes us in turn. (286)

To close, I want to turn to some places where I see people moving beyond individual inclusion of diverse bodies exercising agency in remaking spaces and toward the collective deliberation about what those spaces should be. In some ways, what I'm yearning for here is *City Living Part Two*, a book that elaborates how people get together to make cities the way they are.

Some of this work is forecast in the examples of ordinary people resisting gentrification, which Kukla explores in the chapter on anarchist living and organizing in Berlin. The autonomous housing and cultural space they highlight, Köpi137, continues to be threatened with eviction so that developers can transform the space it holds. Kukla describes a founding member of Köpi, Frank, reflecting on how the photos they were allowed to take of the collective space would misrepresent what it is. Because they were not allowed to take photos of people, he said, "readers would wrongly think that Köpi is a lonely place" (168). I love this point because it illuminates that the built infrastructure of a place, necessary as it is to living, playing, and partying, is merely a trace of the social infrastructure that makes that place live.

The anarchism Köpi residents practice can be induced from looking at the material traces of how they live, but it's just a trace of the collective work they do. Anarchism at Köpi is something other than how the building looks; it's how the people in it work collectively. Kukla narrates a short window into Köpi's collective process, through an account of the meeting they attended asking to be able to document the space for their book. As they write, "In the case of Köpi, the embodied details of their anarchist decision-making process *are* details about their uses of space and vice versa; the shape of the room and the furniture, together with the use of bodily timing and gesture, in fact *constitute* the decision-making process at the *Hausprojeckt*" (167). But because Kukla (quite appropriately) leaves the meeting after making their pitch to be able to document the place, readers cannot access the ways Köpi is very much not a lonely place.

It is these forms of collective practice, of being not lonely, that matter most to the project Kukla is committed to, building the possibility of spatial agency "to autonomously occupy, move through, and use space, as well as our ability to mark and transform it in accordance with our needs and desires" (7). The *our* in this sentence matters a lot—we are not just collections of individuals who decide what we personally need from the places we live. Rather, if we're going to build good places, we need to constitute collectivities that can make decisions together, directly, in a way that is mutually committed to collective flourishing. All autonomy must, in the end, be relational autonomy. How can cities be a site for practicing this?

Perhaps the most exciting place I'm seeing people ask this question is in the terrain of the new municipalisms.

Murry Bookchin's work is one anchor for these movements, which have been active in Europe for some time and which are beginning to find footing in the US as well. Bookchin famously formulated the idea of *social ecology*, a way to collectively manifest freedom—that social organization which does not destroy the natural world, contests the power of the state and capitalism, and produces flourishing. His work has been central to the formulation of organizations pursuing what he formulated as communalism, a way out of stale debates between Marxists and anarchists about how to address state power. For Bookchin, the city has the potential to be a place for direct democracy and widespread social transformation. He writes:

> If we are to recover politics, citizenship, and democracy, we need not only to recover our concept of the city as a place in which we work and engage in everyday consociation; we also have to see the city as a public arena, in which we intermingle to discuss public affairs, such as ways of improving our lives as civic beings.[3]

It's important that when Bookchin thinks about the category "citizen," he is not formulating that as a status granted to people by the state; rather, this names a practice of being together in the collective work of making our consociated lives.

Over and over reading *City Living*, I wanted to hear how Kukla would think of Bookchin and municipalism, especially in terms of what I believe might be shared views of what a city is and can be. Kukla writes about Berlin's approach to holding its history in its present, writing "We are not seeing the city *as it was* but rather seeing the city *as it is now*, which is a way of being shaped by its own past" (144). Bookchin defines how he thinks of what a city is: "I view the city as the *history* of the city. That is to say, I view the city as the cumulative development—or dialectic—of certain important social potentialities and their phase of development, traditions, culture, and community features."[4] Municipalists are taking up this formulation of the city as the cumulative manifestation of all the history that has constituted it, and thus as a living thing that can be reconstituted by ordinary people working together.

Another concept that is helpful to bring into the conversation is that of *intimate direct democracy*, formulated by political theorist, social ecologist, and activist Modibo Kadelie. He says, "It's the kind of life in which people can sit down, talk with one another and reach some kind of consensus about how they want to live, how they want to relate to their immediate environment and how they want to structure their institutions and carry on their history."[5] He continues: "If we believe in direct democracy that means that we must believe that ordinary people can create institutions to liberate themselves and drive history forward." In imagining *City Living: Book Two*, I pictured Kukla taking up these anarchist and communalist approaches to ordinary people collectively shaping the conditions for collective and personal agency.

In his book *Thirdspace* (not to be confused with third *place*), geographer Edward Soja recounts asking Henri

Lefevbre whether he was an anarchist. Soja writes: "He responded politely, 'No, not now.' 'Well then,' I said, 'what are you now?' He smiled. 'A Marxist of course . . . so that we can all be anarchists some time in the future.'"[6] There are as many sorts of anarchists as there are Marxists; staying committed to collective decision-making by the people affected by the decisions is one way to parse the sorts of political praxis that might be helpful for struggles over how we all live together. Wherever we live, I do hope we can all be anarchists in this sense some time soon.

Even though I'm excited about the new municipalisms and the ways that theorists like Kadalie and Bookchin have formulated the potential for direct democracy as the ground for new a polis for all, I return to the question of the rural and to thinking about places that are not cities. The places that are not cities, back to the farmland and the server farms, *are in the city*. We who live in cities cannot live in them without all the people who live and work elsewhere. We cannot breathe without the forests making our air. We cannot drink without the watersheds that flow into our cisterns. We cannot eat without the fields and the farmers. In writing about losing home, having to leave rural Port Orford, Eli Clare writes: "The people who are dying in rural towns and work minimum- or sub-minimum-wage jobs—not temporarily but day after day for their whole working lives—are working class and poor people."[7] He writes against the urban bias that animates much queer living, part of the assumption that in order to be queer you must move to the city. Clare quotes Suzanne Pharr's brilliant words on why this matters:

> If we cannot do rural organizing around lesbian and gay issues, then rural lesbians and gay men are left with limited options: leaving our roots to live in cities; living fearful invisible lives in our rural communities; or, with visibility, becoming marginalized, isolated, and endangered. Not one of these options holds the promise of wholeness or freedom."[8]

I recognize these bad options from my limited experience being openly queer in the rural spaces and small cities I've lived in, where walking home from the gay bar hand in hand with a woman is very different than doing that same thing even in Ottawa. I believe that organizations like Oregon's Rural Organizing Project (https://rop.org) can be a vital space for bridging the shared yearnings for a different world from the cities to the suburbs to rural places, and that we can tune those yearnings through the kind of intimate direct democracy that could truly manifest what Kukla names as those shared spaces that are "living and dynamic, in a constate process of remaking" (161).

NOTES

1. Alexis Shotwell, *Knowing Otherwise: Race, Gender, and Implicit Understanding* (University Park, PA: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 2011), xi.

2. Patricia Hill Collins, "Comment on Hekman's 'Truth and Method: Feminist Standpoint Theory Revisited': Where's the Power?" *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society* 22, no. 2 (January 1997): 378–79, https://doi.org/10.1086/495162.

3. Bookchin and van Outryve d'Ydewalle, *From Urbanization to Cities: The Politics of Democratic Municipalism*, xxv.

4. Bookchin and van Outryve d'Ydewalle, *From Urbanization to Cities*, xxvi.

5. Modibo M. Kadalie and Andrew Zonneveld, "Re-Learning the Past to Re-Imagine the Future." See also Kadalie, *Intimate Direct Democracy: Fort Mose, the Great Dismal Swamp, and the Human Quest for Freedom.*

6. Edward W. Soja, *Thirdspace: Journeys to Los Angeles and Other Real-and-Imagined Places*, 33.

7. Eli Clare, *Exile and Pride: Disability, Queerness, and Liberation*, 37).

8. Suzanne Pharr quoted in Clare, *Exile and Pride*, 44.

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Re-Making the Territory of a Philosophy of the City

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Quill R Kukla's book *City Living* navigates the treacherous territories of philosophy and the city. The publisher classifies the book not as a work of philosophy, but rather as "sociology, urban," and only the first and last chapter explicitly develop philosophical concepts or make normative claims that many might recognize as falling clearly within the domain of philosophy. But I want to argue that the book IS philosophy (while also being "fundamentally interdisciplinary," as Kukla claims on page 2), and makes important contributions toward an intersectional feminist philosophy of the city. Kukla's analysis not only helps us claim a right to the city but also helps us feminists claim a right to philosophy.

In their acknowledgements, Kukla argues that they learned "to make a paradigm shift from thinking like a philosopher to thinking like a geographer, or at least a philosopher-geographer" (xvi). It is this blurred boundary designated by the hyphen that interests me, how the book straddles the line in ways that enrich our thinking about both cities and philosophy in ways that help us renegotiate space for thinking and inhabiting cities as well as the disciplines differently.

In the context of Kukla's thinking about city living, a pivotal concept is "territory," which Kukla defines as "a space in which a group of people feel at home and experience themselves as having a voice and agency within and over that space" (59). While Kukla is concerned with actual and not metaphorical space, I think we might extend the concept to disciplinary territories, as these spaces for thinking and writing have very real consequences for agency and voice. The territory of philosophy has not been hospitable to the city and few philosophical works on cities are counted as philosophy, that is, they are not read within the canon of philosophy (nor—as we see with Kukla's book—are they classified as such in Library of Congress or marketing classifications). Although our numbers are growing, it is still safe to say that few academic philosophers read or teach philosophical works on the city such as those by Henri Lefebvre or Engels's *The Condition of the Working Class in Manchester in 1844*. As soon as philosophers write about the city, they almost always are cast out of their territory into the domain of social science. Many of us have been engaged in recent projects that we call "philosophy of the city" and the Philosophy and the City Research group thrives.[1] I see Kukla's work as an important contribution to the project of reclaiming the territory of the city as an important subject of philosophical investigation, or to put it another way, of remaking the territory of philosophy to include the city.[2]

Until very recently women, nonbinary persons, trans persons, and all those who engage in philosophy that aims to ground the work and make it more meaningful were likely to be cast out of the territory of philosophy rather than have a voice within and over the space. Feminist philosophical work has been precarious precisely because it aims to make philosophy speak to our embodied and lived experiences. Historically, feminist philosophers who engage in interdisciplinary thinking are often cast out of the discipline of philosophy. Iris Marion Young, one of the first contemporary philosophers to write explicitly about cities (and cited by Kukla, 48; 55–56), ended her distinguished career as a professor of political science at the University of Chicago without formal philosophy department affiliation. Young had some choices and chose to work in an intellectual context where she had a bigger voice and greater recognition than that accorded her within philosophy, but too many other feminist, BIPOC, and white, non-cis, male philosophers have simply disappeared.

APA Studies on Feminism and Philosophy (formerly the *APA Newsletter on Feminism and Philosophy*) has a long history of publishing work otherwise marginalized in philosophy and documenting the struggles of working outside or at the margins of philosophy. I am therefore grateful to Lauren Freeman for this special issue on Quill's book, a book that is feminist and focused on an inclusive examination of the embodied and lived experience of the city and how we can make it more just. In 2010, when asked to provide advice to mid-career women, I wrote in this very publication that "pushing the boundaries of philosophy is both a way to make philosophy more meaningful to our lives and a way to make philosophy more hospitable to women"[3]—to which I should have added (and now do): more hospitable to women, trans persons, and nonbinary persons.

