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RICHARD SENNETT CALLING IN COMMUNICATION ETHICS

A Dissertation

Submitted to McAnulty College and Graduate School of Liberal Arts

Duquesne University

In partial fulfillment of the requirements for
the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

By

Lin Gu

May 2022

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Lin Gu

2022

RICHARD SENNETT CALLING IN COMMUNICATION ETHICS

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ABSTRACT

RICHARD SENNETT CALLING IN COMMUNICATION ETHICS

By

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May 2022

Dissertation supervised by Ronald C. Arnett

This project focuses on an interplay between Richard Sennett's scholarship and the literature of communication ethics. Content from communication ethics provides a better understanding on how Sennett contributes to urban communication in this historical moment, and answers how we can make communication possible in the era of difference.

Sennett's scholarly concerns starts with a phenomenon that he termed as the fall of public man, which is people's self-withdrawal from the public domain. Sennett initially credited this to a mismatched "I" and "me" and believes reconciling them would solve the problem. Later, Sennett realizes the self-withdrawal from the public domain has more to do with people's connection to others. Sennett's solution is to increase connections among people. This leads Sennett to concern ways in which communication

in an urban environment can better take place since the majority of population now live in cities. Sennett's response is to create an open city that provides the ground for communication among strangers.

I propose that such a Sennettian open city makes sense but the fundamental element that makes communication possible in our current era of difference is to practice communication ethics, with the notion of dialogue placed in the center. Meaningful communication is only possible if we preserve an interspace between persons, recognize everyone communicate and interpret with their own bias, and promote discourse as a means to continue communication rather than an end to inhibit communication.

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At the time I graduate, I not only take all the gratitude, but I will carry the narrative of committing to higher education, and to the trade, the craft, and the profession from the faculty as a whole. The Department of Communication and Rhetorical Studies has prepared me to become a skilled and versatile scholar and teacher. I will carry the narrative through my life.

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Chapter One. Sennett on Public Domain and Individuality

This project focuses on Richard Sennett, a sociologist, philosopher and urban planner, and examines Sennett's scholarship on the public domain, individuality, *homo faber* and craftsmanship, and urban communication. This project also applies the literature of communication ethics to enrich Sennett's works. This project aims to mark the importance of the interplay between Sennett's works and communication ethics in this historical moment, a period labeled by Jean-François Lyotard as "postmodernity", of which the key feature is the impossibility to judge validity of narrative on the basis of purely scientific inquiry (Lyotard, 1979/1984, p. 7).

Sennett's scholarship, though covers a wide range of topics, always has connections and coherence. At the beginning of his career, Sennett started with discussing the trajectory of the public domain in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, particularly emphasizing on the formation of the public domain in big cities. Neither like Jürgen Habermas who takes the "public" component as preventing people from transcending their physical interests, nor like Hannah Arendt who believes in a spiritual public sphere where citizens engage in non-personal and equal dialogues, Sennett regards the public domain as a concrete and specific sphere that resides in every ordinary people's life. Compared to the arduous scholarship Habermas presented in *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere*, Sennett's approach is rigorous, yet less theoretical but more practical. Sennett does not aim at discovering or building a universally applicable theory that describes the way in which the public sphere transforms but looks at the public sphere from a concrete and detailed perspective through emphasizing the significance of people's narrative and everyday life. This came out as one of Sennett's masterpieces, *The Fall of Public Man*, in which Sennett offered historical insights on public culture and the public domain,

particularly in London, Paris, and New York from the eighteenth to twentieth century. In this sense, Sennett's scholarly approach is closer to Richard Rorty's narrative approach which studies philosophy historically and concretely.

Once Sennett regards the city as a physical place that carries public space, or the public domain, Sennett realizes the inadequacy of looking at the public domain only from a microscope, since a city consists of more than buildings, but dwellers. Since what people see informs how they identify, this goes to the second focus in Sennett's scholarship—narrative and individuality. The way in which one works, lives, and communicates, constitutes one's narrative. It is one's narrative that fundamentally influences and is influenced by how one perceives the public sphere and how one identifies oneself. To understand how one's narrative and identification on one's individuality being influenced by practices in the public domain, Sennett interviewed extensively on various types of workers in Boston, manufacturing workers, the middle class white-collars, and the lower class whose life have been greatly influenced by housing projects. Sennett produced fruitful publications in this line of inquiry: *The Hidden Injuries of Class* co-authored with Jonathan Cobb and published in 1977, *The Corrosion of Character* published in 1998, *Respect in a World of Inequality* published in 2003, and *The Culture of the New Capitalism* published in 2006 as a further and synthetic development.

Those interviews and books enlighten Sennett on ways in which people do their work. The way people used to work in a nineteenth century manufacturing factory became different once industrialization and capitalism took over cities in the twentieth century. Thus, Sennett becomes interested in understanding how people cooperate with each other in the workplace, as well as how people communicate and collaborate in communities once their social environment has been affected by industrialization and urbanization. At this point, Sennett turns back to what

he has done in *The Fall of Public Man*, recognizing that the public man is less acknowledged not only due to the way people perceive themselves, but more fundamentally, the fall of public man is influenced by ways in which people connect with others. Subsequently, Sennett published another series of books, *The Craftsman* in 2008, and *Together* in 2012, as well as two novels, *Warriors and Priests* in 2010, and *The Foreigner* in 2011. They are dedicated to exploring what some material ways of making culture are, and issues regarding labor, work and cooperation. This relates to the notion of *homo faber*, Latin for “Man the Maker”, a concept that humans are in control of their destiny and surrounding environment through using tools. From *The Craftsman* to *Together*, Sennett starts with describing how a craftsman works with his tool and material, and eventually moves to how people in a society cooperate with each other. Sennett believes that craftsmanship incorporates more than mere manual dexterity but encompasses a fundamental human impulse, the “desire to do a job well for its own sake” (Sennett, 2008, p. 9). Whether one is a goldsmith, a parent, a politician, an educator, or a twentieth-first century App developer, to practice a craft is to know one’s job.

It is Sennett’s purpose to understand ways in which people cooperate in the society, while his observations prompt him that what he proposes as ideal cooperation does not always happen, neither in workplaces nor in local communities. There are multiple reasons being attributed to, but among them, the most decisive one connects to the element of diversity. Sennett observes that cooperation is difficult to occur once people face those who are not like them. Sennett does not stop at describing this phenomenon but goes a step further. He discovers that the physical environment people dwell in contributes to people’s understanding of diversity and cooperation. Since Sennett has already done outstanding scholarship in development of cities, this time, Sennett moves his research focus to urban communication. In *Building and Dwelling*, Sennett

traces how major European and American cities have been planned, enunciates why those plans have limitations once encountering massive influx of population, articulates how urban planning influences resident's perception, and provides insights on how we may introduce ambiguity and porous border in cities for residents having a better understanding on the physical place as well as the public space.

Sennett's scholarship on the public domain, on narrative and individuality, on craftsmanship, and on urban communication all together make him particularly important in this historical moment. As the West has been influenced by immigration for decades, Sennett ponders ways in which people can communicate to those who radically differ. In big cities, immigrants from rural and suburban areas are often not appreciated by local residents. If people living in a community are reluctant to cooperate or even refuse to communicate with those who differ, how can a community or a city carry on. More importantly, how the public domain remains its vitality. When Sennett writes on urban communication, he does not write as an architect who focuses on how the shape and function of buildings evolve. Rather, Sennett focuses on ways in which communication between urban planners and city dwellers, as well as among people who carry different narratives, has flourished or struggled in the twenty-first century big cities. In addition, I further apply the literature of communication ethics into this project, as I believe content from communication ethics enriches Sennett's scholarship, provides a better understanding on how Sennett contributes to urban communication in this historical moment, and answers how we can make communication possible in the era of difference.

This project has five chapters. Chapter one, *Sennett on Public Domain and Individuality*, starts with Sennett's account on the fall of public man, exploring Sennett's articulation to the phenomenon that people are performing a self-withdrawal from the public domain. Putting this

in communication language, Sennett ponders people's unwillingness to practice communication in the public domain. Sennett initially believes that such a self-withdrawal is due to a disassociation between an active "I" and a passive "me" (Sennett, 1976, p. 330). He later realizes his solution to this self-withdrawal through reconciling the "I" and the "me" is a futile gesture since encouraging communication is hardly successful if efforts are only placed on the self. Sennett believes having meaningful connections between one and the other is more decisive.

Chapter two, *Sennett on Craftsmanship and Urban Planning*, discusses Sennett's scholarship from *The Craftsman* in 2008 to *Building and Dwelling* in 2018. When Sennett explores possible ways to connect people, he is interested in the relation between power and authority in the workplace, as well as how cooperation is shaped, strengthened, and weakened. Later, Sennett realizes that one's connection to the other is greatly influenced by one's environment. Since one not only works in the workplace, but lives in a local community, one's dwelling environment also influences one's communication practice. This is why Sennett eventually moves to urban planning and urban communication.

Chapter three, *Sennett and Urban Communication*, discusses the urban communication literature and how Sennett's work enriches the literature. Sennett has noticed that the way in which one recognizes one's self has been changing and this change is associated with the change of urban environment. Sennett therefore discovers that urban planners and city dwellers usually do not protect and promote the same good, and this is especially the case in the twentieth-first century cities. To fill this gap between planners and dwellers, Sennett proposes the notion of an open city, a settlement that permits dwellers valuing their own goods to live in the multiplicity of life. Sennett believes that an open city is the answer for encouraging communication to take place in the public domain.

Chapter four, *Sennett and communication*, proposes that communication in an era of difference is better understood as a craft. To encourage communication to take place in the public domain, I advocate that it is crucial to understand the notion of communication ethics literacy. The central element in understanding communication ethics literacy is dialogue. I propose to understand the notion of dialogue through emphasis on three key terms situated in the works of three different philosophers, the interspace from Martin Buber, the bias from Hans-Georg Gadamer, and the dialogical communication from Mikhail Bakhtin.

Chapter five, *Urban Planners and Urban Communication*, discusses how communication in an urban environment can be better practiced from the perspective of urban planners. From Sennett's concern on the fall of public man to the idea of practicing ethical engagement in urban communication being laid out, it eventually calls for a practical turn. Therefore, chapter five emphasizes on the group of urban planners, discussing ways in which planners can communicate with dwellers and authorities.

Basic Information of Richard Sennett

Richard Sennett was born and grew up in the Cabrini Green housing project in Chicago. Pay checks that sustained Sennett's family mainly came from governmental assistant programs, as he self-reflected in *The Culture of the New Capitalism*, "I'd grown up 'on welfare'" (Sennett, 2006, p. 8). Sennett's professional preparation was fulfilled at Harvard University, studying history with Oscar Handlin, sociology with David Riesman, and philosophy with John Rawls. In 1969, Sennett's first academic book, *Nineteenth Century Cities: Essays In The New Urban History*, coauthored with Stephan Thernstrom, was published. Since then, Sennett started his outstanding and productive career. He was a founder of the New York Institute for the Humanities at New York University and directed for a decade. Sennett has worked at Yale

University, Brandeis University, and New York University. Sennett teaches urban studies at the London School of Economics and Political Science (LSE) and at Harvard University. Sennett is currently serving as the President of the American Council on Work, Senior Advisor to the United Nations on its Program on Climate Change and Cities, and a senior fellow at the Center on Capitalism and Society at Columbia University and a visiting professor of Urban Studies at MIT. Till 2021, Sennett has published more than one dozen intellectual books and three novels, plus dozens of articles in academic journals. He also received various prestigious awards, and among them are the Hegel Prize¹, the Spinoza Prize, an honorary doctorate from the University of Cambridge, and the Centennial Medal from Harvard University².

Producing such fruitful publications and winning those awards, Sennett is no doubt an excellent scholar. He writes on topics generated from the real world, contemplates them with care, and analyzes issues historically and philosophically. Yet, Sennett does not rely on immense vocabulary to draw on words that general readers will not understand or uses a simple vocabulary with ridiculously contorted sentence structures and the repetition of certain words which makes an entire paragraph totally incomprehensible. Rather, ideas in Sennett's books are clearly presented, logically organized, and coherently connected. When Sennett is writing, he occasionally pulls in terms from other languages, notably French and German, and compares certain terms to reveal differences and connections between them, such as, "*Gemeinschaft* and *Gesellschaft*", "*ville* and *cit *" (in *Building and Dwelling*). Sennett devotes all efforts to illuminate readers with his thoughts in perspicuity and stays away from obscurity.

¹ Winners of the Hegel Prize before Sennett include J rgen Habermas and Paul Ricoeur.

² Information on Sennett's career trajectory comes from "Building and Dwelling: A Conversation with Richard Sennett." *LILP*, 1 May 2018, [www.lincolnst.edu/publications/multimedia/building-dwelling-conversation-richard-sennett.](http://www.lincolnst.edu/publications/multimedia/building-dwelling-conversation-richard-sennett), as well as his personal website, richardsennett.com.

Chapter one, *Sennett on Public Domain and Individuality*, explores Sennett's discussions on the notion of the public domain. It also examines how people's non-personality erodes their practices in the public domain, through the interplay between an active "I" and a passive "me" (Sennett, 1976, p. 330). It then addresses the difficulty for cooperation once the major economic body of the United States transformed from manufacturing industry to service industry. Based on extensive interviews with workers in both industries, Sennett articulates how one's narrative and individuality are influenced by the physical environment in which one works and by the people with whom one communicates.

Sennett on the Public Domain

This section introduces Sennett's works and thoughts on the public domain, mainly from articulation on Sennett's 1976 publication, *The Fall of Public Man*. I will explore Sennett's understanding and uses on the notion of public, his examination on reasons for people turning inward and non-personal once the time moved to the twentieth century, his articulation on ways in which the interplay between the active "I" and the passive "me" contributes to one's self-withdrawal from the public, and in the end, I will bring in communication ethics which connects all these discussions through understanding the "good" that people want to protect and promote and how the "good" creates meaning in actions.

When Sennett begins writing on the development of cities, he pays attention to the form and meaning of work in modern cities and societies. As a sociologist, he is also interested in society and culture in the twentieth century urban environment. In *Families Against the City* (1970), Sennett analyzes two types of structures of middle-class families that lived and worked in Chicago during two decades of the city's enormous industrial development. Sennett observes that families living in an intensive structure with prolonged childhood are less suitable to the

urbanized Chicago than those living in an external structure with upwardly mobile youth (Sennett, 1970a). After *Families Against the City*, Sennett publishes *The Uses of Disorder*, arguing that a well-planned and ordered city is blemished. Sennett also argues that it is in such a “disordered city” that men³ will have the opportunity to become more in control of themselves and more attentive to the existence of others; as the title suggested, this is the utility of disorder (Sennett, 1970b).

In 1976, Sennett published *The Fall of Public Man*, in which Sennett delivers his thoughts systematically regarding ways in which people’s participations in the public domain have been changed by massive industrial development that occurred in major American cities. Prior to the 1970s, the intellectual background or atmosphere was based on various sociological discussions from the previous generation, majorly focusing on individualism and the public space. Compared to major sociological discussions on public life that focused on politics, Sennett’s approach is closer to anthropology and historicity. This provides him a different and more vivid understanding of the nature of the public.

A Concrete and Practical Public

Before Sennett, there have been two leading European theorists dedicated to study the public domain, Jürgen Habermas and Hannah Arendt. Habermas believes in a public domain composed of economic interests and political disputes (Habermas, 1968/1971). The origin of Habermas comes from the Frankfurt school which is responsive to Nazi Germany. Habermas’s theoretical roots are Marxist ideas, so he emphasizes the use of political power to overcome

³ Sennett does mean to apply his ideas to humankind in general, but he is talking about people in his time, which is the 1960s. For Sennett, people living in the 1950-60s are the first generation in the history of the United States, on one hand, living in a time with affluence as a benevolence of life, but on the other hand, struggling with what they can do with affluence. Daniel Horowitz (2004) has a detailed articulation and analysis on this phenomenon. See, *The Anxieties of Affluence: Critiques of American Consumer Culture, 1939-1979*.

divisions and separations among classes. By the 1990s, as reflected in *The Theory of Communicative Action*, this emphasis eventually became his communicative interaction theory.

On the other hand, there is Hannah Arendt, who argues that the public domain that permits all political life hardly exists without human plurality. Arendt believes in the existence of a pure public political field where all citizens, regardless of class, gender, race or ethnicity, can communicate equally. When Habermas treats “publicity” as a product of material life, Arendt refuses to define “publicity” according to the physical environment that residents dwell in.

Sennett, however, works neither like Habermas nor like Arendt. Observing that big cities have created a unique environment for its dwellers, Sennett takes modern urban environments as the background of his research and attempts to understand ways in which people’s everyday actions and social interaction patterns are influenced (Sennett, 1970a). The approach Sennett prefers comes from anthropology, which compares the formal expression patterns in theaters with those ordinary ones on the street. In *The Fall of Public Man*, Sennett focuses on the development of London, Paris and New York from the 1700 to 1970s, and thus integrates historicity to his academic framework.

Therefore, there have been three major approaches in the West that are dedicated to understanding public life. They roughly formulate a spiritual equilateral triangle. One of them is the edge of Habermas, who takes the “public” component as the struggle for people attempting to transcend their own physical interests. The second is the edge of Arendt, believing a “public” that consists of special citizens who engage in non-personal and equal dialogue with each other. The third is the edge represented by Sennett and other scholars sharing similar thoughts. For Sennett, the “public” is concrete and specific. Sennett studies the way people communicate to strangers, the clothes they wear when on the street, and the comparison and contrast between

outdoor spaces and indoor rooms. Sennett attempts to clarify the meaning of these specific behaviors and their expressiveness. Hence, when Sennett talks about the public domain, he refers to a concrete environment in the lifeworld, where everyone acts and participates on an everyday basis. Through observing the public domain, Sennett realizes the suspension of one's personality in everyday life. Due to this suspension, people turn inward and non-personal.

Individual's Non-Personality

When Sennett aims to understand sources of the suspension of one's personality, the notion of individualism inevitably comes across his mind. Individualism is more than just a matter of economic competition. It deals with the social significance of the relationship between the individual and the other, as well as the psychological perception of the individual's self. On the social level, the point Sennett makes in *The Fall of Public Man* is almost self-proved: in big cities, one's everyday actions are becoming less relevant to those of others. Similarly, Arendt (1958/1998) stated in *The Human Condition*,

“under conditions of radical isolation... under conditions of mass society or mass hysteria... all people suddenly behave as though they were members of one family, each multiplying and prolonging the perspective of his neighbor... In both instances, men have become entirely private, that is, they have been deprived of seeing and hearing others, of being seen and being heard by them... The end of the common world has come when it is seen only under one aspect and is permitted to present itself in only one perspective” (p. 58).

Arendt is making the point that the privation of a person does more harm than intimating self-withdrawal from the public domain, but it deprives others' right to see and hear. A city is expected to be a settlement where strangers can meet and communicate, but once the majority of

people stop participating in the public domain, those who remain enthusiastic in participating are deprived of the source or the ground to do so.

Sennett has a clear understanding on this subject, benefited from his anthropological approach that favors a comparison between the theater and the street. When the actor is performing in a theater, the audience is expected to watch and listen. In the public domain, when people are participating in public activities on the street, others can see and hear. Once the actor in the theater disappeared, the seated audience, no matter how badly they look for a play, are facing an empty stage. Once people cease to participate in the public domain, those who are enthusiastic to see and hear are facing an “empty street”; people exist but are indifferent to others. In Sennett’s words, people become “artists deprived of an art” (Sennett, 1976, p. 29). From a psychological perspective, Sennett believes people’s self-identification as independent beings is the recipe for psychological impoverishment. People become less expressive and lack the stimulation from strangers or others. Arendt further stated that “the privation of privacy lies in the absence of others... whatever he does remains without significance and consequence to others” (Arendt, 1958/1998, p. 58). In *The Fall of Public Man*, Sennett thinks the non-personality ought to enrich one’s experience rather than thinning it. It is the lack of participation in the public domain that breeds the non-personality of the individual, which eventually leads to the fall of public man.

As has always been the case in Europe, the “glue” of everyday society is now a problem for the United States, as well as the psychological confusion and suffocation caused by the decline of non-personal relationships. These problems are more concrete in the quality of urban public spaces that we all face. It is now a cliché to say that the shape of Beijing, Shanghai and other Eastern metropolitans are becoming Westernized in terms of buildings and outdoor public

spaces. Sennett has indicated the flaw in this Western model, including the homogenization and isomorphism in public places, suffocating consequences of this homogeneity in everyday social interactions, and the psychological dislocation caused by physical isomorphism. When a district is designed in a way that discourages casual street conversations, and when a city is planned with the philosophy of limiting public life by reducing human interactions, the public domain faces a physical environment that inhibits its formation, by which it is expected to be supported.

Isomorphism in public space results in people's psychological dislocation—wherever one stands, one cannot tell differences in places, and one is thus indifferent to others.

The Rootless I

But are there any deeper origins other than the modern isomorphic city planning that contribute to this psychological dislocation. For Sennett, the answer is the “I” that is rootless and trapped by intimacy.

In the first chapter of *The Fall of Public Man*, Sennett agrees that modern life is “a rough parallel” to the Roman social crisis once Octavian passed away (Sennett, 1976, p. 3). When the Augustan Age has gone, participation in the public domain shifted from an honor to an obligation. Although ceremonies and rituals were still practiced, what was different was the reason for those practices. While those practices ought to be connected to “passion”, they were in fact tied to “the rules of the *res publica*” (p. 3). In *On the Good Life*, Cicero discussed the performance of obligation that there are different kinds of obligation that influence people's personal and public lives (Cicero, 1971, p. 120). Hence, when Romans after Augustus's Age considered engaging in public activities being connected to obligation, it does not mean that they participated reluctantly. According to Cicero, people practiced in the public domain as they valued reputation which is obtained through goodwill (doing service), confidence (intelligence

that comes from just and trust), and respect or admiration for the path to promotion when dealing with the public (p. 136). Eloquent public speaking is the route to reputation (p. 145). Therefore, what is lacking in Roman's participating in the public domain is passion. When obligation restrains passion, there are still responsibilities and goals. So, public participation for Romans is an obligation but not a burden. In fact, in a classical world, the central element is the rule. Rome is in a juncture between a classical world and modernity. It is an ongoing juncture in which the rule moves from the element of a polis to the issue of being a citizen, and there are individual responsibilities that one ought to undertake "as a citizen". In *On the Good Life*, Cicero argues that in order to be a citizen, there are certain issues that need to be completed as an individual. In the introduction written by Michael Grant, Grant claims that Cicero "approved of Panaetius's demonstration that the rights of the individual (including private property) are reconcilable with the needs of society" (p. 27). However, the lack of passion in practice not only diminishes the desire for further practices in the public domain but provides the ground for Christianity to flourish. As Rome begins to decline and loses its power, what is left is an understanding of an I that is increasingly rootless. The "I" used to be connected with being a citizen no longer has that connection. People end up with new conceptions of that over time. Subsequently, Christianity shifts from a secret practice to a "new principle of public order" (Sennett, 1976, p. 3).

Here, Sennett is making the point that in his historical moment, which was modernity back then, people's participation in public life becomes fulfilling obligations. This excludes connections among familiar members but exists "between people who are not joined together by ties of family or intimate association" (p. 3). Similar to Romans after Augustus, people in modernity concern less on what is going on in the public, and participation is a matter of "going along" (p. 4).

However, *The Fall of Public Man* indicates that in order to let the public man “stay strong”, we need more than obligations in supporting practices in the public domain. What Cicero argues, is introducing the element of passion, but Sennett disagrees. Admittedly, passion does permit Romans to participate publicly, but when in a historical moment that is modernity, Sennett worries that passion is too easily bound to the agent’s psychological state and thus becomes misleading. Lack of passion may explain why one loses the “will” or “desire” to practice publicly, but it does not explain why the public domain “could lose its will together” (p. 12).

The public man cannot be fully supported solely from a political leader’s publicity on achievement and success, or solely from people attending regional councils that address issues in the local community. The public man must root in everyone’s care for the other. Hence, to prevent the public man from falling, it is inadequate to work from a therapeutic approach that presupposes waking people up can solve the problem. What we need is a ground that encourages public activities to take place. Such a ground is only possible in a society where people value those public activities, value each other’s participation, and are able to find meanings in those activities.

The Active “I” and the Passive “Me”

Through investigations on meaningfulness in people’s life, Sennett realizes that ways in which people work in the twentieth century are not the same as those in the century before. In the twentieth century, most industrialized countries have witnessed a decline in the number of manufacturing laborers and a growth in white-collar workers (Sennett, 1976, p. 327). Within the white-collar class, there has emerged a group that consists of those who conduct “quasitechnical, quasi-routine work”, such as computer programmers and entry-level stockbrokers (p. 328). This

class has “no group identity, no class culture” that can provide meaning to their work (p. 328). They are expanding extraordinarily and the boundary between their self and work is not clear. This does not mean that the social position of this new class cannot mirror the self, but when such mirroring occurs, it is always termed as “false consciousness” (p. 330). Sennett articulates this through the distinction between two parts of the self at work, an “I” and a “me” (p. 330). The “I” is the active self that drives one’s “motivations”, “feelings”, and “impulses”, while the “me” is the passive self which is judged by one’s institution (p. 330).

But in fact, we cannot understand the “I” and the “me” abstractly from a theoretical framework. Rather, the “I” and the “me” are performed and contextualized in reality. If one thinks “I have completed the work”, one talks with the “I”; when one’s company thinks “he has completed the work”, the company talks with the “me”. It is thus paradoxical since works completed by the “I” are rewarded to the “me” (p. 331). Although rewards can provide meaning for doing the work, they are issued to the “me”, while “finding meaning in the work” is hardly feasible if not connected to the “I”. Once we say, “I am rewarded, so I am satisfied for the work I have done”, this is a different rhetoric with, “I did this, so I am satisfied”. The level of self-motivation is stronger when the meaning of doing work is found in the “I”. Conflicts between the work-completing I and the reward-crediting me are stealthy yet cannot be overlooked.

Towards the end of *The Fall of Public Man*, Sennett realizes that where one performs one’s self influences one’s understanding. The biggest difference that shaped people’s workplace in the twentieth century is brought by industrialization. Industrialization generates cities with giant scopes in land area, population, and variations in industries that none of previous cities can ever match. For Sennett, an industrialized city in the twentieth century ought to become an “instrument of impersonal life, the mold in which diversity and complexity of persons, interests,

and tastes become available as social experience” (p. 339). Nevertheless, impersonality breaks this mold. In the workplace, late twentieth century workers tend to perform an impersonal self to colleagues and the boss, which is a dramatically different fashion compared to the steelworkers in the 1900 who have developed “communal understandings”, a common capacity that exists among manufacturing workers, which helps them navigate through the chaotic environment of a factory (Sennett, 2008, p. 107). As a consequence, other than family members or close friends, people cannot know or are not interested in knowing those who are even close to their lives. Urbanization coming with industrialization becomes “retribalization” (Sennett, 1976, p. 339). Still, Sennett never denies impersonal life. Rather, he believes that cities ought to permit impersonal actions. The city should create a “forum in which it becomes meaningful to join with other persons without the compulsion to know them as persons” (p. 340). Through observations on urban planning in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, Sennett has seen too many examples in which urban planners are dedicated to bringing in elements that they think can increase intimacy. Sennett disagrees with those attempts as they create “tyrannies of intimacy” and increase denials of “the reality and worth of impersonal life” (p. 340). It is reasonable to worry about issues brought by impersonality, while introducing intimacy artificially and then acting as impersonality no longer exists cannot help. Using Ronald C. Arnett’s language, recognizing impersonality as imperfect is a recognition of darkness, while pretending impersonality will disappear through introducing intimacy is offering “artificial light”, which inhibits people recognizing the genuine dark and obscures the possibility of having “genuine light” (Arnett, 2013, p. 118).

Communication Ethics and Meaning in Action

Whether one wants impersonality or intimacy, and whether one wants attribution going to the active “I” or the passive “me”, are questions bound to have no universally correct answer. The element of diversity in a society cannot be overlooked. In *The Fall of Public Man*, it is Sennett’s wish to witness a society that encourages public activities to take place and to be valued. It also makes people’s diversity in interests and tastes become available as social experience. To form such a society, what we need is not passion, will, or desire, but “meaning”. The meaning of an action fulfills the agent’s heart when practicing. The meaning also serves as a mind-driver that guides decision-making. This is where communication ethics comes into play.

Communication ethics has a clarity of good that one is willing to protect and promote. If one asks what the meaning of an action is, often one is indicating cannot see the meaning of an action. This is to say, the action one practices fails to reflect what one wants to protect and promote. If one embeds the self in the ground, the ground provides meaning for the self. Once there is no ground under one’s feet, whatever actions one performs, nothing provides meaning for those actions. As a result, one fails to see any meanings in any of one’s actions. The ground that provides meaning to the self is generated and shaped from the historical moment that one lives in. It is in the historical moment that the good one wants to protect and promote is found.

A historical moment is not simply defined by a series of calendar years, or by the development of schools of thoughts which appear within or across historical moments. A historical moment appears when people raise issues and concern those issues require attention. Throughout the history of the West, there are four distinctive historical moments that have been acknowledged. From the perspective of the field of philosophy, John N. Deely referred to them as the Ancient, the Latin Age, the Modern Period, and the Postmodern Times (Deely, 2001).

Deely performs a thorough and comprehensive understanding on the development of Western philosophy, and accurately defines historical moments through questions being asked in a particular period. The first historical moment is antiquity, spanning from the classical Greece to the fall of Western Roman Empire in the fifth century⁴. With the collapse of the Roman Empire, the West moves into a different historical moment called the Middle Ages, or the medieval period, in which Christianity became the narrative ground that provides meaning to the self. Towards the end of the Middle Ages⁵, the overwhelming preference on praising the God and the Heaven in artistic creation has been shadowed by the Italian Renaissance, the authority of the Church has been questioned and challenged, and it eventually results in the Kantian Enlightenment slogan, thinking for yourself rather than letting others do the thinking for you (Kant, 1784/2019). In modernity, the question people ask is whether they can intellectually move forward without following instructions from the institution of the Church. Hence, people prioritize pure objectivity and individual rationality. Consequently, the good people value in modernity become progress, efficiency, and individual autonomy, which are regarded by Arnett as “the trinity of modern belief” (Arnett, 2013, p. 3).

The current historical moment that we live in is referred to by Lyotard as postmodernity (Lyotard, 1979/1984, p. 7). However, in the last section of Deely’s book, he wrongfully regards the postmodern time as an independent period that exists directly after modernity. In fact, postmodernity is not a period that exists directly after modernity, but a juncture that presupposes

⁴ Again, historical moments emerge from questions rather than sovereign states or calendars. So, even scholars in history and classics refer the period from Alexander’s death in 323 B.C. to the crowning of the first Roman emperor Augustus in 29 B.C. as the Hellenistic period, the question people addressed in the Classical Greece remain pragmatic; thus, the Hellenistic period is not a unique historical moment but belongs to antiquity.

⁵ There are various views on the exact time that marked the end of the Middle Ages. It is generally accepted to regard the period from 1300-1500 as the Late Middle Ages and it can also be considered as the beginning of the Renaissance. In these two centuries, three major crises led to radical changes in all areas of society: demographic collapse, political instabilities and religious upheavals. See: “The Late Middle Ages.” In *Middle Ages Reference Library*, edited by Judy Galens and Judson Knight, vol. 1, 2001, pp. 213-226.

that all previous historical moments are co-present. This means that in any given historical moment, people answer the question of what the good that people agree upon is. A shift between historical moments is a shift of the good that people desire to protect and promote. This means that once we move from antiquity to the Middle Ages, the good that people protected and promoted in antiquity is no longer appreciated. Similarly, once we move from the Middle Ages to modernity, the medieval good is gone. However, once we move from modernity to postmodernity, modernity is still alive and the good people value in modernity is also alive. More importantly, the good people valued in previous historical moments are reborn in postmodernity. In postmodernity, there are people who still value polis—practices in their family and community; there are people who still believe in their faith; and there are people who still value objectivity and progress. So, in the current historical moment, there is no “the good” that everyone agrees to protect and promote, but a number of individual goods that we value differently. Postmodernity permits that we live with a multiplicity of goods. It simultaneously means that when we look at what the good we want to protect and promote, each of us will have his own answers.

As a historical moment emerges when questions people ask need responses, it does not emerge directly before or after a specific year on the calendar. Meanwhile, we cannot select which historical moment we want to dwell in, but existence “meets us”, without our approval or our liking; this meeting forms a “derivative self” (Arnett, 2013, p. 7). Thus, we never have a life that is ready for the historical moment. Otherwise, it is a reified sense of self—I am me no matter where I am. This is how the historical moment shapes who we are.

When Hans-Georg Gadamer introduces philosophical hermeneutics in *Truth and Method*, one of his contributions is reminding readers about the existence of prejudice and bias (Gadamer,

1960/1993). Since each person is always embedded in his own narrative, the way they look at the same world that they all dwell in ought to be different. One can always interpret the world in one's unique way as it is shaped by the narrative one situates in. Meanwhile, it is difficult or even impossible for one interpreting the world based on another people's narrative, since one is not situated in that narrative. Therefore, our interpretations to events always have limitations, which come from our prejudice and bias. Communication ethics is important as it addresses the bias. So, doing communication ethics from a philosophy of communication⁶ perspective means focusing on a bias, the performative story that one finds worthy of the meaning of the communicative event. When we take a bias seriously, make that bias explicit, and understand it in concrete contexts, it will get us the way to see and understand a question better.

