

interrogates city images with reference to developments during the first half of the nineteenth century, for example in the form of cuttings through older parts of the urban tissue prior to the launching of Paris's *Grands Travaux*. The transformations of the city during the nineteenth century are analysed through different perspectives: destructions, perception of the inhabitants, economic and political aspects, the improvement of traffic, sanitary conditions, and urban renewal (albeit with reference to the 'new' typology of modern residential property). A main conclusion reached by Darin is that a gap exists between original intentions and built reality. The main actors, 'singular actors', are the subject of the fifth 'book' which is dedicated, notably, to the thoughts and works of Haussmann and Le Corbusier. Accordingly, Darin explores the notion that *grands plans* are never the work of a unique thought, and to this end he asks key analytical questions such as: who historically 'owned' the paternity of Paris's *Grands Travaux*? Napoléon III or Haussmann? With regard to Le Corbusier, Darin uses the master of Modernism as the pretext to explore themes and contexts tied to the urban solid and void, and the new relation created between buildings and vegetation. Notably he builds on the opportunity to explain the evolution of the street and with this he concludes that the city is essentially a collective work, even if in the case of Paris we can recognize a few *Grands Hommes* of specific influence.

The sixth 'book', entitled 'Disturbing transfigurations' points to the 'defects' and 'intrusions' that have appeared in cities through time, 'disturbing' the envisaged original order of the city – for example, its façades, street layouts, block designs and building block plans in relation to plots. Significantly, the line of enquiry adopted by Darin helps reveal that the city is a collage of different elements, linked together over time and by various dynamics and processes. The difficulty shown, therefore, by Darin with reference to those individuals working on trying to restore the 'original state' of some historical parts of the city is to identify the aforesaid 'original state', which, more often than not, never existed anyway. What kind of inferences does this imply? And what imperfections exist thus deep within city formation? Well, it is imperative to appreciate the imperfections of our settlements; the products of social, cultural, and physical contexts drawn out over a long period of time. Furthermore it is vital to realize that cities are made of improvisations, compromises and adaptations that often contradict the original intentions and ideals behind urban

plans. But, as Darin suggests, do we not find some beauty in those irregularities?

To conclude, Darin's book is for the stroller, the *flâneur* who wishes to take time observing with great attention the surrounding urban scene, and the individual curious to understand the reason behind the many elements that constitute the urban form or, in this case, constitute the parts of the urban comedy.

References

- Ricoeur, P. (2000) *La mémoire, l'histoire, l'oubli* (Seuil, Paris).
 Roncayolo, M. (1996) *Marseille les territoires du temps* (Editions Locales de France, Paris).

Catherine Maumi, Les Métiers de l'Histoire de l'Architecture, Ecole Nationale Supérieure d'Architecture de Grenoble, 60 avenue de Constantine, BP 2636, 38036 Grenoble Cedex 2, France. E-mail: catherine.maumi@grenoble.archi.fr

Remembering, forgetting and city builders
 edited by *Tovi Fenster* and *Haim Yacobi*,
 Ashgate, Aldershot, UK, 2010, 205 pp. ISBN
 978 1 409406679.

To attract, and be of relevance to, an urban morphologist a book needs more than the words 'city builders' in its title, but this is a good start. In the broadening of focus on agency in urban morphology and in other aspects of urban studies in recent years too, the issues of memory, remembering and memorials have generated a substantial literature. In many urban areas there are formal and informal 'memorials' – war memorials, place names, associations with characters and events, and even unregarded relict features of past urban landscapes. To them, this book adds the useful corollary of forgetting: why are some things unregarded or deliberately disregarded?

The book is a wide-ranging collection of ten chapters plus epilogue. Chapters cover locations ranging from New York to Lubumbashi (Congo), and from Frankfurt to Volgograd. Themes, or the subjects of specific case studies, include community gardens, the construction of everyday spaces by different communities, memory and place, the implications of post-war reconstruction,

and the rhetorical functions of built space. Some of these are quite new topics although, even on the more familiar ones, the contributions are interesting, informative and offer something new: for example in Podoler's chapter on identity and the construction of the past in Seoul, and Lagae's contribution on colonial built heritage in Lubumbashi.

The editors' introduction clearly sets the context in terms of theoretical debates on the relationship between, on the one hand, the activities and products of planning, architecture and urban design and, on the other, agency, knowledge production, place creation and use. Key to their argument is the assertion that 'the planned landscape is ... a symbol of the political power of the state, which struggles to establish a particular collective identity' (p. 1). Successive chapters give examples of the deliberate creation of place, the suppression of aspects of the past, the manipulation of heritage, and so on. All are quite familiar arguments, although it is very helpful to see these new examples (Hausman's Paris and socialist Berlin are perhaps too frequently used).

It might, though, be interesting to explore these concepts through a slightly different lens. Much detailed morphological work has shown that many urban landscapes are products of incremental, small-scale and 'unplanned' processes occurring over substantial periods, with the gestation periods of some developments taking decades. Although these processes normally work within an overarching framework of control, which could clearly be described as 'a symbol of the political power of the state', it is hard to see in these everyday, ordinary urban landscapes any particular drive to establish a 'particular collective identity'. And such processes can, over time, significantly change the character and appearance of their locality; removing or re-constituting some 'memorials' and adding new structures (and creating new opportunities for new memories) through redevelopment and infill. So one could question how widely applicable the processes highlighted by the editors might be. Sandercock, whose critical comments on modernistic planners are cited by the editors (p. 1), has an interesting perspective on the lowest level of agency in the built environment – the often unregarded, small-scale, individual and community-driven change unrelated to the big picture of State power, aspiration and control.