While I argued then and still argue that we can and should respect those of us who choose to give up philosophical labels or affiliations, I still believe that those who can do so should push the boundaries of philosophy by rejecting the claim that whenever we make philosophy meaningful or relevant our work ceases to be philosophy. Kukla's act of keeping the hyphen might have been born of a modesty that they have not yet mastered the territory of the urban geographer, but I hope that they will continue to think about how and why it is important not to cede the territory of philosophy to white, cis men who still patrol its borders. As Linda Martín Alcoff and Eva Feder Kittay have argued, "In expanding the scope, method, and vision of philosophy, in allowing for a permeability of disciplinary boundaries, and in the active engagement of reflexive critique, the work of feminist philosophers has begun to overhaul our understanding of philosophy, even as it remains undeniably philosophical."[4] Their claim that feminist philosophy "remains undeniably philosophical" when in fact feminist work was (and sometimes still is) regularly denied to be philosophical is a performative act that we must continue to make[5] because it is at once both a political and philosophical act to claim a territory that is repeatedly denied to feminist philosophers and philosophers of the city. We must engage in a continued process of remaking the territory. I believe that it is important to map and remember this context for both feminist philosophy and philosophy of the city.

Kukla does not dwell on these philosophical turf wars, but rather jumps fully into their investigation of city living, developing what they call a "philosophical toolbox" for asking how urban spaces and urban dwellers "make, shape, and change one another" (13). A key concept in that toolbox is the idea of "ecological ontologies," which Kukla defines as "sets of real, concrete things and events that can exist only within an ecological system, made up of material space and its users in dynamic inaction with one another" (3). Kukla's use of this term helps us think about how humans as well as nonhumans interact with each other and a given space. For example, Kukla provides detailed descriptions of the dog park in their neighborhood, documenting how neighborhood interactions and use of a space transformed the space into a de facto dog park (116–18). Elsewhere Kukla notes how dog walking affects where and how humans walk (as dogs stop to sniff, explore, and defecate), but also that humans control dogs' wanderings too and that everyone's walk is affected by the given space (73).

A second key concept that Kukla develops is "spatial agency," which is defined as "our ability to autonomously occupy, move through, and use space, as well as our ability to mark and transform it in accordance with our needs and desires" (7). Kukla analyzes how those with privileged bodies can navigate and use space differently than those who do not have such privilege. When a person walks through a city park, for example, different people will have different levels of freedom. A woman might avoid the space for fear of being catcalled; a person in a wheelchair may not be able to access the park because the sidewalk lacks curb cuts. They also examine Elijah Anderson's analysis of urban street culture[6] and the micropractices of exchanges in an inner-city Black neighborhood, and

how those exchanges create social hierarchies and social identities that have material consequences for social and environmental interactions (52–53).

Kukla's work integrates embodied observation and immersion in city living and with urban dwellers in ways that examine how ecological ontologies are created, maintained, and changed through the interactive forces of physical place and urban dwellers. As such, Kukla develops a sense of spatial agency that is both embodied and intersubjective. By focusing on city living, Kukla emphasizes the ways that cities concentrate and emphasize our interdependence—on one another and on the natural and built environments.

Kukla argues that "our ecosystem is our territory," the space where we dwell and feel most at home, where we feel properly oriented and are able to move smoothly within it (27). Our home territory shapes our attention and perceptions, our embodied skills on how to respond to surroundings, and our moral responses that determine what we judge to be valuable or not (29). Kukla argues convincingly that cities have distinct ecosystems and much of their fieldwork involves documenting how territories "can be made real and given material shape through micronegotiations" (42). Territory, they note, "can be established top-down through policies and spatial divisions, but it is also powerfully produced bottom-up through bodily postures, gestures, gazes, marking of space, and the like" (42). In other words, we can be shaped by the physical plan of the city. Humans act differently in an urban park that only has hard, uninviting concrete surfaces and provides no protection from the sun than in one with grass and trees, buskers, and picnic tables. But humans also make the city, as they might occupy an otherwise empty concrete park, transforming the space by erecting tents and altering themselves by forming a community among strangers, as happened with Occupy Wallstreet in Zuccotti Park.

Although many urban planners, geographers, and philosophers share Kukla's view, Kukla argues that they are striking a new middle ground between two dichotomous positions that they label as "spatial determinist" and "spatial voluntarist." An environmental or spatial determinist often assumes that space is fixed and natural; determinists would argue that space shapes our choices and actions (14). The view that crime in public housing projects is caused by the design of the housing is a spatial determinist view. Spatial voluntarists take the opposite view, focusing on how people's choices shape their environment (14). This mapping allows Kukla to make claim to what they identify as new terrain that rejects both: "Rather, I want to insist that neither spaces nor their dwellers can be properly understood independently" (15). Arguably, this view is not as original as Kukla's neat categories would suggest. The use of this sort of dichotomous thinking is typical of philosophical methods that Kukla otherwise rejects (or sidesteps), and it is unhelpful in this context.

For example, Kukla names both Rousseau and Plato as spatial or environmental determinists (14), but a deeper analysis demonstrates that both philosophers take much more nuanced views. If anything, Plato rejects environmental determinism. Famously, in the *Phaedrus*, Socrates is invited by Phaedrus to walk beyond the city limits and complains, "I am a lover of learning, and trees and open country won't teach me anything, whereas men in the city do."[7] In this quote we might also hear a rejection of any physical place as determining the philosopher's ideas, or we could read Plato as Kukla's ally, arguing that there is something about the way that the city demands interaction and dialogue with the place and its inhabitants that gives rise to philosophical learning. In Plato's *Republic*, when Socrates and his interlocutors build a city in speech, they focus on how a city grows precisely through the interaction of geography, trade, social customs, and economic need. In short, people both respond to the environment and, in turn, respond to their interactions with each other and the new social, economic, and behavioral norms that develop as a result of growth. Yet, later in that work, as well as in other dialogues, we might argue that Plato is the first in a long line of philosophers to reject the city and place as having real relevance. The analogy of the cave and Plato's theory of the forms suggests that philosophical truth is independent from place, that philosophical truths are obtained through the escape of place that dialectical thinking affords, and then the philosopher returns to the city to offer that wisdom. And on these claims, Plato is very much at odds with Kukla, not because he is an environmental determinist, but one who rejects the very premise of Kukla's work about what we can learn when we engage in urban living and reflect on it.

Plato is decidedly anti-urban, as is Rousseau. In most of his writings, Rousseau holds a romantic ideal for his home of Geneva and espouses an intense dislike for large cities such as Paris. But I do not think that that makes him an environmental determinist. In his "Letter to M. D'Alembert on the Theater," Rousseau argues against the building of a theater in his beloved Geneva, but the argument is not about the actual building or physical environment of the theater; rather, it is about the social interactions that go on in and about a theater.[8] At his most Platonic, Rousseau criticizes the theater-makers for mistaking reality and illusion. But he further argues that the customs that emerge in response to theater—for example, competitions for fine dress among the theater-goers—not only reflect, but can produce greater social inequalities. Plato and Rousseau are but two examples of philosophers in the Western tradition who see no place for the city in philosophy, not because they are spatial determinists, but because they think philosophy can escape environmental influence entirely.

Importantly, Kukla's thesis in no way depends on how we classify or understand Rousseau and Plato, but the misreading demonstrates how rocky the terrain of philosophy of the city is. And I am grateful that Kukla resists the common philosophical disciplinary practice of merely reporting on other books. A philosophy of the city calls for the philosopher to be in and for the city! That said, the very invisibility of much of philosophy of the city makes it difficult to sometimes navigate the territory and to recognize allies. The result is that Kukla sometimes misses important opportunities for dialogue that could advance their project.

The greatest missed opportunity for stronger solidarity with thinkers who precede them is when Kukla pigeon-holes Jane Jacobs as a spatial determinist (13–14). While it is true that Jacobs argued for specific city plans as the best ways to preserve city life, so, ultimately, does Kukla, focusing their concluding section of the book on urban planning and what we should build. Kukla argues for a built urban plan that allows for its inhabitants to tinker with it, and on this last point they squarely agree with Jacobs, approvingly citing Jacobs's insight that "if a space is overplanned, it can strangle the room for creative uses and no one has the opportunity to participate with agency in nice-building and place-making" (44). Indeed, Jacobs revolutionized American urban planning by opening up the possibility for grassroots planning, for including those who inhabit the city in planning right from its start.[9]

Kukla further borrows from Jacobs's observations about the ballet of place, and Jacobs's insights here are precisely those of interaction with others—including strangers—and our interdependence on one another and on our built environment. Without seeming to realize that David Seamon's work is indebted to that of Jane Jacobs, Kukla borrows Seamon's concept of "place ballet," that is, ways that "place identity is essentially generated by . . . established routines and patterns of micronegotiations" (33). But Seamon argues that it is Jacobs who first described such a place ballet when she observed the complex interactions of neighbors and strangers on her Greenwich Village block.[10]

Kukla's claim to the middle ground of course means that there is learning they take from both of what they classify as the extremes. But in refusing to see more ways that Jane Jacobs is a tremendous ally, Kukla loses their way a bit, relying on a hard philosophical distinction that hinders rather than helps to make their point. Kukla does gain their bearings quickly, though, and their work helps push the boundaries of the concept of the "right to the city," but in a way that builds on Jacobs's insights rather than refusing them.

The term "right to the city" has been used and abused and appears in both activist and scholarly writings. It appropriately is credited to French philosopher Henri Lefebvre. His work initiates the idea of the right to the city as a right, and clearly defines it as a right to inhabit the city (rather than a formal legal right):

> Reflective of his stress on the city as a space of politics, Lefebvre envisions a city where its inhabitants could properly participate in urban political life. This emphasis is most visible in the specific way he frames the right to the city. "The right to the city manifests itself," argues Lefebvre, "as a superior form of rights: right to freedom, to individualization in socialization, to habitat and to inhabit. The right to the [city as] *oeuvre*, to participation and *appropriation* (clearly distinct from the right to property) are implied in the right to the city" (Lefebvre, 1996: 173–4).[11]

Kukla's fieldwork and theoretical reflection help us better understand what it means to claim a right to the city as a right to inhabit, connecting Lefebvre's insights to a feminist phenomenology of agency that is both embodied and interdependent. And it is city living itself—and Kukla's reflections on it—that allow us to recapture and develop this critically important claim, helping us both understand the distinctiveness of urban embodied living and the right to inhabit the city. As Kukla writes, "City dwellers are constantly, as a matter of course, accommodating themselves to others. Living one's life with these kinds of negotiations and intrusions makes for a distinctive kind of embodied existence" (259). Importantly, the book also transverses global North and South, thus further challenging the domain of traditional Western philosophy as well as most social science work focused on North America and Europe.

Kukla's conclusion that the right to the city is a right to inhabit a shared space is an important contribution to philosophy of the city—as is the claim that the "right to the city includes not just access to suitable spaces that meet one's needs and fit one's activities, but also the ability to exercise agency not only within but *upon* these spaces" (260; italics in original). Kukla's insights into what a claim to the right to the city entails allows for a more inclusive understanding of the injustices of spatial inequality as a matter of constricting access and embodied agency (261–63). By drawing on feminist disability theory and connecting it to both their fieldwork and their analysis of the right to the city, Kukla synthesizes disparate fields in a way that is more just, respectful, and inclusive. As Kukla writes, "Spatial justice requires that we work to make sure that everyone, with every kind of body, be able to participate fully in urban life" (266).