Once Sennett is writing on the public domain, the historical moment he experiences is mainly modernity. One of the features favored in modernity is a purely objective pursuit of truth. First, pursuit of truth has nothing wrong in terms of fulfilling people's desire to know the unknown and to reach the unreached. However, modernity goes too far. In modernity, we have so much in our heads regarding progress, that the next is always better, that whatever we can go to will be better. As a consequence, it becomes difficult to establish roots. In our infinite pursuit to progress, there is no end or destination to reach upon, but only a self-hypnotized conviction that "the next is always better". The end or the destination is marked by the good we value, once we reach there, we know the good we value has been protected and promoted and the good thus becomes a root that gives meaning to our narrative and self. However, an unreachable end leads

⁶ There are three ways to understand the philosophy of communication. The first is a "communication" understanding in which the entire speculation would be on communication. The second is a "communicology" understanding in which it looks at philosophy of communication as a methodology. The third is a "philosophical hermeneutics" understanding, looking at philosophy of communication as what prepares one the assumption that making life worth living.

to the incapability of establishing roots. This creates an “existential homelessness”, that is a person does not know what matters and there is no ground under that person’s feet (Arnett, 2013, p. 4). An Arendtian example of existential homelessness is a bureaucrat. Arendt critiques a particular understanding of the world that she thinks as taking over, which is the bureaucrat mode, where one has portability of conviction, based on little other than development of one’s career (Arendt, 1958/1998).

Besides, the pursuit of truth not only alludes people to an obsessed addiction to progress, but it blurs people’s understanding of what truth is. From Thomas Kuhn, we know that a truth is only true in one paradigm, but not true in all paradigms (Kuhn, 2012). There have been, and there still are, many paradigms to understand this world, but the West in modernity is assuming there is only one, which is guided by natural science. By no means this is indicating natural science is useless or harmful, but we should not take it as the only avenue towards truth. The biggest example of that is the eighteenth century, referred to as the Age of Enlightenment, which privileges pure rationality over everything else. The Kantian Enlightenment slogan is helpful as it positively frees people’s mind from theologian’s instructions. But once the pursuit of a pure scientific method overflows from the scope of natural science, it formulates a logic that disdains all the other approaches that do not use statistics. The Enlightenment focuses on the individual agent and pursuit of truth rather than meaningfulness.

The focus on the individual agent, as a feature in modernity, corresponds to what Sennett has observed as the distinction between the active “I” and the passive “me”. Sennett believes that meaning in the work cannot be generated successfully unless there is a way to reconcile the “I” and the “me”. Sennett does not aim to blur the distinction between the “I” and the “me” but looks to regress the socially mismatched “I” and “me”. For Sennett, the true self ought to be the active

“I”, while in a society, the only active self is the passive “me”. This explains why workers in the twentieth century are perceived as “apathetic” or “listless”, as the active “I” is not permitted to perform itself (Sennett, 1976, p. 331). To this point, Sennett realizes the necessity of digging for more information to understand how the “I” and the “me” might be reconciled.

In the next session, I will introduce Sennett’s scholarship in the 1970s, in which he illustrates how one’s narrative and individuality is influenced by one’s living and working community.

Sennett on Narrative and Individuality

Since the 1960s, Sennett has been interviewing extensively on workers with a broad range in industries, including manufacturing workers, the white-collar middle class, and the lower class whose lives were greatly influenced by housing projects. Through interviews, Sennett comprehends that it is one’s narrative and individuality that shapes how one understands the “I” and the “me”.

The Hidden Injuries of Class, 1977

The first project started in the late 1960s in Boston. In this project, Sennett and Cobb interview many white families whose members mainly consist of the second and third generation immigrants that did manufacturing work. Sennett and Cobb find the acknowledgement of class seems to be lacking among those Boston workers. Sennett and Cobb conclude that class means more than personal wealth or social reputation, but it is associated with meaning as well. The formation of a social class requires the formation of a consciousness from its members (Sennett and Cobb, 1977).

Background Information of 1960s

Before I go through Sennett and Cobb’s research outcome in detail, it is necessary to start with introducing the economic and social background back then.

In the 1960s, the growth of a postwar consumer society marked the heyday of the United States. According to Daniel Horowitz, in the 1940s, “33 percent of American residences lacked running water and 60 percent had no central heat”; in the 1950s, “almost 60 percent of Americans were in the middle class, a proportion that had almost doubled since the prosperous days of the late 1920s”; till the end of 1960s, “three out of five American families lived in homes they—and their mortgage companies—owned, and seven out of eight owned at least on TV set” (Horowitz, 2004, pp. 49-51). Americans’ economic experience has improved dramatically since the 1940s and reached its high point in the 1960s. Most of the working class experience their life getting better. However, in chapter three which is dedicated to discussions on David M. Potter’s *People of Plenty*, Horowitz writes, “America’s great success ‘in approaching the goals of mobility, of individualism, of permissiveness, of equalitarianism has not produced the society it was expected to produce’” (p. 99). Horowitz’s view is supported by economists such as John Kenneth Galbraith as Galbraith critiques the affluence and states “the excessive embrace of consumer culture among white, middle-class suburbanites was seen as the prime source of the nation’s problems” (p. 14). Thus, the 1960s not only witnessed the continued wave of prosperity but raised warning signs of troubled economic times. For example, “women on welfare started to demand decent treatment from welfare officers as well as fuller participation in consumer culture than meager welfare budgets allowed” (pp. 163-164). In brief, the working class in the 1960s was basically living in a decent life. Yet, when the consumer culture started to take over the land, there were red flags presenting themselves. This is the economic and social background when Sennett and Cobb conducted their interviews.

Love and Power, I and Me

From interviews, Sennett and Cobb learn that those manufacturing workers in Boston have never been oppressed by any bureaucrat organizations. They establish strong connections to

rigid institutional environments. There are stable unions they belong to, big companies they work for, and relatively fixed markets that tell them what they should produce for a maximized profit. These all together guarantee their work and living conditions. These may not guarantee workers living a luxury life, but life ought to be decent. However, workers struggle understanding their low social status, though the United States in the 1960s is supposed to be a country “making few class distinctions” (Sennett, 2006, p. 6).

There is no need to repeat how much the unions or other social movements have defended worker’s rights. But in those interviews, Sennett and Cobb find that once those workers have benefited from radical social changes, they convert to conservatism. Sennett and Cobb state that “for the workingman, everything could be jeopardized by radical change”; thus, “workers want to protect what they have and the system that has made these triumphs possible” (Sennett and Cobb, 1977, p. 5; 7). Material hardship caused by the system makes those who suffered rebel, while material reward provided by the new system makes those who flourished defend. Not everyone in the working class stays on the same page. Those who still suffer desire a new game while those who already settle down do not want to start over. Sennett and Cobb cite Nietzsche’s “join power and love” to illustrate the connection between “possessing power” and “knowing what love is” (p. 192). Nietzsche’s idea is that one cannot understand what love is unless one possesses power. Possession of power separates one from vulnerability and such a possession is necessary to pursue true love. Learning from Nietzsche’s argument, Sennett and Cobb conclude that the privileged working class have already earned power, so they are willing to express love. But what about the suffering working class? More significantly, if one feels powerless, how can one then join love to power? This is the gap in the working class, between the privileged and the suffered. Sennett and Cobb describe the gap as the title of their book—*The*

Hidden Injuries of Class. The hidden injuries are emotional injuries that are generated “in the conflict between fraternity and individual ability, in the sacrificial attempts to make power out of one’s love. The attempt to join the two realms seems only to increase the feeling of powerlessness” (p. 193).

Sennett and Cobb then ask the question of whether it is reasonable to separate love and power. Their answer is that if that happened, “men alienate themselves” (p. 193). This goes back to what Sennett has brought up towards the end of *The Fall of Public Man*, which is the separation between the active “I” and the passive “me”. In one interview, a plumber said, “they gave me a pay raise when the south wall mess was straightened out” (p. 193). The plumber is talking with a passive “me”. Rhetoric shaped by the voice of an active “I” will be “I earned a pay raise as I fixed the south wall mess”. There are dozens of similar examples in Sennett and Cobb’s interviews. Using passive voice shifts one’s responsibility from “the real person” who does the work, to “the institution’s individual” who is responsible for and credited as doing the work (p. 197).

In *The Fall of Public Man*, Sennett argues the separation between “I” and “me” as a mismatch that needs to be reconciled, without blurring them, but in *Hidden Injuries*, Sennett finds positive elements from this mismatch. When a task is assigned to someone, one’s role as an employee serves as an alienated other that does the work, and eventually one is rewarded as an employee. The positive implication in the separation between the “I” and the “me” is that such divorce avoids one being alienated as an “institutional man” (p. 197). Hannah Arendt had a similar comment that one’s public life and private life ought to be separated (Arendt, 1958/1998). Once the private sphere is blurred with the public sphere and if the public is evil, then one has no place to hide—this creates existential homelessness. A bureaucratic institution

that creates institutional men is an example that demands employees sacrifice their private sphere for public obligation and it thus gives birth to existential homelessness. Thus, Sennett understands that what he aimed for at the end of *The Fall of Public Man*, reconciling the “I” and the “me”, is not something that can easily occur. Sennett even doubts if this reconciliation should occur. If the “I” and the “me” would be reconciled, it provides better identification for workers since then the work is completed by the “I” and rewards are also issued to the “I”. But the danger cannot be underestimated. Once the work is messed up, which inevitably occurs in the professional marketplace, and the blame is put on one’s shoulder, a reconciled “I” and “me” makes one have no place to go. An “institutional man” does not have this protective alienation of “the real person” from “the institution’s individual” (p. 197). Results of the separation between the “I” and the “me” are therefore twofold. It secludes the “I” from rewards and credits but also protects the “I” from blame and fault. Sennett then starts to wonder what one’s character will be if the “I” and the “me” exist in such a unity of contraries.

The Corrosion of Character, 1998

After *Hidden Injuries* was published, Sennett shifted his future research emphasis towards the development of individual character. Back then, capitalism in the United States has made the country to its high point. The working class, though referred to in Marx’s theory as proletariat and therefore being exploited, were living a good life. At that moment, almost everyone, including Sennett himself, believed that such a life “would continue in its fixed grooves” (Sennett, 2006, p. 6).

Background Information of 1970s, Recession Occurred

However, the beginning of the 1970s was telling the majority that such a thought is only a dream that is now over. Politically, the Watergate scandal in 1972 was a huge, consuming scandal that caused many Americans to fear and lose hope in their government. One year later,

the Vietnam war ended. People realized that they had lost so much in that war. Faith in government was at an all-time low in the aftermath of Vietnam war and Watergate, as exemplified by the low voter turnout in the 1976 United States presidential election⁷.

Financially, the 1970s is a tough time for the working class. The breakdown of the Bretton Woods system and the oil crisis in 1973 and 1979 dramatically affected the States. The welcoming call to international investors and a loose control on them result in financial capital on a global scale flowing more freely than ever before. Not surprisingly, foreign investors were in fact rather speculators. Their sights only stucked to shareholder returns and dividends while kept blind to a corporation's long-term operation and health. Short-sighted speculators grasp profits at the expense of bankrupting others. This is close to how Hobbes described nature as a war that each against all, or in Sennett's phrase, "everyone was competing with everyone else" (Sennett, 2012, p. 158). On the other hand, due to the lack of oil, manufacturing industries began to decline. These all together led to a recession. At that time, most of the population consisted of workers, whose options for increasing incomes were limited. According to Robert J. Samuelson, the decline in power and influence of organized labor, foreign competition in industries, and the shift to a service-oriented economy have reduced chances for many workers to maintain the benefits of a middle-class lifestyle (Samuelson, 1997, p. 81).

Service Industry Workers with Specialized Skill Set

Still, not everyone suffered economically in the 1970s. The service industry, for instance, as a newly emerged economic form, grew and expanded robustly. Therefore, when Sennett looks at his previous research on the "I" and the "me", he returns to interviewing, not manufacturing laborers, but middle-class workers in the service industry. In this research, Sennett talks to

⁷ Presidential voter turnout in 1960 was 63%, then it started to drop gradually as 62% in 1964, 61% in 1968, 55% in 1972, and 54% in 1976 (Samuelson, 1997, p. 198).

people from high tech industries, financial services, and the media industry. Through those interviews, Sennett has explored ways in which new forms of work created by new capitalism⁸ have changed people's character, which is shaped by one's communal and personal experience. This project is published as *The Corrosion of Character: The Personal Consequences of Work In the New Capitalism*. Since the 1970s has witnessed a flourishing of a service-oriented economy, it is straightforward and almost intuitive to believe that people being interviewed by Sennett should benefit the most from new capitalism's blessing. Surprisingly, those middle-class individuals regarded their lives as "cast adrift" (Sennett, 2006, p. 7).

However, such a "cast adrift" identification is not associated with financial poverty, but psychological impoverishment. The issue Sennett observed in *The Fall of Public Man* reappeared in the heyday brought by new capitalism in the United States—the lack of meaning in the action makes employees suffer. But the source that contributes to the lack of meaning differs. In *The Fall of Public Man*, the lack of meaning is derived from people's failure to see the meaning of practicing public affairs, which leads to a self-withdrawal from the public domain. In *Corrosion of Character*, the lack of meaning is driven by the requirement of a specialized skill set in the workplace. Once a specialized skill set is required, it changes how workers perceive the workplace in two ways: working with others and working with "the master".

Highly specialized skill set challenges workers to acquire "communal understandings" which is the common capacity that manufacturing workers, such as steelworkers in the 1900, developed to help them navigate through the chaotic environment of a factory (Sennett, 2008, p. 107). With communal understanding, when someone messes up in the production process or

⁸ Compared to merchant capitalism which is an early stage in the development of capitalism, the new capitalism or the modern capitalism focuses on improving the mode of the production and accumulates wealth through calculated and systematic production.

raises a red flag in security, his colleagues can easily notice and make up what is left out. This is the communal understanding that steelworkers developed. They work, communicate, cooperate, and understand each other's role. Meanwhile, it will be a mistake to regard communal understanding as a unique feature in manual workshops. Machine operation itself does not interfere with the development of communal understandings, but a specialized skill set does. In the 1970s, when the high tech, the finance, and the media industry started to flourish, knowledge used to prepare communal understanding did not "transfer to small, tight spaces as in a specialized machine shop, where the worker had to focus more on his individual body" (p. 107). It does not mean workers in those newly emerged industries no longer work with machines; they do, but there are little connections to other people who also work in the same office.

When interviewing Wall Street back-office workers after the 2008 Financial Crisis, Sennett asks one question repetitively to those who lost their jobs, "do you want your old job back?". They did not answer with a simple yes or no. The answer has often been, "I want to do the same sort of work somewhere else" (Sennett, 2012, p. 149). Those fintech workers still love their jobs, in terms of the content or payment, but they feel disappointed in the workplace as people do not talk to colleagues and the boss sits behind the desk as if other employees are irrelevant to him. In other industries, similar issues occur. Skilled middle-class workers cannot find their position in the cooperative system that used to develop communal understandings. The system that once consisted of "organized careers" now comprises "a maze of fragmented jobs"; "middle-class world has cracked" (Sennett, 2008, p. 34). With communal understanding, almost everyone understands what others are doing, while challenged by specialized skill sets, now workers only know projects at their hands.

In addition to the lack of ground that prepares communal understandings, specialized skill sets with machine operation challenge the way workers deal with “the master”. Sennett uses the baking industry in Boston as an example. Basically, when new bakers are recruited, learning from their master regarding “how to bake bread”, becomes learning “how to operate the automatic oven that bakes bread”. Before the automatic oven is introduced, the master passes his knowledge on baking to apprentices by talking about instructions, showing the practice, requiring apprentices repeat the practice, and rectifying their mistakes. It takes time and practice for apprentices to understand ways in which the color of a dough, the temperature of an oven, and the length of baking all together influence the taste of bread. However, with an automatic oven, the length and temperature of baking can be selected from the digital menu and apprentices no longer judge the completeness of a dough through its color. This gives apprentices an “easy-out”, and as a byproduct, it dethrones a master (Sennett, 1998, pp. 64-75). However, once the master still intends to speak as an expert, apprentices react sullenly to his “authority”. With an automatic oven, what the master acquires is a way of operating a machine that is not invented by him. This is similar to what happened in some university programs that only teach ways in which to use a computer, not programming. An authority in computers is expected to understand the language of computers, which is programming. But the way in which to use a software ought to be a skill that everyone can possess under repetitive and reflective practices. Regarding operative practices as genuine knowledge and passing it with an authoritative tone only intensifies the relationship between the master and apprentices. Consequently, workers equipped with specialized skill sets feel little connection to their master.

Falling in Love with the Practices of the Craft

Apart from *Corrosion of Character*, Sennett brought up the Boston bakery example again in *Building and Dwelling* (Sennett, 2018). When *Building and Dwelling* was written, Sennett

observed that employees in the bakery he visited on a routine basis have experienced a turnover of three generations. In the first generation, the bakery was a family business owned by Greek immigrants, hiring no African Americans as Greeks thought they carried “the virus of failure” (Sennett, 2018, p. 257). In the second generation, it transformed from an artisanal shop to an industrial brand, using automated equipment to expand its production—this is the period when the bakery was mentioned in *Corrosion of Character*. In the third generation, the bakery returned to a family business, but owned by Latino. The bakery seized a niche market by appealing to Boston’s young elite and promoted itself as producing organic food. The third wave of ownership team has Latinos, African Americans, and it took back some second-generation relatives of the original owners (pp. 254-258).

The nature that those employees worked together in a workshop has a greater complexity than a mixed community. This provides the ground for cooperation to take place as “cooperation involves much more intense exchanges between workers about their work” (Sennett, 2018, p. 258). This is also the ground that permits “communal understandings” to be developed. Cultural differences do not counter much in a workshop, if people prioritize the work. Sennett observes that a Greek baker can refer to a batch of baguettes as “Cuban color”, meaning its baking temperature is too high so it looks too dark, while other workers, Latinos and African Americans, do not feel distressed at all for such an epithet (p. 258).

When the bakery was operated by the second generation as an industrial brand that provides standardized bread, employees have little connection to neither the work nor the people, so it was difficult for employees to discover meaning in their work. In the third generation, the work is placed as priority, so it becomes the good that people in the bakery want to protect and promote. The good that employees value provides meaning in their work. People love working in

this bakery not only because they fall in love with the intention, but more importantly, they love the practices of the craft. They love their job as they love the practices in the job. In this sense, they stay away from, in Marx's language, being exploited as alienated labor, but turn themselves into craftsmen in the bakery, although Sennett never uses the term "craftsman" in *Corrosion of Character*.

Respect in a World of Inequality, 2003

So far, Sennett has realized that manufacturing workers in the 1960s, though living a decent life, are not satisfied with themselves. This dissatisfaction roots in a lack of meaning in their work because of the mismatch between the active "I" and the passive "me". In the 1970s, when service industry workers started to live affluently, they also failed to see meaning in their work. This time, requirements of specialized skill sets take the blame.

Towards the end of the 1990s, the economic bubble clashed. When the economy of the United States gradually went back to the track, it is worth noticing that governments worldwide started to research ways in which the welfare system ought to work—this includes the structure of the medical insurance system, the degree of independence that pension and subsistence allowances could be managed, and even what products should the comprehensive education system provide. When Sennett was paying attention to this process, he discovered that the way this new welfare system influences those people blessed by it, is vastly different from the way it used to be—as Sennett has "grown up 'on welfare'" (Sennett, 2006, p. 8). Therefore, *Respect in a World of Inequality* was dedicated to probing the relation of work and reforms of the welfare system.

Mutual Respect

In fact, no matter how prosperous an economy or a country is, the class of the impoverished always exists. Early in the Middle Ages, the impoverished needed to confess their

condition, as if being in trouble with life necessity was a sin. Within the framework of capitalism, the poor gradually unchained themselves from that theological perspective. Once the church was replaced by the metanarrative of science, the necessity of confession became less significant and as a result, the practice of confession was lost in the public. Nevertheless, the social group of the impoverished did not vanish as they stopped confessing. Instead, they were integrated into a social and economic network. Their position transformed from a group of unemployed waiting to be assisted by institutions, to a group with utility in participating in modern industrial production. On one hand, being poor means suffering a condition of poverty, namely a lack of cash and property. On the other hand, and more importantly, since fulfilling basic life needs is their top priority, their desire for payment will be easy to satisfy. As Karl Marx concluded in *Das Kapital*, this group becomes a huge supply of an inexpensive labor force during the age of mass industrial production. This makes proliferation of capital possible, and it is during the process of capital accumulation and proliferation that the number of workers in a factory directly determines the amount of surplus value that can be exploited by the factory owner (Marx, 1867/1887).

Thus, if welfare in the Middle Ages did assist the poor, the welfare in modernity kept the poor busy and poor, then, what happened to the welfare system in the twentieth century? As various forms of social welfare were dismantled through the last decade of the twentieth century, many scholars started to reflect on the unethical part of the welfare system in modernity—making the poor fully occupied but providing meager wages. A short-sighted pursuit of wages hardly extricates the poor out of improvement but struggles them back and forth around poverty. Thus, scholars advocate that people's well-being is best served by what they can become—a focus on potential, not just need.

However, Sennett views this issue from a different perspective. Dating back to his childhood experience with the Cabrini Green housing project in Chicago, Sennett addresses the need and social responsibility across the gulf of inequality. In a world obsessed with consumption, referred by Zygmunt Bauman (2000) as the feature of liquid modernity, the rich, the middle class, and the poor all encounter the issue of mutual respect, but the poor suffer the most. Sennett looks at three factors that undermine mutual respect: unequal ability, adult dependency, and degrading forms of compassion. In *Respect in a World of Inequality*, Sennett proposes a welfare system based on respect for those in need. He explores how self-worth can be nurtured in an unequal society, how self-esteem must be balanced with feeling for others. and how mutual respect can forge bonds across the divide of inequality. Contrary to how the welfare reformation in the 1990s was planned, Sennett argues for a welfare system based on respect to those in need (Sennett, 2003).

Communication Ethics and a Situated Self

To summarize, this section discusses Sennett's research on narrative and individuality. From interviews, Sennett has gained great insights from manufacturing workers in Boston, from middle-class workers in high tech industries, financial services, and the media industry, and from observation and research on the welfare system reform in the 1990s. All these are dedicated to ways in which people's narrative and individuality can be influenced by their work and work community. *Hidden Injuries* as a study on working-class families in Boston reminds us that a fully recognized class consciousness among them seems to be disrupted by people's variation in living conditions. *Corrosion of Character* articulates the failure for workers in service industries discovering their own value as modern capitalism has constructed an indifferent society that discourages people's need for each other. *Respect in a World of Inequality* probes the

reformation of the welfare system in the last decade of the twentieth century and advocates the significance of mutual respect in the reformation. In 2006, Sennett published *The Culture of the New Capitalism*, providing an overview of changes articulated in the previous three books.

Since *The Fall of Public Man*, Sennett has struggled by people's self-withdrawal from the public domain which is generated by people's difficulty of seeing the meaning in public practices. Through interviews on workers and observations on how they work, live, and communicate, Sennett finds the lack of meaning in action still presents itself. Sennett believes the mismatch between the "I" and the "me" takes the responsibility. In fact, it is one's narrative that influences one's identification on the "I" and the "me". One's narrative is shaped by one's previous experience and it also shapes one's view of the world in the future. Thus, a narrative provides the context for interpretation, establishes the tradition that is the basis for understanding ethical life within the world, and determines how people act. Meanwhile, one's individuality⁹ refers to one's uniqueness which is constitutive to who one is, as it is also constitutive to the knowledge about oneself as a member of the human race. In *Corrosion of Character*, Sennett concludes that difficulty for service industry workers seeing meanings in the work is attributed to the lack of "communal understanding", which is not a challenging ability for steelworkers in the 1900s to obtain. For steelworkers, their families all worked in the steel industry, and they were born and raised under the environment of steel factories. This trajectory offers them the unique narrative that people growing up in a different environment are unlikely to experience. When Sennett argues that those steelworkers are able to develop communal understandings while the

⁹ Individuality is not a premise or a result of individualism. One consumed by individualism ignores conversations that come before and implications that come after. Individualism takes one to stand above the community, but it does not mean that there are no identities. There are still individual identities. Individualism occurs with or without one's recognition of one's or other's uniqueness. Individuality objectively exists in everyone. Individualism is driven by an individualistic mindset.

late-twentieth century service industry workers cannot, he articulates ways in which those two styles of working differ. For Sennett, communal understandings are more crucial and pragmatic once the work environment requires cooperation and mutual understanding. For service industry workers, specialized skill sets build an invisible boundary between each other. Even if one understands what the big project is, one cannot assist the other since one's skill set only assures its utility in one's own position.

From the perspective of communication ethics, the good that steelworkers desire to protect and promote differs dramatically from the good that service industry workers value. For steelworkers who embrace the narrative of communal understanding, they have learnt to and get used to staying with one another to complete all actions in a factory. What they value is the existence of a work community and the exteriority of the work. They understand that the foremost issue is to complete the work with the assistance of others, so they are willing to offer assistance in the first place. But once it goes to the service industry, the good that workers value shifts from the community to the individual self. Service industry workers, no matter how much they care about the wellness of their company, would eventually realize that they are paid to work¹⁰. Job positions are not permanent. Their uniqueness in the job is a glory brought by specialized skill sets, a newly emerged phenomenon, which makes them concerned that it may go away at any time soon. As a result, the good they value is an individual self, a self that pursues interests and provides motives in actions for its own.

Although Sennett does not indicate this straightforwardly, an individual self is a self that lives in a therapeutic culture. It is difficult for those service industry workers to think that there are other ways to think about life. In this sense, they live in what Kenneth Burke calls, "trained

¹⁰ In *Together*, Sennett states that linking one's action with rewards is one way to promote efficiency in the workplace. It separates one's individual rewards from collective interests.

incapacity”, the state of affairs in which one’s “very abilities can function as blindnesses” (Burke, 1935, p. 7). It means that people’s past experiences can lead to wrong decisions when circumstances change. This is what the entire therapeutic movement is about, starting with the issue of self and placing a primary focus of decision making.

Charles Taylor has a similar expression in *Sources of the Self*, in which Taylor is doing an examination of saying that if we simply work from a universal standpoint, there are no sources of the self, it’s just me. The self is never a forever entity. When we change the sources that sustain the self, we change the self. For a sovereign self, the self never changes. Taylor works with an assumption that the self changes when its sources change. The self does not grow or change from the thin air, but there is ground under the self. If the self is a flower, then its narrative is the soil. When the issue of sources of the self is discussed by Taylor, he is asking what is the soil that gives one a sense of self. It does not happen abstractly. It happens literally from the ground up.

Therefore, when Sennett is comparing steelworkers and service industry workers, he is making judgements on them. The ability of making those judgements comes from Sennett’s awareness of multiple narrative structures. This is also how communication ethics works. It comes out of practices that we think have importance. The importance is the good that people want to protect and promote. But communication ethics does not solve everything. It is the beginning to understand what those practices are, what stories prepare this group of people, and its implications. So, communication ethics is not a metanarrative, but one petite narrative and there are many communication ethics that all have their own implications.

After Sennett has researched the public domain and narrative, he becomes interested in the relation between power and authority in the workplace. Sennett ponders how cooperation

could occur more frequently, how cooperation among manual labors differs from among intellectual labors. Once Sennett was working on differences between manual and intellectual labors, he could not help not to think of Hannah Arendt, who has been his teacher and friend for a long time. Inspired by Arendt's distinction on *Animal laborans* and *Homo faber* in *The Human Condition*, Sennett starts to explore ways in which materials make culture, or material ways of making culture. This research emphasis corresponded to previous unanswered questions about whether and how could workers find meaning in their work. Finding meaning will not be possible unless workers value what they do—they need to value both the product they make and the process of making. This is the distinction between utility and meaningfulness, which are expressed by Arendt as “distinguishing between ‘in order to’ and ‘for the sake of’” (Arendt, 1958/1998, p. 154). Once a worker values both the product and the process of making, the worker has the will to make things better, not “in order to” make things better, but “for the sake of” making things better. In this sense, the “in order to” has become the content of the “for the sake of” (p. 154).

A worker who desires to do a job well for its own sake is defined by Sennett as a craftsman. The craftsman's enduring impulse of doing his job well for its own sake is craftsmanship. Therefore, in the next chapter, I will start with how Sennett understands the notion of craft and craftsmanship.

Chapter Two. Sennett on Craftsmanship and Urban Planning

This chapter, *Sennett on Craftsmanship and Urban Planning*, has two parts. The first part is based on Sennett's scholarship on craftsman, craftsmanship, and cooperation. Sennett proposes one's motivation to work well as the fundamental element that makes one become a unity of both understanding the “why” and the “how”. Sennett also articulates how cooperation is shaped in

solidarity, competition, and ritual, how cooperation is weakened due to structural inequality and specialized skill set, and how cooperation is strengthened through physical gesture, encountering resistance, and practicing commitment in communities. The second part of this chapter articulates Sennett's work on urban planning, discussing how Sennett understands the difference between one's dwelling environment and one's perception of that environment. Sennett also introduces how the philosophy of urban planning has been changed from the nineteenth century to the current decade, with the emphasis on understanding ways in which a city's physical structure influences communication and cooperation between local residents and outsiders—immigrants.

Sennett on *Homo Faber and Craftsmanship*

When Sennett was writing on the topic of *homo faber*, he had the idea of writing three books and organized them as the “homo faber project”: they are, *The Craftsman* in 2008, *Together* in 2012, and *Building and Dwelling* in 2018 (Sennett, 2012, p. x).

The Craftsman, 2008

In *The Craftsman*, Sennett intends to investigate ways in which craftsmanship has evolved. Through exploring material ways of making culture, Sennett observes that a craftsman means much more than a manual worker. There are programmers and doctors with special craftsmanship in their work, parents with the craftsmanship of parenthood, and politicians working with the technique of “state craft”¹¹ (Sennett, 2008, p. 171).

Researching on labor work and intellectual work, as well as the role of work ethics in craftsmanship, what Sennett has discerned is a wrongful standard that is currently being used to

¹¹ Sennett wrote a three-volume-project to address the issue of technique—each book is a technique for conducting a specific way of life. The first volume, *The Craftsman*, is about craftsmanship, the skill of making things well. The second volume, *Warriors and Priests*, addresses rituals as the craft that manages zeal life. The third volume, *The Foreigner*, explores the skills required in making and inhabiting sustainable environments.

assess the quality of work and the value of a worker. As a sociologist and philosopher that takes history seriously, Sennett does not limit his insight to the twentieth century. From researching Roman brick makers to European assembly line workers nowadays, Sennett discovers a gap created through the history between theory and practice, between technique and presentation, between architects and artisans, and between the maker and the user. Besides, Sennett notices that the way classical and medieval craftsmen used their tools and materials can lend some insights to modern workers. Subsequently, it may guide us the way in which people can cooperate with each other, which became the content of *Together: The Rituals, Pleasures, and Politics of Cooperation* in 2012.

Homo Faber, the Craftsman

At the beginning of *The Human Condition*, Arendt distinguishes *animal laborans* from *homo faber*. For Arendt, *animal laborans* regard work not as a means but as an end. In *Eichmann in Jerusalem* (1963), this is how Adolf Eichmann defended himself as making gas chambers more efficient. Eichmann legitimized it as “just doing the work”, a typical example of *animal laborans* that carries the banality of evil. On the other hand, *homo faber* practice with thinking. For Arendt, *homo faber* are not *animal laborans*’s colleagues but bosses. Meanwhile, Arendt reminds us that we always live in *animal laborans* and *homo faber* as a unity of contraries. We are supposed to complete tasks as well as judging our results. *Animal laborans* answer the “how” and *homo faber* consider the “why”. Arendt’s perspective was never a modern thought but as early as a classical one. In *Metaphysics*, Aristotle privileges architects, who are the final cause of products, over artisans, who are the efficient cause of products. For Aristotle, architects understand the “why” of making things, while artisans are simply bringing architect’s blueprints into existence—artisans only take the “how”.

Nevertheless, Sennett disagrees with Arendt, not on her distinction between the two, but her applause to *homo faber*. Sennett believes that knowing the “how” and the “why” are never in opposition. When *animal laborans* focus on production which even results in zero discourse exchange with others, they are still thinking, a thinking on material, tools, and ways in which to craft. What’s more, as “the process of making concrete things reveals to us about ourselves”, when the purpose moves towards “map[ping] out where pleasure is to be found and how it is organized”, *animal laborans* might guide *homo faber* (Sennett, 2008, p. 8).

This by no means indicates Sennett is blaming Arendt for the misunderstanding. In fact, as Sennett states, “Western civilization has had a deep-rooted trouble in making connections between head and hand, in recognizing and encouraging the impulse of craftsmanship” (p. 9). When practical activity is demeaned, “technical skill has been removed from imagination, tangible reality doubted by religion, pride in one’s work treated as a luxury” (p. 21). In this sense, Arendt expressed similar ideas when she articulated the relationship between labor and work. According to Arendt, modern historians mistakenly treat the engagement of slaves as the reason for despising labor, while in reality, free men in antiquity felt “necessary to possess slaves because of the slavish nature of all occupations that served the needs for the maintenance of life” (Arendt, 1958/1998, p. 83). The institution of slavery in antiquity is not designed for, in Marx’s language, exploiting the surplus value of slaves, but an “attempt to exclude labor from the conditions of man’s life” (p. 84). Thus, it was rooted in antiquity that people demeaned labor as results that labor will produce, corps, fruits, and other necessities, though necessary to sustain human life, reflects a slavish nature in the process. Moving to modernity, it reversed traditions and glorified labor as “the source of all values” (p. 85). When modernity distinguishes productive labor from unproductive labor, skilled work from unskilled work, manual labor from

intellectual labor, Sennett does not doubt the existence of differences between those groups but wonders whether there are also commonalities.