In this context it is particularly interesting that the editors choose as their first substantive chapter Eizenberg's study of the creation of community

gardens in New York. The production and use of these informal gardens, particularly by ethnic migrant communities, is set in the theoretical context of invoking a pre-urban, often pre-migration, life; and the process of developing these gardens as a struggle with authority. This is identified as another of the book's central themes: that 'different communities living in urban spaces struggle to legitimize their identity and diasporic memories through spatial practices' (p. 2) in the creation and use of space. The chapter highlights that these communities can be active actors rather than merely passive consumers of the spaces provided by the State and its planning systems. Reference to the recent trend for 'guerrilla gardening' might have made this point even more forcefully!

The two chapters on post-war reconstruction do address that wider, more formal, State-level of space production. Reconstruction after catastrophe is usually at such a scale that State intervention and resources are needed; and especially after wartime destruction, political upheaval and societal change, processes of reinterpretation come more into action – the remembering and forgetting of the book's title, spurred often by dissonant and unpleasant heritage issues. Stalingrad, for example, presented Soviet planners with a *tabula rasa* in a way that many damaged cities did not. Trubina explores the product of this reconstruction – an iconic representation of Soviet invincibility, but renamed Volgograd in 1961 – not only through the built product but also through the communication of this 'rhetorical space' experienced by contemporary guided tours. The tours are stereotyped and the space paradoxical. Part of the paradox is the layering of Soviet and Stalinist symbolism; but in reality are not most urban places 'paradoxical'? Rodenstein explores the rebuilding of Frankfurt am Main not in terms of its *first* post-1945 rebuilding, but the 2007 decision to reinstate parts of the lost medieval street grid and replicate several buildings. Her argument links these planning decisions with the remembering/forgetting processes, suggesting that these are normal functions and that forgetting, in the urban context, does not occur intentionally. Meaning and self-image, central to Frankfurt's story, are regularly reviewed as circumstances, politics, populations and even individuals change.

The final chapter, Hatuka's 'epilogue', is an interesting exploration of collective memory, sense of place and place-making. She addresses a crucial question: given that both remembering and forgetting 'is a routine reality for so many people, why does it still have so much significance?' (p.

193). She relates this to issues of twentieth-century change – the destruction of world wars, the mass movement of peoples across national and cultural borders, and their assimilation into new cultures. The changes to urban areas, and the processes explored in this volume, are strategies of coping with change. They may be, she says, related to Freud's theory about 'working through' the traumas of repressed memory.

Overall this is an informative and challenging book, and it usefully adds to our knowledge of processes of urban change and use. The chapters cover some difficult ground, but this is vital in understanding how radically new communities change their surroundings: and as formerly minority ethnic groups become majorities in the new century, this is likely to take on greater significance. Some chapters could be stronger:

having visited Seoul I looked in vain for some issues in the chapter on that city's identity and the construction of its past, but interesting details on the reinstatement of some sites were submerged in the political era-level overview. Nevertheless, on the whole this is a worthwhile and challenging book. This is a part of Ashgate's series 're-materializing cultural geography' and, despite the rather heavy use of the currently-fashionable jargon of cultural geography, there are several other volumes with relevance to urban morphology here.

Peter J. Larkham, School of Property, Construction and Planning, Birmingham City University, Perry Barr, Birmingham B42 2SU, UK. E-mail: peter.larkham@bcu.ac.uk

ISUF 2012: New urban configurations

The Nineteenth International Seminar on Urban Form (ISUF 2012) will take place in Delft, The Netherlands on 17-20 October 2012, hosted by the Technische Universiteit Bouwkunde, Department of Architecture and Urbanism, in collaboration with the European Association of Architectural Education. The theme of the conference is 'New urban configurations'. Topics to be covered include:

- Innovative building typologies
- Infrastructure and architecture

- Complex urban design
- Green spaces and the city
- Transformation of historical centres
- The European city

A key feature of the conference will be the last of a series of symposia during 2011 dedicated to Saverio Muratori. There will also be a post-conference excursion, which will include visits to both Rotterdam and Amsterdam. For further information contact Professor Nicola Marzot (e-mail: N.Marzot@tudelft.nl).

Urban coding and planning

Urban codes have a major influence on urban form. They are the subject of a new book which investigates the nature and scope of coding, its purposes, the kinds of built environments associated with it, and its relationship to urban planning. Edited by Stephen Marshall, *Urban coding and planning* (Psychology Press, London, 2011) brings together historical and continuing traditions of coding from many different parts of the world.

Contributions include:

Karl Kropf: Coding in the French planning system – from building line to morphological zoning
 Nick Green: A chronicle of urban codes in pre-

industrial London's streets and squares
 Vibhuti Sachdev: Paradigms for design – the Vasta Vidya codes of India
 Qinghua Guo: Prescribing the ideal city – building codes and planning principles in Beijing
 Yoshihiko Baba: Machizukuri and urban codes in historical and contemporary Kyoto
 Jonathan Barnett: How codes shaped development in the United States, and why they should be changed
 Gerald Steyn: Coding as 'bottom-up' planning – developing a new African urbanism
 Barrie Shelton: Adelaide's urban design – pendular swings in concepts and codes