Kukla not only connects feminist disability theory, but also feminist critiques of the Western dichotomy between the public and private, arguing that the analyses of the right to the city by Lefebvre and others assume that dichotomy. In contrast, Kukla argues that the conditions required for spatial justice include the creation and maintenance of "third spaces," that is, communal spaces that blur the boundaries of public and private but that can be territorialized and remade by those inhabiting the spaces. This is a very rich area that invites more research and thinking on the right to inhabit and remake spaces that challenge the public/private dichotomy. There is much work that can and should be done to connect Kukla's work with that of others where there is fruitful dialogue; a feminist philosophy of the city depends both on continued fieldwork of the sort that Kukla engages in and models for us as well as more dialogue between those engaged in philosophy of the city. I think, for example, of the promise of connecting the work of Margaret Kohn's *The Death and Life of the Urban Commonwealth*[12] with that of Kukla.

Kukla's book comes full circle, starting with the quote from Jane Jacobs's *The Death and Life of Great American Cities*—"Cites have the capability of providing something for everybody, only because, and only when, they are created by everybody"—and ending with an argument for a similar type of urban planning that allows bottom-up

micronegotiations. But it is a circular map that opens new points of connection and dialogue between and within the disciplines and between and within urban dwellers. Kukla's book *City Living* provides us with a map that can be used to guide an intersectional feminist philosophy of the city as we chart out better understandings of cities and more just forms of urban living.

NOTES

1. Philosophy of the City Research Group, https://www.utwente.nl/en/potc2021/Philosophy%20of%20the%20City%20Research%20Group/.

2. See Samantha Noll, Joseph S. Biehl, and Sharon M. Meagher, "Introduction: Transforming Philosophy and the City," *The Routledge Handbook of Philosophy of the City*, eds. Sharon M. Meagher, Samantha Noll, and Joseph Biehl (Oxford and New York: Routledge, 2020), especially pp. 1–4.

3. Sharon M. Meagher, "Pushing the Boundaries of Philosophy," *APA Newsletter on Feminism and Philosophy* 09, no. 2 (2010): 8. Available at https://cdn.ymaws.com/www.apaonline.org/resource/collection/D03EBDAB-82D7-4B28-B897-C050FDC1ACB4/v09n2Feminism.pdf.

4. Linda Martín Alcoff and Eva Feder Kittay, "Introduction: Defining Feminist Philosophy," in *The Blackwell Guide to Feminist Philosophy*, eds. Linda Martín Alcoff and Eva Feder Kittay (Malden, MA and London: Blackwell Publishing, 2007), 12.

5. Sharon M. Meagher, "Feminist Transformations," *Journal of Speculative Philosophy* 26, no. 2 (2012): 200–10.

6. Elijah Anderson, *Code of the Street: Decency, Violence, and the Moral Life of the Inner City* (New York: W. W. Norton, 2000).

7. Plato, *Phaedrus*, 230 d 3-4.

8. Jean-Jacques Rousseau, "Letter to M. D'Alembert on the Theater," 1758; reprinted in Sharon M. Meagher, *Philosophy and the City: Classic to Contemporary Writings* (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 2008), 72–80.

9. See, for example, the work of The Center for the Living City, https://centerforthelivingcity.org/info; Thomas Campanella, "Jane Jacobs and the Death and Life of American Planning," *Places*, April 2011, https://placesjournal.org/article/jane-jacobs-and-the-death-and-life-of-american-planning/.

10. David Seamon, "Body-Subject, Time-Space Routines, and Place-Ballets," in *The Human Experience of Space and Place*, eds. Anne Buttimer and David Seamon (Milton Park: Routledge, 1980), 148–165; citing Jane Jacobs, *The Life and Death of Great American Cities* (New York: Vintage Books 1961), 52–53.

11. Mehmet Barış Kumulu, "The Vortex of Rights: 'Right to the City' at a Crossroads," *International Journal of Urban & Regional Research* 37, no. 3 (2013): 923–40, https://doi.org/10.1111/1468-2427.12008.

12. Margaret Kohn, *The Death and Life of the Urban Commonwealth* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016).

Spatial Agency in Climate Adaptation

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In their book *City Living: How Urban Dwellers and Urban Spaces Make One Another*, Quill R Kukla artfully brings together several modes of inquiry to explore the relationship between urban spaces and the people that dwell within them. Kukla's work is an example of interdisciplinary excellence—they draw upon phenomenological and conceptual analysis and weave their philosophical inquiry together with theoretical tools in geography as they engage in careful ethnographic fieldwork and archival research.

The central object of Kukla's investigation is the embodied uses and materiality of urban spaces. They illuminate how relationships of power and people's agency are supported or limited by urban spaces. Kukla is interested in the processes by which spaces shape such behavior and agency, but they also illuminate the ways that dwellers shape and remake spaces into niches that satisfy their needs as occupants. Kukla argues that these reciprocal processes yield real, material things in the world. Kukla notes that plenty of real things, which have concrete impacts on the world, exist because of the social practices that produce them. Their reality and meaning are tied to particular social institutions. For example, paychecks influence material things in the world in virtue of social institutions such as wages and banks. Even if a paycheck is not itself a material object or has no distinctive physical properties, its reality cannot be questioned. Having or being denied a paycheck is sufficient to encounter its reality, even if such a reality is dependent upon social practices and institutions. Similarly, Kukla argues that such things as neighborhoods or rush hours are the sorts of real things that exist only in cities because of the specific ways that city dwellers use and engage with urban spaces. Kukla's materialist approach to cities is an important divergence from more common analyses of city life which tend to focus primarily on the subjective experience of individuals in urban spaces. Instead, Kukla argues that the way people use space, and the way space shapes people, produce concrete things that exist within the context of these particular relationships.

Specifically, through micronegotiations—the daily interactions and small movements in city spaces—such material things are produced. Kukla argues that micronegotiations play an important role in the construction of city dwellers' embodied habits, identities, moral judgments, perceptual skills, and capacities for risk assessment. However, such impacts are not limited to individuals; these micronegotiations and practices shape urban spaces as well. Kukla is specifically interested in how territories—understood as real, concrete things in the world—are produced through these micronegotiations. Territories, according to Kukla, are spaces where people experience having agency over and within such spaces. The dynamic, co-constitutive relationship between material spaces and the material movements and transactions of dwellers produces territories which are themselves material realities that are key to city life. For example, they delineate outsiders and insiders and establish and regulate norms of how urban spaces are used. They are key to cities because they are the spaces within cities that people's agency is expressed and experienced.

Kukla stresses the importance of recognizing that urban spaces, and the territories produced by people's micronegotiations in cities, are mostly shared spaces. They argue that it is the shared nature of city spaces that make them distinct from non-urban spaces. Such spaces are used in conjunction with others and this joint use of space entails constant negotiations (not all of which are conflictual). Kukla's main task is to elucidate the various forms of

sharing urban spaces and how people and such spaces are co-constituted. While this task is primarily descriptive, it is not without normative implications. Through an attentive examination of the co-constitutive material relationship between city dwellers and urban spaces, Kukla illuminates the way in which cities can be both places of change that can generate opportunities for flourishing as well as environments that reinforce and entrench injustices.

This in-depth philosophical and interdisciplinary analysis of cities and their dwellers, as well as Kukla's account of spatially embodied agency, their analysis of gentrifying spaces as contested territories, and their exploration of repurposed cities could not come at a more crucial time. Today, four billion people, roughly 55 percent of the world's population, live in cities.[1] The trend towards increased urbanization coincides with estimates that seven out of ten people in the world will live in a city by 2050. The speed and scale of urbanization presents its own range of challenges such as the need for infrastructure, affordable housing, and efficient transportation systems, and the potential impact and needs of growing urban populations is significant. However, these challenges are even more pressing when understood in the context of anthropogenic global climate change.

Cities are both impacted by and exacerbate climate change. Cities account for more than two thirds of the world's energy consumption and more than 70 percent of emissions. They are also sites of great exposure to slow and rapid-onset climate impacts. For example, a significant number of urban residents occupy coastal areas. Even though such communities are increasingly at risk to the impacts of rising sea levels and storm surges, the trend of urban expansion is also accompanied by the fact that population in vulnerable and hazard-prone areas—such as coastlines—is increasing.[2]

Furthermore, according to the most recent Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change report, there is high confidence that future urbanization will amplify air temperature changes in cities despite background climate conditions.[3] Furthermore, given the increased frequency and intensity of extreme climate events such as heatwaves, cities will experience increased heat stress. This is due in part to the geometry and material of urban spaces, where tall, closely built buildings absorb and store heat while decreasing opportunities for natural ventilation. This phenomenon, referred to as the urban head island effect, is further exacerbated by the lack of green spaces and bodies of water in cities.[4] Additionally, the heat released due to human activities such as industrial heating and cooling systems are factors that contribute to making cities hotspots of climate change.[5] With extra heat, cities are prone to infrastructure failures as asphalt is melted, power grids fail, and rail tracks expand. Most significantly, without protection from extreme heat, city dwellers are increasingly at risk of heat-related health impacts and death.

High-risk areas are often home to communities of Black, Brown, and Indigenous peoples who have already experienced disenfranchisement, oppression, and increased vulnerability due to a range of structural injustices stemming from legacies of colonialism, racism, disinvestment, and segregation.[6] For example, in the United States, the distribution of the urban heating burden is experienced disproportionately in neighborhoods with higher Black, Hispanic, and Asian populations compared to predominately White urban spaces.[7] During the most recent and unprecedented heatwave in India, where temperatures exceeded 120 degrees Fahrenheit (49 degrees Celsius), the vast majority of the most vulnerable urban dwellers were the working urban poor who faced temperature extremes due to having to work in blue-collar jobs based outdoors and living in inadequate housing without access to effective air conditioning or cooling centers.[8]

Both rapid and slow onset climate impacts also have direct and indirect influence on human mobility within and beyond urban spaces. The heterogeneity of climate-related mobility presents another challenge that urban dwellers will increasingly face. Depending on a variety of factors, climate change can induce increased movement through migration and displacement or can prompt immobility. This range of climate mobility outcomes can be characterized by a wide range of degrees of agency. For example, some urban coastal dwellers may become increasingly immobile due to limitations in resources and opportunities to move away from harm, while others—despite increased vulnerability—will choose to remain in the places they know to be their home.[9] While successful *in situ* adaptation decreases risk, failures to adapt in place may prompt mobility-based outcomes that can increase risk in cases of displacement or forced relocation. Failures of *in situ* adaptation can also give rise to immobility where agency in decision making is decreased.[10] Place-based attachment and identity are often central to well-being and factor into the decisions people make in the face of climate impacts.[11] However, the relationships between dwellers and the spaces they constantly negotiate can also contribute to maladaptation. This gives rise to questions of justice and legitimacy regarding proactive adaptive behaviors and interventions in the face of climate-related risks and increased vulnerability.

While Kukla does not specifically address climate-related mobility outcomes or climate vulnerability in the book, their discussion of displacement in the context of gentrification and their attention to spatial agency offers resources for answering challenging normative and practical questions regarding climate-related displacement, immobility, vulnerability, and adaptation. Their account of spatial agency helps to illuminate ways in which harmful climate mobility outcomes can be understood as wrongs warranting address and can help clarify the content of our obligations to those who are vulnerable.