Sennett perceives that no matter what type of labor one does, productive or unproductive, skilled or unskilled, manual or intellectual, there exists the commonality of desiring to do the job well. For Sennett, one carries such a desire is a craftsman, a professional who produces high quality work. Sennett thus defines craftsmanship as “an enduring, basic human impulse, the desire to do a job well for its own sake” (Sennett, 2008, p. 9). Following that, Sennett ponders the way in which skills are developed from a craftsman who aims to produce high quality work. Sennett makes two arguments. First, all skills, even the most abstract one, start with bodily practices with hand; second, technical understanding develops through “the powers of imagination”¹² (p. 10). These two arguments all together emphasize the necessity of resistance and ambiguity in crafting, meaning that craftsmen are expected to cooperate with struggles rather than fighting against them.

Craftsmanship, Motivation to Work Well for its Own Sake

In the third part of *The Craftsman*, Sennett shifts his argument to craftsmanship by asking whether craftsmanship always comes with an ethical framework. The answer is that it did, but ethics yielded to reason and truth in the Enlightenment. Enlightenment privileged reason and objectivity over anything else. A craftsman pursuing truth without meaningfulness cares nothing about the implication of its products. This is very close to scientists who make a nuclear bomb without considering whether we should drop it. It is evil for scientists to say that their jobs are to engage only in science, not the implications of how it will be used. In addition to scientists,

¹² Sennett himself called these two arguments “contentious”, but I think they both look persuasive and convincing (Sennett, 2008, p. 10).

ordinary people can also become victims of this philosophy, such as Adolf Eichmann¹³. It rests in the banality of evil because the product will eventually take the craftsman somewhere.

Therefore, Sennett is arguing that instrumentalization does not have to stick to craftsmanship. A craftsman is possible to become engaged “practically but not necessarily instrumentally” (p. 20). Sennett thus blurs the boundary between *animal laborans* and *homo faber* as “technique is no longer a mechanical activity; people can feel fully and think deeply about what they are doing once they do it well” (p. 20).

It is thus reasonable to ask, how can we motivate people to work hard and well? Through observations on The Soviet Union, Japan, Europe, and the United States, Sennett locates two methods to achieve this. One is setting a moral imperative to do the work for the sake of the community. Since all members in the community are responsible for its survival, progress, and prosperity, everyone must work hard. The second method introduces the element of competition. It does not attract people with collective interests, but individual rewards. One wants to work hard as such an action promises one with more benefits. The first method is reflected as the command economy of the Soviet Union and the second represents what market economy in general as we know today. Sennett’s comment is that both are managed to encourage and promote workers at the beginning but demoralize them eventually. What we need is a system that permits freedom of transformation for products and capital as well as governmental support and supervision. It ought to be a free economy and governmental interference exist simultaneously.

Once Sennett has discussed craftsman, craft, and craftsmanship, he ascertains that there is a central element that is tied to all three—the element of cooperation. Even for a craftsman who works alone in his workshop, he still cooperates with his tools and materials. Throughout history,

¹³ Eichmann might not be a perfect example for an ordinary people, as he was indeed a senior officer in Nazi Germany.

cooperation is the element that influences the way people do the work, communicate with others, understand their environment, and identify themselves. Cooperation occurs from top-down, as well as bottom-up. It also involves elements of balance, competition, struggle, which are all common ingredients in the life of the working class. When writing *The Craftsman*, Sennett is enlightened that the desire of doing a job well for its own sake is a potential that most of us already possess but being demeaned in modernity. Thus, people feel uncertain to put such a desire into practice. Similarly, once Sennett is contemplating the idea of cooperation, he realizes that cooperation is a genetically embedded ability but “remains stuck in routine behavior” (Sennett, 2012, p. xi). This is especially true when people encounter those who are unlike them. It thus introduces an ethical component regarding how we are expected to respond to and being responded to by the Other, as an alien, a brother, a neighbor, or someone else. Often in modernity, people demand others to cooperate, particularly when facing those who are weaker. For Sennett, this is not cooperation but manipulation. Just like we cannot demand others to do dialogue, since such a gesture moves dialogue to monologue, we cannot demand others to cooperate, as that moves cooperation to manipulation. Hence, Sennett organizes his thoughts on the topic of cooperation and publishes them as *Together: The Rituals, Pleasures, and Politics of Cooperation* in 2012.

Together, 2012

Since cooperation is a rather broad topic, in *Together*, Sennett discusses how cooperation might be shaped, weakened, and strengthened, with the focus on “responsiveness to others”, that is, communication skills in conversation, in the workplace, and in the community (Sennett, 2012, p. xi). Since *Together* serves as a subsequent volume to *The Craftsman*, Sennett makes a straightforward connection by stating that cooperation is also a craft (p. x). Also, Sennett has

released some of his insights on the next book, *Building and Dwelling*, by saying urban design nowadays is “a craft in peril” (p. x). Our understanding of “material craftsmanship and social cooperation can generate new ideas about how cities might become better made” (p. x). Hence, what Sennett emphasizes in his “homo faber project” is the significance of practical skill, which has been despised in the current society. However, Sennett also reminds us that our practical skill is a tool rather than “a salvation”, but without it, meaning remains abstract.

Before moving to the discussion on how cooperation is possible among those who differ, Sennett starts with articulations on types of cooperation that exist in conversation, workplace, and community, intending to present ways in which cooperation might be shaped. For Sennett, cooperation is shaped in three ways, solidarity, competition, and rituals.

Cooperation Shaped in Solidarity, Competition, and Rituals

To start, Sennett illustrates two methods that cooperation can relate to solidarity, through contrasting “political cooperation” and “the politics of cooperation”.

Political cooperation concerns ways in which the public cooperates through political structures to reach certain goals. Political cooperation as a necessity in societies takes two major forms, representing two different views on how to cooperate. The “top-down” activists regarded cooperation as means to achieve political goals and ends. The “ground up” activists pursued “as much free participation as possible”, concerning questions such as who is ruling the group, and who decides whether a particular person should be excluded (p. 39). They represent two understandings on solidarity, more unity and discipline or more diversity and inclusion.

On the other hand, the politics of cooperation concerns constructing and maintaining relationships among people in non-political organizations. In Paris, the solidarity built from ground up was the settlement, a voluntary association located in a poor urban community. In the United States, the settlement emerged in the form of Houses of Hospitality in the Catholic

Worker Movement by Dorothy Day and Peter Maurin in New York and the Hull House settlement founded by Jane Addams in Chicago. What they have in common is the creation of local communities. The politics of cooperation in non-political organizations intends to address ways in which people can relate to one another. In a House of Hospitality, a workshop, a factory, or a modern international corporation, the politics of cooperation presents itself as a bond among people.

Then, Sennett moves to discuss ways in which cooperation and competition are bonded together and how ritual serves as a mediator between them. Since there are no naturally perfect individuals, individually insufficient human beings compensate through the division of labor so that their incomplete brain and social control are reconciled (p. 68). When the division of labor is set, competitions follow. One inevitably competes with others, but also cooperates with others, for securing a position. In terms of competition and exchange in human society, Sennett divides the spectrum of competition and exchange into five segments, spanning from outright contribution to thorough competition.

The first is altruistic exchange, which is hardly an exchange but merely a gift-giving. Altruism is doing good without pursuing any rewards, awards, or even recognition. This is similar to what Arendt expressed in *The Human Condition* that true kindness is doing good without being acknowledged by others (Arendt, 1958/1998, p. 73). Though altruistic exchange is driven by the giver's inner will, communication still occurs between the personal agent and its internal self. Performance of altruistic behaviors is motivated by communication between the internal self and the agent and thus, shapes the narrative of the agent (Sennett, 2012, p. 74).

The second is win-win exchange, which is commonly practiced in the natural world as nest building and in human society as business dealing. A win-win exchange presupposes that

both participants can receive something they desire at the end. Since such a beautiful result is not always assured but earned. To achieve a win-win exchange, negotiating skills are crucial.

The third is differentiating exchange. Compared to win-win exchange with the recognition that both parties will benefit from cooperation, differentiating exchange does not outline reciprocity. One example of differentiating exchange is that two strangers on a street meet and engage in a conversation. When they depart, seldom does either ever see or remember the other, but they may learn something from the conversation. However, neither are confident about gaining knowledge at the beginning of such a casual conversation. A win-win exchange presupposes that when one learns something, the other must gain something as well. In differentiating exchange, such reciprocity is not expected.

The fourth is zero-sum exchange in which the sum of exchange is zero. Though zero-sum exchange gives birth to fierce competition, it does not eliminate possibilities for cooperation. In fact, as Sennett argued, cooperation must occur in zero-exchange, no matter whether participants are on the same side or opponents (p. 83). The format of cooperation is usually an agreement set at the beginning that the winner will leave something for the loser, rather than wiping out the table.

The fifth is winner-takes-all exchange. This can be understood as an extreme form of zero-sum exchange in which one receives everything and the other loses everything, such as results of a total war, genocide, or monopoly.

For Sennett, cooperation is most likely to occur in win-win exchange and differentiating exchange. But tensions still exist in both conditions. Sennett argues that human society can balance cooperation and competition through ritual, as it is “one way of structuring symbolic exchanges” (p. 86). Whether one decides to cooperate or compete, often one realizes one’s

decision helps one achieve the good one protects and promotes. In either case, the focus of attention is on the self. What ritual does is to move the focus of attention from the self to the practice. Ritual does not consist of abstract rules or theses, but concrete practices.

A friend of mine is a protestant so on every Sunday morning she goes to the church, in which she participates in a Holy Communion with all other members. The feedback she gives me is that during the Holy Communion, everyone consolidates their relation to God and to other brothers and sisters. Their identity as church members is thus reinforced. Nevertheless, her statement that ritual permits unique identity to members of a group must not be misunderstood as identity is created by ritual per se. In fact, any individual or group's identity is always created and shaped by their practice, in my friend's case, participation in the Holy Communion. Once we want to change a part of the identity, we change the practice that works on that part. Then, our identity will follow. Therefore, when two parties are competing rather than cooperating, going back to the ritual reminds both about the practice they are expected to follow, and eventually reminds them of the identity they are holding in the first place.

To summarize, in this part Sennett analyzes three ways that shape cooperation, in solidarity, in competition, and in ritual. There are two ways to achieve solidarity, forging it top-down or generating it from the ground up. The top-down structure is good at encountering special problems in practice but risks in possibilities of disconnection. The ground up structure favors equality in information transmission and decision-making but challenges itself in communicating with those who differ. Then, Sennett presents five ways that cooperation and competition can live mutually. Among them, cooperation is most likely to occur in a win-win exchange and a differentiating exchange. They have different levels of reassuring benefits for both parties, but they both aim at building a mutual relation between competition and

cooperation. A ritual shapes cooperation through people's obligation to follow the ritual. Practices in a ritual represent the good that people are willing to protect and promote once they follow the ritual. Their willingness of returning to ritual's practices permits a ground that cooperation may take place. Practices are expected to be repetitively engaged, rather than performing as a one-time show. For those occasions that people begin with cooperation and then turn to hurting the other in the interest of oneself, the principal that Sennett suggests make cooperation more open is "dialogic cooperation", which does not solely aim at reaching an agreed-upon conclusion but permits ongoing discussions (Sennett, 2012, p. 127).

In the next session, Sennett discusses how cooperation could be weakened or harmed, and assesses the state of cooperation in modern society.

Cooperation Weakened in Structural Inequality and New Forms of Labor

In this section, Sennett starts with introducing Martin Luther's Protestant Reformation as an example in which cooperation and competition utterly lose balance. Most of the ink is then spent on explaining the fact that modern capitalism crushed cooperation through creating structural inequality and new forms of labor.

Structural inequality is defined as a condition where one group of people is attributed an unequal status in relation to other groups of people. In the system of modern capitalism, income earned through laboring and working do not and would not match the proliferation of wealth from capital and property. In *Bowling Alone*, Robert Putnam argued that this inequality results in a decrease of people's trust in institutions and leaders (Sennett, 2012, p. 134). Jeffrey Goldfarb took a step further and stated this inequality gave birth to a "cynical society' whose denizens are ill-disposed to cooperate" (p. 134). Sennett recalls what he has written in *Respect in a World of Inequality*, and thus realizes that structural inequality in income and wealth is a result of social inequality in welfare, education, and other dimensions. Sennett also recalls how social inequality

can erode people's trust to others and eventually diminishes the ground that prepares for cooperation. Sennett discusses two dimensions of social inequality. The first is inequalities imposed on children and the second is inequalities which have been absorbed and naturalized, so seeming to become part of a child's self (p. 137).

To illustrate the first dimension, Sennett uses content from a massive report conducted by the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF)¹⁴. In their 2007 report, it surveyed children in 21 countries from North America and Europe, discovering that some children learned cooperation through competition while some others reflected a weak reaction to understanding of mutual support. Meanwhile, children in internal unequal societies have a higher possibility of performing bullying behaviors while children in equalized societies are more likely to learn from others (p. 139). Children were not born with the ability or intention of cooperation, but the high level of internal inequality makes the post-learned countervailing social force weak. This is the inequalities imposed on children.

On the other hand, the rapid and huge expansion of market that aims at juvenile consumers in the United States¹⁵ has successfully convinced juveniles that "they are what they own" (Schor, 2004, pp. 189-202; 141). This obsession with consumption corresponds to what Bauman described as a feature of "liquid modernity". The commercialization of childhood is a huge worry to adults. It is a worry more than purchasing unnecessary or unwanted products to fulfill children's own selfhood, but possession of certain products, with promotion from

¹⁴ In *Together*, Sennett cited that content from this report was collected from *Child Well-being in Rich Countries* (also referred as Innocenti Report Card 7), which is downloadable from www.unicef.org/irc. However, as I am confirming this citation, the original version of Innocenti Report Card 7 is no longer available. It seems that UNICEF only posts their most recent report, which is Innocenti Report Card 11, conducted by Peter Adamson in 2013. UNICEF Office of Research (2013). '*Child Well-being in Rich Countries: A comparative overview*', Innocenti Report Card 11, UNICEF Office of Research, Florence. From www.unicef-irc.org/publications/pdf/rc11_eng.pdf.

¹⁵ In *The Kids Market*, James McNeil listed statistics of the purchasing power of children aged four to twelve; it rose from just over \$6 billion dollars in 1989 to over \$23 billion in 1997 and to \$30 billion in 2002. In 2002, teens spent \$170 billion (McNeil, 1999; 141).

merchandise, gives birth to children's vanity. As Sennett points out, "invidious comparison... exploits feelings of inferiority" (Sennett, 2012, p. 142). This vanity makes children believe that they are hipsters while others are philistines and it legitimizes their action of looking down on those who do not purchase popular goods. Not everyone has the same opportunity or advantage to purchase those goods. Thus, inequality in the financial condition of a family is absorbed and naturalized as children's opportunities of purchasing certain products, and thus becomes a part of a child's self.

Sennett also realizes that inequality experienced in childhood is not the only source that sets barriers to cooperation in the workplace. In the workplace, cooperation is more effective when driven by the exteriority of a task, which is a clearly defined or identified project. People can and are more willing to cooperate when they know what to pursue, that is, they know what is the good they want to protect and promote. Besides, cooperation occurs more frequently once people in a team have different types of knowledge that can be shared. However, since the post Second World War economic recovery and the breakdown of Bretton Woods monetary agreement during the oil crisis of 1973, the rapid development in economy and technological iteration requires one's contextual knowledge being frequently updated.

The research Sennett conducted in Boston in the 1970s used to enlighten a way to generate civility and cooperation in the workplace for the new forms of labor. Sennett finds an informal relation existed between employees and their boss in the manufacturing industry, which consists of "earned authority, mutual respect and cooperation" (Sennett, 2012, p. 148). This informal relation proved to be helpful and supportive once a crisis occurred. However, since

1970s, “permanently employed” manufacturing jobs¹⁶ decreased and worker’s knowledge of workplaces and the people around counts less in the job market. They move from jobs to jobs, with lower income, a sense of precarity, and insecurity. On the other hand, contrary to manufacturing labors, in newly emerged industries such as fintech, financial workers in the back-office are obsessed with computer screens with numbers moving on them. They were skilled and they took pride in their work. They were financial craftsmen. But as Sennett stated in *The Craftsman*, those financial craftsmen have trouble locating their position in the cooperative system that used to develop communal understandings¹⁷; organized careers have been replaced by fragmented jobs (Sennett, 2008, p. 34). In those new forms of labor, the ground that prepares for cooperation no longer exists.

Since those financial craftsmen had to sacrifice extensive hours into their jobs and once unemployed, they started to experience the lack of respect from their boss, unconsolidated trust in their colleagues, and weak cooperation with other businesses in the industry. The informal relationship that existed among Boston manufacturing workers and bosses does not seem to exist in Wall Street. Fintech workers seem to have less identification and recognition, if any, to the people and place. The only good they intend to protect and promote is productivity. This destroys more than solidarity and cooperation in the workplace but encourages the abandonment of ethics. The lack of solidarity makes a company difficult to maintain health and sometimes fail to overcome tough moments that are created by external competition such as a shift in industry’s

¹⁶ During the 1960s, manufacturing workers in the U.S. could be considered as permanently employed, not because their contracts were life-long or they had no risks to get the boot, but the flourishing manufacturing industry made them easily get similar jobs in other factories.

¹⁷ Those financial craftsmen did not enjoy working in Wall Street. Recalling interviews Sennett conducted to those Wall Street back-office workers after 2008, those workers expressed their desire of working in the same industry but somewhere else. They wished for a different physical location since the previous one only contains colleagues who focus on themselves and bosses that ignore everyone.

focus. However, the discount or even defiance on ethics in the workplace is much more dangerous. It shifts people's focus of attention from the good of a company to the good of one's interest, while there ought to be a connection between them. If the only good that employees want to protect and promote is productivity, or sales record, employees may consider achieving their goal at the expense of the interests of their colleagues. Ethics in the workplace is supposed to unite and encourage people to respect and cooperate with each other, but once employees solely focus on their own interests and refuse to cooperate, the exteriority of a task cannot put them back to work.

To summarize, structural inequality and new forms of labor are two features that have emerged since modern capitalism. They both weaken cooperation in the workplace. To ease these weakening effects, it will be pragmatic to clarify the good that people value in the workplace and who takes the credit for doing the work. Cooperation is seldom possible if the good that people value stays in the shadows.

In the next section, Sennett discusses three occasions where cooperation is strengthened: in making, in encountering resistance, and in community.

Cooperation Strengthened in Making, Encountering Resistance, and Community

When working on ways in which cooperation is strengthened, Sennett realizes a strong connection between this section and *The Craftsman*. A craftsman cooperates with his tools, materials, other craftsmen, his master or apprentices in the workshop. The workshop is a place where cooperation among craftsmen is strengthened. According to Sennett, in the process of crafting or making, informal gestures play a significant role in strengthening cooperation, through ways in which physical gestures give life to informal social relations.

In a workshop, bodily gestures take the place of words in establishing authority, trust and cooperation, as Sennett concludes, "physical gesture makes social relationships feel informal"

(Sennett, 2012, p. 205). When a craftsman moves and works in a workshop, his actions describe ways in which he feels most comfortable and productive. A verbal statement such as “this is my desk and hammer” seems formal and final, while a physical gesture delivers the same meaning with ambiguity, “I’m always using this desk and this hammer without verbal proposition”. This creates spaces for possible supplemental interpretation and negotiation. My actions make others think of this space as “my zone”, but if others want to use it, we can always talk about it.

However, an informal relationship generated by gestures does not exclude verbal discourse. In a workshop, the mentor cannot tell his apprentices “do it yourself” at the beginning since that slogan has no motivating power but only drives the apprentices confused and crazy. A good mentor would firstly demonstrate ways in which to use a tool or make a product by himself, and during the demonstration, the mentor explains reasons for doing certain steps and articulates aspects that a novice could easily neglect or misunderstand.

In *The Craftsman*, Sennett mentioned that it will be less helpful to apply abstract verbal discourse alone in explanation. Thus, a better way is to “show, don’t tell” (Sennett, 2008, p. 181). Abstract verbal discourse struggles once the purpose is to articulate body movement clearly, since “movement is the foundation of language” (p. 180). This is one of the two central arguments Sennett made in *The Craftsman*, that all skills, no matter how abstract, start with bodily practices with hand (p. 10). By no means does Sennett suggest we stay away from literal instructions, since oral communication becomes extremely inefficient and unproductive once people’s simultaneous existence is absent; thus, communication cannot rely solely on either orality or literacy. (Ong 1982). Hence, the focus ought to be placed on making written instructions more understandable. We need physical gestures, verbal discourse and literal instructions to stay co-present. This is how cooperation is strengthened in the process of making.

Looking at cooperation from a broader sense than crafting, Sennett realizes the existence of resistance. Resistance arises once subjects do not present or function in the way that we take for granted. In general, when resistance presents itself, we feel as if “something goes wrong”. Then, we either fight against it or work with it.

Fighting against resistance means we focus on dumping the problem without understanding it. The goal is to create a problem-free situation, risking facing the same problem in the future. On the other hand, working with resistance prefers to comprehend what and how things are out of order—the goal is to understand the problem itself and to seek solutions thereafter. We cannot unlock details of a problem unless we treat mistakes created by it seriously.

When two engage in a zero-sum exchange, paying attention to the other party and ensuring neither wipe out the entire table is the key for future repetitive exchanges. This requires both, especially the stronger, to work with the resistance—leaving something for the weaker. But when we focus closely on the exchange, we easily embody our whole force for maximizing benefits. This blinds us from understanding what the other is protecting and promoting. Once two parties have competing goods, it is vital to know why the other’s good is a resistance to us, while applying full force eliminates our opportunity to know. Therefore, Sennett argues that we are encouraged to consider using “minimum force”, letting the exchange process present on its own, so that we better respond to those who resist or differ from us (Sennett, 2012, p. 208). Once applying minimum force, we do not push the other to an extreme for our best result. Rather, we only mention a minimum or essential aspect of interests, then forward the microphone to the other, and listen to their voice. The minimum force we apply permits resistance to present itself. The other is encouraged to raise their interests so we understand what the resistance is thereafter.

Applying minimum force is a crucial technique in diplomacy, negotiation, and interpersonal communication. Using minimum force strengthens cooperation as it prepares for “dialogic cooperation”, which prefers to develop ongoing discussions rather than quickly reach an agreed-upon conclusion (p. 127).

In addition to a zero-sum exchange where people compete for their own benefits, Sennett is also interested in how cooperation takes place when two parties do not compete. Sennett pays extra attention to cooperation between assistance providers and receivers. This could be a counter-intuitive topic as assistance receivers are expected to express gratitude to providers. However, Sennett’s experience warns him that such gratitude should not be taken for granted. This deals with ways in which cooperation is strengthened in a residential community.

In *Respect in a World of Inequality*, Sennett favors a welfare system that emphasizes on respect, an idea based on Sennett’s adult experience when he went back to Chicago, particularly the community he was born and raised in. When Sennett went back to Chicago, he discovered that the neighborhood where he grew up has improved a lot. Sennett is delighted by this positive change but also contemplates ways in which people in a poor neighborhood can walk out of trouble. A most common solution relies on assistance from the outside, especially from those who had a shared experience. Sennett is surprised that once those who survived in childhood, left during adolescence, and thrived in the outside world want to reach back to those who are still suffering, their assistance is not appreciated. The younger generation refuses to take helping hands from those “adult role models”. The cliché, “if I can do it, so can you”, has been extended and interpreted by those “role models” as “if I can succeed, so can you”. Role models express the idea that “the way we fight for our life is not a pleasant journey, so we are here to help”. Such a statement is encouraging in the speech as it presupposes that once necessary assistances are

available, people are managed to overcome struggles in life. However, it does not seem to encourage or inspire the younger generation's morale.

The struggle roots in the narrative of a person. Since each person is unique, the cliché, "if I can do it, so can you", does not make sense in the first place. We all have different backgrounds, so our race, gender, family, education level and jobs altogether shape our narrative. Our narrative reflects on ways in which we have experienced our past and provides unique perspectives on how we perceive and engage the world. Hence, receiving assistance from others is definitely helpful for improving my own condition, but it does not necessarily ensure my success in life, and no one should make that assurance. The problem in the younger generation in poor communities is that they realize such an assurance provided by role models is nothing more than a dream. Even those role models maintain that "we grew up in this community, so for you who still live here, our opportunities are yours", the younger generation refuse to take it at the beginning.

Once talking about a community as the area where one works, dines, entertains, shops, and lives, it is closer to what people understand as a community is, a residential community. A small community may have family-owned small restaurants and local shops, as well as chain restaurants and designer's stores. For such a physical area, Sennett asks whether the community itself can become a vocation (Sennett, 2012, p. 273). Arendt's political community lightened our path that if the answer is positive, people living in the community must have something they agree to protect and promote. In Arendt's political community, it is equal rights. In an everyday living community, Sennett offers an alternative answer, "the pursuit of a good quality of life"; after all, the central theme in *Together* is "cooperation enhances the quality of social life" (p. 273).

Communication Ethics and Exteriority of Work

Before starting the “homo faber project”, Sennett credits the difficulty of discovering meaning in the work as the major reason for people’s self-withdrawal from the public domain. Therefore, with the “homo faber project”, it is Sennett’s purpose to explore ways in which people can find meaning in their work. Sennett believes this must start with one’s love of the work. Putting into the language of communication ethics, it means the good that one values in the work is the work per se. One needs to fall in love with the craft. This functions both on the process of working and the outcome. Hence, Sennett starts the “homo faber project” with discussions on the craftsman, who desires “to do a job well for its own sake” (Sennett, 2008, p. 9). Sennett appreciates Arendt’s distinction on *animal laborans* and *homo faber* but argues that *homo faber* not only knows the “how”, but also the “why”. It is knowing the “why” that makes a person a craftsman. Thus, craftsmanship inevitably comes with an ethical framework. Although where to use a product and in what way to use it can influence results that product will bring to humanity, the craftsman as the inventor of the product must keep its possible implications in mind. The implication is the “why” of crafting. Sennett observes that the ethical component which long existed along with craftsmanship yields to rationality and progress during the Enlightenment. This is a result of the good that people valued in the Enlightenment is pure progress. Once moving into postmodernity, the good people valued in modernity does not fade away completely but becomes one type of good that certain people agree to promote and promote. Consequently, there are people still dedicated to pursuing progress. This is proved by Sennett after he interviewed those Wall Street financial workers in 2008, who express that the chase of productivity and the abandonment of ethics as two common features in the fintech industry.

Until this point, the question of how workers can find meaning in the work remains. Sennett sees no issues with the pursuit of productivity, but the abandonment of ethics is what genuinely concerns him. Most of the time, we do not have arguments over historical moments, and this is especially correct once we are in postmodernity. This means when we talk about communication ethics and what the other desires to protect and promote, there is always a “hermeneutic bias”—no one is certain of a universally agreed upon opinion on what constitutes communication ethics (Arnett, 2010, p. 45). Therefore, when we ask what practices are appropriate to engage in this historical moment, we do not have disagreement with those who worship progress and productivity, but we may have disagreement with how progress is achieved. Sennett concludes that no matter whether it is craftsmen in a workshop, steelworkers on an assembly line, or fintech workers in the New York Stock Exchange, they all pursue and eventually make progress happen. What Sennett has observed as the lack of ethics in fintech workers is not witnessed among craftsmen or steelworkers. Sennett illuminates this distinction as the difference in level of cooperation. Fintech workers rely on individual efforts more than collective achievements. Hidden and valuable data interpreted from the market, secret news gathered from the CEO of a company, and contact information of special clients that other stockbrokers do not have, all together build an invisible yet sturdy information wall between every single fintech worker. They benefited more independently than collectively. If the good that a craftsman or a steelworker agrees to protect and promote is the work and the working community, the good that a fintech worker values is his individual success. Thus, it is less helpful to claim what is or should be ethical¹⁸ in this historical moment but more pragmatic to

¹⁸ In fact, before the 2008 Financial Crisis, even fintech workers realized that they had violated regulations, they still acted regardless. For instance, Geraint Anderson, a broker whose annual salary was more than 300,000 dollars in London City, presented his idea, “[before the crisis raised the alert, people] join the market and make money as quickly as possible, and that means lying, cheating and stealing... regulations are considered as idiots... the way

work from the perspective of communication ethics as it tries to revert people to the phenomenological focus of attention of what people protect and promote, not necessarily claiming what is ethical. When responsibility in the work is forgotten or ignored, the exteriority of the work is expected to commence a “spiritual awakening” which rings an ethical call (Arnett, 2017, p. 6). But for those fintech workers, the exteriority of the work only reminds and motivates them the significance of individual progress.

Hence, Sennett concludes the lack of cooperation among those fintech workers as the major reason responsible for their difficulty of seeing the meaning in the work. As a result, *Together* is a book concentrated on ways in which cooperation among people, companies, and communities are shaped, weakened, and strengthened. Rather than demanding others to cooperate, Sennett advocates that cooperation ought to start from the self rather than a manipulation placed on the other. When I read *Together*, the meaning between lines tells me that Sennett is expecting a reciprocal relation: once we start with a cooperative attitude, we can expect cooperation would occur thereafter. This makes me recall Martin Buber who was best known for his philosophy of dialogue, a form of existentialism centered on the distinction between the *I-Thou* and the *I-It* relationship (Buber, 1923/1958). For Buber, the relation between the I and the Thou is straightaway experienced as reciprocity. Once I start with an attitude for cooperation, others will respond in the same manner. However, Emmanuel Levinas critiques Buber’s *I-Thou* relation as it is insular—it is “too formal and reciprocal” (Levinas & Robbins, 2001, p. 9). For Levinas, the expectation of reciprocity cannot be imposed on the other, but I am always responsible to the other.

people were behaving was a rational way of behaving in the context of a bonus system and the lack of regular”. “Global Financial Meltdown.” *YouTube*, uploaded by Rebel Mystic, 14 Apr. 2013, www.youtube.com/watch?v=VQzEWegJLP0.

Back to *Together*, Sennett addresses neither Buber nor Levinas, but uses this book to articulate the topic of cooperation. So far, Sennett has accumulated rich experience regarding work and life of urban workers. In fact, since Sennett firstly interviewed those Boston manufacturing workers in the late 1960s, Sennett started to consider ways in which the urban environment shapes one's understanding of the self and the environment. Once Sennett has collected and organized his thoughts on this subject, he believes it will be helpful to publish an independent work on urban communication. That work came out in 2018 as *Building and Dwelling: Ethics for the City*, in which Sennett discusses ways in which a city has been planned and built through the history, how the physical urban environment differs from citizen's living experience, and how residents may encounter and respond to those "outsiders"—mainly immigrants from other countries.

Sennett on Urban Planning

The previous three sections, Sennett on the public domain, narrative and individuality, and *Homo faber*, are presented in a chronological order. However, there are two books published between *Hidden Injuries* (1977) and *Corrosion of Character* (1998) that have not been discussed yet. I save them to this section as I believe both are connected to urban planning. Meanwhile, although the "homo faber project" consists of *The Craftsman*, *Together*, and *Building and Dwelling*, I think *Building and Dwelling* is closer to the theme of urban planning, so it will be discussed in this section.

The Conscience of the Eye: The design and social life of cities was published in 1991 as a study of how Renaissance urban design passed into modern city planning. The subsequent *Flesh and Stone: The Body And The City In Western Civilization* was published in 1994 and served as

an overview of the design of cities from ancient to modern times. Both provided insights for *Building and Dwelling*.

Flesh and Stone, 1994

If we consider connection to urban communication rather than urban planning, *Flesh and Stone* carries more weight than *Conscience of the Eye*, as it presents a history of culture, from the perspective of the interaction between urban formation and development and human life. *Flesh and Stone* focuses on the structure of the human body and the structure of a city, investigates the evolution of human culture, and establishes the structure of restoring the history of human civilization.

Eye, Heart, Arteries and Veins

In Sennett's framework, the history of urban development since antiquity is condensed into three categories. He labels them with three different organs, the eye, the heart, and the arteries and veins, which each represents a unique relationship between a citizen's physical experience and the image of a city.

In the first category, which is connected to *The Conscience of the Eye*, Sennett articulates the power of "sound and eye". Sennett pulls in concrete examples on social events, portraying ways in which people in ancient Greece and Rome used their ear and eye to participate in urban activities and how the form of a city regulated people's action.

In the second category, Sennett explores the concept of city and citizen's physical experiences in the Middle Ages. When Sennett observes that actions of residents in a bishop's diocese were mainly connected to the cathedral in that diocese, he starts to consider a cathedral as the "heart" of a diocese. This is true both literally and metaphorically. The medieval good that people protected and promoted was faith and churches were places for practicing and pursuing faith. Citizens thus were all connected to the church, which served as the heart of a community.

The third category is arteries and veins, and this is what Sennett also discussed extensively in *Building and Dwelling*. Basically, European planners in the late 17th and early 18th century were greatly fascinated by William Harvey's inspiring theory on blood circulation in the human body. They started to take a city as a body and subsequently regarded roads and streets as arteries and veins. They also made an analogy to Harvey's conclusion that one's body would be healthier if one's blood travels smoother and thus believed a city would be healthier if its traffic can move freely. Since the 17th century, city planners paid great attention to methods of making traffic move freely, such as the one-way street invented by French urbanist Christian Patte as we know today. Besides, planners took one step further than Harvey's theory. They started to equalize freedom of moving as the speed of moving—faster a carriage travels, freer its passengers are. Consequently, planners in the early 18th century laid out streets mainly to serve carriages. The practice of walking was less concerning, and sidewalks were therefore less important than carriageways. In this sense, the freedom of pedestrians and strollers has yielded to the freedom of drivers and passengers.

The most typical example is Baron Haussmann's renovation plan for Paris. Paris in the first half of the nineteenth century was a nightmare for traffic. The population of Paris doubled at that time but with no increase in land. Twisted and irregular streets that stayed for almost a thousand years were finally exhausted by an overwhelming traffic of human and carriage. Haussmann renovated Paris. Eventually, Paris was issued a decree annexing eleven surrounding communes and an increased number of arrondissements from twelve to twenty, which enlarged the city to its modern boundaries (Kirkland, 2013, p. 179). The old Paris that disappointed carriages became a city that welcomes traffic more than ever.

This philosophy has passed its implications to twentieth and even twenty-first century urban planning. The most typical example that I am familiar with is Pittsburgh, where roads and streets are mainly designed for cars. The overpass next to Duquesne University's campus brutally separates the uptown and the downtown. Pedestrians who want to go through crossings near Centre Avenue, Bigelow Boulevard, and Six Avenue would only witness endless vehicles running off the Interstate 579 lane and congesting in these intersections. The area connecting uptown and downtown privileges vehicles over pedestrians. I understand that meeting points near any interstate lanes are reasonable to be ridiculously busy, while it looks unwise to mingle pedestrians with such a huge traffic flow. In fact, most pedestrians aiming to go through those intersections would have to make use of several nearby underground subway entrances to avoid ground level traffic flow, with an extra cost in time and walking distance.

Sennett's comment is that the overemphasis on free-moving and speed which constitutes the model of modern urban design facilitates convenience in life but excludes the participation of our human body in the city's streets and other public spaces. The public space no longer exists. When participation in the public space decreases or ceases, people's ability to feel and remember is weakened. Comfort and speed have been achieved at the expense of numbing people's passion and compassion.

Building and Dwelling, 2018

The philosophy of regarding a city as a human body has nothing inappropriate but making the freedom of moving as the top priority in urban planning does concern Sennett greatly. In *Building and Dwelling*, Sennett aims to answer questions such as what a city means to people, how dwellers find meaning in their local community, and how people can fairly treat those who differ, etc. All these questions relate to what Sennett has observed at the early stage of

his career—we are witnessing the fall of public man. *Building and Dwelling* is a comprehensive book that covers a great number of important metaphors, detailed analysis, and discussions on other scholar's fruitful deliberations. Yet it is accessible and enjoyable to read, as Sennett's writings always have been.

Building and Dwelling starts with a distinction between a city's structural environment and resident's experience in a city. Then, Sennett articulates two approaches to understand a resident's life experience: one is through their perception of the city, the other is through influences of a city on residents.

The Divorce between Ville and Cité

Sennett starts by peeling people's experience in a city from a city's physical environment. Drawing from St. Augustine's description on the City of God and the City of Man, Sennett introduces two different meanings of the city—the physical place, and “mentality compiled from perceptions, behaviors and beliefs” (Sennett, 2018, p. 1). Sennett uses two French words, *ville* and *cité*, to remind readers that the built environment and how people dwell are different things. The *ville* refers to the built environment, and the *cité* refers to modes of life and attachments to place which urban dwellers rise.

This divorce between the *ville* and *cité* has also been replicated in the twentieth century social thoughts: the Chicago School delved into the social structure of the city but had neither idea on how a good school should be designed nor the interest in designing one. Le Corbusier's *Athens Charter*, on the other hand, was distinguished both by its “visual good ideas and the poverty of its social imagination” (p. 75). There are also Jane Jacobs's view of the city as the product of small-scale, spontaneous actions and Lewis Mumford's vision of the planned metropolis as a means of social reform represented divergent yet equally problematic

frameworks for urban planning. Academic discussions on urban planning in the previous two centuries are rich.

Sennett not only interests in the city per se but pays great attention to city residents.

There are two perspectives to approach this. The first perspective concerns people's perception of the city. The second works from influences of a city's physical environment on its residents.

People Perceiving the City: Being Crowded and Feeling Crowded

Since one's perception of a city is a rather broad topic¹⁹, to narrow the topic, Sennett prefers to focus on pedestrians on sidewalks and streets. Once the number of people on a sidewalk reaches a certain density, individuals become a crowd²⁰, in which a group of people seem to be gathered under "chaos". The idea of chaotic crowds was originally raised by Gustave Le Bon who regards the crowd in the French Revolution as the mob. When mobs gather, they commit crimes that no one would ever do if they were alone. The key is that the mass shields individual identity so everyone becomes anonymous. Le Bon's idea on the mob is later taken and reflected in Sigmund Freud's (1921) writing on group psychology—the crowd suspends moral judgment. Not everyone will become a member of mobs once gathered with others, but the possibility exists within. This was not a unique phenomenon that existed only in the French

¹⁹ Various phenomenologists of place have written on people's perception of a city, such as Gaston Bachelard's (1994) *The Poetics of Space*, Edward Casey's (2013) *The Fate of Place*, Devika Chawla's (2014) *Home Uprooted*, bell Hooks' (2009) *Belonging*, Joshua Meyrowitz's (1985) *No Sense of Place*, Yi-Fu Tuan's (1990) *Topophilia*, and David Seamon's (2015) *Geography of the Lifeworld*.

²⁰ In fact, we can understand the crowdedness of a sidewalk both from an objective and a subjective standard. There are standardized measurements we can apply to distinguish a dense population from a crowded population. Jane Jacobs had similar discussions on concentrated population and overcrowded living once she was promoting a concentrated population as one of four keys to make a city diverse (Jacobs, 1961, Ch. 11). On the other hand, feeling crowded cannot be purely determined by the number of people existing on a specific spot. After all, it is sometimes "feeling" crowded not "being" crowded matters; this is a psychological judgment. As Sennett indicated, feeling crowded on a sidewalk varies from culture to culture. Edward Hall once articulated the distinction between Saudi Arabians getting used to standing close to each other in public and Americans preferring a social distance (Hall, 1977). A condition considered by Americans as crowded may well be regarded as normal for Saudi Arabians. These two groups would have no conflicts in their own cultural settings, but once they merge into the same community, one's comfort zone may tear the other's pleasure apart.

Revolution, as we just witnessed protests for George Floyd's death in the summer of 2020, during which violent actions took place, such as shoplifting, clashes with police force, and even arson. Some people who committed them might still have the "courage" to commit even without mingling in a crowd. But for those who followed, once group actions dilute individual identity, actions taken with a group cease to be credited to individuals. This is how the crowd turns to mobs.

On the other hand, contrary to Le Bon who studied individuals as a gathered crowd, Georg Simmel regarded individuals on the street as individuals. Simmel is interested in understanding how individuals feel crowded even when they are not gathered with those around them but coexist. For Simmel, if one walks on a street that is filled with other pedestrians, the feeling of crowded emerges due to "sensory overload" (Sennett, 2018, p. 54). Therefore, one becomes blind to signs, avoids eye contact with strangers, receives information from people around and events occurred on streets, yet refuses to build communication with them. Simmel referred this as the display of a "blasé attitude"²¹; Sennett termed it as wearing a "mask" (p. 54). When one wears this psychological mask, one's blasé attitude leads to blasé actions: one sees events happening yet responds to nothing. One stays at a distance without getting involved. It is vital to remember that one acts indifferent not as an indication of coldness, but as a safeguard for the individuals psychic wellbeing so that others do not perceive him as vulnerable. Impersonality can protect the self²².

²¹ The term "blasé attitude" is Sennett's own translation, in Georg Simmel. "The Metropolis and Modern Life", in *Classic essays on the culture of cities*, ed. Richard Sennett New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, 1969, p. 48.

²² This corresponds to what Sennett mentioned in the last part of *The Fall of Public Man*, in which Sennett concludes that the "absence of belief in publicness" is connected to the nineteenth century when impersonality was defining "a landscape of human loss, a total absence of human relationships" (Sennett, 1976, p. 260; 261). When Haussmann aims to make the city accessible, he aims at increasing connections between one and others (through speeding up traveling), while in Simmel's framework, overloaded sensory threatens people's inner life. Once people are pushed too close to others, an intense connection discourages people's desire to socialize.

Therefore, in Le Bon's mob, individuals in the crowd actively participate in group actions with others, no matter whether they agree with or even understand the meaning of actions. In Simmel's blasé attitude, individuals passively interact with others through their self-withdrawal from the crowd. Le Bon's Paris is filled with chaos and danger, while Simmel's Berlin²³ is clouded by numbness and indifference.

However, Sennett also realizes that how one perceives the city is not a purely psychological process that is completely driven by the individual self. Rather, the physical environment of a city matters greatly. In the second approach to understand a resident's experience in a city, Sennett focuses on, in Sennett's own language, ways in which the *ville* can influence the *cité*. Sennett uncovers two patterns: the *ville* can lead the *cité*, and the *ville* can also disrupt the *cité*. In addition, Sennett explains the third element that influences the *cité* without affecting the *ville*, that is immigration.

Ville Leading Cité, Zoning Theory

If we look at the literature of urban planning and have to credit one idea that has influenced the philosophy of urban planning since the twentieth century most, that must be the zoning theory—a major contribution from the Chicago School. Initially introduced by Ernest Burgess in 1935, the major philosophy behind the zoning theory is that each place in a city should have its own unique use. This philosophy is straightforward and intuitively accurate. But that is not the complete story. In fact, the zoning theory from the Chicago School was a response to two former practices: one is a failed practice in New York City, and the other is Ferdinand Tönnies's *Gemeinschaft und Gesellschaft* distinction.

²³ Simmel's *The Metropolis and Mental Life* was based on Berlin.

The failed practice in New York City refers to Central Park. Before 1935, two biggest cities in the United States must be New York and Chicago. When planners and scholars were thinking how they ought to make Chicago better, they agreed to learn from New York. Central Park was an important lesson. Construction of the Central Park begun in 1858 and mostly done by 1873²⁴. The design of Central Park embodies Frederick Law Olmsted's social consciousness and commitment to egalitarian ideals. Influenced by Andrew Jackson Downing and his own observations regarding social class in England, China, and the American South, Olmsted believes that the common green space must always be equally accessible to all residents and is to be defended against private encroachment (Sennett, 2018, pp. 48-50). Olmsted understands how much the lower class has suffered in the workplace and how much they have been separated and excluded from others, he thus aims to design a place where inclusion can take place. Though class distinctions may not disappear absolutely, Olmsted believes that social integration can be achieved in a physically well-designed place—a well-planned *ville* can stimulate the *cit * we want. Olmsted's effort of racial integration is to move people from the environment of working to spaces for leisure. Nevertheless, once the Central Park is open, it is not a total failure but does not carry out Olmsted's wish. The lower class and the poor did not commute frequently to the park, so it gradually became a place for the middle class and the rich (p. 46). Integration occurs only under occasions when significant social events took place. It might be unfair to critique Olmsted as "planning with his own illusion", but what happened in the Central Park is an important lesson for later planners. Planners in Chicago, for example, learned that even people have been moved from the workplace to a park for leisure, such an artificially planned social

²⁴ It is interesting to think that New Yorkers nowadays are so familiar with the existence of Central Park, almost taking its natural landscape for granted, while forgetting how artificial it is.

inclusion still not seem to function properly. Since artificial mingling, no matter how smartly designed, will eventually fail, wouldn't it be easier to create separation at the beginning.

On the other hand, the German sociologist Ferdinand Tönnies published *Gemeinschaft und Gesellschaft* in 1887, and it was translated into English in 1940 as *Fundamental Concepts of Sociology*. In this text, Tönnies sorted out the distinction between *Gemeinschaft* and *Gesellschaft*. *Gemeinschaft*, usually translated as “community”, refers to groups based on feelings of togetherness and on mutual bonds, such as families and neighborhoods. *Gesellschaft*, usually translated as “society”, refers to groups sustained by it being instrumental for their members' individual aims and goals, such as a company and a state. *Gemeinschaft* concerns one's face to face encounters. *Gesellschaft* concerns impersonal and instrumental arrangements. In a society, or in *Gesellschaft*, people perform Simmel's blasé attitude. When Olmsted was looking for building a public park to integrate people from the city, Tönnies dampened the enthusiasm by reminding that one's life is always local (Sennett, 2018, p. 66). Olmsted's park intends to bring the people in *Gesellschaft* to perform face to face encounters, which is argued by Tönnies as only existing in *Gemeinschaft*.

The Chicago School does not agree with Tönnies as he separated the community and work completely. Rather, the Chicago School finds more persuasion in John Dewey's belief in “experience-based knowledge”—telling people what happened regardless of what people's thoughts are (p. 66). This is exactly how the zoning theory turns out. Planners predetermine uses of areas in a city regardless of how residents will react to their plan²⁵. Hence, learning from Olmsted, Tönnies, and Dewey, the Chicago School studied the *cit *, daring taking changes and

²⁵ This is not saying urban planners are “evil life destroyers”. In general, planners do hope city dwellers will like their plan, but in case dwellers react negatively, planners guided by the zoning theory hardly intend to abandon or reform the theory. The common practice responding to negative feedback is to reorganize ways in which zones are designed.

challenges, but was indifferent to voices of the people who would live in their blueprint. Once planners want a city where people perform certain activities in fixed areas, and when planners care little about people's feelings in such "segregation", the zoning theory becomes the most proper and almost the only choice.

A city planned by the zoning theory would have significant features in its landscape. It would have a CBD (Central Business District) for the white-collar class, a commercial area where shops and restaurants gather, a nightlife place that bars and nightclubs occupied, a cultural zone where museums and art centers find home, etc. Areas performing different functions inevitably operate in their own schedule. The CBD is busy in the daytime on weekdays but quiet at night and on weekends. The nightlife place, on the contrary, is crowded in the night while dead in the day. A cultural zone with all museums closing at 5 p.m. ceases to have popularity after dinner. The zoning theory thus proposes higher productivity and better performance once everything is "nice and clean".

Ville Disrupting Cité, Gentrification

When the Chicago School argues for a top-down effort, the zoning theory intends to let changes in the *ville* lead changes in the *cité*. Once a city is divided into zones, infrastructure in a zone determines or at least affects types of actions that residents can perform in that zone. This is straightforward to understand since structural changes of a city's physical environment should result in changes in citizen's living habits and conditions. Sennett finds this is accurate since negative changes occurring in the *ville* often bring negative changes in the *cité*. However, when positive changes occur in the *ville*, surprisingly, they do not always lead to equally positive changes in the *cité*. In many cases, the *ville* disrupts the *cité*. The most typical example is community gentrification.

Once an area is predominantly occupied by the low-income class, planners always want to level it up; this is the process called gentrification. When Sennett visited Shanghai in the first decade of the twenty-first century, he was fascinated by a traditional architecture, Shikumen, which was “originally built as single-family housing for displaced landowners or merchants [and] began to shelter people poorer than the first wave of residents” since 1900 (Sennett, 2018, pp. 111-112). Apparently, living in Shikumen would not be an enjoyable experience but in fact a terrible one. When the local government decided to migrate people out of Shikumen, it was not until the 1990s that “shared toilets and kitchens disappeared” (p. 112). Nevertheless, this gentrification created problems that did not exist previously. For example, individual apartments, though with an improved living condition, make people suffer from the ills of isolation. This led to a rise in rates of depression, “juvenile crime”, and “adult anomie” in “those families native to the city who have been dispossessed of their established neighborhood” (p. 112). When urban renewal starts, original residents must move out to clear the way for reconstruction. A community after renewal hardly maintains its same structure, otherwise people may question whether the money is well spent. People are used to the logic that gentrification must bring in changes, and the greater and more dramatic changes are, the better the new community will be. As a result, the gentrified community reconstructs literally everything on the ground, as well as the resident’s root to the community. In the gentrified community, migrated residents “occupy but do not dwell” (p. 112). The gentrified *ville* disrupts people’s *cit *.

Till now, Sennett has discussed two ways that the *ville* can influence the *cit *. The first connects to the zoning theory, a planning philosophy that believes areas of a city should have its distinct and fixed use. Consequences of such a layout are twofold. It is convenient to understand that at any specific hours on any days, which areas are “serving residents” and which are “not

ready to serve”. On the other hand, it limits people only to visit those areas which are “serving” and discourages visiting those that are “unready”. Functions that the *ville* carries influence, and even determine, people’s *cit *—places can go, and things can do. The second way that the *ville* influences the *cit * deals with the philosophy of gentrification. Actions and activities that residents used to perform in a community are no longer available once gentrification is completed. People’s *cit * is changed by a brand-new landscape.

The zoning theory changes the *ville* from the beginning stage. Planners decide what area can perform which type of activity, and then let citizens live in their plan. The philosophy of gentrification changes the *ville* in the middle of people’s life. Planners reorganize where people are already living, provide them with a new landscape, and hope they will like it.

Outsiders Influencing the Cit , the Weight of Others

Apart from the zoning theory and the philosophy of gentrification, Sennett mentions a third way that the *cit * can be influenced. This time, the *ville* remains unchanged but the people living there differ. This connects to one of the most important and severe problems that almost all countries are facing—immigration.

When immigration occurs, politicians, journalists, planners and scholars are all fervent to understand how they could organize a community so that immigrants can merge into local life easier. This is an important topic, and it deserves meticulous consideration and careful handling. However, it seems that little attention has been paid to those original residents. What about their feelings once those “outsiders” who suddenly start to live next to their houses? What are their experiences and how do they treat immigrants? Diversity is generally helpful in providing an open and learning community where one accepts and learns from those who are different from oneself. However, such a learning community does not form automatically once diversity presents itself. Once people refuse to acknowledge those who are unlike themselves as their

neighbors, there is a misfit. After all, the success for immigrants merging into local life depends on the interaction between immigrants and local residents. Resented locals with outgoing immigrants seldom get along, and the same applies to friendly locals with doleful immigrants.

Those concerns are not born in the thin air but from events in real life. For example, in 2016, Germany was swept by PEGIDA, that is, Patriotic Europeans Against the Islamization of the Occident (German: *Patriotische Europäer gegen die Islamisierung des Abendlandes*), a pan-European and anti-Islam political movement. PEGIDA proposes to stop all Muslims coming into Germany since their ways of living are totally alien to European cultures. PEGIDA regards the Other as alien. People supporting PEGIDA believe those who “differ so radically cannot live together; the weight of difference is too great” (Sennett, 2018, p. 122). The same year, Donald Trump was elected as the president of the United States. One of Trump’s campaign promises was later fulfilled as the Executive Order 13767²⁶, which directs a wall to be built along the Mexico–United States border, serving as a physical barrier and preventing Mexican immigrants from crossing the Mexico–United States border. Without commenting on whether actions were right, both actions sent out a message that once people refuse to face diversity with a positive and open attitude, they want to build “gated communities” instead (p. 3). Though, we may argue there are distinctions between political refugees and economic migrants, the tension between the local and the outsider remains. People prefer to physically segregate those who are so different rather than live with them. The weight of others is thus the weight of differences.

Even where the refugees are allowed to stay, for example, in Sweden 2016, cultural clashes still occurred. In houses of hospitality, for example, stew provided was mistakenly considered as containing pork, so it remains untouched (p. 123). Sennett’s comment is that what

²⁶ Executive Order 13767, titled Border Security and Immigration Enforcement Improvements was issued by former U.S. President Donald Trump on January 25, 2017.

the host has taken for granted is to imagine that “what we would have wanted, the refugees would have wanted” (p. 123). Hosts are thinking refugees as one of them, while refugees do not take in that.

Meanwhile, in order to get a local job in Stockholm, learning Swedish is necessary. Adolescents are doing this better than their parents. However, the younger generation’s success in this subject unexpectedly creates an additional gap between them and their parents. According to Sennett, once “adults heard their children speaking a foreign language easily and taking quickly to a foreign culture, the more integrated children became, the more dissociated parents felt” (p. 123). This creates a dilemma that cannot be solved easily. For immigrants, the young generation needs to master a new language so that they can work in better jobs in their new settlement. For urban planners and scholars, they would like to see immigrants speaking the local language, so that immigrants can have a better relationship with local residents. However, for the old generation immigrants, though not being subjectively lazy or refusing to learn, they simply cannot catch up. What the young want to protect and promote is a better life at the place they now dwell, a nation where they were not raised up. A high quality of life is not a free gift, but an earned reward. So, the young want to be explorative, ambitious, and adventurous. But what the old want to protect and promote is a stable living environment, a place that is comfortable and secure. As a consequence, the better the young get along with local residents, the more homeless the old generation feels, both in the nation and in the family. Any efforts made to assist immigrants merging into the local community ultimately widen the gap between immigrant children and parents.

The Other as a Stranger, Self-Withdrawal or Exclusion

Once the locals distinguish themselves from the outside, outsiders are usually regarded as either strangers or neighbors. They differ phenomenologically. Conflicts are more likely to occur

once outsiders are perceived as strangers. Through researching ways in which immigration has taken place in Europe and the United States, Sennett observes two ways to shun alien others as strangers, a self-withdrawal through fleeing from them, or exclusion through isolating them.

In fact, a self-withdrawal can take two forms. One can either separate oneself from others, or one can act indifferent to the existence of others. The former is Martin Heidegger's metaphor of a Black Forest Hut. The latter is Simmel's articulation of "blasé attitude" (Sennett, 2018, p. 54).

Heidegger provides the most typical example of a self-withdrawal from strangers. As one of Husserl's most famous students, Heidegger attached existential philosophy to rejection of those whose existence differs. In *Building Dwelling Thinking*, Heidegger stated that dwelling is not just building, and he used the word *Dasein* for dwelling; humans are thrown to the earth, wandering where we do not belong (Heidegger, 1971). This account of *Dasein* came from Kierkegaard, but Heidegger rejected Kierkegaard for "finding too easy a refuge in God" (Sennett, 2018, p. 124). When Heidegger felt overwhelmed or embarrassed interacting with others, he preferred to live in an imaginative hut he would build in a Black Forest. Heidegger's trip of leaving the city was also a trip of leaving the Other. In the Heideggerian trip, the identity of the Other does not matter, Jews, Muslims, Mexicans, or Asians. Whoever decides to self-withdraw from strangers seeks to "build up the ego by eliminating dissonance" (p. 129). On the other hand, once one decides not to eliminate dissonance physically but psychologically, one generates the feeling of vulnerability which is described by Simmel as the reason for performing "blasé attitude" and by Sennett as the reason for putting on a psychological mask (p. 54). The difference is that a self-withdrawal from strangers is a decision that has nothing to do with crowd

densities. People feel threatened by the existence of those who are radically different, no matter their population.

However, not everyone has the financial privilege to leave a place and settle down somewhere else, and not everyone has the will or desire to perform blasé attitude. Therefore, for those who have to stay with and thus maintain a hostile attitude to strangers, they begin to consider possible means of separating strangers. The answer is exclusion.

We cannot forget that regarding others as strangers is fed by a feeling of being under threat, a vulnerability that is not simulated by any actual danger or uncomfortable conditions that people have experienced. Rather, it is triggered by a self-imposing image that “constructs a disruption from the facts of differences” (p. 129). In terms of immigration, cultural difference is the most effective trigger. Differences in appearance, clothing, or even smell all trigger the sense of vulnerability among local residents. What is more, once stereotypes are formulated, an absence of detectable signs of differences does not help to ease the tension, but only exacerbates it. Once the locals are alert to signs of differences, and once those signs are not presented, the locals start to flinch as they believe strangers “must be hiding something” (p. 129). In Europe and the United States, there are people regarding Jews as swindlers, Muslims as terrorists, and Mexicans as undocumented immigrants. To assure immigrants will not “interfere” with the local life, exclusion is put into practice.

Exclusion does not have to look brute or harsh. It becomes complicated and sophisticated once people actually need those whom they despise. In the twentieth century Italy, most Jews were used to being extremely poor and unskilled. Jews filled “the niches of the informal economy... peddling cheap or used goods”, while other residents, mainly the Christians, wanted to isolate Jews even while making use of Jews (p. 130). One way to exclude those who are

“unwanted but needed”²⁷ is physical segregation. In Sennett’s observation, for any huts or ghettos in Italy, their “simplified space allows no room for anything other than a stripped-down experience... there is no room for strangers in a place” (p. 134). The purpose of planning a ghetto in such a way is to “use the other practically while pushing away their presence socially” (p. 134). Dealing with problems among ghetto dwellers could be difficult, so planners take an “easy-out”: constraining those already in the ghetto to continue living in the ghetto, forever and ever. This “couples exclusions of people with simplification of form. In making clear, direct, simple forms, *Homo faber* practices social exclusion” (p. 129). Once “simplifying through excluding” is practiced, *Homo faber*, planners of ghettos, who are expected to design an inclusive and justice community, become oppressors that favors exclusion and discrimination.

The Other as a Neighbor

So far, previous discussions have focused on consequences when the other, immigrants, has been identified as strangers. Local residents may perform a self-withdrawal, isolating themselves from those immigrants. They may also perform exclusion, either physically constraining the outsider in specific locations or socially refusing to affirm the outsider as “one of them”. Both the self-withdrawal and exclusion are generated by local resident’s negative attitude that regards outsiders as strangers. But what the entire image would look like once outsiders are perceived as neighbors, and more importantly, is this possible?

The key philosopher in this inquiry is Emmanuel Levinas. Inspired by Heidegger and Buber, Levinas seeks to create a philosophy of ethics. He addresses the problem that “words turning towards one another but encountering a limit which cannot be crossed; each language contains irreducible, untranslatable meanings” (Sennett, 2018, p. 125). When Levinas says the

²⁷ Sennett did not use the phrase. This is my own term.

first philosophy is ethics, he neither refers ethics as theories such as ontology or utilitarianism, nor does he mean how to do ethics. Levinas does not take a systematic or theoretical approach. For Levinas, his first disagreement with Being is that it puts *Dasein* or an individual person in obligation to Being, opening up possibilities to Being. The second complaint is that it is in abstraction that does not involve human beings in. For Levinas, ethics is always about people. The way in which the first philosophy works as one sees an individual human being is that one attends to the face of the other, rather than the individually unique characteristics of the other, as it will be a humanistic model. When the Levinasian permits one attends to the face of the other, it pulls one back to a prior assumption—I am my brother's keeper. This is similar to how St. Augustine uses guilt to link behavior and narrative. If one is going to root oneself in a given narrative, there are behaviors that move one outside it. What the sense of guilt does is to move one back to the narrative structure. It is a constant return driven by grace. This means if one is working from a therapeutic standpoint, one is disappointed in someone who doesn't engage in profession. If one is working from a narrative standpoint, what one wants is not profession per se, but someone's willingness to come back to the narrative, being professional. In the Levinasian model, one is constantly pulled back into the narrative of being responsible for the other. One then becomes responsible, though there is no absolute answer to how to be responsible.

Meanwhile, one attends to the attentiveness of someone, regardless of what that person looks like or what that person is, a stranger, a friend, or someone else. So, the other is not about attributes. As Levinas stated, "before any attribute, you are other than I, the other otherwise, absolutely other... this alterity is not justifiable logically; it is logically indiscernible" (Levinas & Robbins, 2001, p. 49). Therefore, "the other is not other because he would have other

attributes... the other is other because of me” and “the other is other before my attributes” (p. 11).

This idea of regarding an outsider as a neighbor, engaged with the Other who cannot be reckoned, stays far from the commonly agreed upon notion of a neighbor. For Sennett, Levinasian philosophy “conceives the Neighbor as a Stranger”, and they are both an other. (Sennett, 2018, p. 126). In addition, Sennett takes this Levinasian philosophy with a practical application: “the Neighbor as a Stranger bears on the mundane realm of the city. Awareness of, encounters with, addressing others unlike oneself – all constitutes the ethics which civilizes” (p. 126). When people wear Simmel’s blasé mask that shields their identity, such an indifference to strangers “degrades the ethical character of the city” (p. 126).

Levinas pays a lot attention to response and argues our necessity and inevitability to responding to the Other. It is more than saying “we must respond to the stranger at door”, but for Levinas, even not responding is already a response; one cannot not respond²⁸. Therefore, being indifferent to those on the street, in Levinasian philosophy, though is not favored, is still considered as responding.

Hence, although scholars and urban planners have been arguing extensively regarding whether immigrant workers are strangers or neighbors, or how we are expected to identify them,

²⁸ “One cannot not respond” should not be confused with “one cannot not communicate”. When a stranger is knocking on the door, hearing the knock and deciding not to respond is no doubt a type of response—we decide not to talk to that stranger. But communication works differently. When Calvin O. Schrag took the communicative turn and moved “I think, therefore I am” to “I communicate, therefore I am”, Schrag meant to say that communication is constitutive to who I am, as it is also constitutive of the knowledge about myself as a member of the human race. Here comes the importance of communicology. If “I communicate, therefore I am”, does this mean that I cannot not communicate, that is, I am always communicating. For communicology, it is possible not to communicate. Similarly, Schrag also emphasized the distinction between “communication” and “information”. When we communicate, we do at times make use of information, particularly when we are dealing with objective matters of fact. But communication itself is never simply the presentation of information. Thus, it is necessary to avoid confusing communication with information. This is also why ethics is important. We need to pay attention and respect the other, so that the other’s communicative efforts will not be reduced to information transmission. It is important to avoid confusing communication with information. Going back to Levinasian ethics that when we communicate, we are constantly responsible for the other, it does not mean that we are always communicating.

the important point is that these two identities are ontologically united. For anyone, an outsider is both a stranger and a neighbor, because the key, which is rooted in Levinasian philosophy, is that an outsider is ontologically an other.

Communication of Ethics and the Multiplicity of Goods

This section explores Sennett's works on urban communication, including his presentation on the history of urban planning, articulations on ways in which the structure of a city influence dweller's understanding of the city, and deliberations on how local residents perceive the city and immigrant—those who come from the outside in general.

Sennett has observed practices in which the *ville* leads the *cit *, as well as the *ville* is led by the *cit *. When the *ville* leads the *cit *, the most typical example is the zoning theory, which is guided by a philosophy that parts of a city should have their own unique function. The way a district is designed and planned influences and even determines people's activities in that district. On the other hand, the *ville* may be led by the *cit *. This seems closer to people's common sense that planners should build the city according to the way people want to live. However, what people "want" could be unjust. There are various examples in which a group of people want "gated-community" as they refuse to engage with those who differ, and urban planners fulfill their wish accordingly. The highway that brutally separates Pittsburgh's downtown and uptown, the cramped housing created for the Jewish population in the twentieth century Italy, and the argument between a bus parking lot and green space²⁹ in Boston are all typical examples. So, if what people want is unjust, what is built as just is not what people want. Sennett understands this as more than reconciling building and dwelling and advocates a systematic asymmetry approach,

²⁹ In the 1960s, when Boston was working on racial integration, there were efforts of busing black pupils to schools located in white working class communities. However, the planning project for a hard bus parking lot was resisted by residents in those communities. They argued for the importance of green space, but the subtext is that if those buses cannot park here, those black pupils will not attend the school in which their children will be attending.

meaning that addressing only from one of them is not going to succeed. Sennett's answer is to reject a "closed city" and construct an "open city".

Sennett rejects a "closed city" with isomorphic landscape and over-disciplined and segregated dwellers who live in a life that is dull. This is more than critiquing the zoning theory as Jane Jacobs did in her series of publications. Rather, Sennett favors an "open city" where dwellers acknowledge and embrace differences at all levels. When Sennett is writing how and why local resident's self-withdrawal or exclusion to immigrants take place, he uncovers that the weight of the other is the weight of difference. The current historical moment is enriched by, or using a negative term, "glutted with", diversity at all levels. Diversity does not present itself from thin air, but through people's narrative. When we say diversity is one feature of postmodernity, we refer to the fact that postmodernity has witnessed the existence of the multiplicity of narrative. Postmodernity is a recognition that we are in a juncture in which we acknowledge the possibility of living in multiple narratives simultaneously. Since one's narrative fundamentally influences the good that one values, in this current historical moment, there is no "the good" that everyone agrees to protect and promote, but a number of individual goods that people value differently. Postmodernity permits that we live with a multiplicity of goods. In such a world of glory, we are trying to deal with an extraordinary awareness of diversity. The diversity is always here, but as Sennett's scholarship demonstrated and as people's attitude toward immigrants reflected, the willingness to accept it has not.

In the next chapter, *Sennett and Urban Communication*, the emphasis moves to urban communication. I will start with an overview on urban communication literature, in which there are different schools of thought identifying a modern city as context, content, medium, place, or process. The main purpose of the next chapter is to discuss how Sennett's work on urban

planning is related to the field of urban communication. The connection majorly comes from three sources. First, the way in which a modern city is planned and designed influences people's understanding of the self, which is one's psychological subjectivity. Second, the philosophy and practice of urban planning have both illuminated a gap between urban planners and city dwellers. How do people fill in this gap is what connects Sennett with urban communication. Third, Sennett maintains that the notion of an open city is what modern cities should model themselves on. Sennett does not fantasize that an open city will solve all problems. But an open city is by far the best answer he can offer. What Sennett believes as pragmatic is that we try to physically open current cities up, especially for those who are closing, and we perform a dialogical communication in the process of planning.

Chapter Three. Sennett and Urban Communication

This chapter discusses urban communication literature and how Sennett's scholarship enriches the academic community. The emphasis is placed on articulating and interpreting the significance of Sennett in urban communication in this historical moment.