Most notably, in chapter 3 of the book, Kukla makes the case that urban dwellers can be displaced without actually leaving their neighborhoods. While they argue this in the context of gentrification, Kukla's insight that residents can lose their territory even before they have physically left has important implications for understanding the nature of our obligations to support *in situ* adaptation. Let me explain.

Kukla argues that people lose their ability *to be* at home—and even *to know* their own neighborhoods in locations that have been gentrified. This is because people's spatial agency (and authority) has been decreased in the space they otherwise recognized as their home. For Kukla, to know a place is to know how to negotiate, use, interact with, and move through a space. In other words, knowledge of a territory is gained when people have developed skills and positionalities that permit them to have agency within a given space. As Kukla argues, "we know a city when we understand how to perceive and respond to it well, and when we have developed the embodied feel of using it and moving around in it competently" (37). When neighborhoods and territories are altered physically, in cases of gentrification, for example, residents' territorial skills are destabilized or rendered meaningless in the altered space. Certain changes to the material spaces people occupy can thus create disruptions to people's very identity. The very ecology of their neighborhoods is shifted to the point that they can no longer impact spaces and spaces can no longer accommodate them in the ways that garner meaning and literal material functioning.

How might this understanding of spatial agency and the way it is disrupted in the context of displacement be applied to the context of climate-related vulnerabilities? In cases where climate impacts increase the need for spaces to be altered and adjusted to protect and address the shifting needs of vulnerable dwellers, dwellers may work to adapt to changes in their material environment, but they may lack the agency to shape the spaces they occupy. While people may not have physically left or been pushed out of the climate-vulnerable spaces they occupy, they no longer have a place in their previously known and occupied territories. In other words, physical displacement need not occur for people to be alienated and excluded from the territories they occupy. The skills that otherwise served them, that helped dwellers perceive, respond to, and move through spaces, may not be enough to enable competent use of such spaces. Consequently, people may be cut off from meaningfully accessing place identity.

Elsewhere I argue that people who are at risk and vulnerable to negative climate mobilities have a claim to a right that the international state system ought to protect: *the right to a livable locality*. I argue that climate-induced displacement, migration, and immobility do not emerge as some natural phenomenon, but rather arise due to organizational features of the global territorial state system, understood as a social practice.[12] When understanding the state system as a social practice, we can evaluate whether this decentralized organizational structure is justified in light of these purported aims. In this work, I argue that for any objective one might ascribe to the state system, having a secure right to be somewhere livable is a necessary condition for its attainment. Being in a livable space is instrumentally valuable in this way; it establishes conditions that enable opportunities to pursue various activities, participation, and ways of being in the state system that are relevant for one's well-being.

The notion of livability I defend also captures the constitutive, embodied, relational element of existing as a person within a territorial state system. When the right to a livable locality cannot be effectively claimed because one's home is uninhabitable, one is left with nowhere to effectively "be" in the system in this relevant embodied, relational way. I understand "being in a livable space" in a phenomenological sense. People are spatially located within a social practice that is territorial in nature. People are not merely existing in some static way within a space that provides opportunities for life. Rather, they are already occupying livable spaces in a relational way, adapting both their bodies to the spaces as well as the spaces they occupy. I argue that protecting the right to a livable locality is a normative principle that emerges for and from the social practice of the territorial state system. As such, it serves as a legitimacy condition of the practice. I argue that the obligation to protect the right to a livable locality includes both ameliorative immigration practices as well as the facilitation of *in situ* adaptation.[13]

Kukla's account of displacement as a loss of agency and authority within territories helps to characterize the nature of exclusion people face when their right to livable spaces is compromised. Thus, it also helps to account for the moral wrong of exclusion which undergirds the obligation to protect the right to livable localities. Furthermore, by articulating the active and embodied way people come to "know" the places they occupy, Kukla's account helps to illuminate epistemic deprivations that contribute to make spaces uninhabitable. The knowledge that has been gained in the active relationships to these spaces may be lost or rendered ineffective for the purposes of adaptation. Such conditions can be understood as a deterioration of the mutual constitution between embodied people and place. Stated differently, the relationship between people and places is uni-directional: the spaces people occupy constrain their actions and choices, but the space is no longer responsive to previous micronegotiations that enabled people to shape and come to know the spaces and territories they occupy.

To further illustrate this epistemic deprivation, we can normatively evaluate unsuccessful cases of *in situ* climate adaptation where people are rendered immobile against their choice. While not physically excluded, people suddenly find themselves without any place to meaningfully "be" and thus are unable to participate in the production of their valued, place-based identities. Even worse, if spaces are changed without taking into consideration the impacts of dweller's ability to navigate and epistemically engage with infrastructural change, such changes may amount to maladaptation and increased vulnerability to impacted dwellers. For example, the city of Miami continues to spend a significant amount of money on infrastructure to protect against sea-level rise. However, some of these interventions risk impacting property markets, which can contribute to forms of climate-based gentrification and the further displacement of vulnerable communities.[14] This has moral relevance for a social practice whose legitimacy is constrained by its capacity to remedy or protect against territorial exclusion. If such conditions of exclusion persist, the obligation to protect the right to a livable locality has not been discharged.

In the context of climate change and the increasing impact on urban spaces, city dwellers may recognize that adaptation is necessary. However, given the significant importance of place in identity formation and understanding, successful *in situ* adaptation will require, in part, people's ability to transform the spaces they occupy in ways where they can continue to develop place-related identity and meaning. Kukla's attention to spatial agency provides us with a metric by which we can evaluate interventions focusing on adaptation and risk reduction. Even if people recognize adaptation as necessary, if their spatial agency is diminished by governance processes, then dwellers can rightfully claim that such interventions are not justifiable. Rather than rectifying conditions of inclusion, such interventions can further disrupt the ability of urban dwellers to cultivate the territorial skills and understanding required to transform or evolve place-based identity in the context of adaptation.

This does not mean that adaptation requires the preservation or conservation of the exact characteristics of current ecological systems. Rather, it requires supporting dwellers' ability to negotiate changes in meaning by facilitating their ability to impact the spaces they occupy. In other words, supporting *in situ* adaptation requires supporting the possibility for mutual constitution between people and place. This includes supporting a community's ability to create new meaning or integrate local knowledge as the physical spaces around them shift due to climatic change.

In order to guard against the forms of exclusion that may occur, we cannot simply examine whether people have been physically displaced. We also must examine the extent to which their place-based identity and knowledge of space has become inaccessible. Kukla's analysis provides us with a metric by which we can evaluate the legitimacy of climate adaptation policies. We can examine whether the agency of dwellers has been enhanced or further compromised by a particular policy proposal or adaptation strategy. To correct and guard against furthering such forms of exclusion, policies and strategies to facilitate *in situ* climate adaptation must be inclusive. Policy and planning procedures that protect and increase the agency of urban dwellers most vulnerable to climate risks ought to value and integrate local knowledge and ought to expand the participatory nature of deliberation and decision making.

A recent study has found that spatially heterogenous exposure patterns to extreme heat illuminate an urgency for adaptation mechanisms that are locally tailored to the diversity of spaces within cities and across the world's varied urban centers.[15] Given the heterogeneity of exposure patterns and the heterogeneity of climate mobility outcomes, urban adaptation planning will require a multifaceted approach that is contextualized by specific localities. The legitimacy of approaches can be determined, in part, to the extent to which they enhance the spatial agency of vulnerable urban dwellers in those localities. Furthermore, we need not wait for instances of physical displacement to occur in order to determine whether the right to a livable locality is threatened. Relevant forms of displacement and exclusion can occur even when physical exclusion is absent. Consequently, we have *ex ante* reasons to implement early proactive adaptation strategies. Such strategies allow for the transformation of spaces voluntarily and can support and integrate transformation of spaces in a way that recognizes dwellers themselves as agents and partners in adaptation planning.

In the final chapter of the book, Kukla argues that a right to urban spaces or a right to the city involves "access to and agency within different kinds of territories and public spaces" (283). They note that diverse city dwellers should be enabled to remake the diverse array of urban spaces needed for a city to flourish. Doing so does not require making all spaces inclusive for all types of bodies, nor does it involve pre-planning spaces for people. Rather, Kukla argues, we should focus on expanding marginalized people's spatial agency so that they can meaningfully participate in territory creation. I contend that we should carry over this concern for spatial agency in our normative arguments regarding climate adaptation. Under conditions of climate change, diminishing spatial agency can be an indication that people's right to a livable locality is vulnerable. Participatory adaptation planning that integrates local knowledge can enable urban dwellers most at risk to have an opportunity to continue to shape their identity and maintain a co-constitutive relationship to the spaces they occupy. This is vital to guard against the foreseeable exclusion that can result in the social practice of a territorial state system under conditions of climate change. A shifting climate niche demands that people are not solely responsible for adapting. Rather, urban spaces also must adapt to meet the needs of the expanding number of people negotiating their lives within them.

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Flesh-and-Blood Scholarship

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In *City Living*, Quill Kukla unfolds the thesis that "urban dwellers and urban spaces constitute one another" (121), that is, people who live in cities transform and act upon their environments, while they are also shaped and limited by the social and material conditions in these environments. And they do so not only through grand designs or top-down plans, but also in and by quotidian acts: personal interactions, microexpressions, stances, gestures, how their bodies move around each other and in space, language, art, and other ways of marking, making, and reproducing territories linked to specific groups and identities.

This is an alluring argument, not only because it beckons with the possibility of bottom-up agency and emancipation in unequal cities, but also because it refuses to place that possibility in an ideal, utopian horizon. It is precisely because Kukla acknowledges the limitations and constraints of agency that this proposition becomes tantalizingly attainable. Kukla takes us through the myriad ways in which residents of DC, Berlin, and Johannesburg have tinkered with, adapted to, gradually transformed, and survived in hostile or precarious settings. Through attentive, heartfelt accounts of case studies, Kukla demonstrates the real, existing power of individual actions and social interactions to create more just and inclusive urban spaces. As Kukla develops their book from explanatory theory to analytical case studies to a wishful vision,[1] it is hard not to feel hopeful and roused to action. The change they envision is something we can all do, here, now, right after the book's last page, starting with becoming aware of our own territories, shibboleths, and the consequences of our everyday embodied actions.

In fact, after reading their book, I find myself aware of so much that had previously gone unnoticed, and which now is impossible to unsee—like fish suddenly becoming aware of water.[2] We all participate in the territory-making Kukla describes, which relies on socially and culturally coded markers such as pace of walking, posture, tone of voice, accent, behavior, glances, skin color, gender, dress, signs of class or national belonging, how we pass each other on the street, whether we linger or hurry, stare or avert our eyes. This happens at all scales—in shared spaces such as the squares, streets, and buildings Kukla analyzes, in our workplaces, bus rides, grocery runs, sites of entertainment, doctor visits, even inside our own homes. If we are complicit with the reproduction of social space even in our smallest behaviors and gestures, then we also have the power to critique and change such space.