Urban Communication Literature

The field of urban communication is highly interdisciplinary. It is rather difficult to find an official definition or even an agreed upon decision on what urban communication is. Although there have been attempts made so far, justifying one single definition and applying it to such a broad field is an exhausting and could have been well argued as an impossible task. Nevertheless, the lack of definition does not erase the existence of such a burgeoning and fruitful field of study. A wide range of discussion both in communication research and pedagogy have been conducted by sociologists, planners, designers, economists, and psychologists.

Research Scope of Urban Communication

Exploring the research scope of urban communication must start with a basic question, what urban communication studies. A general answer is that it studies communication in an urban environment. Then, the first step is to understand the scope of an urban environment.

In urban communication, as well as other urban studies related fields, a city is not reduced to its natural landscape and artificial architecture, but as a “product of human nature” (Park, 1915, p. 577). A city is understood as “a state of mind” and is involved in “the process of the people who compose it” (p. 577). Urban Communication Foundation³⁰, an important urban communication research center that embodies global cooperation, states that scholarship in the field starts from the “premise that cities themselves function as a medium of communication”³¹. Compared to urban studies, urban communication utilizes the content and approach from communication. This unique cooperation provides scholars possibilities to look at the city as a complex environment of human interaction and as a physical place that shapes people’s narrative.

Indeed, a modern city is more than an economic and religious center that represents a state’s prosperity, but a settlement that enables social connections among strangers to occur. People used to praise a city as giant, prosperous and thriving, while recently, people attribute the success of a city as being smart (Mitchell, 1996), communicative (Gumpert and Drucker, 2008), and open (Sennett, 2017). The legendary Italian writer Italo Calvino hinted this change, though unpurposely, in *Invisible Cities* by saying, “you take delight not in a city’s seven or seventy

³⁰ The Urban Communication Foundation was established as a non-profit organization in 2004. It facilitates research on urban communication issues which address regional, national and international cooperation.

³¹ “Supporting Scholars Studying Urban Communication.” *Urban Communication Foundation*, Urban Communication Foundation, urbancomm.org/about-ucf-1. Accessed 5 Feb. 2022.

wonders, but in the answer it gives to a question of yours” (Calvino, 1997, p. 38). A modern city is a place where people’s narratives are shaped, stories are written, and questions are addressed.

The burgeoning and fruitful scholarship in urban communication contains discussions on urbanism and urbanization (Berry, 1976; Berry, 1980; Mitchell, 2004; Calthorpe, 2010), philosophical perspectives on place and space (Relph, 1976; Tuan, 1990; Kunstler, 1993; Carragee, 2007; Zagacki and Gallagher, 2009; Seamon, 2015), the notion of the communicative city (Burd et al., 2007; Hamelink, 2008; Gumpert and Drucker, 1995; 2008; Jeffres, 2008; Drucker and Gumpert, 2009; Jassem et al., 2010; Matsaganis et al., 2013), and most recently, the notion of the open city (Sennett, 2017; 2018). This is not an exhaustive list but includes some of the most fundamental, enlightening and cited works.

Although it was not until the last two decades of the twentieth century that academic discussions regarding urban communication initially occurred, the study on communication in an urban environment is not new. What is new is the participation of communication technology into this inquiry and all those improvements, issues, and challenges that communication technology brings to the table. Communication technology enables ideas from cyberspace to be materialized and then applied to the physical world. This is a modern implication of the notion of *poesis*. It changes the relationship between people and their environment and creates spaces for people to interact with the environment through digital media. With the assistance of communication technology, a city speaks through its “stone, steel, structures and shape” and becomes a place where people generate, exchange and receive messages (Drucker and Gumpert, 2009, p. 65). In this sense, a city is a medium where human communication takes place, which echoes the premise that Urban Communication Foundation proposes. However, regarding the

city as medium is only one view among others. Thus, in order to understand urban communication, it is vital to articulate the role a modern city plays in human communication.

A Modern City as Context, Content, Medium

To understand the role of a modern city, Giorgia Aiello and Simone Tosoni have chosen seven articles, which they identified as most representative, from different disciplinary perspectives and reviewed their research questions and methodologies to illustrate perspectives on urban communication: “documentary”, “audiencing”, “material”, “visual”, “mixed-method”, “ecological”, and “applied” (Aiello and Tosoni, 2016, p. 1254). Aiello and Tosoni further summarized these seven perspectives and proposed three “distinct but interrelated” roles that a city plays: “context”, “content”, and “medium”, and argued that the role of a city is both a producer and a product of “practices, interactions, and narratives” (p. 1252).

The City as Context

Once scholars regarded the city as context, the research emphasis is placed on ways in which communication practices relate to urban space. Scholarship in this strand mainly focuses on “media uses in urban contexts”; the key concept is “audience”, or “media users” (Aiello and Tosoni, 2016, p. 1256). It is no wonder that this approach was earlier referred to as “urban new media studies” (Graham, 2004, p. 17) and later as “urban media studies” (Tosoni and Ridell, 2016, p. 1278).

The City as Content

Meanwhile, scholars also consider the city as content that prepares for communication. Particularly, in spite of using formal investigation and research, there are scholars who have realized the importance of audio documentaries that allow city dwellers to “hear the city” and to tell the story of their individual lives and communities (Makagon and Gould, 2016, p. 1264). In this strand, the basic purpose of research is to understand the city through “concrete praxis”,

including individual stories and community experiences (Aiello and Tosoni, 2016, p. 1258). This is similar to Sennett's observation in Chicago that prepared him to publish *Families Against the City*, in which Sennett has examined two types of family structures in Union Park, a declining Chicago community, and argues that the "extended" type is better suited to urban-industrial competition than the "intensive" type.

The City as Medium

When the Urban Communication Foundation states urban communication scholarship is based on the "premise that cities themselves function as a medium of communication", this premise means scholars explore ways in which communication in an environment is possible through examining how the physically built urban environment "shape, constrain, and ultimately also mediate" lives of city dwellers (Dickinson and Aiello, 2016, p. 1294). A city speaks through its architecture and serves as a place where people can create, deliver, and receive messages. Meanwhile, there is Luc Pauwels who preferred a visual approach to investigate ways in which a city communicates through observing human actions in the public sphere. Pauwels concluded that a city is a "multi-authored communicative space" where cooperation, competition, and intervention take place (Pauwels, 2016, p. 1325). This corresponded to what Pauwels proposed as "visual social science", of which the researcher functions as a "producer, facilitator and communicator" (Pauwels, 2015, p. 3; 10). In this sense, an urban communication scholar not only collects information and produces research results, but shapes the urban environment that others investigate. The city, therefore, serves as a medium that permits those activities to take place; the city is a genuine multi-authored communicative space.

Meanwhile, there are also discussions regarding research methodology preference. One view is that research conducted by one single method may produce biased results. As an alternative, scholars argued for adopting a "multimethod approach", meaning obtaining

information from more than one quantitative or qualitative method, so that information obtained is multi-sourced. (Coleman, et al., 2016, p. 1352). On the other hand, Matthew Matsaganis went a step further. Matsaganis acknowledged the necessity and utility of multimethod studies, but also made his own improvement—combining quantitative and qualitative methods. This is what Matsaganis called “mixed-methods studies” (Matsaganis, 2016, p. 1332). Matsaganis believed research supported by both quantitative and qualitative methods is genuinely interdisciplinary. The cooperation between quantitative and qualitative methods equips scholars with better understanding on ways in which people relate to each other and to the city.

A Modern City as Place, Process

The City as Place

Navigating through the scholarship of looking at a city as context, content, or medium, I have found that there are indeed differences yet also similarities among these three approaches. It is straightforward to see that differences among three approaches root in ways in which a modern city is understood differently. However, similarities among them are more interesting to explore.

It seems that once a city is regarded as context or content, it is treated as a place. Once a city is understood as medium, the city is regarded as a process.

Taking a city as a place means the city serves as a research object which scholars can contemplate, investigate, and conceptualize. The city is a part of research. If the media users were analyzed and understood, or once individual stories were told and interpreted, not only a specific research is completed, but entire strands of research, regarding the city as context or content, are considered fully explored.

Regarding a city as a place is a view that is most staunchly subscribed by the Chicago School, of which the foundation was prepared by conjunction of research from Ernest Burgess and Robert Park. Both proposed and led the Chicago School to practice an empirical approach in

which research emphasis is placed on understanding lives of city dwellers through the role of press and communicative practices in local communities. Guided by the zoning theory, urban planning since then has prioritized the importance of place. Subsequently, Park became interested in understanding why communities within the same zone may still not communicate with each other (Park, 1915). Meanwhile, an alternative perspective took a broader horizon on urban communication and focused on the phenomenon of globalization. Saskia Sassen, a sociologist noted for her analyses of globalization and international immigration and also one of Sennett's work partners in participating the UN Habitat III conference in 2016, has discussed how New York, London, and Tokyo became centers for the global economy (Sassen, 1991/2001), explored the role cities in refugee crisis, Brexit, and gated community (Sassen, 1994/2018), and examined the interplay between global and local phenomena to understand new forms and conditions of global cities (Sassen, 2007). In brief, once regarding a city as a place, scholarship emphasizes on examining how the city is transformed and how dwellers live.

The City as Process

On the other hand, once a city is regarded as medium, the city is closer to being treated as a process. However, it is not a process with a clear end, but an ever-ongoing procedure where human events take place. A city is a forever changing place. In this sense, completing analyzing the audience or interpreting stories only marks the victory in individual projects. The field can never be fully explored since a city constantly shapes and is being shaped by activities of city dwellers. Hence, there are always new groups of audience that need to be understood, different stories from local residents or immigrants that require interpretation, and innovative ways that an urban built environment influences lives of city dwellers. In this sense, the city is not only a part of a research, but an ever changing process in which research is based on. Therefore, urban communication can never complete everything since urban environments and human activities

are dynamic. What scholars can come close to a “clean table” is to consistently ask correct questions that address people’s interests and respond to questions seriously.

One supporter of this view is the eminent urban scholar, Jane Jacobs, who refused to take the city as a place but as a process. When Jacobs stated that the first and foremost principal to make a city diverse and vibrant is that “district, and indeed as many of its internal parts as possible, must serve more than one primary function; preferably more than two”, she was directly responding to and critiquing the zoning theory (Jacobs, 1961, p. 152). Jacobs also maintained that a diverse district “must ensure the presence of people who go outdoors on different schedules and are in the place for different purposes” (p. 152). Jacobs strongly disagreed with zoning theory as she has observed that a community or district which only performs isomorphic function usually dies very quickly. Similarly, when Gumpert and Drucker were articulating the notion of the communicative city and presenting those qualifications and disqualifications, some of those criteria directly contradict what the zoning theory advocates. For instance, a city is disqualified as a communicative city if it has “gated and divided parallel communities” or “isolated communities”; two types of community that the zoning theory favors (Gumpert and Drucker, 2008, p. 200). The zoning theory regards a city as a place that can be dismembered into zones. Those zones, functioning as places, can perform their own specific purpose. Jacobs regarded a city as a process in which activities are born and developed in a city on the whole. Dividing a city into zones for Jacobs is dismantling a coherent process into steps that are no longer connected to each other. For the Chicago School, this is a brand new start, while for Jacobs, Gumpert, and Drucker, this is the beginning of the end.

The City as both Place and Process

In fact, these two understandings of a city, as a place or as a process, though being different, are not radically irrelevant. Sennett does not wish to join either group to fight against

the other, but detects glints of something latent beneath these two different perspectives. Sennett believes the way to unify or to develop a certain level of cooperation between them is to understand the city as both place and process. A city is a place where human events occur and a city is also a process that constantly shapes and is shaped by activities of city dwellers. Sennett does not support having function-distinct zones all over the city but he also opposes mingling everything together. What Sennett favors is a city that has diversity and openness; a city where everyone can find their individual spot. This city functions as a place that enriches the life experience of its dwellers and encourages communication to take place. This city also functions as a process that allows its built environment to be shaped and its dweller's ability to manage diversity to be developed. There will be different communities in the city but communities are not gated for specific groups of people or isolated in a secluded area. There are connections between people inside and outside a community, as well as connections among communities. What separate communities are walls with bridges. Meanwhile, it must be pointed out that regarding the city as a process never means urban communication is only about process as formality. The foundation of urban communication is still content, which is also the foundation of communication in general. Urban communication scholarship is always content-driven.

Therefore, we can conclude that major approaches in urban communication are dedicated to discovering a conceptualized framework that articulates the relationship between cities and human communication. Such a framework shall not be understood as a Habermasian attempt in which Habermas aimed to create the theory of communication that is universally applicable. Rather, a conceptualized framework that urban communication scholars investigate consists of ways in which city dwellers communicate with each other and communicate with their surrounding urban environment. This inquiry is content-concrete, narrative-driven, and locality-

rooted. To approach this inquiry, scholars count on understanding urban life to shed light on questions raised in urban communication. Efforts have been made on comprehending the role of a modern city in communication. Eventually, scholars seek to answer how communication is possible in a modern urban environment.

Since communication occurs among people, understanding how communication is possible in a modern urban environment requires scholars to understand the communicative agent. However, the agent is not the center of communication. The center is the narrative ground of the agent. It is one's narrative ground that provides sources of one's self. Thus, to connect Sennett's scholarship to urban communication, we start with how Sennett understands sources of a city dweller's self.

Interiority

In urban communication, the notion of interiority is traditionally understood within the relationship between the interior and interiority, that is, between the enclosure of an interior physical place and a psychological subjectivity³².

A traditional understanding on this subject argues a deep connection in which the articulation of interior place was part of what enabled the development of a European bourgeois sense of the subjective life, a life sheltered and enclosed. This understanding regards the existence of a shelter that allows privacy in general, as a premise to the birth of the sense of subjectivity. This understanding has prevailed since its birth and gradually has become the standard understanding of this subject.

However, Sennett questions the feasibility of applying this standard account to the twentieth-first century cities. Sennett gives an alternative understanding, espousing that the sense

³² Sennett does emphasize that he does not only understand interiority from a psychological definition but would also think of it as cognitive, certainly, and emotional (Sennett, "Interiors and Interiority", 2016, 57:15-57:21).

of interiority is actually linked to the exterior rather than the interior. For Sennett, this standard understanding leaves out a different way of thinking about interiority as subjective experience and behavior in exterior spaces. In another word, Sennett believes that subjectivity does not exist in vacuum, but exists as an experienced perception.

A Standard Understanding: Interiority Recognized from the Interior

The standard understanding of the relation between the interior and interiority emerged in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries Europe. In general, the standard understanding was generated through the shift from an absence of privacy to a possession to privacy. It argues that it is the possession of privacy in an interior place that gives birth to one's sense of interiority/subjectivity. One cannot develop one's interiority without accessibility to a private interior place.

In early modernity, families in European cities did not have the privilege of enjoying differentiated interior places. It is a common practice that one single room performs various functions on a daily basis. People slept in the same room as they dined in and operated their businesses. Bedding was brought into the room in the evening and was taken away and replaced by tables and chairs in the morning. The interior was therefore a place that was repetitively occupied for daily uses and a place in which there was no concept of privacy. Private activities, even sex, were used to happen in the presence of other people. Lawrence Stone, who was a historian of sexuality³³, argued that sex was not a private experience in early modernity (Stone, 1977/1990). This is an unthinkable fact for us but early modern European families did not have a private room where people can enjoy intimate life such as sex, though people may draw the

³³ Stone was also a historian on narrative, focusing on ways in which narrative has been used in historicity research. Stone once stated that "more and more of the 'new historians' are now trying to discover what was going on inside people's heads in the past, and what it was like to live in the past, questions which inevitably lead back to the use of narrative." (Stone, 1979, p. 13).

curtains around the bed only if could they afford curtains³⁴. Thus, the notion of privacy was certainly absent in the interior place.

The next stage in this standard understanding is that a new ideal of domesticity, appeared in the middle-eighteenth century among the European bourgeoisie, dictated a new interior place, one in which separate rooms perform separate functions. Sleeping in particular is segregated from other activities. As a result, the place of domesticity is not a place in which the public can perceive from the outside. This was reflected in housing projects in eighteenth-century London. As Sennett exemplified, for instance, since the 1740s, people started to have differentiated rooms for different functions. It is in the presence of private domestic places that men's subjectivity is set free. One's interiority guards the self, as something to be protected against the outside.

However, in addition to the emphasis on the division of labor in interior places, Sennett argues that the standard understanding has missed one important element that has a significant role in building one's interiority. That is the element of daily clothing. Sennett exemplified that before the eighteenth century, people wore the same clothing wherever. Differentiation began in the 1830s and 40s. Ordinary people started to dress differently when they were with family than when they were with strangers. It is further articulated that as houses got warmer in the eighteenth century, due to better insulation, women have adapted the wearing of negligee clothing, which gave birth to future intimate behaviors. Hence, the discussion on the interior place cannot be separated from the bodily comportment and bodily dress, as well as an architectural space.

What is deduced from this is that such a private realm, based on this standard understanding, creates a specific zone of openness and frankness that constitutes what we think

³⁴ See, *The Family, Sex and Marriage in England 1500-1800*, especially Ch. 12—Plebeian Sexual Behaviour, pp. 603-649. (Stone, 1977/1990).

about as interiority—a space where people feel free to show themselves as who and what they really are, both their physical body and their behavior. This is the articulation favored by historians such as Stone (1977/1990) and Phillippe Ariès (1960/1965). In *Centuries of Childhood*, Ariès detailed how childhood as an idea has changed over time, why the nursery has become an increasingly interiorized and privatized place, and why an aspiration for middle class people to segregate children in the nursery has occurred. It is also reflected in the nineteenth century realistic novels, such as Honoré de Balzac’s *Old Goriot*, where the interior becomes a place of revelation that did not occur in the street.

Meanwhile, in social theory that studies the notion of place, there are scholars such as Gaston Bachelard, who turned to the notion of house to uncover a “metaphor of humanness” (Bachelard, 1958/2014, p. vii). In *The Poetics of Space*, Bachelard placed a centrality on the house because the space of the house both is shaped by and shapes the humans residing therein. The house is central for Bachelard as the house provides a platform for dreams and imagination. Indeed, the house acts as the “portal to metaphors of imagination” (p. viii). Hence, Bachelard regarded the interior place as actually a place for opening up.

To summarize, the standard understanding of the interior and the interiority regards an interior place as essential to the birth of interiority (the sense of subjectivity). It is in the interior place that differentiated rooms perform different functions, that one starts to wear unique dresses when interacting with family members, and that one opens up and exposes the real self to those who are intimate.

Georg Simmel’s Understanding: Interiority Recognized from the Exterior

On the other hand, there is a contrary understanding given by Georg Simmel. Simmel’s *Metropolis and Mental Life* (1971) was an essay based on Potsdamer Platz, Berlin, a public

square and traffic intersection. As Simmel was observing such a huge shopping street filled with a diversity of people, he contemplated what the possible theory of such a place could be. In the early twentieth century, most people in Berlin tried to get as far away from the lower class as possible. But when shopping, people were brought together and reluctantly met the existence of other classes. Potsdamer Platz was therefore a very dynamic street. Simmel was the first scholar to ponder how to theorize people's interaction pattern on Potsdamer Platz.

Simmel's answer was that people will perform "blasé attitude"³⁵ due to stimulus overload caused by the existence of others (Sennett, 2018, p. 54). Once people feel overstimulated physically, their response is what Simmel called blasé attitude which leads to blasé behaviors. On one hand, one performing blasé behaviors wears a psychological mask and presents a cold and indifferent face. The indifference protects one's self from being involved in possible conversations from strangers. One is therefore invulnerable. But even if one must manage one's comportment so that one appears neutral on the outside, one is still stimulated. Indifference does not mean inattentiveness. One must be fully aware of stimulations from others and can only prefer not to interact with others thereafter. One's indifference is a result of one's attentiveness.

Sennett thinks this awareness of overstimulation and the reaction of avoiding interaction are both signs for one developing an urban account of interiority. This is what urban subjectivity is about. In an urban environment, one's subjectivity is linked to an exterior condition and a reaction to being exposed to difference and complexity. Whoever chooses to look cool outside is never cool inside. One's inside and outside are therefore divided. But this divide is made by one entering the street and being aware of those who differ rather than one being removed from the street.

³⁵ The term "blasé attitude" is Sennett's own translation, in Georg Simmel. "The Metropolis and Modern Life", in *Classic essays on the culture of cities*, ed. Richard Sennett. New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, 1969, p. 48.

Furthermore, Simmel argued that one's subjective feelings are heightened by the exterior stimuli on the street. In the standard understanding, one aims at neutralizing stimuli through positioning oneself in a private place in order to open up oneself; one's interiority is recognized in private. Simmel's understanding argued that one realizes one's interiority once being on the street, on that exterior; one's interiority is recognized in public.

In brief, the standard understanding believes one's interiority is recognized through being in a private interior place. One does not have to stay alone, but those who are co-present must be one's intimates. The interior is where self-disclosure occurs. On the other hand, Simmel's understanding believes one's interiority is recognized through the existence of others, especially those who are present in the exterior environment and are different from oneself. It is the awareness of being different from others that evokes one's interiority.

Although there have been two understandings of ways in which a city dweller recognizes and develops interiority, they both make sense in their own periods. However, looking at Simmel's understanding, which is more recent, that the interiority is better realized due to external stimuli, Sennett asks whether such a divide in one's self is something that people appreciate. Sennett comments Simmel's understanding as a "majestic, indeed tragic, view of the mentality of urban life" (Sennett, 2018, p. 55). This goes to another vital question, which is why people, mainly the young, prefer to live in a city.

Dwelling in a City, Alone and Free

City Dwellers Living Alone

It is almost intuitive to believe that a city always comes with valuing diversity, providing better job opportunities in an economic sense, and being crowded. These perceptions virtually match features of a city. Nevertheless, it will cast doubt on the inference that city dwellers live in

clusters. In fact, scholars have looked at the urban population in the United States and uncovered a remarkably interesting phenomenon.

Robert Ellickson, an American property law scholar, has discovered a phenomenon in the United States that “more than 50 percent of American adults are single, and 31 million—roughly one out of every seven adults—live alone” (Ellickson, 2008, p. 40). Eric Klinenberg, an American sociologist, further indicated that women are the main demographic group living solo; by 2010, there were 17 million female solo dwellers, compared to 14 million men (Klinenberg, 2012). In addition, Klinenberg presented that more than 15 million solo dwellers among the 31 million are “middle-age adults between the ages of thirty-five and sixty-four” and more than 5 million of them are “young adults between eighteen and thirty-four”, while the same figure for young adults in 1950 was 500,000. This makes them the “fastest-growing segment of the solo-dwelling population” (Klinenberg, 2012, pp. 5-7). In another word, those solo dwellers in Klinenberg’s writing are not widows or widowers, but are single in the proper sense. The number of people who cohabit or are married to other people is constantly shrinking in American big cities³⁶.

Since human beings are naturally social creatures, living alone is by no means our first choice. Nevertheless, based on Simmel’s account on interiority and work experience in Islamic cities, Sennett does see a fulcrum on the seesaw of living alone and being lonely.

The Value of Freedom from Community

When working on the project for UN Habitat III, Sennett had the experience of, as a man, being able to talk to various muslim women in Cairo about wearing the burka. Sennett once asked

³⁶ In 2019, the marriage rate per 1,000 total population is 6.1, down from 8.2 in 2000. In fact, the number has been continuously declining ever since 2000. Data is derived from CDC/NCHS National Vital Statistics System, www.cdc.gov/nchs/fastats/marriage-divorce.htm

a woman about her attitude to wear a burka mandatorily before going on streets; her response was a positive one. The woman appreciated her capacity of going on streets even having to wear burka since that activity freed her from her mother and her children. Using Sennett's language in *The Fall of Public Man*, that woman expresses her relief from the tyranny of intimacy in a more anonymous realm.

In the standard understanding, gendered space is regarded as an interior space. But Sennett received a much-complicated image in Cairo. It seems that in Islamic religious culture, being exposed to family members does not necessarily mean being protected. In Simmel's understanding, wearing a burka makes a woman invulnerable in public. Yet, it is not entirely accurate as wearing it made women feel free to go into public. There is a relief from the domestic realm in which women become the prisoner of their family.

From this experience, Sennett perceives that the freedom obtained through staying away from the tyranny of intimacy has a significant value. This freedom from *Gemeinschaft* (community) is a decisive element that influences the younger generation to make voluntary moves from countryside to city. The idea of being free from the intimate knowledge of others is what encourages people who could move, as an added benefit onto the economic imperatives for wanting to move.

This was not Simmel's understanding. Simmel advocated the importance of the exterior stimuli in perceiving interiority while never credited the desire of being free from the intimate knowledge. This relationship between the exterior and one's self that is based on emancipating one from tyranny of intimacy. It is not Eurocentrically unique but applies globally, as it occurs in all nation states under industrialization and urbanization.

In fact, the value of freedom as emancipating one from tyranny of intimacy has been validated since the medieval period, as the German adage *Stadtluft macht frei*³⁷ (city air makes you free) delivers. *Stadtluft macht frei* represents the idea that where one dwells indicates what one has made of oneself in “a place cut free from inherited or traditional limits” (Sennett, 2018, p. 137). One’s narrative, although does not determine, but does shape and is shaped by one’s experiences in the past, conditions of the present, and views to the future. A city is a unique settlement that consists of people whose origins are diverse. City dwellers do not share the same narrative. Their various previous experiences provide them different perspectives of viewing events. In a village or a small town where everyone almost knows everyone else, narratives are, not completely, but commonly shared and agreed upon. In a small settlement, a narrative does not equal to, but is closer to a “common sense”. Thus, it is difficult for anyone holding a contradicting or different belief, no mention to speak it out. For example, one living in a village from a conservative community may feel struggle and unsafe of expressing one’s homosexual orientation, since such an orientation contradicts a conservative perspective that most of one’s neighbors hold. Once one moves to a city, there might still be people who disagree or even hate homosexual orientation, but the urban environment is less likely causing conflicts between one and them, while a small village does not provide enough spaces to reduce tensions. City dwellers, though not everyone, understand an open and equal environment as the good they want to protect and promote. People do not look for pure agreements, chaos, or indifference. Rather, people pursue possibilities of living a multi-layered life without being judged by others, as long as they do not interfere with others. City dwellers participate and perceive events and activities with unbiased eyes and remain open to others’ responses.

³⁷ *Stadtluft macht frei* is a German saying describing a principle of law in the Middle Ages.

Interiority Recognized through Being Alone in Public

If people prefer to keep away from an interior place but to stay alone in a public space where others are present, Sennett ponders what form of interiority would people develop under such an action.

Staying Alone in Public

When Simmel used a blasé attitude to articulate how people react to those strangers on the street, Simmel was describing a phenomenon that occurs in a space. Sennett, on the other hand, is more interested in understanding people's being alone in a place. A place is often identified as where people dwell and stay, while a space is the outside environment when people are moving. In general, people move through spaces and stay in places. Sennett pays attention to solo customers in public places.

A typical scene of being alone in public, is not necessarily on a street that is crowded, but in a cafeteria. Before the nineteenth century, European cafés did not use small, round tables that we take for granted as what Starbucks are using today. Rather, cafés used large, rectangle tables as those we now place in a formal meeting room.

This was mainly a response to the population expansion that major European cities in the eighteenth century have experienced. Immigrants encountered a double task of both sharing their ideas and interpreting others. This task cannot be completed without extensive verbal expression. According to Sennett, both in mid-eighteenth century Paris and London, once a stranger felt necessities of having a conversation with another, the stranger would come to the other and grip the other's arm directly to hold the other's attention (Sennett, 2018, p. 27). Hence, urban designers in the eighteenth century believed that cafés and pubs should be designed in a way that encouraged people to engage one another, undeniably with the purpose of stimulating purchases as a byproduct. Anyone could buy a cup of coffee, find an empty seat, and start or intervene in

conversations with people around. As a result, cafés are filled with long tables that can host twelve or sixteen customers. Those tables are majorly placed indoors for two reasons. Firstly, for any café owner who desires to use the outdoor space, moving a long table along with a dozen chairs is always an exhausting job. Hardly any staff were willing to do such a job, provided by the fact that they need to complete it on an everyday basis. Secondly, the outdoor environment in the eighteenth century was rather unhygienic. Urine and even stool were all over the streets. This might be an unthinkable fact for us, but as Sennett mentions, before 1843, men “peed like dogs on the sides of buildings as much as in the street” when they felt a need (Sennett, 2018, p. 23). A sense of shame or a concern for public health was certainly absent. This was not changed until the invention of *pissoir* in 1843, a French invention and later common in Europe, which provides a urinal in public space with a lightweight structure. The *pissoir* provided a possibility for urines being transported under streets. This invention did more than increase the hygienic level of streets, but made outdoor spaces available for social events, such as an outdoor café.

Therefore, in the mid-nineteenth century, when cafés decided to use the outdoor space, adopting small, round tables became a common practice. Consequently, the exterior space was hospitable to single people alone. Meanwhile, in the nineteenth century, it was observed that when a single person having his coffee placed on the table, others usually preferred not to join him, as contrasted to the common practice of participating and intervening conversations occurring alongside a long table.

If one gets the chance to stay alone in a café’s outdoor seat, one also enjoys opportunities more than drinking coffee, but reflecting on oneself, observing others, and recalling one’s memory, which are three unique aspects of one’s interiority recognized through being alone in public.

Reflexivity, Passivity and Memory

The first aspect of this interiority embodies a level of reflexivity on the self. The absence of verbal intrusions from others provides one an occasion to idle on trivial matters such as the taste of coffee, as well as to contemplate philosophical inquiries, such as the meaning of life. Sennett argues that the state of being alone and detached from others is not a state of being blasé to or defensive against them. It is a state in which reflection is possible because one is released from *Gemeinschaft* (community), and from the physical stimulation of others.

The second aspect of this interiority is passive observation. The state of being alone permits one to use one's eyes visually without any actual engagements with others. The most typical example is Christopher Isherwood's novellas, *The Berlin Stories*, whose first line is, "I am a camera with its shutter open". Sennett's idea is one is able to develop an interior insight, not through interaction, but through the freedom of being able to observe without interacting. Hence, interiority is more than a simple withdrawal from the public. What the standard understanding has mistaken is that it takes interiority as a detachment from the world. However, it ought to be a particular type of relationship with the world, one which practices passive observation.

The third aspect of this interiority is that it allows the work of memory to carry on. It is under the condition of being alone in public, the work of memory can be floating and intermittent. One's focus of attention is shifted to the interpretation of memory, which is the construction of a story. One is not obsessed with making explanations but experiences a different kind of time in which one allows memory to be floating through one's mind. For Sennett, this enables a Bachelardian epistemic break³⁸, of things coming, breaking down, and going. When we

³⁸ Bachelard, before writing *The Poetics of Space*, published *The Formation of the Scientific Mind* in 1938, in which he brought up the notion of epistemological rupture, or epistemic break. Bachelard (1938/1986) as a historian and

talk about daydreaming, in the Freudian sense, there is always the revelation of some inner logic. In an epistemic break, one is not linked to any logic but one is more open. In a Freudian daydream, episodes in the dream follow certain logical coherence, while in an epistemic break, the logic behind one's memory is open to creation.

To summarize, being alone in public privileges one with the opportunity to reflect on oneself, to observe others without interaction, and to allow memory to float through one's mind. All these three aspects are unique features of one's interiority that cannot be developed within a private interior place or through being indifferent in public spaces.

But if we look at all elements together, Simmel's account on people preferring a blasé attitude as a response to sensory overloaded, Ellickson's and Klinenberg's observations on people dwelling alone, the pursuit of freedom for emancipating people from tyranny of intimacy, and people enjoying taking individual spot in public and practice unaccompanied activities, reflecting and observing, do all these indicate a sign of urban loneliness? Are city dwellers deprived of the opportunity of having a rich emotional life because they prefer to dwell alone and experience their social lives alone?

Being Alone without Loneliness

Sennett would not connect the state of being alone to the experience of loneliness. For Sennett, it is being alone in impersonal conditions that enables a certain interior work, a certain subjective activity.

theorist of science proposed that the history of science is neither continuous without interruption, nor in complete discreteness, but it is successive with obstacles. Within the realm of science, there have been and will be unconscious structures such as the Cartesian separation between mind and body, which served as an epistemological approach to do the science. Bachelard further argued that once those obstacles have been dismantled, it creates a vacancy in the history of science, and that is an epistemological rupture.

When the aphorism says, “never do we feel less lonely than being alone within a crowd”, it does not indicate loneliness as a lack of companionship, but a lack of purpose. In Klinenberg’s *Going Solo*, the extraordinary number of solo dwellers is eye-striking to everyone. Yet, there is no necessity to treat this phenomenon as disturbing, dangerous, or even a sign of decay. As long as those solo dwellers prefer to but are not forced to live alone, they are definitely capable of navigating lives with their own various purposes. It is not a thin end of a wedge, not even close to it. However, it is irresponsible to applaud or support any reluctance in action when using this phenomenon’s worry-free feature as an excuse. In fact, a society does need to prepare itself with certain elements, such as an increased number of hospitals, care centers, and widened sidewalks that are suitable for rolling walkers, everything needed to prepare for encountering an increased number of elders in the future. This is where Sennett found a dissonance in urban planning.

The Philosophy of Urban Planning

The Gap between Planners and Dwellers

Sennett is interested in the *Stadtluft macht frei* as he sees a gap between often proposals from urban planners and wishes from city dwellers.