The power of *City Living* lies not only in telling, but also in *performing* an engaged, inclusive urban theory. This is a visceral text. It engrosses, amuses, and pulls the reader into urban realities. I find myself laughing out loud at Kukla's account of the rules for being admitted to Berghain, an exclusive nightclub in Berlin (154–55); cringing at a passive-aggressive racist episode in an Ethiopian restaurant in Johannesburg (248–49); and sharing in Kukla's shock when they hear a man refer to homeless people as obstacles to be "stepped over" in DC (108). It is not only that Kukla brings to life complex social and urban environments—which they do, vividly—but, crucially, they convey a sense of their own lived experiences as a researcher. Sure, many scholars acknowledge their place in discourse and in fieldwork, but there is something different here as Kukla brings us along for the ride, sharing their sensorial experiences, gut reactions, physical navigations, tastes, smells, hesitations, swear words, and their palpable excitement at fieldwork breakthroughs. This is a kind of flesh-and-blood scholarship, and I am not sure my single, short essay can do justice to its potential unfoldings, as both a writing genre and as a method.

As for method, Kukla opens up a world of possibilities for understanding social and spatial environments. They set out to "read urban spaces as saturated with meaning," but avoid inferences "about individual psychological contents or reactions" (3). This translates into a threefold method: first, minutious analyses of people using and interacting in spaces; second, a consideration of broader historical, political, and socioeconomic contexts that help Kukla interpret and situate those uses and interactions; and third, the incorporation of concepts from a wide range of disciplines related to space and society, which emplot the critical case studies into a broader theoretical narrative.

The spatial analyses, with evocative descriptions of places, buildings, and people, remind me of Michel de Certeau's systematic phenomenological account of space as perceived and lived by a sensing body—except that Kukla politicizes phenomenology by considering the messy tangle of financial, material, political, memorial, and ideological interests that cut through individual and group uses and perceptions of space. Kukla also attends to a variety of perceiving and living bodies beyond just their own (rejecting any universal perceiving subject). These bodies are presented as dynamic, consequential in their actions, communicative in ways that can be at least partially decoded and understood, but also ultimately resistant to full knowledge or control (whether by the state, by other social groups, or by scholarship). We glimpse moments, sequences in developing stories that are always much bigger than what scholarship can contain. What

matters is that we can follow a phenomenology of actions, illuminating power imbalances, modes of survival and rebellion, instances of exploitation and oppression, and examples of liberation and hope.

This phenomenology does not need to conform to a tight thetical arc for the sake of argument; instead, it recognizes the incompleteness and inconsistencies of both scholarship and reality. Kukla observes how the Maboneng Place neighborhood was "paradoxically" designed from the top-down so as to nourish bottom-up and "unpredictable uses of space" (242–43), resulting in an island of racial diversity and safe coexistence separated from the deeply segregated rest of Johannesburg through gentrification and hipster culture. This paradox does not invalidate the real existing achievements of Maboneng Place, nor does it excuse its shortcomings. And in Berlin, Kukla reveals how territory-making can easily go from the inclusive, cacophonous sharing of space by different groups in Hermannplatz (179–89) to "pernicious" gatekeeping, as in the somewhat sadistic admissions ritual to the Berghain nightclub (157). Kukla also dwells in the more ambiguous case of Køpi, where the self-preservation of a radically autonomous and leftist community entails rigorous exclusion of those perceived as outsiders, even when they are sympathetic or interested (157–70). Kukla's politicized phenomenology allows for the productive study of these and other perplexing examples, not despite, but because of their contradictions.

This acknowledgment of the messiness of reality might be related to Kukla's focus on things as they are—the material conditions of the production of urban and social space. I use these words intentionally, as I hear other echoes of Marx in Kukla's work: "dwellers are not simply determined by spaces, but rather exercise creative agency within them. This is not unfettered agency, but agency that is thoroughly spatially embedded and constrained" (30). Marx had put it, in the context of what he saw as a retrograde revolution (Louis Bonaparte's 1851 coup d'état): "Men make their own history, but they do not make it as they please; they do not make it under self-selected circumstances, but under circumstances existing already, given and transmitted from the past."[3] As these two very different texts resonate, they point not just to mutually constitutive elements, but converge upon the hope of agency, imperfect as it may be. Where Marx had dreamed of a revolutionary end goal, Kukla highlights many ongoing rebellions, drawing from recent history, observing contemporary cities, and pointing to possible futures.

Kukla's method resolutely centers on what can be observed, refusing to speculate on psychological motivations and inner emotions. But at points, the book scrapes just below the surface—alluding to the adventurous millennial vibe of guests at a fashionable South African dinner club located in a neighborhood considered unsafe (224–27); discussing the meanings of recent history, memory, and the official discourse on reconciliation in Constitution Hill, a multipurpose site devoted to South Africa's history of racial violence (227–33); or critiquing the ersatz setup at the former Checkpoint Charlie in Berlin, now widely derided as a kitschy tourist trap and noted by Kukla as "very *un*-Berlin"

(189). Kukla's rich observations are evocative of so much more than meets the eye, but they stop before delving too deeply into cultural interpretation. To be clear, Kukla's theory and method do recognize that such cultural forces are at play, as "cultural patterns" associated with "how a space functions" (3), or as the social saturation that shapes and constrains people's spatial agency (17).

I suggest—with an eye to how I may apply Kukla's method to my own research—that this can be pushed further; that is, cultural meanings might work as a third element alongside space and social agency, rather than an aspect attached to either of the two terms. Collective symbolic constructs, visual and literary representations, and social imaginaries—many of which happen not only at a broad, societal level but also in the fine grain of micro-interactions—work in tandem with the "materiality of spaces and their embodied uses" (3). People can inhabit a space symbolically, virtually, or in their imagination; they can envision and change spatial meanings through language, art, music, mass and social media.[4] Those interactions might take place outside of particular places, in other materialities, or they may even be immaterial, but they still help shape physical places and the people who inhabit or act upon them. For example, in São Paulo, young male Black residents of low-income areas at the margins of the city, who are usually stereotyped as criminals, have reshaped public perceptions of themselves and their neighborhoods through a steady production of rap, hip hop, literature, and slam poetry since the 1980s. Their work thematizes life in these peripheral areas, laying bare their challenges as well as their creativity and humanity. Not only has this artistic output changed residents' views of their own neighborhoods (instead of shame, they feel pride), but it has also diminished their stigma among residents of wealthier areas. The peripheries started to be seen as centers of art and cultural production rather than mere reservoirs of cheap labor, poverty, and crime. This change in social perception reverberated through concrete changes, ranging from self-built improvements done by residents of those neighborhoods (such as gathering spaces for music and poetry) to broader political support for these areas (in the form of municipal laws and public funding for cultural projects). As I write this, it feels like an idea best saved for a real-time exchange rather than a soliloquy, so I will leave this question open, somewhat unanswered, curious as to what Kukla might make of it. Regardless, Kukla's analyses of gestures, behaviors, and micro-interactions foreground aspects often overlooked by other approaches, even thick descriptions and ethnographies, offering a novel and productive method for observing and understanding urban space.

Kukla also develops a transdisciplinary theory of city living, which brings together conceptual affinities among various fields: geography, history, philosophy, urbanism, architecture, heritage and memory studies, anthropology, sociology, feminist theory, disability theory, language studies. Kukla's own propositions transit fluidly among these other disciplinary voices, resulting in a framework that attends to multiple aspects of city living while returning the reader to the main point: the dynamic, mutually constitutive relationships between cities and people. Within this

framework, Kukla gives new life to established concepts, such as gentrification, community, and public space.

Their take on public space is particularly helpful, as they reject the "public/private dichotomy" and focus instead on "shared spaces" (259) and on the slippery, multiple definitions of public (267–71). They point out that significant social interactions involving communities, individuals, organized groups, and other assemblages that make up an urban "public" take place in spaces that are not officially public—inside privately owned buildings, homes, and establishments, or in liminal areas that tread the line between publicity and privacy, such as Tempelhofer Field in Berlin, which contains a lively public park, the "eerie" half-empty former airport terminal, and a camp for Syrian refugees (171–79). Other case studies present fuzzy examples of legality, ownership, and right of occupation, which defy conventional (capitalist) assumptions about privacy and publicity—this is the case with the hijacked buildings in Johannesburg's Central Business District (201–02), or the formerly squatted Køpi, which has continued to survive thanks to Berlin's strong tenancy laws and an unusually low rent (158–59).

Blurring the lines between public and private, and in fact focusing on the blurriness itself, makes for a complex account of urban space that works alongside Kukla's consideration of "third places" (271–74). These are places outside of work and home, which can acquire their own identity (or multiple identities) and may function as "niches" for groups to interact and inhabit, such as coffee shops or hangout spots at subway stations. These places further dissolve the dichotomy between public and private. Here, Kukla joins forces with other scholars who have critiqued the idea of a universal public sphere or universally public spaces, instead acknowledging that any notion of the public (or private) is complicated by a consideration of varying degrees of publicity, social diversity, contested meanings and uses of public space, parallel publics, and alternate categories such as the "commons."[5]

Kukla's nuanced account of the public feeds into their vision of what an inclusive city should be:

> Supporting every city dweller's right to the city does not mean giving everyone access to and agency within every part of the city, but rather making sure as best we can that everyone has this within a wide range of spaces sufficient to support a flourishing urban life. (266)

A flourishing urban life, as Kukla points out in the book's conclusion, includes not only the right to a home (private space) or infrastructure (public space), but also places for leisure, socialization, self-realization, protest, and dissent. Such a city would allow people to exercise political and material agency, and—crucially—to tinker with and adapt spaces to their own (often unpredictable) needs. Kukla even opens up the possibility for such agency to include not only humans but also non-human animals (71–76). In light of climate change, the Anthropocene, and the ethics (or lack thereof) of human action, Kukla's argument might reasonably be extended to other agents such as different

kinds of living organisms (plants, fungi) and even non-living elements such as geological forces.[6]

Kukla recognizes that, on the one hand, it is not possible to plan for all of these needs and elements in advance because they are necessarily dynamic, not determinable a priori, and constituted out of individual circumstances (for example, bodies with different physical and mental abilities) as well as unfolding social interactions. On the other hand, Kukla points out that top-down planning is still necessary to balance socio-economic and political inequalities. In their words, "If a space is a 'free for all,' then those with more voice and social power already will disproportionately colonize and remake the space" (284).

I think about this as I write this essay from the other side, so to speak. Kukla finished their book manuscript in spring 2020; while they acknowledge the uncertainty posed by COVID on the very kind of city living they write about, their manuscript understandably could not fully incorporate the repercussions of the pandemic. And not only the pandemic—there were the murders of George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, and Ahmaud Arbery, among other African Americans; the spring and summer of Black Lives Matter protests, and the toppling of monuments to slavery and colonialism; there were the turbulent 2020 presidential elections and the attack on the Capitol on January 6, 2021; and as I finish this, there is now the war in Ukraine and the Tigray War in Ethiopia, adding to many other ongoing conflicts, refugee waves, and immigration crises.

Back amid the lockdowns of early 2020, Kukla wondered if the pandemic might mean a fundamental change in the way people relate to cities, or just a temporary pause (7). If, in some aspects and at least for some time, the pandemic altered our relationship to fellow city-dwellers, shared spaces, and community, it does not seem to have irrevocably changed us. Millions of people never had the luxury of staying home and continued to share dense urban spaces and infrastructures in large cities, especially in disadvantaged neighborhoods. Protesters put fears aside and masks on to demonstrate in support of Black Lives Matter. Pandemic fatigue also spurred a yearning for normalcy, and even those with a choice have been choosing to return to crowds, cafes, plazas, streets, schools, churches. The sharing of urban spaces and resources that Kukla analyzes lives on, and their arguments and conclusions endure.

We are thrust together again, still dealing with an active pandemic, political distrust and divisions, and the mass destruction of entire cities. What do we owe each other, as individuals and communities, in our present circumstances? What kinds of agency do different people have when SARS-CoV2 is still circulating and mutating, and not everyone is equally immunized or impervious to serious disease or death? How do we navigate our local spaces pervaded by systemic racism, or national and international spaces attacked by reactionary forces? These frays in our mutual trust return us to our mutual dependency and make Kukla's book timely—perhaps even more timely now than when it was written. Kukla's vision for a kind of flexible but thoughtful planning that redresses injustices is needed

more than ever. So is their paean to urban life, which reminds us of the best that can come out of living together in contemporary cities.

NOTES

1. I use wishful to indicate Kukla's concluding proposal for how cities should be—although they describe their conclusion with the usual scholarly terms normative and prescriptive, I find these two words at odds with the radically inclusive, open-minded approach of their book.

2. For the "fish in water" metaphor, see Nan Nussman, "The Dynamic Nature of Cultural Identity throughout Cultural Transitions: Why Home Is Not So Sweet," *Personality and Social Psychology Review* 4, no. 4 (November 2000): 363; David Foster Wallace, "This Is Water," commencement speech, Kenyon College, 2005, audio and transcript available online at Farnam Street Media Blog, https://fs.blog/david-foster-wallace-this-is-water/; and Yuli Rahmawati and Peter Charles Taylor, "'The Fish Becomes Aware of the Water in Which It Swims': Revealing the Power of Culture in Shaping Teaching Identity," *Cultural Studies of Science Education* 13, no. 2 (August 2017): 525–37.

3. Karl Marx, *The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte*, originally published in 1852, available online at Marxists Internet Archive at https://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1852/18th-brumaire/. The quote is in chapter 1.

4. Norman Klein's take on the relationship between social imaginaries, urban representations, and urban life is helpful in considering this approach. Norman Klein, *The History of Forgetting: Los Angeles and the Erasure of Memory*, updated edition (London and New York: Verso Books, 2008).

5. Ted Kilian, "Public and Private, Power and Space," in *Philosophy and Geography II: The Production of Public Space*, eds. A. Light and J. M. Smith, 115–34 (Lanham, MD and Oxford: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 1998); Rosalyn Deutsche, "Agoraphobia," in *Evictions: Art and Spatial Politics* (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 1996), 269–327; Jeffrey Hou, ed., *Insurgent Public Space: Guerrilla Urbanism and the Remaking of Contemporary Cities* (New York: Routledge, 2010); Sara Blaylock, *Parallel Public: Experimental Art in Late East Germany* (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 2022); Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri, *Commonwealth* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2011).

6. On non-human animals and urban space, see the work of Lisa Uddin, including but not limited to her book *Zoo Renewal: White Flight and the Animal Ghetto* (Minneapolis: Minnesota University Press, 2015); and Laura Reese, ed., *Animals in the City* (New York: Routledge, 2022). On vegetal, fungal, and geological forces, see Caitlin DeSilvey, *Curated Decay: Heritage Beyond Saving* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2016). On fungi, see Anna Lowenthal Tsing's *The Mushroom at the End of the World: On the Possibility of Life in Capitalist Ruins* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2017).

Rethinking City Living

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I want to begin by gushing a bit. All six of the authors who have engaged here with my book, *City Living*, are intellectual heroes of mine. I have studied and admired and been inspired by the work of each of them. Moreover, all of them have read the book generously, carefully, charitably, and with their distinctive minds on display. I am so grateful for this gift, and it is an almost indescribably deep and delightful privilege to converse with them here. There is no chance that I can respond to all of the rich issues they have raised in one short essay. I have had to content myself with picking out one or two points from each response to discuss further. But these engagements have given me

excellent fuel for multiple future developments of the work that I did in *City Living*.

Shen-yi Liao and Thi Nguyen both focus their comments on specific sorts of urban niches, looking at ways in which they fall short of supporting and expressing spatial agency. Liao picks up on my discussion of the fact that children have very few territories in cities, and argues that even playgrounds, which seem like paradigmatic territories for children, don't really support children's spatial agency, given the norms we enforce for how to use them. Nguyen focuses on gentrified spaces, writing from his distinctively aesthetic point of view, and developing my suggestion that these are often homogenized and hostile to spatial agency.

I adore Liao's focus on children's agency, which is a topic I mention several times in the book but don't develop. I am planning an in-depth exploration of children's agency in a future work, and I am so grateful to Liao for helping me think more about it. Liao argues that adults impose unnecessary norms on children for how they should use and interact with space, and police their use of space, even within their "own" places, for instance by insisting that slides are "for" sliding down, not climbing up. Adults control the "proper" use of spaces earmarked for children. As Liao nicely puts it, bouncing off Nguyen's work, we make spaces for children in which they can play *games*, that sculpt and constrain their agency in ways that are designed top-down, but we deny them spaces to be used as *toys*, which would allow creative free play. It is not unreasonable to do some sculpting of children's agency, to help them develop into adults who can competently navigate and feel at home in adult spaces. But we should explore the ethical limits of adults' desire to shape and discipline their children into specific sorts of people.

I've argued that spatial agency—the right and capacity to move through, occupy, and creatively shape space—is its own, independent axis of justice. Spatial agency is important instrumentally, because where we are located and where we can go shapes other goods relevant to justice such as our health, income, and lifespan. But one of the central points of *City Living* is that, as embodied and spatially embedded beings, the ability to use, be at home in, and move through space is valuable to us for its own sake. We all need territories, mobility, and spaces that we can creatively use and shape to our needs. We all need to be able to express ourselves in space. Against this background, Liao's discussion points to what I think is a deep ethical problem with how adults generally treat children: we routinely deny children this spatial agency, almost completely. As a culture, we don't take their need for territory or their right to mobility as values at all. We think it is routine and appropriate that adults get to decide where children go, how they use their bodies, and how they interact with space. We exercise extreme spatial apartheid, separating adults' and children's spaces. We create spaces for children, such as playgrounds, theme parks, science museums, toy stores, and schools, but all these spaces are highly choreographed with rigid place ballets. "Well-behaved" children keep to this choreography, and their "mis"-uses of space are coded as transgressive and unruly. Children are not allowed, generally, to pick where they go

or how they get there, or what they do in and to space. I'd like to suggest that this is a legitimate human rights violation. Freedom of movement and the ability to exercise creative agency in and over space is a basic human need and good.

Children's use of space often feels disruptive to adults. One interpretation of this disruption is that children "don't know how to behave" yet. We may be tolerant of or annoyed by this lack of discipline, but either way, we take it as a lack, as something to be minimized and overcome. But another interpretation of their spatial disruptiveness is that they have radically different perceptions of salience and different affordances than adults do. In *City Living*, I argued that dogs and (even more so) cats have different relationships to space than we do: for them, territories and places worth attending to may be defined by smell and texture; small, high spots may show up as good places to sit and nap; and so forth. Given that such relationships to space are variable, would we expect young children to share saliences, affordances, and spatial values with adults? And if we acknowledge that these things are shaped differently for children, then isn't it a fundamental challenge to their embodied autonomy to choreograph their movements according to adult standards?

Children need to be kept safe within reason, but as Liao nicely points out, we tend to apply stringently low-risk tolerances to them that we don't apply to ourselves, and to be far too willing to compromise their autonomy in doing so. We in fact weaponize our responsibility to keep kids safe, turning into a tool to constrain their mobility and agency and to make their bodies convenient for us. We need to take it as a value in its own right to let children move through, territorialize, and creatively use and remake space. This does not mean that children should be able to use *any* space however they want, or even that adult-only spaces are uniformly inappropriate. As I argued in my book, spatial agency and the right to the city require access to a wide range of different kinds of territories, not access to or freedom within all territories. We need to take children's need for and right to spatial agency as seriously as their need for and right to being kept safe.

Nguyen builds on my claim that gentrification tends to *homogenize* spaces, by designing them for hypothetical users with money, rather than letting them be responsive to and shaped by the needs and agency of actual residents. He is certainly reading me right when he suggests that my reference to "quirky" coffee shops and the like was ironic; the same basic "quirky" aesthetic is now depressingly reproduced in gentrifying neighborhoods around the world. Gentrification, as Nick Smith argued, is a globalizing force, eliminating difference and creating a bland, universalized landscape of consumerism. I love Nguyen's suggestion that sites like Pinterest are co-constitutive with this aesthetic. These homogenized spaces are depressing and do not scaffold agency, and this is true not just for their users but for their creators. Such spaces are the material manifestation of no one's dream or vision; they are created to generate a market, not to express a passion. This homogenization makes it hard for them to be *grippy* as territories. There is nothing here to hold us in a place,

to make us feel like it is our place. When "everyone" is an insider, no one is, as there is nothing distinctive here upon which to build embodied community.

It is worth noting (and fully consistent with Nguyen's discussion) that what we count as a "neutral" aesthetic, designed to extract money from any "hypothetical" user, is in fact marked not only by class, as is obvious, but also by race, ability, and norms of gender conformity. We should reflect on whose tastes and comfort we take as "neutral" and who we are ultimately building landscapes for. The Ikea-like aesthetic that Nguyen describes strongly signals whiteness and Eurocentrism. "Neutral" environments may (or may not) be technically accessible to wheelchair users, but regardless, they are built around the proportions, affordances, and capacities of standard, normative bodies. Some of these spaces are marked as masculine (sports bars), some as feminine (typical clothing boutiques), and some as scrupulously neutral (coffee shops), but they are generally not queer or challenging in any way of gender norms. When we build landscapes in which "anyone" (with money!) will be comfortable and will want to consume, we remove the possibility for the generation of creative spaces that can be territories for people with non-normative bodies, social identities, or even aesthetics.

Alexis Shotwell provides an anarchist vision of how to collaboratively and collectively create cities and build the right to the city, which is fully in line with my vision in *City Living* and which extends that vison in exciting ways. To her points about the collaborative production of spaces, I just want to add that the causal arrow goes both ways here; in order to engage in this sort of anarchist organizing and creating, we need the right sorts of spaces that make these kinds of interactions possible. Part of what was exciting about a place like Köpi, which I explored in the book, is that it made this sort of collaborative anarchist work possible through its material infrastructure. Privatized suburbs shaped around isolating domestic spaces, at the other extreme, throw up physical barriers to this sort of coming together and nonhierarchical interaction, although the rapid rise of virtual spaces on the internet goes some distance toward overcoming such barriers.

Shotwell describes a serious limitation of my project, with which I really need to grapple in my future research. She asks whether my analysis applies to places other than big cities, and takes me to task (gently and kindly) for my lack of attention to smaller cities and towns and rural spaces. To an extent, I feel able to answer this challenge. The general philosophical framework, which is the focus of chapter 1, concerns how agents and spaces constitute one another in general. Here, there is nothing specific to cities. My analyses of ecological ontologies, niches, territories, and stances, for instance, are meant to apply to any agents, all of whom are spatially embedded, even including nonhuman animals. So I do think that I have not ignored non-city spaces in this sense. Meanwhile, my analyses of the phenomenology and agential consequences of proximity, pace, etc. are specific to fairly large cities, because I am trying to get at the particularized ways in which urban spaces and urban dwellers distinctively make one another. And my analyses of Washington, DC, Berlin, and Johannesburg are in no way

intended to generalize beyond those specific cities. I don't see this as a limitation of the book, but as an outgrowth of my commitment to dwelling in the empirical specificity of particular spaces and exploring their embodied logic. I write about big cities, not to philosophically or practically devalue other spaces, but simply because they are what I love, and my methodology, which involves dwelling and lingering in spaces and trying to get a feel for their place ballets, is essentially one of loving attention.