Planners: The Pursuit of Sociable Places

Almost all planning ideologies assert the importance of making communities diverse, bringing people together, creating convivial places, such as a brisk district, as Jane Jacobs (1961) expected, where various groups of people are present at different periods in a day. This is an unspoken philosophy that basically all urban planners agree with, that we should make more inclusive communities. Sennett does not radically disagree with it but does cast doubt on this philosophy as it neglects places in which people can dwell alone in safety, in public. Sennett sees a miss in planning places that would enable the young mother that Sennett talked to in Cairo to get away from her children and her families. There are city dwellers, in fact a great number of

them, prefer to stay alone when they are in public. Therefore, the practice of planning communities that only enhance interpersonal connections while eliminating possibilities of staying alone would not be appreciated by dwellers, especially by the young generation.

Sennett believes it is more responsible and pragmatic for urban planners beginning to translate the notion of *Stadtluft macht frei* into more practical terms, such as facilities that free people from domestic constraints. This translation does not have to start with a broad scope but could be something as trivial as which specific type of bench we want to put on a sidewalk. Sennett also asks when designing a park, whether planners should position the entire focus on creating social places of conviviality, which is Olmsted's approach in designing Central Park, or whether planners aim at creating places that permit and encourage people to stay alone.

Dwellers: The Desire for Staying Alone

The urban planning philosophy of placing the entire pursuit on creating more sociable places is what Sennett believes urban planners ought to rethink. For lots of city dwellers, being actively engaged is not the purpose of their presence in public. Rather, people go to a public place to look for an interior life, a life where they can practice self-reflection, passive observation to others, and floating memory, none of which would be possible if they are not alone. Sennett reminds that encouraging people to have interior life when they are in public is a thought that has not been addressed in the philosophy that guides urban planning yet. Planners are so obsessed with creating convivial places that they lose balance between being engaged and being alone. This on one hand is understandable, since planners in the second half of the twentieth century all mainly struggled with the issue of overpopulation in cities. Engaging people into interactive communication is one pragmatic way to prevent slum formation³⁹ (Jacobs, 1961).

³⁹ Jacobs stated that a slum forms not because people keep living there, but too many people leaving too fast. Thus, the key for unslumming is to enable people to “enjoy city public life and sidewalk safety” (Jacobs, 1961, p. 279).

However, times change and we thus must change with the times. Though the population in cities does not seem to decrease, preferring to dwell alone is a completely brand new phenomenon that has never been observed in the history of humankind. Meanwhile, as Klinenberg pointed out, the number of solo dwellers will not stop increasing in the foreseeable future. Hence, the new task for urban planners in this historical moment is to provide places that solo dwellers can stay alone and comfortable, enjoying activities such as sitting at a table in a café, smoking a cigarette, watching the crowd, and reflecting. This does not indicate creating social places is out of consideration, but it should not stay as the only item on the agenda.

The challenge for urban planners is to understand and fulfill what city dwellers wish for, individual spots in public that facilitate self-reflection and interiority recognition, without sacrificing friendliness for invulnerability through wearing a blasé psychological mask.

An Open City: Sennett's Response to Filling this Gap

After Habitat III, Sennett was deeply concerned about seeking a way to view the physical and the social parts of a city together. The physical parts represent concerns of urban planners regarding planning the city as a whole. The social parts represent wishes of city dwellers regarding concrete aspects of living in an urban environment. The physical parts are the *ville*, referring to the built environment. The social parts are the *cité*, referring to modes of life and attachments to the place in which city dwellers rise.

Sennett has seen, as the title of chapter 3 of *Building and Dwelling* revealed, a “*cité* and *ville* divorce” (Sennett, 2018, p. 63). There ought to be an integration of *ville* and *cité*, an integration that concerns what a city should be in its physical structure as well as its socioeconomic status. For Sennett, a modern city ought to be a settlement that enriches people’s experience. This can be achieved collectively and individually. A city that enriches people’s

experience needs to have multiple individual spots in public that allow people to stay alone and reflect.

This is the Sennettian notion of an open city, a city that enables everyone to live in the multiplicity of life, a life that permits one to engage with others as well as to stay alone. Economically, this requires a developed and mature market that opens up various job opportunities. But socially and psychologically, it requires dwellers to be able to manage complexity. An open city permits people to take advantage of opportunities which might be unforeseen and accidental. An open city also permits people to become more skilled in managing complex conditions of life.

However, from Habitat III, Sennett has seen cities in the developing world today enabled neither. In those cities, *cité* and *ville* are divorced. Cities are becoming, under the conservation of global capitalism, rigid, crude, and closed. Sennett ponders the answer of a sharp question Jacobs asked him, “so what would you do” (Sennett, 2018, p. 171). This question is not only for Sennett, but for all urban planners. To answer this question, Sennett proposes the notion of an open city, a city planned in a way that permits the experience of its dwellers to be enriched and diversified, and permits people’s ability to manage diversity and difficulty in an urban environment to be developed and enhanced.

Instead of tearing down an entire settlement⁴⁰ and building everything from scratch thereafter, an open city is better constructed through modifying and improving conditions of a current city. An open city means more than its architecture and landscape, which is the *ville*, but

⁴⁰ As Sennett stated, most of the twentieth-century urban planning projects proceeded on this principle, “demolish all you can, grade it flat, and then build from scratch” (Sennett, 2008, p. 215). A typical practice occurred in Pittsburgh in 1950 when a large section of the Hill District was demolished, converted to office buildings, a civic arena, and a giant parking lot. The rest of the Hill District suffered tremendous damage due to this radical change. The Hill District that was economically and culturally rich and vigorous has been utterly destroyed, with almost no hope coming back.

also people's living experience and perception of the city, which is the *cit  *. To open a city physically up requires urban planners look at the city as a whole and work on the concrete landscape of the city. To cultivate people's ability to manage complexity entails planners understanding the role that people play in an urban environment.

The Open City

This session is devoted to unpacking the notion of the open city. It starts with distinctions between a closed system and an open system. It then moves to Sennett's articulation on three systematic elements that mark an open city: "passage territories", "incomplete form", and "development narratives". It ends with the discussion on the notion of the smart city from William Mitchell (1996).

Viewing A City as A System

By claiming that building an open city can fill in the gap between planners and dwellers, Sennett does not take the concept of the open city as a planning instrument, but as a set of propositions that people would contemplate and react to either positively or negatively. The key to understanding the open city is to look at the city as an integrated system.

A Closed System and An Open System

Once we take in the framework of viewing a city as a system, understanding the distinction between an open city and a closed city moves to understanding features of an open system and a closed system. In *Building and Dwelling*, Sennett illustrates features of an open system and a closed system through discussing differences between a "MIT-level project" and a "Microsoft-level project" (Sennett, 2018, p. 4). A Microsoft project as a closed system packages existing knowledge. A MIT Media Lab project as an open system unpackages existing knowledge. They vary in three major elements: research goals, research approaches, and attitude to failure.

Firstly, they differ in telos, or goals. An open system always puts emphasis on exploration, versus a closed system's major activity is hypothesis testing. A closed system pursues problem-solving while an open system favors problem-finding and only seeks to resolve problems thereafter.

This goes to their second difference, research approaches. An open system constantly embodies a non-linear process of research, whereas a closed system must predetermine a predictable path of outcomes before launching experiments. An open system's nonlinearity leaves doors for further investigations. A closed system's predetermined results eliminate future studies to take place.

Thirdly and finally, an open system permits and even encourages the presence of failure since it considers failures as opportunities for learning. A closed system does not regard failure as an option since its research purpose is to test a hypothesis of which the result is predetermined. Failure in an open system is regarded as a gap between the known and the unknown and as an opportunity to improve the system. Failure in a closed system means a genuine failure and possibly a withdrawal of funds and even a closedown of a department.

To summarize, an open system conducts non-linear research with the purpose of problem-finding and permits and learns from failures. A closed system embodies linear research with the goal of problem-solving and rejects the presence of failure.

Modern Cities Trapped in Over-Determination

After Sennett has observed that modern cities are becoming closed and their *ville* and *cit * are divorced, Sennett ponders reasons behind this phenomenon. A city as a place where different people meet and engage with each other ought to enrich people's living experience and encourage creativity to take place. In addition, compared to Greek architecture, modern planners occupy a greater number of new materials and acquire advanced construction technology that our

ancestors can only imagine. Nevertheless, the abundance of resources does not necessarily evoke creativity. Sennett credits the lack of creativity to “over-determination” on “both of the city’s visual forms and its social functions” (Sennett, 2017, p. 97).

The best way to understand over-determination in a city is through the phenomenon of over-featuring that has engulfed the high tech industry since the beginning of the twenty-first century. Technology should be, or better be, user-friendly is almost a common sense in the most recent decade. Bill Gates used the term “friction-free” to describe user-friendly technology (Sennett, 2018, p. 153). This corresponds to our expectation of using technology: easy, clear, and straightforward. To achieve this, designers actively hide complexities of technology from users, so that users are not required to understand why pressing a certain button generates a certain result, but only to know which button to press for a specific result⁴¹. Once users can easily locate a right button without exhausting themselves by attempting to press all buttons, that technology will be qualified as user-friendly, such as Apple products, which are famous for their user-friendliness.

However, Sennett worries about the tendency towards achieving user-friendliness through “over-featuring”, meaning an ever-increasing type of functions that a technology permits its users to perform. The Microsoft Word was designed for creating, editing and formatting text documents, graphical documents, and comprising images. It was and still is an immensely helpful text-processor. Once additional features have been added, such as creating a custom tab, converting a bulleted list to a table, and removing background images, it remains useful but “the

⁴¹ Apparently, the practice of using without understanding is nothing new, but an ancient dilemma. For instance, the history of coffee told us that people drink brewed coffee for staying energetic early in the fifteenth century while the role caffeine plays in coffee was not understood until 1819 (Ukers, 1922/1935, pp. 9-10). This is also how we differ science from technology. A technology is something that performs certain functions, such as coffee keeping people awake. Science is the philosophy that works behind a technology and explains why technologies can function in certain ways, such as the brain’s reaction to caffeine is the reason for keeping people awake.

sheer number of options can slow down the writing process” (Sennett, 2018, p. 153). When users write by hand, they only write the content; when they use Microsoft Word, they type, edit, format, and interact with other features that Microsoft Word has but users may not need. This is not indicating Microsoft Word is not helpful, but it impedes visual focus by offering too many possibilities on the screen.

It is also unfair to blame users for succumbing easily, but the issue is that users often have troubling understanding the “why” even if they intend to, since technology designed under ethos of friction-free easily discourages curiosity. A convenient and user-friendly technology like Microsoft Word is always pound of its comprehensive menu that collaborates all functions available. But once the menu offers “predetermined forms for each function, [users] can choose only what’s on the menu” (Sennett, 2018, p. 155). It looks as if users are provided with more choices but are indeed limited by those choices—their freedom of choosing is confined within technology’s logic.

Therefore, influences of monopoly capitalism, restriction of participation in the formation of a program’s open source, menu design oriented rather than the kernel focused, these all together moves the high tech industry from an open to a closed condition.

Similarly, over-determination exists due to a prevailing assumption that a detailed consideration on the planning stage regarding all aspects of a dweller’s life will generate a city that all dwellers would love. As Sennett has been working in many third-world cities, his work experience allows him to debunk this assumption easily. Nevertheless, Sennett does not simply blame planners for being ignorant or self-righteous, because he has observed the fact that over-determination is genuinely promoted by most of the authorities. Generally, planners must carry out wishes of the authorities. In most nation states, regimes are obsessed with order and control.

Creativity in urban planning is thus strangled by the pursuit of “rigid images” and “precise delineations” (Sennett, 2017, p. 97). However, when Sennett defends planners and argues the regime ought to take the blame, by no means is he favoring anarchism. In fact, Sennett aims to arouse planners and reminds them what they have missed in modern urbanism, “a sense of time” (p. 97). Particularly, Sennett does not mean time in a nostalgic sense, but time in a future tense. Urban planners need to consider the “forward-looking time” and consider issues such as understanding how a city possibly evolves through time (p. 97). The over-determination that features order and control excludes a city from any opportunities to live in a forward-looking time.

The obsession with order and control is an advanced case of galloping zoning theory, of which the central idea is that each place in a city should have its own unique use. A city turns out to be clear and clean. With all activities predetermined and placed in control, a city is over-determined. This creates a proliferation of rules and regulations that is “unprecedented in the history of urban design”, resulting in privileging discipline at the expense of vitality in local life; eventually, the city is “frozen... in time” (p. 98).

This is why Sennett tries to remind us in terms of the “forward-looking time”. A city that suffers over-determination cannot move forward, but is trapped in the time from the past. It only exists in the shape when it was born because that is how planners create it. Planners guided by the zoning theory have no consideration on creating a city that can evolve along with its dwellers. Planners study the *cit * but are indifferent to voices of those who would live in their dreams.

The Closed City: The Brittle City

In fact, a city that suffers over-determination hardly remains in its original condition, which would be terrific if it happened, but it tends to decay very quickly. Sennett refers to a city

that suffers over-determination as a “Brittle City” (Sennett, 2017, p. 98). Districts of a Brittle City are rigidly organized but not coherently integrated. With a tight connection between form and function, a Brittle City creates an environment that obsolesces easily. According to Sennett, the average lifespan of new public housing projects in Britain is 40 years and the average lifespan of new skyscrapers in New York is 35 years (p. 98). Meanwhile, it is more than an architectural obsolescence but a social breaking down. People’s sense of belonging has been ripped apart; in Fullilove’s language, their root to the local community has been shaken.

Still, Sennett does not see the Brittle City as the cause of all its problems but accurately locates the preference of a closed system as being responsible. The favor of making a city to function as a closed system features a city with over-determination and eventually causes all problems that a Brittle City has. According to Sennett, a city operated as a closed system has two essential characteristics: “equilibrium and integration” (p. 98).

Equilibrium in a closed system means the total cumulative loading being taken globally must be granted to equilibrate under a certain bottom line. For instance, if the bottom line of a city is an income-expense balance, all departments in the administration must ensure their projects do not spend more than they are allowed. Integration means that all parts in a closed system remain consonant or harmonious with the broad spectrum of intermeshing functions. In an ideal condition, equilibrium assures the closed system would not break its bottom line and integration promises all parts of the system function in desired ways. But consequences of such an ideal condition are to reject anything unusual, unpredictable, and controversial, even those ideas may benefit the system in the long term. In this sense, contrary to modernity which has an underlying friendly gesture to anything that is new, a closed system eliminates any thoughts and

possibilities that may bring in changes. The favor of operating a city as a closed system, according to Sennett, reveals bureaucracy's "horror of disorder" (p. 99).

To rectify a closed system, Sennett goes against relying on the capitalistic free market, since it only accelerates bureaucrat's planning for their own interest and exacerbates the gap between the elite and the general. A pragmatic social contrast to a closed system must be a social system with different features. This social system is an open system and a city carrying an open system is an open city.

Sennett's Open City

The idea of an open city was initially introduced by Jane Jacobs in her argument against the French-Swiss architect Le Corbusier's plan of Radiant City. Le Corbusier's Radiant City is a utopian city that basically only consists of skyscrapers with parks. When Jacobs was arguing against the Radiant City and promoting a city that embraces a great level of diversity, she was enthusiastic about understanding ways in which urban places with density and diversity will function, such as streets. Jacobs discovered that those dense and diverse places do not lose vitality but are more vigorous and convivial than those isomorphic or homogeneous areas. In *The Death and Life of Great American Cities*, chapters 9 to 14 are dedicated to this inquiry. With heavy ink spent on six chapters, Jacobs has drawn two basic conclusions. First, diversity in a city is out of the question if the city does not meet four basic requirements: districts performing more than one primary function, having short blocks, buildings in various ages being co-present, and a sufficiently dense concentration of people (Jacobs, 1961, pp. 150-151). Second, diversity, once generated, is possible to be maintained by spontaneity; "city diversity itself permits and stimulates more diversity" (Jacobs, 1961, p. 145). Hence, it is clear that Jacobs basically took city diversity as its commercial diversity, including "variety of cultural opportunities, variety of

scenes, and a great variety in its population and other users” (Jacobs, 1961, p. 148). Meanwhile, although Jacobs indicated smallness and diversity are not in synonyms, she did believe a greater variety means a higher proportion of small elements.

Sennett has been influenced by Jacobs and does appreciate her scholarship on urban studies. Sennett acknowledges the correlation of planning certain features and the birth of diversity in a city. However, Sennett disagrees with her mindset that unplanned spontaneous growth maintains a livable community. Sennett takes this spontaneity as a breeding ground and a catalyst for community segregation in class, race and ethnicity. Sennett does not consider an unplanned spontaneity would reverse or even rectify any side effects of the zoning theory, since Sennett has seen so many people who are desperate to build “gated communities” (Sennett, 2018, p. 3). To prevent a city or a community suffering from “overdetermined, fit-for-purpose form”, Sennett aims to offer another planning theory so the zoning theory has an alternative (Sennett, 2008, p. 215). Jacobs has offered her response while Sennett does not think her pursuit of unplanned spontaneity is an ideal option. Similar to Jacobs, Sennett also advocates a community that should mix various types of people, with synchronous forms of public space where many activities can take place at once rather than a single activity being repeated all day long. Jacobs and Sennett have seen the same destination, while parting on the possible way of reaching there.

In addition, Sennett detects another lurking flaw in her writing. For Sennett, it seems that Jacobs paid little attention to the visual element in urban planning that can greatly assist in increasing diversity and enriching people’s experience in an urban environment.

To summarize, Sennett believes an open city cannot grow simply based on unplanned spontaneity, but it needs opportunities to grow in its forward-looking time. Those opportunities are endorsed by the city’s own framework, a framework that permits the city to remain open and

to evolve with its dwellers. Sennett states that the key feature of this framework is a “visual structuring of evolutionary time” that serves as “a systematic property of the open city” (Sennett, 2017, p. 100). To make this concrete, Sennett describes three systematic elements of an open city, “passage territories”, “incomplete form”, and “development narratives” (p. 100).

Passage Territories: More Borders, Less Boundaries

The first systematic element of an open city, passage territories, refers to edge conditions of a city. In the natural world, there are two types of edges, ecological border and ecological boundary. An ecological border permits activities between different groups to occur at the edge. The coast is an ecological border in which sea waves hit the land. The coast is where marine organisms such as algae feed and grow and land creatures such as crabs prey. An ecological boundary permits less activity between different groups, in which the purpose of a boundary is to separate groups completely. A border’s edge intensifies activities, functioning as a membrane. A boundary’s edge dispels activities, functioning as a wall. In a city, a border is usually made of lawn or patio, while a boundary is often made of wall or fence.

Sennett realizes that most planners intend to strengthen a community through working with its center while neglecting its edges. Though the center is genuinely important, edges are places where communication and exchange between different races, ethnicities and classes take place. Boundary-featured edges weaken and even diminish the rich communicative interactions necessary to make a city more open. Sennett believes an open city needs more borders and less boundaries. For occasions that a boundary is necessary, Sennett thinks a wall does more benefits to the city if it functions like a sponge which is both “porous and resistant” (Sennett, 2017, p. 101). A sponge is porous and resistant since it absorbs water but it still keeps its shape.

Observing the almost ubiquitous application of the zoning theory, Sennett agrees with Jacobs that the boundary dominates the modern city, leading urban habitats being cut up into

segregated parts. In most cases, boundaries that separate communities in a city are made of highways. In Pittsburgh, the Interstate I-579 HOV traverses downtown and Pittsburgh and brutally separates the Uptown and the Hill District from the Downtown. It severely blocks residents in the Uptown and the Hill District going into Downtown. It is still possible to reach there but it takes a detour. This boundary has seriously damaged the economy of those two communities. Meanwhile, hardly anybody from the Downtown would think about crossing into the Uptown or the Hill District.

However, Sennett does not espouse the elimination of boundary, which is what John Stewart favored. In *Bridges not Walls*, Stewart (1973/2011) rejected communication with obstacles and thus proposed a fully transparent environment for communication to take place. Stewart was trying to remove boundaries utterly, moving from “walls without bridges” to “bridges not walls”. However, Sennett would disagree with Stewart’s practice of removing boundaries as it would inevitably bring huge side effects. Sennett learns from Googleplex’s hot desking environment that a barrier free atmosphere will not promote communication but only makes everyone silent.

Hence, Sennett encourages replacing boundaries with borders. An open city is not about “bridges not walls” or “walls without bridges”, but it should be “walls with bridges”. A wall functions like a sponge is a wall with bridges. It is porous and it opens for communication. It is also resistant and it protects both sides for privacy.

This dual quality of being porous and resistant is a vital principle for “visualizing more modern living urban forms” and could be well extended from an individual building to a district which consists of various communities (Sennett, 2017, p. 101).

Incomplete Form: Farming a City than Master Planning

The second systematic element of an open city is incomplete form. When Sennett says an open city requires using incomplete form, he does not mean unfinished construction sites with scaffoldings and skip cars. Incomplete form is a designed incompleteness. It is better to make half of a good house than to make a complete cruddy house, such as a building with “rooms are chopped up into cubbyhole space”, which represents a common housing condition in Hong Kong (Sennett, 2018, p. 230).

The incomplete form is found in the city, rather than made from the beginning. Sennett recognizes that most cities nowadays are not “farmed”, that is, they are not evolved gradually, but they are “master-planned” (Sennett, 2018, p. 236). What Sennett believes as pragmatic is that urban planners need to design with the consideration that cities and buildings have the opportunity to adjust and evolve over time as the need for habitation changes.

When Sennett and his team was assigned to replan Harlem, New York, on the west edge of Harlem, they put the first fairway supermarket in that area. This was the first time that blacks and whites had a supermarket in West Harlem. This creates a racial co-presence which turns out to be a good result. Both races meet in the supermarket and talk outside it. What excites Sennett is the fact that there are numerous other places in New York City that are like Harlem, places with incomplete forms that could be found. These are places that Sennett believe vital to open a city physically up, through developing and upgrading. Sennett disagrees Sennett worries about the philosophy in urban planning that tears down an entire community and designs everything from sheets of paper and builds everything from scratch. Sennett proposes using incomplete form in planning as it creates possibilities for doing adding and adjusting in the future.

The third systematic element of an open city is development narratives. A development narrative is what guides planners when working on a blueprint. It is a narrative of urban planning. Sennett goes against the prescriptive development narrative that follows “a lock-step march towards achieving a single end” (Sennett, 2017, p. 103). Instead, Sennett prefers a non-linear development narrative that leaves room for future communication. Sennett terms this narrative “seed-planning” (Sennett, 2018, p. 235). In another word, a city is not rigidly prescribed, but gradually developed. This does not reject having a plan at the beginning, but permits possibilities for conflicts taking place and changes being made after the original plan has been processed.

This is best understood through the philosophy of communication. The philosophy of communication as the carrier of meaning requires the meeting of existence on its own terms. So, meaning emerges in our response to what has happened before us and what is happening currently. We cannot find a theory that always tells us how to communicate. Similarly, we cannot find a perfect theory that tells us exactly how to plan an open city—the number of buildings should exist in a district, their proper height, or the most perfect width of a street should be. But we need to constantly analyze issues we face in the world we are living in. Such a move is not possible if we stand above the world and judge, but we situate ourselves in the world with practice. The key is we are willing to practice in the real world, open ourselves to conflicts, and adjust our practice accordingly. This is the essence of the Sennettian seed-planning.

To summarize, Sennett believes the best way to understand an open city is through the notion of an open system, which is in contrast to a closed system. A closed system prioritizes order and control over anything else and refuses any changes that may challenge the system’s order to take place. A city operating as a closed system suffers over-determination and therefore

becomes a Brittle City. Two features of a closed system, equilibrium and integration, serve a Brittle City through squashing the bureaucracy's horror of disorder, even at the expense of potential innovation and rectification of the city. Such a city is trapped in the past, and therefore permanently misses the forward-looking time. An open city, on the contrary, has opportunities to grow in its forward-looking time. Those opportunities are made possible through constructing more borders and less boundaries, using incomplete form that encourages futural modifying and upgrading, and embodying a non-linear seed-planning narrative.

An Open City and A Smart City

In fact, there are several ideas related to ways in which a city ought to be planned in urban communication. One of the most influential ideas is the notion of a smart city.

The first book on the notion of smart city is William Mitchell's 1996 publication, *City of Bits: Space, Place, and the Infobahn*. Mitchell's imagination on a smart city is fundamentally different from what technology autonomists have portrayed in fictions and films, such as *The Matrix* or *I, Robot*, both of which fascinated audience with a highly technologized worldview with a robot-suitable city structure and a convenient, or stupefied, human lifestyle. *City of Bits* presented a smart city that has a complex form: citizens are benefited by rich choices due to an information-sharing database; the physical structure including buildings and streets responds to human activities and is open to evolve. Mitchell's smart city has a polymorphic *ville* as well as a *cit * rich in meanings.

It seems that Mitchell's smart city has all features necessary that Sennett requires for constructing an open city. However, Sennett reminds us that an open city does not equal a smart city. In fact, Mitchell's smart city is an open smart city, while there are also closed smart cities that have none of those features.

The Original Googleplex

An example of a closed smart city that Sennett discusses heavily is the original Googleplex, located in New York City, just above the Greenwich Village. It took over and refurbished a giant building that was previously used by the Port Authority of New York as their office. Sennett terms the New York Googleplex “a new kind of ghetto” (Sennett, 2018, p. 146).

In blueprint, the Googleplex is meant to be a self-contained structure; namely, a company town that provides full services on all matters and issues. The Googleplex is designed as a company town in one building. The goal is to exclude any possible obstacles to creativity so that employers and employees can live inside the building and work for Google all day long.

Nevertheless, the Googleplex did not seem to have achieved its goal. To pursue creativity, the internal structure is designed to maximize efficiency and minimize distractions. This philosophy presupposes that such a self-sufficient and inward-turning environment would inspire creativity, while the reality answered negatively. One feature that marked its failure was the “hot desking”, an office organization system that involves multiple workers using a single physical workstation or surface during different times of a day. In a hot desking environment, one is no longer assigned with an individual desk, but is encouraged to use any available desk at hand. The purpose is to balance work and socializing as such a balance is believed to be a booster to generate creativity. Google, as well as other high-tech companies, prefers to reach this balance through amalgamating social spaces into “high-traffic areas” (p. 150). As a result, there are no dedicated social spaces but only areas that are constantly engaging all types of activities, and socializing can only take place within those areas. The boundary between work and socializing is more than blurred, but completely diminished.

Still, Sennett does not regard Googleplex as a total failure. Features in the Googleplex correspond to what Jacobs proposed as fundamental to increase a district’s diversity. According

to Jacobs, the first rule is to have districts providing more than one primary uses so that people are able to use districts on different schedules and in the place for different purposes (Jacobs, 1961). Jacobs was strongly against the zoning theory that was popular in her time. In this sense, the Googleplex stands with Jacobs. Jacobs provided several examples to illustrate her ideas and her arguments were sound and persuasive. But the primary reason that the Googleplex failed to achieve its purpose is the lack of resistance. The Googleplex featured a resistance free environment, but forgot that creativity cannot take place without “encounter[ing] with resistance” (Sennett, 2018, p. 151). This marks the fundamental difference between an open smart city and a closed smart city.

Therefore, a closed smart city is a city with a Googleplex version, filled in with Tocquevillian individuals and fueled by user-friendly technology. Dwellers are deprived of living experiences. All planning efforts are dedicated to “foresee how the city will function” (p. 161). This is not a dialogical understanding. It only presupposes that city dwellers will love the way their city is planned. A closed smart city does not value or even receive active feedback from city dwellers. A closed smart city is a “prescriptive” smart city that “privileges problem-solving over problem-finding” (162). In a closed smart city, city dwellers do not experience or explore the city, but follow predetermined ways of living. This creates more than ethical concerns, but the hope that prescribed technology leading to efficiency may permanently remain a hope. “An efficient tight-fit assumes the design will foresee every circumstance in which the object will be used”, but the society is filled with people who mainly act upon their own circumstances (p. 162). Looking at the entire society as a whole picture, we observe that people almost act arbitrarily. Therefore, it is impossible to foresee all unforeseeable events. Thus, the

philosophy that planners can offer solutions to all problems in advance is merely a fallacy. A closed smart city pursues efficiency at the expense of people's dwelling experience.

Dwelling in an Open City

Looking at the current historical moment, cities in the twenty-first century are undoubtedly filled with immigrants. Diversity is the common feature that all cities share. This means city dwellers always belong to several different communities simultaneously—through their workplace, family, friendship, and church. An open city permits and encourages people with different narratives to engage in meaningful communication. However, meaningful communication does not occur spontaneously. It sets certain requirements to city dwellers, who are participants of such communication. A closed city does not engage in dialogical thinking. Active feedback from city dwellers is silenced and ignored. Planners presuppose their design is perfect and dwellers would love it. An open city encourages active feedback from city dwellers so that planners can learn from it.

In this chapter, *Sennett and Urban Communication*, I have reviewed the urban communication literature in which scholars attempt to understand how communication in an urban environment is conducted. This chapter also illustrates a traditional understanding of one's interiority which argues that one's interiority is connected to the interior environment one dwells in. It also introduces Simmel's alternative understanding which maintains that interiority is connected to the exterior environment. This leads to the phenomenon that people, especially the young generation, prefer to dwell alone in a city, since one prefers to develop one's interiority when being alone. Therefore, Sennett argues that a modern city ought to possess features that allow one to dwell alone, not only in private, but also in public. But the gap between planners and dwellers is prohibiting those features from being brought into existence. To fill this gap,

Sennett proposes the notion of an open city, which is a settlement that permits people to communicate as well as to keep distance with others. An open city is the best way to assist dwellers to develop their interiority and to provide the ground that allows meaningful communication in an urban environment to take place.

However, a Sennettian open city does not presuppose meaningful communication could spontaneously occur once the physical environment is set up. In our current historical moment, which is postmodernity, we have seen too many examples in which communication among people results in conflicts, which is normal and encouraged, and even violence, which should be avoided.

Therefore, chapter three illustrates an ideal urban environment, an open city, which enables communication in an urban environment to take place. The next chapter, *Sennett and Communication*, is dedicated to discussing ways in which communication in the era of difference is possible. This requires more than a ground that permits meaningful communication to take place, but one's attentiveness to the ground and one's willingness to perform communication. In chapter four, I will bring back Sennett's discussion on the notion of craftsmanship and advocate that communication in postmodernity is better understood as a craft. I will also illustrate the notion of communication ethics literacy, which answers what makes communication possible in the era of difference.

Chapter Four. Sennett and Communication

Once we say that we live in postmodernity, we are referring to a historical moment. A historical moment is not understood as a period of calendar years, or as the development of schools of thoughts which occur within or across historical moments. Rather, a historical moment emerges once issues raised by people require public attention.

Throughout the history of the West, there have been antiquity, the middle ages, modernity, and postmodernity. However, postmodernity is a special historical moment since it does not exist directly after modernity, but a juncture that presupposes that all previous historical moments are co-present. This means that in antiquity, the middle ages, and modernity, there was a clearly agreed upon good that people living in those historical moments were willing to protect and promote: polis, the Church, progress and objectivity. But once we move from modernity to postmodernity, it does not mean what people valued in modernity is no longer valued in postmodernity. Instead, progress and objectivity are still appreciated by groups of people but they are no longer valued by the entire society. What is more important is the fact that the good people valued in previous historical moments are reborn in postmodernity. Hence, in postmodernity, there are people who still value polis—as practices in family and community; there are people who still believe in faith; and there are people who still value progress and objectivity. So, in postmodernity, there is no “the good” that everyone agrees to protect and promote, but a number of individual goods that we value differently.

Postmodernity as an era of difference permits people carrying different narratives to meet and it also permits people to live with a multiplicity of goods. This chapter, *Sennett and Communication*, responds to a call from postmodernity. This chapter attempts to address, interpret, and answer one of the most fundamental questions in the field of communication, that is how communication is possible. This chapter connects to Sennett’s work by addressing Sennett’s discussions on craft and craftsmanship and by discussing issues that exist in communication between urban planners and city dwellers.

This chapter starts with Sennett’s discussion on the notion of craft and craftsmanship. It then moves to articulating why communication in postmodernity is better understood as a craft.

It finally brings in the notion of communication ethics literacy through presenting ideas from Buber, Gadamer, and Bakhtin.

In chapter three, *Sennett and Urban Communication*, I have presented the fact that urban planners and city dwellers have their own good to protect and promote. This results in miscommunication and sometimes conflicts. Sennett responds to this challenge by introducing the idea of an open city, a settlement that embraces difference and diversity. However, one fundamental element requires attention before Sennett's blueprint of an open city can be brought into existence, that is human communication.

Sennett's belief for an open city equipping difference and diversity is inspired by a classical understanding, from the notion of *synoikismos*, which literally means dwelling together and originally means the amalgamation of villages into a Greek polis. Aristotle interpreted *synoikismos* as the practice of "drawing of different people together" (Sennett, 2018, p. 7). In *Politics*, Aristotle concluded that trade is more vigorous in a city than in a "thinly populated village" (p. 7). Aristotle thus emphasized that *synoikismos* is decisive to the prosperity of a polis since trade is based on exchange on various types of goods which must be firstly made by people from different professions. This Aristotelian understanding of urban development does not only apply to a Greek polis but makes more sense to a modern industrialized city. Hence, Sennett sees the success of an open city relies on its inclusiveness to difference and diversity.

An open city is expected to permit people to live with a multiplicity of goods. An open city is not a modern industrialized city which only favors industrial production or commerce activities. Although Sennett does not express explicitly, an open city is genuinely a postmodern city where various petite narratives are rooted and practiced. As a result, people unavoidably live, work, and interact with those who have different narratives. Meaningful communication

among those with different narratives is never generated spontaneously, but always carried out with arguments, conflicts, and sometimes even violence. A city, no matter being open or closed, cannot function well if its dwellers fail to build meaningful communication with others.

However, communication with those who differ is never easy. This means one must learn to respect those perspectives that are unlike one's own. Building communication with people unlike oneself is something that needs to be acquired. Thus, Sennett advocates that the notion of *synoikismos* contains more than the idea of interacting with those who differ but practicing *synoikismos* requires a learned capacity. Such a capacity is a type of craft that permits one to identify, understand, combat, and cooperate with those who are different from oneself.

Craftsmanship in the Digital Era

In a modern urban environment, one's capacity to manage difference and diversity is learned from understanding the craftsmanship in the digital era. There have been arguments that intend to put the digital and the craft in opposition. This is more than wrong but dangerous. Placing them in opposition assumes that the digital era that we are now experiencing is a time that discards traditions and modes of performing the craft. This opposition is raised by the perspective that the craft in the traditional sense does not remain its authentic form in the digital era. This is a modern mindset in which the value of tradition is ignored and practices of tradition are therefore abandoned. Nevertheless, we are no longer in modernity but postmodernity, which is a juncture that permits all previous historical moments to be co-present. Thus, some features of modernity still exist but they are never as dominant as they were in modernity. Sennett has seen this difference, though he never explicitly uses the term postmodernity, he argues that we should not regard the digital era as a period that has no place for performing a craft (Sennett, 2018). We need a brand-new perspective to look at the digital era

that has given birth to a new form of craftsmanship. Therefore, since craft is one feature among many others that was born in digital culture, Sennett advocates that instead of articulating “craft in the digital age”, a more accurate phrase is “craft of the digital age”⁴². This craft of the digital age is the new form of craftsmanship in postmodernity⁴³ that we need to understand.

Three Aspects of Craftsmanship

Contemplating on the craftsmanship from a traditional account, Sennett has summarized three aspects that the craftsmanship in the digital era contains: craftsmanship is developed through the interplay between explicit knowledge and tacit knowledge; craftsmanship is strengthened through balancing problem-finding and problem-solving; and craftsmanship is prepared through practicing slowly and thinking reflectively.

Explicit Knowledge and Tacit Knowledge

The first aspect about craftsmanship concerns what the rhythm of skill development is. This rhythm represents an interplay between explicit knowledge and tacit knowledge. The knowledge of a practice is explicit when one initially learns about it. After conducting several practices, one is skillful in a way that one can make the body movement right without thinking explicitly on how one ought to move one’s body. At that point, explicit knowledge is transformed to tacit knowledge. This is exemplified through the example of chopping vegetables. At the beginning of practicing chopping vegetables, one has to pause and think as one must control the strength being placed on the knife. Excessive strength destroys herbs with tender fiber and may hurt the cook’s fingers, while inadequate strength slows down the process and

⁴² See, Sennett, “Richard Sennett: Craftsmanship”, 2016, 4:30-4:45.

⁴³ A craft is considered as a manual activity and craftsmanship is skill in a particular craft. Therefore, in order to identify the level of skill in a craft, craftsmanship involves a certain degree of objectification, not merely of production whereas a craft could be merely a productive activity. Craftsmanship reflects how quality of work gradually gets built up in a productive act. In brief, the craft of the digital era is the craftsmanship in the digital era.

quickly exhausts the cook. Through moments of pausing and thinking, one eventually acquires explicit knowledge. After one learns to chop boldly and clearly, one can chop without thinking how much strength one ought to use as one did in those early attempts. This is one acquiring tacit knowledge.

But craftsmanship keeps developing even after acquiring tacit knowledge. This generally occurs when a master craftsman tries to make his tacit knowledge explicit again so that his apprentices can understand. When the master decides to organize and clarify his knowledge regarding ways in which to use a tool, he dredges up tacit knowledge into consciousness. This is the stage when the master feels surprised. Surprises occur as the master realizes that knowledge he writes down does not present them in the exact same way he thinks they should. This creates a new gap between tacit and explicit knowledge, which does not exist if the master does not attempt to make his tacit knowledge explicit again.

Problem-Finding and Problem-Solving

This goes to the second aspect about craftsmanship—the core of developing craftsmanship is balancing problem-finding and problem-solving.

In the mechanical view of craft, when one encounters a problem, if one could, one solves it. The danger is that once one separates problem solving from problem finding, one isolates oneself from possibilities for skill development. In fact, there is a difference between a craft practice and a mechanical practice. A craft practice is similar to using a tool. One can develop various proper ways to use the tool. A mechanical practice is closer to operating a machine. A machine is a representation of a correlation between means and ends and there is usually only one correct correlation. In *Technic and Civilization*, Lewis Mumford described the distinction between a tool and a machine roots in “the degree of independence in the operation from the skill and motive power of the operator” (Mumford, 1934/1963, p. 10). A master demonstrates a

mechanical practice to his apprentices will have no confusion at all, since there exists only one way to practice. But if a master demonstrates a craft practice, the gap between tacit and explicit knowledge presents itself.

Acknowledging the legitimacy of this gap is extremely important. The gap is a problem that drives the master's attention. Once trying to fill in the gap, a master can exhaust his mind to repeat the exact same way he used to practice. Alternatively, the master can focus on features of the tool and the craft practice, and develop a different way to produce the same result, even though this process challenges him with new problems that he did not encounter previously. The former master, once failed to stimulate the accurate recollection, usually ends up with having unnecessary conflicts with his apprentices. But even if he succeeds, his skill is not developed. The latter master, on the other hand, challenges himself and manages to strengthen skills. Both of them try to solve the problem, but the former favors problem-solving and leaves no room for problem-finding. This is why he intends to repeat what has been pragmatic without willingness to walk into the unknown. If a master aims to think as the latter one, he must understand that there is more than one way to do something right in a craft practice. For both, the tacit knowledge that they have obtained for performing a certain activity is indeed genuine knowledge. However, when we say we have developed a skill, it means we learn various ways to perform the same activity. Philosophically, this means something becomes an objective practice without being the "truth" practice. Once a craftsman recognizes the existence of multiple methods to practice and masters those methods, his skill develops.

This essentially explains why multitasking is difficult to achieve. Once a craftsman values problem-finding, he has to contemplate on practice carefully. Thus, it is genuinely difficult and even impossible to simultaneously contemplate on something else if he intends to be

Careful and focusing. In multi-tasking, it requires one to switch one's focus of attention between a task to another task frequently. The quicker one can switch one's focus of attention, the more successful one is regarded as being multi-tasking. Every time a switch of focus of attention takes place, one concentrates on the new task and forgets the previous task. Once encountering resistance, one always aims to solve those problems without necessarily considering sources of those problems. Not because one is unwilling to, but one is not granted with the time to think. Multi-tasking aims at squashing ambiguity, which is precisely where problems emerge. If a craftsman intends to understand sources that give birth to a problem, a practice that causes ambiguity is the best place to look at. But if one is multi-tasking, one sincerely does not want ambiguity to occur again since it only slows the switch of one's focus of attention. Therefore, multi-tasking fundamentally goes against what problem-finding is about, but only favors problem-solving.

Slowness and Reflective Thinking

Therefore, the third aspect about craftsmanship is its nature of being slow, which connects to the previous two aspects strongly. Developing craftsmanship takes enormous time in acquiring explicating knowledge, in making tacit knowledge explicit, and in problem-solving. Influenced by a modern mindset with a pursuit of efficiency, often one wants to do everything quickly, so doing things slowly is what one has to learn.

However, one does not slow down for its own sake since such a practice does not engage in reflection. One wants to slow down the movement for better reflective thinking. A slow process enables a psychological break so that one can contemplate the consciousness of an activity. Through a practice, one may sense instant hits that are illuminating but one has difficulty recollecting those hints. A general experience is that if one goes through something extremely fast, one is not good at practicing what one goes through as one undergoes too fast.

Philosophically, this means that doing well in something does not equal reaching the Heideggerian sense of release, in which dwelling is regarded as a form of immersion. Sennett values the slowness in craftsmanship as it generates the process of releasing, which provides one a relief from strong or repressed emotions. Once practicing slowly, one gradually becomes absorbed and one dwells at peace. The slow practice allows one to inhabit the time of doing rather than the time that gives a recognition of being. Slow practice encourages one to contemplate on the process per se rather than being anxious to produce a result.

In this historical moment, there are huge numbers of firms choosing an efficiency imperative—releasing a product in the shortest period of time even with the lowest quality and then rectifying the product through user feedback. Most of those firms died very quickly. Intelligent and dedicated people might be hooked to join those firms but they eventually quit as the pressure to go fast diminishes the whole attentiveness to what is being produced. Aiming to improve solely from user feedback puts a great burden on customers for explaining why something goes wrong. User feedback is helpful but the major force for improvement ought to come from craftsmen in the firm.

Meanwhile, we realize that postmodernity is not a historical period directly after modernity, but a juncture in which all previous historical moments are co-present. This means what has been valued in modernity, such as efficiency, is still promoted and promoted by certain people. When Sennett argues that one aspect of craftsmanship is slowness, he does not intend to slow everything down, but reminds us that we cannot presuppose improvement would always come after speeding up. If a firm realizes its competitors are shortening the developing period of a product at the expense of its quality, it may not be wise to join the rat race. Instead, providing a product with higher quality can let the firm bounce up, as a later entry, especially after customers

are fed up with those low quality products from its competitors. On the other hand, it is not helpful if the firm always attempts to provide an A plus level product, since it exhausts time, money, and marketing opportunities. The firm must therefore ask whether those resources are well-spent. In most cases, a firm does not become better with the excessive effort people put into in order to pursue perfection. Therefore, when Sennett says developing craftsmanship takes enormous time, he does not applaud those craftsmen who constantly ponder details but never complete any products. Such a craftsman is practicing for its own sake. He forgets the importance of the public domain. A genuine craftsman ought to pay attention to the practice as well as what is required by the public domain.

Communication in Postmodernity as a Craft

When a craftsman is making something, he must focus on the material in front and the tool at hand. The more concentration a craftsman devotes, the less he realizes his existence. This is a phenomenology question that deals with the notion of focus of attention. Phenomenology is always driven by consciousness, so it is always the phenomenological focus of attention. A master telling careless apprentices to “pay attention” means to let apprentices have a phenomenological focus of attention on what is at hand. A coach telling inattentive kids to “play the game” means to let kids have a phenomenological focus of attention on activities in the field. This also explains how magic works. Magic always functions as a shifting of a phenomenological focus of attention. When a magician is performing, he moves the audience's phenomenological focus of attention to one direction, while somewhere else where the audience's focus of attention is absent, changes are happening. Once the audience's focus of attention moves back, those changes seem to occur from thin air. Magic works when the

audience's phenomenological focus of attention is moved to one direction when it ought to be somewhere else.

A craftsman placing his focus of attention on the work no longer feels himself. From a psychology perspective, his self-consciousness diminishes. From a phenomenology perspective, his focus of attention is not on the agent. When a blacksmith waves a hammer, when a musician plays the piano, and when a clerk drives to the workplace, their focus of attention is not on the agent, but on the practice: the material, the music, and the road. Standardized practices lead to ingrained body motions and it makes prehension possible. A blacksmith does not think about him striking but concentrates on where should the hammer drop so that a right part of the metal receives force. A pianist does not think about him playing the piano but moves his fingers when hearing familiar notes and rhythm of music. A driver does not think about him driving but his body operates as autopilot once being familiar with navigation. None of these activities can occur if the phenomenological focus of attention is not placed on the practice.

However, placing the phenomenological focus of attention on the practice does not ensure certain practices will be accepted. There is the distinction between imposing an action and acting from a tradition. Explaining why certain actions fulfill an ethical framework can work in both directions. Demanding people to act "ethically" usually generates stress. This is not because those people are unethical beings, but if such a demand has no connection to the context and the experience, meaning of action diminishes.

In an urban environment, there are always certain actions being made by a group of people in a specific place. The most common example is that expert planners inform community members on some exciting changes that will be brought to the community. This is an action coming from an imposition of a context. As a result, community members often refuse, even

those changes genuinely benefit the community. On the other hand, engaging community members at the beginning of a planning procedure will create a fundamentally different result. Dwellers feel they are engaged and trusted. Their ideas are heard and valued. In this sense, a plan is written by planners and dwellers together. This is a plan coming from realistic context and experience, so it makes sense. Without participation of dwellers, a professional plan coming out of a disembodied context does not make sense. These two types of plan do not have the same phenomenological reality. What makes communication ethics important in this issue is that it tries to revert people's phenomenological focus of attention to what people protect and promote, not necessarily claiming what is ethical in communication or claiming what benefits the community. Communication ethics is "understood within the genre of praxis" and "embraces responsibility without an ironclad blueprint for discerning truthful/ethical action" (Arnett, 2017, p. 4).

Once we look at how communication is understood and practiced in postmodernity, we realize it echoes those three aspects that the craftsmanship in the digital era contains.

First, when communicating with those who carry different narratives, both parties are easily involved in conflicts if they focus on the agent but not the narrative. To know one is to know that one's narrative. Knowing one's narrative illustrates the narrative ground that prepares one's identity. In most cases, we cannot achieve this through direct verbal inquiry. Hence, we need to watch events happen and can only interpret and understand them thereafter. This takes a significant amount of time.

Second, once we move from observing a behavior to understanding meaning behind a behavior, that behavior becomes an action, which is understood as a story-laden behavior that carries public significance. The moment we move from observing a behavior to understanding an

action is similar to the move from explicit knowledge to tacit knowledge. An action carries its significance as the public understands meaning behind it. Once a stranger joins the community, people need to interpret the meaning behind the action so that the stranger can make sense of the action. Otherwise, an action remains a behavior for that stranger. This is similar to the process of a master educating apprentices, in which the master is making tacit knowledge explicit again.

Third, we recognize that dealing with conflicts in communication does not necessarily mean that we are only pursuing agreement. Solving or easing conflicts is certainly one of the goals but should not be the only goal. This is the fundamental reason for doing philosophy of communication since it helps us describe questions instead of directly offering solutions. The philosophy of communication focuses on philosophizing through asking questions that lead to something else. We want to address a question into its own ground and contemplate comprehensively regarding everything associated with that question. This does not mean that problem-solving is irrelevant. Problem-solving requires one to pay attention to the public domain and focus on implications. This is why the philosophy of communication always comes with a rhetorical turn that brings in implications. The philosophy of communication tries to examine what are some assumptions connected to this question. Rhetoric emerges in those assumptions of what one attempts to bring out into the public domain and those assumptions have persuasive consequences. It is those implications that guide one's decision making in terms of accepting or rejecting some particular ideas. Working on craftsmanship means developing skill in a particular craft. This cannot be achieved solely through squashing problems. Similarly, in communication, the focus of attention ought to be placed on problems. We encourage conversations and arguments so that problems can be fully discussed. We need to firstly understand the how and why a problem emerges and can only work on problem-solving thereafter.

To summarize, communication in postmodernity always involves communicating with people carrying a different narrative. In order to build meaningful communication, one is required to respect and understand, without necessarily accepting or agreeing with, the other's narrative. The practice of understanding meanings behind behaviors is one learning explicit knowledge, while the practice of interpreting actions to those who do not understand is one learning making tacit knowledge explicit. Meanwhile, one does not remain completely silent during observing, understanding, and interpreting. Rather, one actively communicates. One invites more conversations to take place once a conflict presents itself. Communication is a necessity for navigating the current historical moment which embraces a world of glory. Understanding as one goal of communication is what everyone desires. However, understanding is not taken for granted and is hardly achieved in a short period of time, but requires dedication, patience, and effort. Communication in postmodernity as what prepares people to engage with those who differ is genuinely a craft.

Hence, the next important question is what it means ethically for a person to develop this craftsmanship, which is the skill for communicating with people who carry different narratives and for practicing *synoikismos*? In the next session, I propose practicing and acquiring such a skill through understanding communication ethics literacy which places emphasis on dialogue and difference⁴⁴.

Communication Ethics Literacy

Similar to the philosophy of communication, communication ethics is also tied to a set of assumptions that carry for a discourse, a text, and an understanding. What makes communication ethics unique is that it has a clarity of good that one is willing to protect and promote. A good is

⁴⁴ This draws upon Ronald C. Arnett, Janie M. Harden Fritz, and Leeanne M. Bell's (2009) book: *Communication Ethics Literacy: Dialogue and Difference*.

an object of craving. Communication ethics is understood as the protecting and promoting of what one craves or desires in a life. Therefore, in postmodernity—an era of difference—there is no “the communication ethics”, but individual goods that everyone values differently. Living in postmodernity is living with multiplicity of goods. It simultaneously means that when we ask what one craves or desires and what one protects and promotes, each of us will have individual answers. The significance of this historical moment comes from the fact that questions emerge in “junctures of change” which lead to concrete and individual responses to the good that one values (Arnett et al., 2009, p. 11). Postmodernity as a juncture offers us an opportunity to learn from difference, since it permits different goods to become co-present. Communication ethics literacy is what makes communication in the era of difference possible.

Therefore, communication ethics cannot be regarded or used as an instrument that one can brandish to condemn the other as being unethical by claiming the other fails to meet certain standards. The failure of “meeting standards” is derived from the fact that what one values differs from what the other values, which is the fundamental feature of postmodernity. Making such a critique in the name of communication ethics has no legitimacy but only self-righteousness.

Instead, a more pragmatic way to embrace communication ethics is to let it remind us of the necessity of meeting the existence of “the Other”—those who have different and even contradictory opinions (Holba, 2013, p. 545). Communication ethics helps us to learn and understand the significance of this meeting and what are some assumptions that make this meeting occur. In *Communication Ethics Literacy*, Arnett, Fritz, and Bell have summarized six approaches to communication ethics. They are “democratic communication ethics”, “universal-humanitarian communication ethics”, “codes, procedures, and standards in communication

ethics”, “contextual communication ethics”, “narrative communication ethics”, and “dialogic communication ethics”⁴⁵. By indicating these six approaches are different, the authors do not argue any superiority that any of the six may carry. Which one of them makes the most sense depends on the concrete social context that a historical moment called upon. In terms of the area of urban communication and considering issues regarding communication between urban planners and city dwellers, as well as between community members and outsiders, are carried out under the stress of handling differences, understanding communication ethics through the notion of dialogue seems to best respond to this historical moment. In fact, there are several ways to address the notion of dialogue. Anderson, Baxter, and Cissna (2004) have identified four different schools of dialogue, situated in the work of Martin Buber (philosophy of dialogue), Hans-Georg Gadamer (philosophical hermeneutics), Carl Rogers (therapeutic psychologism), and Mikhail Bakhtin (dialogical communication).

Martin Buber, Dialogue in Interspace

Once people with different narratives encounter and communicate, they may engage in conflicts. One may squash conflicts by preventing it from occurring in the first place, namely, avoiding any further communication with those who have different perspectives. This is only a futile gesture since it does not necessarily solve the conflicts nor it helps one to learn from differences. As an alternative, John Stewart (1973) proposed that people ought to be fully communicative and transparent to others, as the title of his book suggested, we need *Bridges not Walls*. Stewart argued that conflicts can be best addressed under conditions of full transparency. Stewart’s proposal looks plausible yet creates a series of other problems. The most decisive concern is that full transparency does not encourage but inhibits communication. A closed smart

⁴⁵ See, Chapter 3: Approaches to Communication Ethics: The Pragmatic Good of Theory.

city, such as the Googleplex, is an attempt to build bridges without walls. As Sennett's observation from the Googleplex, its hot desking environment did not increase opportunities for any informal discussions. On the contrary, people prefer to "fall silent" (Sennett, 2018, p. 150). Hot desking privileges fully transparency, but the practice in office shows people favoring privacy. This environment with full transparency greatly discourages those who want privacy to participate.

This is what Buber argued profoundly that the meaning of communication only emerges in the space between man and man. Before Buber, there were two major schools that tried to answer ways in which communication takes place. One of them is behaviorism which believes one's communication is fully derived from one's perception of the external environmental stimulus. The other side is psychologism which states that one's communication is connected to one's internal identification. Behaviorists argue one communicates only through responding to the external environment and one's action is therefore irrelevant; psychologism argues one communicates through focusing on, perceiving, and understanding the internal feeling of one's self (Arnett, 1981).

Buber disagreed with both. Buber was trying to offer an alternative account on explaining how communication occurs. The central term of Buber's philosophy is dialogue. Buber (1923/2012) did not understand a dialogue as a conversation that only consists of discourse, but as a meaningful interaction of the narratives of two interlocutors. A conversation begins when people start talking. A dialogue occurs long before people meet. A dialogue between two people represents an encounter of two people's narratives. A dialogue occurs once people are living their own lives, experiencing the world in their own ways, and letting their narratives be shaped by their experiences.

Stephan Strasser (1969), in *The Idea of Dialogal Phenomenology*, quoted Buber's identification on the significance of reciprocity: "One will touch, the other will allow himself to be touched; one will execute movements of touch, the other will remain relatively motionless; one will perceive, the other will allow himself to be perceived" (pp. 55; 57-58).

Therefore, once a dialogue takes place, one communicating the other is not understood as a subject acting on an object. Some may argue that since both have the opportunity to become a subject and an object, but even this understanding is also incorrect. The idea here is that both interlocutors are fundamental, because without both interlocutors participating, no communication could occur. Therefore, one cannot express and deliver if one completely dwells in perceiving the internal reflections of one's own self. Meanwhile, expression and delivery is equally not possible if one dwells in the other's self. No matter how authentic those internal perceptions are, such a gesture moves a dialogue to a monologue. To enable communication to take place, both interlocutors must be able to express oneself and listen to the other simultaneously. This cannot happen if both dwell only in one's self, but both need to keep a distance from the other. This distance creates the interspace between both interlocutors so that they can formulate a unique relationship that responds to the situation of their meeting.

Hence, Buber's idea is that a dialogue always and only begins with distance; it begins in the interspace between persons. Their narratives offer them knowledge, worldview, and the good they protect and promote. Therefore, there needs to be a space for those two narratives being interacted with one another. As a result, the meaning of communication emerges from that space between man and man. Such a space is not a stable or unchanged space. It is a concrete space that neither interlocutors can possess.

The hot desking environment practiced by the Googleplex creates a full transparency that blurs the public space and the private space. It is similar to an institution that demands employees to smile since this practice also blurs interspaces between people. The hot desking environment is demanding people communicate and be creative, which could be well-argued as an evil demand. Once the public and private spaces are blurred and once the public life becomes evil, people have no place to go. The interspace between persons is always important but it does not exist in the hot desking environment. The hot desking environment is a failure because it aims at creating a space between people that everyone can grasp, while in fact it destroys the interspace that keeps people at distance. What has been destroyed is precisely where meaningful dialogue can take place.

Stewart's proposal of bridges not walls is a similar practice of blurring the public and private and destroying the interspace between man and man. To ensure a Buberian dialogue can take place, we must keep the interspace alive and well. This is why Sennett neither favors having boundaries around a community since boundaries create a gated-community, nor prefers to diminish boundaries completely, since destroying the interspace between persons only discourages communication. Sennett favors replacing boundaries with borders. For Sennett, a border is porous and encourages communication, while it is also resistant and protects people's privacy. Therefore, having borders rejects "walls without bridges" and "bridges not walls", but favors having "bridges with walls". We want "walls with bridges" to exist in a unity of contraries. This is the only way to keep the interspace between people alive and assure dialogue between man and man can take place.

Buber's account of dialogue is not about hearing one's internal reflections but both interlocutors keeping distance that gives birth to the interspace between them. In addition, both

interlocutors must perform their role that responds to “what is called for by the rhetorical situation ‘between’ persons” (Arnett, 1981, p. 205). Dialogue requires both interlocutors to keep their distance and play their role to respond to the situation. Since dialogue is a meaningful interaction of the narratives of two interlocutors, their interpretation on a text hardly remains the same. One’s interpretation of a text inevitably involves one’s bias, which is prepared by one’s narrative. To understand how one’s bias functions in interpretation, we turn to another school of dialogue.

Hans-Georg Gadamer, Interpretation with Bias

When Arnett, Arneson, and Holba were reading Stewart’s *Bridges Not Walls*, they read it “as an exemplar of dialogic storytelling”, which presents the interplay between an interpreter and a text from the perspective of philosophical hermeneutics (Arnett et al., 2008, p. 218). The authors were understanding from a different school of dialogue, which is situated in the work of Hans-Georg Gadamer.

Philosophical hermeneutics coming out of Gadamer requires one to combine the construction of a text and the bias that one brings to the interpretation of that text. The public is presented with both the bias of the interpreter and the text for interpretation. This is Gadamer’s “fusion of horizons” (Gadamer, 2006, p. 390). The significance of using philosophical hermeneutics to understand dialogue is that it has portability, in which we can move it from one historical moment to another. Otherwise, we move dialogue to an abstract framework, which is what Carl Rogers attempted to do.

Cooperating with philosophical hermeneutics, “dialogic storytelling” requires us to recognize the existence of bias, take a bias, make that bias explicit and eventually we have a better understanding of interpretation of a text. Dialogic storytelling situates the bias, text and

interpretation in a given historical moment. Acknowledging the power of “story in the telling of a given theory”, the purpose of doing dialogic storytelling is to better understand how we can tell a story that is appropriate to this historical moment (Arnett et al., 2008, p. 218).

Once urban planners practice dialogic communication with city dwellers, planners are required to recognize the bias that they take when planning. What planners value as good for the community may not be understood by dwellers as good since dwellers have their own bias in interpreting a plan, as well as their own good they want to protect and promote, which is prepared by a community-based common sense.

When Sennett is proposing the notion of an open city, he intends to understand an open city through the notion of an open system. Linking it to the field of communication, the best way to understand an open system is through Gadamer’s notion of horizon (Gadamer, 2006).

According to Gadamer,

“the concept of ‘situation’... represents a standpoint that limits the possibility of vision. Hence essential to the concept of situation is the concept of *‘horizon.’* The horizon is the range of vision that includes everything that can be seen from a particular vantage point. Applying this to the thinking mind, we speak of narrowness of horizon, of the possible expansion of horizon, of the opening up of new horizons, and so forth... A person who has no horizon does not see far enough and hence over-values what is nearest to him. On the other hand, ‘to have a horizon’ means not being limited to what is nearby but being able to see beyond it” (p. 301).

Therefore, the horizon permits one to understand an event comprehensively through looking at everything that is associated with the event, especially those that emerged from history and tradition, which are commonly and easily neglected. If one wants to acquire a

systematic understanding of an event, one must obtain the right horizon of the event and ask the right question. This prevents one from being limited to what has been presented, permits one to look deeper into history, and discover all the possibilities that are not presented before working in the horizon.

Gadamer's horizon is similar to a way to describe a concept. However, it is different from how social scientists use it. In social science, a concept is operationally defined. This means one defines what this concept means at the beginning of a research and uses this definition through the entire research without changing its meaning. Horizon does not permit one to have that control, in a sense of who and what one will encounter. Instead, in a horizon, there are multiple possibilities, within which will emerge through the research process. Various elements that will influence one's understanding of a concept will emerge. Those elements constitute one's bias. One allows definition of the concept to be altered as the research processes; in fact, more precisely speaking, a definition in philosophical hermeneutics is closer to an understanding.

Working in a horizon is similar to working in an open system as Sennett proposes, of which the goal is exploratory investigation and problem-finding. Meanwhile, working in a horizon means one's research always starts with a question, and it leads one to various possibilities that one does not certainly know what they are at the beginning. This is a non-linear research. Besides, horizon carries multiplicity and simultaneously the possibility of mistake. Within a horizon, there are many ways to understand something, but it is still possible to understand it incorrectly. Hence, once doing humanity scholarship, one needs to work on a horizon but it is still possible to be wrong. Similarly, an open system permits mistakes to take place and is eager to learn from mistakes.

Understanding dialogue with philosophical hermeneutics illuminates us the importance of understanding one's bias that one takes to interpreting a particular text, one's own understanding of that text, and the common sense that the public share for interpreting that text.

From a Buberian account, once dialogue takes place in the interspace between persons, it is more than discourse expression but an encounter of narratives. The notion of bias reminds us that every time one interprets a text, one is interpreting with the bias that comes from one's narrative. This also applies to the other. Therefore, it is fundamentally unavoidable that one does not understand the other's narrative as they all have their own bias. This is the nature of what it means to be human. If one can take one's narrative clearly to the other, one is situated in the metanarrative which allows one to stand above history and allows one to ignore the other's narrative. This corresponds to why Buber disagrees with the psychologism perspective that believes meaningful communication occurs if one concentrates on one's internal feelings of the self. Buber is critiquing the presupposition that one can take one's narrative clearly to the other without acknowledging the other has a different narrative that obstructs accepting one's own narrative easily. In fact, psychologism does not even ask whether the other's narrative is different from one's own, but focusing on one's self solely. Hence, it is because others have their own narratives, therefore one's narrative is not always easily accepted by them. We are all situated in bias. The goal is to come as close as we can in terms of horizons of some general understanding. A textual understanding of narrative means the only agreement is differences, not commonality of sociation, though there is still common sense that the public share. This requires both interlocutors keep a distance from the other and acknowledge their own bias in interpretation as well as the difference between their narratives.

The recognition of bias does not necessarily squash all conflicts that may occur during dialogue, but it provides us a positive gesture to look at conflicts and prevents us from turning conflicts to potential violence. A conflict in dialogue is a result of engagement of two different narratives. When both are willing to acknowledge their own bias as well as the fact that the other's narrative is different from one's own, both are willing to stay in the horizon and continue their dialogue. This prevents both from practicing violence, but more importantly, helps both find meaning in communication. The philosopher that articulates ways in which meaning is additively discovered in communication is Mikhail Bakhtin.

Mikhail Bakhtin, Dialogical Communication

The third way to understand communication ethics literacy and dialogue is through Mikhail Bakhtin's notion of dialogical communication. Bakhtin's notion of all language appearing as dialogical focuses on the process of exchange and the unlikely process of exchange. This means that communication does not take place in vacuum. Everything anybody delivers always responds to something that has been expressed before. Bakhtin applied this firstly to literature and then to ordinary languages.

Contrary to monologic that refers to one entity with all the information simply giving it to others without exploration and clarification of meaning through discussions, dialogical communication refers to the use of shared dialogues to explore meanings in communication. Bakhtin (1981) understood that the meaning of language is not universal, but depends on one's socio-ideological nature. Communication thus inevitably embodies unspoken meanings, ambiguities in interpretation, and possibilities of misunderstandings. These are most likely to occur when communicating with people who have a different narrative ground.

Therefore, a dialogical approach to communication does not look at the discourse as a means to the end of making a decision. It is fundamentally hostile to consider discourse as a means to an end, which puts an end to discourse itself. Sennett sees the significance of Bakhtin's dialogical perspective as it challenges the traditional understanding of urban planning which is based on unified action or the decision to act together. A traditional understanding of urban planning assumes that planners will look at the map, discuss issues, reach agreements, formulate a plan, and act upon it. A plan is a mature decision that carries fruitful deliberations of planners. This is not a dialogical perspective. Planners working under a dialogical perspective would draft and revise proposals as frequent as they think are necessary. The process of planning is always rolling and self-editing, which is more important than the plan that will eventually come out. Thus, a plan under a dialogical perspective is a proposition which is completely subject to feedback.

Sennett always prefers different communities to have more connection. These informal settlements cannot be formulated into one large community. It is the sum of many smaller communities. Small communities sometimes suffer from the lack of rules of norms to work together and to live together. Yet they live in the valuable experience of interaction. As a result, community residents walled the community, setting a boundary as they wanted to protect themselves from the violence of the environment. Sennett disagrees with this type of community as it is a gated-community. Sennett does not flatter dwellers but asks how an expert planner, such as himself, may help dwellers if he knows what dwellers have chosen is not a good option for them.

That is where Bakhtin's notion of dialogical communication comes in. The more planners can engage dwellers into conversation, the better planners understand what dwellers want to

protect and promote. Once we ponder what the good that dwellers value, we are contemplating the origin, which is a narrative origin rather than a biological origin. A narrative origin is the ground under people's feet. When planners want to know dwellers, planners want to know the narrative origin of dwellers. Often, it is not helpful to directly ask what that narrative origin is and this is why building trust and relationship takes time. Once Sennett asks people from local communities regarding what they want, answers consist of abstract ideas such as safety and protection. For Sennett, that type of information is helpful, but not adequate to guide planning. Therefore, in the next step, Sennett invites people from different communities and encourages them to talk to each other. In this process, conversations open up new directions of thinking that do not exist beforehand. This is similar to ways in which a focus group is organized but it works with a different heart. Reason for having a focus group is that an organization wants to hear from customers before setting up a production line. Once the organization is smart enough to create products that people would like, such as Apple, a focus group is no longer necessary. For Sennett, he believes that expert planners are able to construct a community that best serves its dwellers, but planners cannot take consent and appreciation from dwellers for granted, regardless of how smart a plan actually is. Therefore, on most occasions, such a conversation takes place without the purpose of reaching agreement. Dialogical communication is therefore a way of negotiating differences and exploring meaning in communication.