But in another sense, the responses I just gave to Shotwell's challenge are too quick and easy. Her call to extend my account to other spaces is important, because cities and other kinds of spaces, including ex-urbs, farmlands, and industrial towns, for instance, are themselves deeply co-constituting. It is a major methodological and theoretical commitment of my book to think ecologically, but just as human and nonhuman dwellers are ecologically embedded in niches within cities, cities themselves are ecologically embedded within larger networks of places. I cannot really claim to be satisfactorily capturing the logic of a city unless I explore its relationship to these other sorts of spaces, without which it would take a very different form, and which it reaches out and shapes. One cannot thoroughly understand city space without understanding how it has mutually dependent relations with farmlands, industrialized border towns, exurban office parks, and so forth. Cities are not isolated or self-supporting entities driven by an internal logic, and treating them as such recreates something like the city-as-organism view that I critique in *City Living*. Hence it is a real limitation of my book, I think, that it fails to explore these connections and dependencies. My methodology involved extended immersion in the spaces I studied, and I had neither the resources nor the temperament to do this for villages, exurbs, and the like. As my interests turn more and more towards nonhuman agency, I do hope to have a chance to do this kind of immersive work in rural spaces, at a minimum.

I certainly agree with Sharon Meagher's push against allowing anyone, especially those traditionally in power, to gatekeep what counts as philosophy. I do take my project to be a philosophical one, in the context of which I bring the tools and sensibilities and the concern for empirical detail and fieldwork of geographers to bear, in order to illuminate what I take to be philosophical questions about agency, territory, ontology, and spatial logic.

The divergence between Meagher and me that seems most worth exploring to me here is in her reading of Plato and Rousseau. Meagher reads both philosophers as ultimately thinking that we can transcend place, and that philosophical thinking is place-independent. I see both philosophers as crucial sources of and predecessors to my commitment to the idea that there is no such thing as thinking independent of place, and that philosophy is fundamentally emplaced. (Indeed, I originally planned *City Living* to open with a chapter on Rousseau and the ineliminability of place to thinking in his writing.)

Meagher writes, "The analogy of the cave and Plato's theory of the forms suggests that the philosophical truth is independent from place, that philosophical truths are obtained through the escape of place that dialectical thinking affords." But this seems wrong to me. When the philosopher escapes the cave, he doesn't leave place altogether. Rather, it is absolutely essential that he moves to a place with a certain kind of sunlight. It is the place itself that enables him to see. It's not as though the inside of the cave is a place and the outside is not, nor as though a barrier-free view is less materially specific than a barriered view. And this insistence on the relevance of place and how it shapes philosophical thought carries itself throughout the dialogues, with the sites of thinking and philosophizing usually much better developed. Plato always embodies his philosophy; he writes not in an abstract and impersonal voice, but in the voices of particular people, who are handsome, ugly, strong, young, old, or whatever it may be. But even more relevantly, these bodies are always placed: in the jail, at the market, at a drunken party, at the port. These settings invariably shape what is said and the structure of the conversation. So I see Plato as a critical ally in my quest to reveal the ineliminability of place to any agency, including the agency of thinking and talking about philosophy.

I am at least as suspicious of Meagher's claim that Rousseau thinks that "philosophy can escape environmental influence entirely." Rousseau thinks that people from different climates will always think differently, that walking structures reflection, and that the truly free man [sic] must be raised by being immersed in a series of highly controlled environments that have been designed in painstaking detail. I take Rousseau as a paradigm of someone for whom thinking is routed in the sensuous and in the body, and for him, bodies and wills are fundamentally shaped by the climate, pace, crowdedness, and access to nature afforded by a place.[1] Rousseau and Plato, along with Descartes and the Marquis de Sade, are among the philosophers who I believe understood that thinking could not be separated from its emplacement.

Meagher is right, of course, that Rousseau in particular was deeply suspicious of the city as a site for philosophical thinking; he believed that cities, like theaters, obfuscated truth and led thinking astray. My book remains neutral on whether cities are in general especially good places in which to do philosophy. However, *City Living* itself is a work of philosophy (as Meagher herself insists), and it is one that could only have been formulated and developed in cities. So at least in my case, the urban setting was essential to my own philosophical thinking. I thus disagree with Meagher's suggestion that philosophizing in general transcends place, and I disagree with Rousseau that cities are distinctively inhospitable to philosophical thought.

Daniela Sandler and Simona Capisani each push me to think harder about how material threats to cities—particularly COVID and climate change—affect the picture of city living that I develop in the book.

Capisani reminds us that cities are both vulnerable to and a source of climate change, and that vulnerability to harm from climate change is heavily racialized and otherwise tracks other axes of oppression. This is a pressing dimension of the materiality of cities that I did not address in the book. As

she points out, Capisani has elsewhere defended the idea that people have a right of access to *livable space*, and that climate change is threatening this right, ultimately for all of us but especially for those vulnerable to environmental injustice. Capisani's environmental lens is a crucial one, and her point about the right to livable space serves as an important enhancement to my own emphasis on spatial agency, spatial justice, and the right to the city. I argue in the book that the right to *inhabit* space is a basic human right. Capisani generously suggests that my "account of spatial agency helps to illuminate ways in which harmful climate mobility outcomes can be understood as wrongs warranting address and can help clarify the content of our obligations to those who are vulnerable," and this seems both right and important. Climate change threatens to make many people's spaces unlivable, both in the biological sense that they may cease to support human life, and in the human sense closer to what I explore in the book, that they may cease to be usable territories that support agency.

But (as Capasani would surely agree) merely moving people to less vulnerable areas or radically reshaping spaces without community involvement will also undermine people's spatial agency, taking away their control over where and how they live. This suggests that the development of sustainable neighborhoods and the quest for climate justice need to center community involvement and community input for how to protect neighborhoods and make them more sustainable, while retaining their ecological character as territories for those who live there. To put the point starkly, simply tearing down urban ecosystems and replacing existing neighborhoods with gleaming LEED® buildings designed in a corporate office is not a just or humane solution to the environmental crises and inequalities facing cities. It is worth noting that social cohesion in a neighborhood is one of the best protections against the effects of natural disasters,[2] so strategies that do not work to preserve and enhance social cohesion are far from optimal.

Finally, Daniela Sandler's exceptionally generous reading of my book was seriously moving to me. She does a better job than I have done myself of articulating my method, values, and intellectual commitments in writing. Sandler challenges me to think about how "social meanings" work in concert with spaces and social agency to create spatial meanings. She points out that people can resignify space, for instance, through musical traditions or through virtual habitation. I think this is right, and important. Think for example of the rich tradition in Black geographies of reading the Blues as giving form and meaning to spaces in the American South through a "Blues epistemology."[3] I would argue that such social meanings still ultimately shape spaces in material and embodied ways. Even when things like art and music do not happen in the spaces they shape, they do their shaping in part by inflecting how those in the spaces experience, move around in, use, and occupy them. I am not sure we would count these interventions as shaping or signifying space if there weren't material consequences for the spaces themselves. That said, Sandler is certainly right that attending to these sorts of aesthetic and cultural imaginings of space can enrich our understanding of the significance and logic of a space.

Sandler asks me, "What kinds of agency do different people have when SARS-CoV2 is still circulating and mutating, and not everyone is equally immunized or impervious to serious disease or death?" This is such a crucial and pressing question. In a recent article, I explored the impact of the early pandemic on urban space.[4] But there, I was exploring how cities had become fragmented, unspontaneous, and regimented by pandemic mitigation measures. Now, in the summer of 2022, we have a quite different problem, which I am eager to explore in near-future writing. Much of city life has returned to its pre-pandemic form, but COVID has created new fragmentations in who can access spaces and who can claim territory where. Most city spaces have become long-term unsafe for immunocompromised and elderly people, and for those who care for them. In many different countries, there is now a stark social division of people into a majority who have decided to return to pre-pandemic embodied life and just accept the ongoing increased morbidity and risk, and a substantial minority who have had to retreat, in a seemingly permanent way, to isolated spaces, often building new forms of community online or through small-group interactions with different rules for how to use space.

In *City Living*, I argued that spatial justice does not require that everyone have access to or feel at home in every space, since territorialization can be valuable. Rather, a just city owes all of its residents a wide range of diverse spaces and territories, sufficient to enable a well-rounded and flourishing life. It seems to me that it is not a realistic goal, at this point, to remake *all* city spaces in the COVID era so that everyone can be safe in them. There is genuine value to the return of crowded dance floors, bustling restaurants, and the buzz of a full and uncontrolled urban space. However, it is simply not acceptable to reintroduce these things and tell the many people who really cannot risk using them that they must fend for themselves in their homes or online, or figure out how to build safe spaces in cracks with no support. We must put our resources and our creativity into building a wide range of safer and more controlled spaces, even while we let other spaces return to their crowded pre-pandemic chaos. We also need to make basic services safely available to everyone. Just as doctors' offices, city courts, and the like must be wheelchair accessible, they should also now be accessible to the immunocompromised. The fact that there is value to allowing people to dance up against one another at concerts is just no reason at all to not require KN95 masks and social distancing and outdoor waiting areas in spaces providing basic civic services.

People tend to talk about pandemic measures in universalist terms—some people argue that "everyone" should be masked and avoid indoor shared spaces, shaming those who are less risk averse; others argue that *any* such restrictions have outlived their time and are unjust impositions. I think we need a more fine-grained approach, with different norms and practices and place ballets for different spaces. We need to make basic services relatively safe. But we also need to create and protect spaces of joy, celebration, protest, socializing, and so forth for people who need enhanced safety. Moreover, these safer spaces should be appealing and lively enough in their own right

that we do not institute a kind of age- and immune-system-apartheid, but rather make them worth spending time in for a wide range of people. We can have packed concerts *and* outdoor book groups, indoor restaurants *and* socially distanced outdoor patios. Partly, I think this vision involves permanently reclaiming huge amounts of outdoor space as *for* people and city living, rather than for cars or as buffers around privatized spaces.

Sandler and Capisani point us to the inescapable truth that climate change and the pandemic have and will continue to shape urban spaces, and more specifically, they are almost certain to enhance power dynamics and inequalities within urban spaces and to introduce new ones. I hope that I provided useful tools in *City Living* for thinking about how to make cities more just and inclusive, and for taking the ethics and politics of spatial agency seriously in the face of such challenges. But this work remains to be done.

NOTES

1. I have written in detail about Rousseau's emplaced philosophy in Kukla, "The Antinomies of Impure Reason: Rousseau and Kant on the Metaphysics of Truth-Telling," *Inquiry* 48, no. 3 (2005): 203–31.

2. See, for instance, Ivan Townshend, Olu Awosoga, Judith Kulig, and Hai Yan Fan, "Social Cohesion and Resilience Across Communities That Have Experienced a Disaster," *Natural Hazards* 76, no. 2 (2015): 913–38.

3. The classic example is Clyde Woods, "Regional Blocs, Regional Planning, and the Blues Epistemology in the Lower Mississippi Delta," *Making the Invisible Visible: A Multicultural Planning History* (1998): 78–99.

4. Quill R Kukla, "The COVID-19 Pandemic and the Loss of the Urban," in *Pandemic Societies*, eds. Jean-Louis Denis, Catherine Régis, and Daniel M. Weinstock (McGill-Queens University Press, 2021).

BOOK REVIEW

Conscience in Reproductive Health Care: Prioritizing Patient Interests

Carolyn McLeod (Oxford University Press, 2020). 224 pp. ISBN 978-0198732723.

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In *Conscience in Reproductive Health Care*, Carolyn McLeod responds to the growing global trend of health-care professionals refusing to provide legal and professionally accepted reproductive services on the grounds that it conflicts with their conscience (International Women's Health Coalition, 2017). These services include conducting or providing abortions, emergency contraception, and even in vitro fertilization (IVF). She develops her central thesis from legal theorist Paul Miller's (2011) conceptualization of a fiduciary relationship, and argues that because health-care providers are gatekeepers to health-care services, they are fiduciaries to patients and public health with a duty to prioritize the best interest of their beneficiaries over their own interests or beliefs. She calls this the "prioritizing approach" and argues that it should guide policy and

regulations on conscientious refusals. She narrows the scope of her argument to "typical refusals," which are "refusals that target requests by patients for a service that, in the mind of the objector, threatens unborn life" (9). Yet, throughout her book, McLeod humbly acknowledges the moral complexity of conscientious refusals and does not think that it is as simple as telling health-care professionals to "park your conscience at the door." Thus, she does not say that all conscientious objections in health care are morally unacceptable but holds that most of them should be severely restricted.

Carolyn McLeod is a professor and chair of philosophy at Western University in Canada. She is an expert in applied ethics, feminist philosophy, and moral philosophy. Her philosophical research centers on pressing issues in public policy, particularly matters that concern the creation or dissolution of families with children. She's been directly involved in policy discussions in Canada about the right of health-care professionals to make conscientious objections, public funding for IVF, and improvements to adoption systems. She received financial support from the Canadian Institute of Health Research (CIHR) grant, which allowed her to establish the Conscience Research Group and to host educational events, including one where she and her colleagues were educated by health-care policy makers from the College of Physicians and Surgeons in Canada. In her acknowledgements, McLeod mentions that she was first inspired to investigate conscientious refusals while teaching in Tennessee, after a health-care professional informed her of a case in which a patient was afraid to return to a physician who had conscientiously refused her request for an abortion.

The structure of the book is divided into two parts. The first part considers whether conscience has value in health care in order to understand what is at stake for health-care providers (who object on its behalf). In chapter 1, McLeod asserts that conscience has value in health care as it allows health-care professionals to have moral integrity. This itself has personal and social value. However, McLeod offers a novel, alternative interpretation of "moral integrity" than the common interpretation in bioethics, which has been that it promotes "inner unity." Instead, according to McLeod, the value in conscience lies in encouraging us to "take our moral values seriously and to revise our values when they do not fit with what we actively endorse" (20). She calls this the "Socio-political, Dynamic view" of conscience (21). This question is foundational because if conscience has no value, then health-care professionals should not be able to refuse providing legal services to protect their conscience.

The book then shifts to considerations of the patient for the remainder of the first part. Chapter 2 takes head-on the argument that patients are merely inconvenienced by conscientious refusals since patients can simply receive services elsewhere. McLeod argues that patients are actually deeply harmed by these typical refusals. She supports her claims by considering the power dynamic between health-care professionals and patients and the well-documented stigma that patients experience when they request services like abortions or emergency

contraceptive. Thus, she claims that typical refusals are likely to cause harm by threatening patients' moral identity, sense of security, or reproductive autonomy (55). Chapter 3 narrows in on the consequential damage to patients' trust in health-care professionals and health professions, more broadly. McLeod argues that damage to trust from typical refusals is very likely to occur as it undermines the key features of trust: reliance on the competence, goodwill, and an expectation of shared values of the health-care professional (68). While Lynch (2008) proposed a system of "Morals Matching"—an institutional compromise in which licensing boards enable ethical "subspecializations" and help patients match with physicians with similar moral values—McLeod points out that this is founded only on trust as an expectation of shared values, but does not ensure the competence or goodwill of the health-care provider (79). Therefore, avenues for distrust remain. The first part of the book concludes that important interests are at stake for both the objectors and patients in regulating refusals in reproductive health care.

Naturally, one might think that devising a compromise between the parties would be a promising solution to the problem of respecting both patients' interests and providers' conscience. However, in the second part of the book, McLeod rejects this approach and defends her central thesis—the prioritizing approach—which claims that health-care professionals as fiduciaries must prioritize the interests of their patient and the public. Chapter 4 is where McLeod critiques the compromise approach. The conventional compromise in conscientious refusals is that the objector will provide a referral to a health-care professional that is willing to honor the patient's request. However, McLeod's analysis of compromise theories indicates that the conventional compromise is unlikely to be a "good" or even a "true" compromise for many objectors in typical refusals, in which the objector is trying to protect the life of the unborn. An additional criticism McLeod makes of the compromise approach is that it presents the interests of objectors and patients as being equal, which fails to recognize the professional role and fiduciary duties of the objector. Thus, she proposes and defends the prioritizing approach in chapters 5 and 6. In doing so, she enlightens the bioethical issue of conscientious objection with a novel contribution by legal scholarship on fiduciaries. Chapter 5 considers cases where the request for the offending service comes from a *current* patient, someone with whom the objector is in an established fiduciary relationship, while chapter 6 considers cases where the request comes from a *perspective* patient, someone who is a member of the public that the objector is licensed to serve.

McLeod makes three claims in chapter 5: (1) Health-care professionals are fiduciaries while serving a gatekeeping role. (2) Therefore, they have a duty of loyalty to their patients, and (3) this duty prohibits them from making typical objections that jeopardize the health interests of their patient. She notes that the fiduciary duty of loyalty to patients does not permit health-care professionals to misuse their power to further their own moral integrity by invoking a conscientious refusal. She then tackles the scenario where the objector believes they have two patients' interests to consider: the one requesting the

service and the unborn fetus or embryo. Here, McLeod frames the argument in terms of who grants health-care professionals authority to intervene on behalf of patients. In the case of competent patients, it is determined by the patient. In the case of incompetent patients (like an unborn fetus/embryo), this is determined by the law. She contends that "the law or the state would not have conferred it on [the health care provider] either, since it permits the service that the objector refuses to provide" (143). (By definition, a conscientious refusal asks for protection to object to a legal, professionally accepted service.) In this scenario, while the objector may think they are prioritizing one of their patient's interests, this authority actually falls outside of what has been bestowed on them by the patient(s) or law. This chapter defends the prioritizing approach to regulating conscientious refusals by health-care professionals. It highlights that they are gatekeepers to medical services, which makes them fiduciaries who must be loyal to and prioritize the interests of their beneficiaries.

Chapter 6 focuses on the broader duty that health-care professionals have to the public and fidelity to certain abstract purposes: promoting public health and equitable access to health care. McLeod explains that this duty is a type of fiduciary duty as health-care professionals have discretionary authority over the practical interests of the public and the public is structurally vulnerable to them abusing this power due to the dynamics of the clinical relationship. She notes that the fidelity to purposes, instead of an individual, makes health-care professionals' duty to the public unique from that they have to a patient. Because of this duty, health-care professionals' freedom to choose prospective patients on the grounds of conscience must be significantly restricted, according to McLeod. In conclusion, the second part of the book argues that the prioritizing approach to regulating typical refusals is morally justified. This is true regardless of whether the patient could access services elsewhere and whether the refusals occur at the individual level of patient-physician relationship or at a more macro level. Finally, she argues that regulations and policies should prioritize the interests of patients and the public over the conscience of health-care professionals as this recognizes the fiduciary duties that health-care professionals owe to these parties due to the power they have over them.

The book offers strong, important messages in its themes of procreation, power, and prestige. McLeod chose to evaluate conscience refusals in reproductive health care, though refusals also occur in areas regarding end of life, such as Physician Assisted Suicide (PAS). She narrowed her scope to typical refusals, which are refusals to provide services that the objector believes threatens unborn life. This scope was important as it allowed her to respond to a prevalent, worldwide problem. This allowed her to make specific claims that could also offer general insight on how to regulate other refusals. Her scope highlighted a mechanism that restricts individuals' right to *not* reproduce, which speaks to how society values and regulates those with the capacity to become pregnant. Finally, the prioritizing approach is also more provocative when applied to reproductive health care as opposed to other conscientious refusals. For instance, the "mere inconvenience" argument would

not be posed in the case of PAS since those requesting such services are undoubtedly accepted to be suffering. Yet, emergency contraceptive and abortions allow us to have a more nuanced conversation as controversy arises over the direness of unwanted or unexpected pregnancy. It also allows us to scrutinize how conscientious refusals in reproductive health care are directed at certain types of people, not just the health-care service. This occurs as refusals may discriminate against LGBTQ+ individuals and cisgender women if an aspect of their identity does not suit the objector's conception of appropriate morality, sexuality, and gender norms. Essentially, highlighting procreation promotes a multidimensional discussion on contemporary, sociopolitical issues.

Power is intertwined in conscientious refusals as it is always held by the objector. McLeod chose to focus on health-care professionals because they are the gatekeepers to health-care services, which bestows them with power. They have the discretion of whether or not to provide a service, which is a choice to either work for or against their patient's interests. McLeod highlights physicians and pharmacists throughout her book, but also suggests that mid-level providers (physician's assistants and nurse practitioners) and midwives can hold this role. While some of these positions come with social power, such as prestige and high income, all of them have power as fiduciaries for their patients and the public. McLeod contributes to bioethical discussion about conscientious refusals by emphasizing the power of health-care providers, particularly physicians, which has been underexamined in previous conversations. Drawing from legal literature, she explains that fiduciaries hold a special kind of power, which comes with moral responsibilities. For these reasons, it is important to severely restrict when protection is given to objectors on behalf of their conscience.

Finally, McLeod's central thesis is one about priority. While she acknowledges that both parties' interests are morally substantial, the interests of the patients should take priority because of the fiduciary duties that conscientious objectors owe to patients. She would agree with accommodations for conscientious objectors only when it would pose no threat to patients' health-care interest. However, in the case of abortions or contraception, McLeod showed that in all likelihood, protecting objectors' conscience will set back patients' health interests, even if patients could go to another professional nearby to obtain services. Conscious protection in these cases is therefore morally problematic, and the primary objective of regulating refusals should be to protect patients.

This book is written for scholars, activists, and any reader who may have specific questions about the morality of conscientious objections in reproductive health care. McLeod uses philosophical support to offer a moral framework upon which future policy and activism can engage to provide socially just health care. Each chapter is thoroughly written in a way that allows it to stand alone as a reference, and I found the writing to be largely accessible, being a reader outside of traditional philosophy scholarship myself. After reading this book, the prioritizing

approach clearly stands above the compromise approach as the more moral and just approach for those with the capacity to become pregnant. Especially in the current time where *Roe v. Wade* is being challenged in the United States, health activists should embrace McLeod's thesis to fight for policies that take seriously the misuse of power that occurs in most conscientious refusals.

CONTRIBUTORS

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