Understanding Communication Ethics Literacy through Buber, Gadamer, and Bakhtin

Communication ethics literacy as what makes communication in the era of difference possible is fundamentally significant. Understanding communication ethics literacy relies heavily on the notion of dialogue. There are three schools of dialogue have been discussed, situated in the work of Buber, Gadamer, and Bakhtin. These three scholars, though having their unique

approach to the notion of dialogue, coherently synthesized their understanding plays a key part in understanding communication ethics literacy. Firstly, the interspace between persons is extraordinarily important for dialogue to ever take place. The preservation of such an interspace is the first and foremost gesture for communication ethics literacy. The Buberian understanding reminds us that without the space between man and man, communication cannot begin. Secondly, once people with different narratives meet, a dialogue between them is more than their discourse exchange but an encounter between their narrative. In communication, a text needs interpretation before being understood. One's narrative inevitably shapes the way one perceives the world and interprets the world. Therefore, one's expression and interpretation to a text always comes with a bias. Philosophical hermeneutics reminds us that recognizing bias, text, and interpretation in the historical moment is fundamentally important for communication in the era of difference to be successful. Third, once a bias is recognized and once an interpretation is made, this does not mark the end of communication. Rather, it is a new beginning. Bakhtin's idea of dialogical communication is that every time one communicates, one responds to something that occurred previously and expresses something from the present. In this sense, discourse is a means to keep communication running, instead of an end to inhibit further communication. Bakhtin's dialogical communication means communication is always rolling and self-editing.

Therefore, communication ethics literacy as what makes communication in postmodernity possible requires a preservation of interspace between people, a recognition of one's bias that will influence one's expression and interpretation, and a willingness to be constantly self-correcting and self-revising.

To summarize, chapter four, *Sennett and Communication*, is an attempt of responding to a postmodern call, how communication is possible in postmodernity. The key to understanding communication in postmodernity is through Sennett's idea of craftsmanship and the notion of communication ethics literacy. Sennett argues that craftsmanship in the digital era contains three aspects: established through the interplay between explicit tacit knowledge; reinforced through balancing problem-finding and problem-solving; and prepared through slow practice and reflective thinking. Therefore, I propose communication in postmodernity is better understood as a craft of the digital age. The interplay between explicit tacit knowledge is reflected as one learning meanings behind a behavior from others and interpreting meanings of an action to others. The balance between problem-finding and problem-solving is manifested as one being actively engaged in communication rather than solely looking for agreement. Also, communication with people carrying a different narrative always involves reflectively thinking on one's own and this process takes enormous time. This chapter then addresses the importance of communication ethics literacy as it answers what makes communication possible in the era of difference. Communication ethics literacy is understood through the notion of dialogue, which has various schools of approaches. I propose that understanding communication ethics literacy requires one to recognize Buber's highlighting on the interspace between man and man, Gadamer's emphasis on bias, text, and interpretation, and Bakhtin's reminder of communication as self-revising.

In the next chapter, I will make a practical turn and discuss how urban communication is practiced in the real world. Particularly, I will address Sennett's responses to ways in which urban planners conduct urban communication.

Chapter Five. Urban Planners and Urban Communication

Sennett, as an expert planner himself, has rich experiences regarding communicating with dwellers, authority, and other planners. Therefore, this chapter, *Urban Planners and Urban Communication*, emphasizes on the group of urban planners, discussing how communication in an urban environment can be better practiced from the perspective of urban planners.

Planners working with Dwellers

In previous chapters, I have articulated origins of conflicts between planners and dwellers, reasons for Sennett's proposal of an open city being a pragmatic response, and ways in which communication in postmodernity can become possible. With the idea of practicing ethical engagement in urban communication being laid out, it eventually goes to how people implement it in practice.

Planners being Deterministic, Imposing an Action

There are many planners communicating with dwellers with a deterministic attitude. Planners with a deterministic voice do not want to take time to know the good that dwellers value. Instead, planners impose a "perfect plan" upon dwellers.

Dwellers favoring a gated-community is a typical reflection triggered by deterministic planners. The favor of a gated-community is fed on the lack of security. One element that drives this lack of security is the progressively increased number of immigrants in cities, both from other cities and other countries. One feels anxious and uncertain once encountering people who come from the outside and are different, especially when the media agenda constantly portrays a plausible connection between immigrants and crimes. As a result, local residents want a gated-community so that those who are different could be segregated.

In addition to favoring exclusion, nevertheless, this lack of security has a much deeper philosophical root. The favor of a gated-community is fundamentally a voting against modernity. In most countries, the majority of city dwellers consist of those workers who are looking for jobs and are not tied to a new world class system called globalization. A local articulation refers to the white working class in the underserved neighborhoods of the caricatured inner cities of the United States. They are worried about their own employment. However, power brokers, meaning a coterie of elite bureaucrats, with the ability to provide the services and resources to lift those communities are absent, disengaged, and absolutely not looking to entertain big city liberal coming in and saving those communities. In the presidential election in 2016, people who are afraid of Hillary have this philosophical root of being afraid of the elite group controlling everything. Globalization makes people lose jobs. But people have seen the privileged class ignoring all those other sources that give meaning for human life which other people really concern a lot. Therefore, people are afraid of the elite class deciding everything for everyone. Consequently, there arises an anger in which people stop trusting the elite class and go against every single decision being made, even without understanding any aspects of any decisions. It is no wonder that city dwellers vote for a gated-community as this goes against proposals from expert planners who constantly advocate integration.

Meanwhile, to ease tensions between expert planners and city dwellers through insisting on the correctness of proposals from planners somehow only undermines the attempt. Those tensions arise as dwellers losing trust in experts, while asserting rightness of experts only solidifies their deterministic identity and exacerbates the mistrust.

This marks the significance of understanding communication ethics literacy through the notion of dialogue. The mistrust to expert planners is derived from the fact that dwellers are not

involved in any parts of the planning process. Planners being deterministic and waving a perfect plan are assuming that their plan would work. Admittedly, there are some corrupted planners, but most planners are working with a good heart. But this does not mean that dwellers will therefore accept the plan automatically. Such a presupposition has no recognition of the notion of bias. Planners ought to ask what the good that dwellers value and how dwellers would interpret the current plan. Planners also understand that the plan, though created from a good heart, still carries bias of planners. It is thus inevitable to see the plan interpreting some of the community's conditions in a way that dwellers are reluctant to accept. Asserting rightness of a plan is imposing an action to the other, which indicates that the other's narrative is irrelevant and unimportant. When one imposes an action to the other, the interspace between them is gone, but there is only one's self. Consequently, dialogue cannot take place. Imposing a plan on dwellers is also a way of using discourse as an end not a means. It aims to eliminate further communication so that the project can be pressed on. If an agreement is reached after thorough discussions, acting upon this agreement is helpful, since this is the practical turn that we ought to make eventually. But reaching an agreement through imposing a plan, meaning in communication is not fully explored. The lack of information and participation is precisely what gives birth to dweller's mistrust of planners.

As an alternative, if planners can invite dwellers to participate in the planning process from the beginning, dwellers would have a much better image of what their community really looks like. More crucially, this is more than showing dwellers that their voices are heard, but genuinely invites dwellers to speak up. The lack of security coming from the fear to the outside will be squashed by a better understanding of the community. The lack of security coming from a mistrust to expert planners will be comforted by engaging dwellers into the real planning

process. Eventually, dwellers may be able to see why a gated-community is not in anybody's interests, but planners cannot take this recognition for granted at the beginning. To reach this recognition among dwellers, it requires meticulous and thorough consideration on issues as well as patient and sincere communication with people.

The answer to opening the city is a democracy of design, not necessarily a better design. Sennett is not looking for the perfect plan that tells people how to live in the city, but a participatory plan that encourages all groups into discussion. A democracy of design is the notion that planners and dwellers communicate, plan, and decide what type of community people will desire. The philosophy of planning an open city is participatory planning.

Planners being Unduly Nice, Unprincipled Comforting

The notion of an open city seems promising and pragmatic, but is an open city the universal answer? Sennett never maintains the idea of an open city is a magic bullet that provides the ultimate solution to all problems in urban planning and urban communication that have occurred in the west as well as in third world cities. Sennett understands that most planners have a strong belief in the idea of integration, so opening a city up is one way of thinking about how planners want to guide the action they have. If planners do not want dwellers to prefer a gated-community, planners have to get dwellers to interact in ways where dwellers do not regard the unfamiliar other as a threat. That is a dialogical thinking pattern, a non-aggressive and non-assertive way of thinking.

Still, Sennett believes making a city open rather than closed is by far the most pragmatic way to keep a city vigorous and thriving. Sennett argues that this is the value urban planners need to universalize; culture-specific is not necessary. Whether it is a city from a Western

developed state or a city from a third-world developing state, an open city is always better than a closed city.

Sennett realizes that having sympathy and showing understanding of the other's experience is beneficial in terms of earning their trust and understanding in return. But when dealing with urban planning from a big scale, individual considerations, though matter, ought to yield to benefits of the community. Sennett seriously disagrees with the notion of "being nice to everyone" that has been used in such a broad and abused way. Sennett has seen city dwellers favoring a gated-community and expressing their request for security and segregation. They wanted a community with the rich and an absence of the black in at least ten blocks. Sennett has also seen planners responding to those dwellers with inordinate and even unprincipled friendliness. For Sennett, such a response earns nothing but a cheap agreement and thus is harmful. This type of response comforts people's emotional condition for having a gated-community at the time, but at the expense of burying the hidden danger for psychological segregation. Not only those who dwell in a gated-community become psychologically isolated and lonely, but most importantly, those dwellers push the responsibility that everyone in a civil society ought to undertake away from themselves. This phenomenon of one becoming unaccountable to others is precisely what has led to the fall of public man.

Planners being Ethical, Love and Responsibility

Although Sennett disagrees with building a gated-community, given all the craziness credited to immigration on a global scale, it is understandable why city dwellers prefer to skip their responsibilities in taking care of others. However, Sennett disagrees that planners side with dwellers on this issue. Urban planners must take responsibility and articulate, with knowledge and the perspective of good will, what is genuinely good for the community. Alleviating feelings

might be the first step, but discussions, justifications and arguments must follow. A responsible planner performs dialogical communication with dwellers rather than substituting empathy for will.

Though Sennett never addresses this explicitly, the center of urban communication needs to be ethics. Similar to Emmanuel Levinas who did a critique on ethics that is based on personal association, so as Sennett. Levinas basically expands this to all ethical occasions that pleasing is not the primary criteria. A Levinasian position would promote loving rather than liking. Loving is one doing something necessary in a given historical moment, not something will gather someone or prove it to a humanistic other.

Teachers always love their students, but when students perform disrespectful actions in the classroom or make the same mistake on a routine basis, teachers may not like students. To be sure, not liking never equals hating. The “dislike” pulls teachers out of their illusionary thinking that students are always right. The “dislike” gives teachers an awakening call that they are required to perform what the job authorizes them to. The “love” drives teachers back to the narrative of education. Hence, teachers do not use penalties for the sake of punishing, but to remind students of what is expected in an educational environment. Loving is driven by the narrative: friendship, parenthood, education, or profession. Liking is driven by the communicative agent: a friend, a child, a student, or a client.

Basically, anyone can be nice to people they like. Levinas did not regard such an action of being nice to others as ethics, but pleasure. Levinas had such a position as he did a critique on ethics that is based on personal association. The point is that ethics is impersonal. Levinas’s project of ethics as first philosophy is ongoing responses to three commands: “one’s attentiveness to the face of the Other”, “one’s attentiveness to the ethical echo”, and “one’s

returning to the face of the Other after attending to the ethical echo” (Arnett, 2017, p. 17). Once we are attentive to the impersonal part, the face of the other, there is a spiritual awakening taking place, that is the awakening to one’s responsibility.

In fact, Sennett critiques urban planners being nice to people that planners do not even like. An urban planner who is inordinately friendly fails to articulate his characters, which are prepared by content—knowledge on what he thinks will work the best for the community. This does not mean an urban planner can assert what the good that people in a community value should be. But a planner is willing to express his perspective and encourages dwellers to speak up. What Sennett critiques is an urban planner who clearly sees dwellers not making sense in their arguments but still appeals to their taste for cheap agreement. Sennett strongly disagrees with this mindset, unprincipled being nice to those who are wrong. This mindset does more harm than destroying opportunities for improving local communities, but an urban planner with this mindset starts to address his friendly personality and subsequently makes it as a selling point, which is one of the features that a therapeutic culture has. For Sennett, he would like to see urban planners working like him, who situates the question within previous practices, talks about what others have done, and then brings in something new if possible. As far as I am concerned, urban planners, and also other professions that practice communication in the work, are better to surprise people with their virtue rather than announcing their virtue as a selling point. Otherwise, ethics walks away and institutions, even society, are in trouble.

For those who genuinely wanted a gated-community, Sennett shows his understanding but never stops there. Although Sennett does not like them since gated-community is regarded by Sennett as a feature of a closed city, Sennett is able to act ethically, doing babysitting as the first gesture and working on the real problem thereafter. This is also why Sennett argues that urban

planners work *with* city dwellers rather than *for* dwellers. A planner who works for dwellers easily falls into a pursuit of agreement, flattering dwellers with whatever they want. Such a planner can justify himself with the belief that the customer is always right. Consequently, issues and problems, if existed, will never be addressed. Every time the planner sees an issue, he will bury it, so it was never brought to the table. On the other hand, a planner who works with dwellers does not take dwellers as customers, but partners, whose voices and interests matter and who are also open to critique.

In a workplace, being ethical means we value people who are working around us and we value the work we have at hand. Even a planner does not like his partners, but it is the love of the work that drives the planner to think impartially, speak honestly, and communicate dialogically. A planner who works with dwellers is able to act ethically since ethics is impersonal. If indeed a planner loves and also likes dwellers that he is working with, that genuinely increases productivity. However, once arguments occur and the planner starts to consider pleasing dwellers, there will be a spiritual awakening taking place, which reminds what the planner's responsibility should be. Planners, such as Sennett, who work *with* city dwellers act ethically even to those who they do not like and they are able to say liking them is not relevant.

Though Sennett does not favor the notion of communal sensitivity and disagrees with "pleasing everyone", which is tied to selling personalities at the expense of avoiding responsibility, Sennett is never mean or harsh. Sennett is not unduly friendly, but he is always kind, responsive and knowledgeable. The purpose of telling the others that they got wrong is never to demean or humiliate, but to challenge and inspire. In fact, when people's established understandings have been challenged, they take the discussion more seriously. Eventually, both parties will learn from this communication prepared by ethics.

Co-Production

As an expert planner, Sennett constantly looks for a working pattern that enables him, as well as other planners, to interpret and practice wonderful planning and designing ideas in a way that city dwellers would genuinely welcome and appreciate.

Sennett answers with the pattern of “co-production”, which “aims at making engagement matter to both sides, by having the technically trained maker and the life-experienced dweller generate the plans in the first place” (Sennett, 2018, p. 244). Co-production is the willingness to communicate with the ordinary. Although it seems the idea of co-production can be applied to all areas where cooperation among people takes place, Sennett limits it in the communication between urban planners and city dwellers. For Sennett, co-production is a way of involving ordinary people in the process of wanting to make places more open rather than closed.

Co-production is similar to, yet fundamentally different from consultation. Consultation is an expert giving advice to people and assuming they will listen to his expertise. Consultation is being deterministic and imposing. Even an expert works from a good heart, from the perspective of serving his clients, sometimes advice might still be impractical. Consultation is planners working *for* residents, while co-production is planners working *with* residents. Consultation usually aims at recognition and agreement, and if not, consultants will strive to achieve them. Co-production usually involves arguments, conflicts, negotiations, and all the other elements that would emerge from cooperation and communication. At the end of co-production, an agreement might still be necessary so that certain actions can be pressed on. But such an agreement is only reached when issues are fully discussed, problems are meticulously addressed, and interests of different groups are carefully considered. It is an agreement achieved after mature consideration,

patient negotiation and months of fruitful and responsible work. It is not a “cheap agreement” that is reached only after a couple of amateur meetings.

During co-production, once conflicts occur, it is more helpful to work collaboratively—focusing on the “physical fabric rather than on each other” (Sennett, 2018, 252). Janie Harden Fritz had a similar perspective when she addressed the term “professional civility”:

[professional civility is a] “communicative virtue protects and promotes the good, or telos, of professions as practice (MacIntyre, 2007) and supports other goods of professions: productivity, the work that is done in organizations; place, the local organization within which professional activity is accomplished; and people, persons working in, or associated with, particular organizations” (Fritz, 2013, p. 8).

Both Fritz and Sennett stated that the focus of attention ought to be placed on ways in which to complete tasks at hand instead of attributing any specific persons as being responsible. This does not equal forgiving people without reasons, but pays attention to what people can do rather than what people have done wrong. When a can of worms is opened, distributing responsibilities to any specific employees should take place as a post-crisis response so that the organization and employees can learn from mistakes. Expression of reproach in the first place would demoralize the team and extend the crisis period, both of which would not do anything good to the organization. Hence, conflicts occurring in the workplace must be addressed with recognition of profession and virtue ethics. Everyone needs to remember and address the good that the organization values. This is achieved through understanding of professional civility, a focus on the people, place, and productivity; they are related to the ethical value of the commons.

Regarding urban communication, co-production functions similarly to the philosophy of communication. Both reject the belief that there is only one universally correct way to guide our

practice. Both equally reject the belief that any confirmed correct answers would become universally true and could be applied to all conditions without paying attention to the concreteness of conditions. Co-production also keeps its distance from embracing practices that are “defined by experts, whether human or digital” (Sennett, 2018, p. 256). Compared to opinions and perspectives from city dwellers which are generated empirically, experts may have an advantage to interpret certain practices with theoretical frameworks and apply theories into practices more accurately. However, this does not crown experts since they still have their own biases of understanding and interpreting events. City dwellers need to work with expert planners but do not follow planners blindfolded. Planners need to work with dwellers so that planners are not occluded by theoretical arguments. In acknowledgement of bias of interpretation, planners working with dwellers is a perfect way to keep both groups inside the horizon of ethical urban communication.

When skilled planners, such as Sennett, and city dwellers are working on generating alternative forms for a particular project, Sennett acknowledges the fact that the more people encourage planners and dwellers together from the beginning in co-production, the more people are open to being open, and the less dwellers wanting a gated-community. This is the power of a co-production pattern.

Planners working with Authority

The previous session has articulated that once planners working with dwellers, being deterministic or unduly nice are two dead ends. The best and only alternative is to engage in communication with ethics at the center.

In addition to dwellers, which is the largest group that urban planners communicate with, there are other groups of people that planners will encounter. One of them is the authority,

including property owners, large institutions, and the government. Therefore, the next question concerns ways in which urban planners implement ethical communication with authority in practice. In fact, this is the most frequently asked question by students once taking the professional civility class—how we are supposed to practice professional civility if our manager simply “does not care”. In urban communication, this is a part of the dilemma that urban planners have been constantly facing—how planners can take processes and repertoires of action as planned. The difficulty comes from more than the fact that planners and authority may value different goods, but how planners change large planning institutions at the scale of a city to engage participatory planning. If conducting a plan requires, and usually requires, participation from authority, how planners engage the authority into meaningful communication.

When working in the developing world and communicating with bureaucratic officials and even some middle-class citizens, Sennett realizes that they do not appreciate the romanticization of informality. Sennett in principle goes against having high rise buildings in a city, while people in developing countries basically want to live there. It is common to see dwellers in the developing world that prefer to have a unit that can fit a family even if the apartment building stands in the middle of nowhere. For most dwellers, having an apartment that is bigger, brighter and more hygienic is a desperate wish that they share. Local governments, when looking for methods that can accommodate a rapidly increasing urban population, often favor mass-produced housing since it is sometimes the only accessible way for sheltering all those people. Many real estate developers also want to build those high rises since those projects always come with considerable profits.

The actual practice of real estate development and urban planning indicates that property owners of private property have noticeably clear motives to champion their goals, profit-driven

motives or other self-interested motives. The public space, on the other hand, is generally owned by the public or by the municipality. However, whether a public space will be used is not decided by the public but local councilors, who are democratically selected to represent the public will. But oftentimes, property owners do not have the same level of interest in advocating the perspective that urban planners value. Besides, planners know that only a small number of funds would eventually go to planning, because the majority of funds is spent on the land and the building. Once planners like Sennett propose to build a more open and diverse community, their hope to get commissioned less high rise buildings in a community results in a lack of financial return in construction. Apparently, property owners are reluctant to pay the bill.

Therefore, planners, dwellers, and property owners have different types of goods to protect and promote. Planners such as Sennett look for an open city that encourages communication. Dwellers in the third world look for a better place to live in even at the expense of psychological isolation. Property owners look for profits. It is trivial to critique planners being unrealistic, dwellers being short-sighted, or property owners being greedy. The only way to understand their conflicting interests is recognizing and acknowledging that they value different goods. None of them should bear any blame and distributing responsibility to any group is unwise. As Sennett suggests in *Together*, distributing responsibility to a specific group of people is precisely why cooperation in modern society is difficult to take place. Conflicting interests might not be addressed all at once, but it is vital to create an environment that permits communication to take place. The center for communication with people valuing a different good is communication ethics. This is the only way to make communication in the world of difference possible.

Global Capitalism

In chapter three, *Sennett and Urban Communication*, I have addressed Sennett's experiences and reflection from participating in the Habitat III conference. Sennett has seen cities in the developing world experiencing *ville* and *cit * being divorced. Sennett believes this phenomenon of those cities becoming rigid, crude, and closed is credited to the conservation of global capitalism. Sennett's response to slowing the city becoming closed is physically opening a city up. However, this may well treat "symptoms" of a closed city, but does not touch the "disease", which is global capitalism that causes cities to be closed.

Sennett believes that global capitalism is the right victim as it goes against almost everything an open city values. Having an open city entails communities being surrounded by borders rather than boundaries, districts being farmed rather than being master planned, and planners working with a dialogical self-critic development narrative. But most importantly, it requires both planners and dwellers to have the ability and willingness to actively communicate with those who hold a different narrative. Communication in the era of difference is a craft that requires learning. The real problem is that capitalism as we know it today has no interest in craftsmanship. In the language of communication ethics, among all various types of goods that people want to protect and promote, pursuing high-quality work for its own sake is hardly picked by anybody. With advanced baking machines that only require operation from its user-friendly surface, the interplay between explicit and tacit knowledge is disrupted. The trend of providing fixed products discourages users from performing problem-finding. Also, one fundamental feature of global capitalism is market exchange which values efficiency greatly. Consequently, slow practicing is not appreciated. These all together inhibit people from becoming craftsmen. People are guided to become trained customers.

Nevertheless, Sennett does not think urban planners have the ability to change the principles of capitalism, since they cannot change how the entire system works. Planners do not even carry such a purpose. Sennett suggests that planners work with the system, not against the system. Urban planners could attempt to change parts of the system, but it would be on a small scale. It is a valuable practice that planners create a protected realm where they are working with a different set of assumptions. But planners are never going to achieve this on a comprehensive scale.

Basically, confronting a policy requires participation of another policy. For example, if planners would like to stop the gentrification of the Pittsburgh Hill District back in the 1960s, they would need to work with lawyers, activists, local councilors, and even senators. All efforts go in the same direction, formulating a new policy that can disrupt the urban renewal process in Pittsburgh, or at least, move the Hill District out of the list. Urban planners can assist in these courses of events, but it has nothing to do with their role as planners. It is political and economic power against political and economic power. There will be tons of activities, asking for papers, holding meetings, proposing, discussing, revising, reporting back, and redrafting. After months of communication and negotiation, there eventually comes a decision. Once the decision has been made, whether the Hill District is finally determined to be gentrified, urban planners can then function as planners, drawing a blueprint regarding ways in which to arrange commercial activities in the community, as well as working on concrete details such as deciding the appropriate width of a street. Once thinking about practices that a planner can perform to avoid the system making mistakes in planning, Sennett realizes actions from a planner only have feeble influences. A planner performs a very partial role. For Sennett, the only way to fight capitalism

is to use socialism⁴⁶. Hence, planners are not going to fight capitalism with practices such as lowering building heights or increasing population density in a community.

Admittedly, having a different plan on building heights and street width is not going to dismantle capitalism, but this does not necessarily mean that all plans therefore reinforce capitalism. The transitivity is led by a false recognition that capitalism would be altered if its creations could have been brought into existence in another way. In fact, as Sennett argued, this is a social as well as a political project. To practice, people need to be mobilized. In fact, this is where the Sennettian open city comes in. But oddly, Sennett does believe that planners always have a type of power of implementing what they want. Planners can get a vision of something that is innovative. But this vision of something being different is not going to be empowering in a way that a political or economic activity is empowering.

This idea is inspired by the friendship between Sennett and Jane Jacobs. So often Sennett has seen people fighting power, losing the battle, and giving up. Because the image they desire is out of their reach. They are not necessarily being cynical but they give up the practice. One of them is Jacobs. Her first book on urban planning was *The Death and Life of Great American Cities* in 1961. After Jacobs published *The Economy of Cities* in 1969, she lost interest in urban planning. Jacobs pessimistically found that literally nothing has changed in that decade. More desperately, she saw no signs that indicate any changes would probably occur in the future. Jacobs disagreed with how Robert Moses planned New York City, and Moses disagreed with her as well. Either could have resisted working with the other, but neither can prevent the other from participating in the industry. Jacobs was defeated by reality and became disappointed with what

⁴⁶ The idea of confronting capitalism through practicing socialism was initially introduced by Karl Marx, although Sennett did not credit Marx explicitly. Neither specifying Marx's argument, nor does Sennett articulate ways in which planners can practice socialism (Sennett, "GSD Talks: Richard Sennett, 'The Open City'", 2017, 70:32-70:38).

she used to love so deeply. Writing from the second decade of the twentieth-first century, the political environment in terms of what discouraged Jacobs has not been changed fundamentally, so Sennett has sympathy to Jacobs' experience, but Sennett does not think Jacobs' reaction, a self-withdrawal, is the direction he would go to. When I am looking at why Jacobs quitted from urban planning, I also have sympathy for her. But what is more important is the action of watching her experiences and attempting to learn from her. It is not simply feeling, but learning.

Without appreciating cynicism but falling in love with realism, I think this is the way that one has to enter into the adult world of dirty power. One also recognizes that everyone is partially going to be imprisoned and demeaned by it. This is the type of social restraints and constraints, not prepared by virtue and law, but prepared by power and order. If one has tremendous resources, one can enter into the adult world and feel all its beauty and glory. One perceives the world as the spitting image of its textbook description. But most people do not have that privilege. Still, it does not mean we then adopt a trained incapacity to believe it is useless to do anything by that.

This is the historical moment that we are living in and we cannot navigate through it by assuming that we are living in a different moment. There are tasks, both urgent ones and necessary ones, requiring urban planners and communication scholars to cooperate. Those tasks are difficult and that is why Jacobs, not in a demeaning sense, gave up. But we cannot avoid those important tasks and push them through the next generation. We must attempt to work them out in the historical moment that gave birth to them. I do not think we are helpless or powerless in this historical moment, so do Sennett.

In the end, there does not exist a direct relationship with urban planning and the dismantling of capitalism, even Karl Marx cannot make such a connection. But it is pragmatic to

contemplate on how planning creates the urban environment as people perceive it is, the understanding of solidarity with others, the sense of values in themselves, the conversation, the normative project, that would be necessary in order to fight against capitalism. In this sense, urban planning is not completely irrelevant, but Sennett reminds us to be extremely careful on not presupposing any direct causalities between planning and supporting for or dismantling of capitalism.

Implication

This project focuses on Richard Sennett and examines Sennett's scholarship, chronologically, on the public domain, narrative and individuality, cooperation, and urban communication. The significance of this project lies in its application of the literature of communication ethics to enrich Sennett's works, and articulation regarding Sennett's importance in this historical moment.

In Sennett's most recent scholarship that deals with urban planning and urban communication, Sennett is greatly troubled by ways in which urban planners can assist in making communication among city dwellers possible. This struggle does not occur recently, but roots in the very early stage of his career. Sennett starts his scholarship on the discussion of the public domain, observes and reminds us of the danger of the lack of participation in the public sphere. For Sennett, public engagement is more than voting a statesman quadrennially, or attending community meetings on a monthly basis, but it requires one to act based on one's own interests with one's willingness to listen to the other. Once this willingness is absent, it leads to what Sennett observes as the fall of public man. Sennett indicates the lack of participation in public affairs has destroyed the public domain. An apathetic public domain discourages people's engagement and participation of meaningful dialogues and actions. Sennett reminds us that if we

want to “fix” this “listless” public, it will be unwise to generate one goal for people and presuppose everyone will agree with that goal. Rather, Sennett advocates to understand this issue from the perspective of individuals.

Thus, in the second stage of Sennett’s career, which is from *The Hidden Injuries of Class* to *The Culture of the New Capitalism*, Sennett interviews extensively on manufacturing workers, the white-collar middle class, and the lower class. Those interviews shed light on the diversity of goods they want to protect and promote. Sennett realizes that the meaning in actions are connected, not only to one’s narrative that constitutes the “I”, but an interplay between the self and the other. Such an interplay exists most commonly in the form of cooperation.

This goes to the third stage of Sennett’s career, from *Craftsman* to *Together*, with a focus on *homo faber* and craftsmanship. In this period, Sennett articulates ways in which a craftsman cooperates with his materials and tools, as well as conditions that allow cooperation among people to be shaped, weakened, and strengthened. During this journey, Sennett locates a vague yet seemingly plausible direction for reconstructing people’s engagement in the public, that is, through discovering meanings in people’s work. In *The Craftsman*, Sennett realizes that meaning in the work is not solely a self-achieved goal—this might be correct for a medieval blacksmith but no longer applies to a postmodern craftsman. Instead, meaning is better generated from cooperation with others. In *Together*, Sennett concludes that cooperation is mostly achieved when all parties take the exteriority of work as the good that they value—respecting the work sets the base for cooperation. Sennett is particularly interested in ways in which to strengthen cooperation. Towards the end of *Together*, Sennett discusses three aspects to strengthen cooperation, through making (working), encountering resistance, and practicing commitment in the community.

Therefore, Sennett once again expands his research interests and goes to the fourth stage of his career. This time, Sennett writes about the city. As Sennett believes, it is city dwellers' daily experience to encounter resistance, both professional and personal, and to engage in practice in community, both in the work community and the living community. So far, Sennett starts his scholarship with an eye on the public domain, turns to individuals that make up the society, moves to companies and communities where people work and cooperate, and eventually, returns to the social level. When Sennett aims at making city residents communicate, he is indicating to make them cooperate. This cooperation is not bundled with any utilitarian goals but aims at a recognition that everyone is willing to listen to other's perspective and express one's own. Once people are willing to communicate with those who differ, the cooperation is successful.

At this current historical moment, the biggest struggle that prevents such meaningful communication taking place is the issue of extreme diversity. Extreme diversity exists, in which the Enlightenment was disrupted, and modernity was called into question. The narrative that one is situated within tells one differently what something means. We have different ways to situate the world and hopefully we can have meaningful engagement. Abandoning diversity and assuming we are living in a different historical moment is not a helpful way to think about this issue. Rather, the challenge is how we conduct communication in the era of difference. Hence, the prominent issue in postmodernity is to learn from diversity. But before that, we need the recognition of it and the willingness to stay within it.

Sennett is an expert urban planner as well as an outstanding sociologist. His scholarship and work are dedicated to creating a better physical and social world in which people live. It is also about communicating with institutions and being strategic in arrangements. It is vital to

think about how communication in an urban environment is possible in this era of difference. This requires planners to understand the entire process, regarding where and how negotiations are most likely to occur. Also, it requires planners to refine their analytical skills so that they can understand different types of cities: large cities versus small cities, rich cities versus poor cities, cities in Republican states versus in Democratic states. Most importantly, it requires planners to understand the fundamental component that makes communication in postmodernity possible, that is communication ethics literacy.

Communication ethics literacy acknowledges three elements and encourages meaningful communication to take place. The first is the preservation of the interspace between man and man. This goes against the idea of having a gated-community and it also opposes eliminating all boundaries for full transparency. The interspace is created through using borders, which is both porous and resistant. The interspace is the primacy condition for dialogue to take place. When a dialogue occurs, it is the encounter of people's narratives. This is not possible if there is no distance between people. The second element is understanding the notion of bias in interpretation. Postmodernity is an era that permits people to live in multiple narratives. This means people may, and often they do, have different interpretations to the same text. Recognizing one's bias in communication is significant as it acknowledges the other to be different and erases the tension of reaching agreement too soon. The third element is dialogical communication. This means discourse is not used to eliminate further communication. Instead, it always encourages further interaction. With recognition of bias in interpretation, people pursue further communication for better understanding. Dialogical communication maintains that the ongoing engagement between people is where people can find meaning and understanding in communication.

Clearly, it takes time to comprehend what communication ethics literacy suggests but it requires even more effort in practicing ways in which to communicate with dwellers and the authorities. Once mastered the tacit, planners could take that framework, not just to different places, but also exploring and discovering different places in a neighborhood, or in a city. This does not mean such a framework is a universally applicable framework. But it represents the philosophy behind urban communication. Such a framework does not tell planners specific activities to perform in order to achieve communication, but it guides planners the right direction for putting effort into. Planners cannot act deterministically or unduly nice, but communicate dialogically and ethically. There is no universally correct answer that answers how to communicate in the world of difference, but only concrete examples where communication takes place. Urban communication is fundamentally content-driven and narrative-oriented. It is always concrete rather than abstract and practical rather than theoretical.

Often, Sennett has seen planners who place their entire focus of attention on polishing their planning skills, which is necessary. But if planners aim to prevent the Pittsburgh Hill District from being torn apart, what they need is the framework that illuminates them in the “where and how” in interfering or altering policies. This is more than the skill set per se. It is a call out for focusing on the specificity of places. There is no universally perfect framework for communication, but knowing the concreteness of deep culture, history, institutions of places, the good that different groups of people value, and then being strategic about where planners want to apply the skills. Therefore, the idea is that we need to constantly perform communication and ethics and human praxis.

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