



## LECTURE

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### **Putting the Academy in Its Place: A Story about Park Design, Civic Engagement, and the Research University**

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I want to thank the University of Miami's Humanities Forum, the School of Architecture, and especially Professor Robin Bachin for inviting me here today. It's a great pleasure to come in from the Michigan cold; it's an even greater pleasure to share a conversation about the history, ambitions, and politics of our Arts of Citizenship Program with colleagues here who have made a similar commitment to public engagement through both design and the humanities. I look forward to listening to your experiences as well as telling you mine.

This talk aims to take on some grand themes: the genesis of the current divide between the American academy and public cultural work, especially in the arts, humanities, and design; the costs, both political and intellectual, of that divide to university-based intellectual work, public culture, and the legitimacy of the American university; the value, both political and intellectual, of bridging it through new experiments in pedagogy, research, and creative work; and the links between community collaboration and the interdisciplinary transformations to which so many of us are committed within the academy.

But I want to begin more modestly, with a story about a small episode that took place about a year and a half ago in Ann Arbor. It was a joint visit to a park called Broadway Park, about a mile or so from the University of Michigan campus, by Mary Van Alstyne's first- and second-grade class from Bach Elementary School and Professor Bob Grese's first-year landscape architecture studio from the University of Michigan School of Natural Resources and the Environment. Broadway Park is a three-acre, triangular meadow that sits wedged between the Huron River, the grand old Michigan Central railroad depot (now a fancy restaurant called the Gandy Dancer), and two bridges, end to end, that cross the railway and the river and connect the downtown and northside districts of the city. To most Ann Arborites, the park is invisible. Hedged between the railroad tracks, the river, and the bridge embankment, it is used almost exclusively by local fishermen (mainly African-American), homeless squatters, and walkers cutting from campus and downtown across the river. But people who eat at the Gandy Dancer and look out on the river look across Broadway Park.

At the time of this field trip, the landscape architects had been assigned the studio project of redesigning Broadway Park as a child-centered space; Mrs. Van Alstyne's students were in effect their clients. Teams of faculty, master's students, and youngsters tramped around the place, and the kids described what they liked best about it, what they thought it should become. Naturally they gravitated toward all the places that the adults found dangerous and nerve-wracking: cut-throughs to the railroad right-of-way, glacial boulders perched on the river's edge, the dirt path under the bridge, the wooded corners of the park. And in most of those places, they found the

things of homeless people: filled plastic bags, shirts hung on trees, a coffee mug on a stump, a mattress in a clearing. The people who lived in the park by night were elsewhere, at work, on the streets, in day shelters. But Mrs. Van Alstyne's students were puzzled and fascinated by their things, and they tried to make sense of them. Some of the youngsters said things like, "This must be a place where poor people live." But other responses were more disquieting and uncanny: "Somebody must have died and left these here." "No, this is where people leave their clothes when they go to the store to buy new ones."

*A place where people leave their clothes when they've bought new ones*—I want to come back to that comment later. But let me begin by explaining what it has to do with the concerns of my talk. The future of the research academy, I want to argue, depends (among lots of other things) on enlarging its capacity to create and learn from encounters like this: encounters among faculty, students, and interlocutors from our larger community, encounters between the intellectual work of teaching and research and the public work of producing, designing, and repairing our collective life. Doing that means experimenting with the ways universities teach, do scholarship, train professionals, give out money, evaluate student and faculty work. It does not mean abandoning the vast, extraordinarily successful infrastructure of resources and interests that organize the professional academy, but it does mean unprivileging some of its habits and relationships and creating new habits and relationships outside it. It means putting the university in its place.

I was on this trip to Broadway Park because the program that I direct, Arts of Citizenship, had organized and funded the teaching partnership between Bob Grese and Mary Van Alstyne. The mission of Arts of Citizenship is to explore the place of the arts, humanities, and design in the practice of public life—and at the same time to explore what difference doing our work in public, and in dialogue with community collaborators, makes to academic teaching, scholarship, design, and creative expression. One of the projects that we sponsor, called Students On Site, brings together teachers from the University and the Ann Arbor schools to use the neighborhood around Broadway Park and the Broadway bridges as a site for local, place-based, interage curricular experiments in history, writing, design, and other fields. The project includes not only teaching partnerships like this, but also the creation of a website archive of historical materials about Ann Arbor intended for both K-12 and college students. In connection with these pedagogical efforts, the City of Ann Arbor has asked Arts of Citizenship to participate in the current reconstruction of the adjacent Broadway bridges, inviting us to assemble a team that is proposing opportunities for public art, community-history exhibits, and park redesign in the neighborhood. Indeed it was the bridge reconstruction—and the invitation from the Mayor to contribute to the design process—that provided the original impetus for Students On Site.

The field trip, then, was one part of an omnibus, interdisciplinary project that uses the study and reshaping of local place to build bridges among teaching, research, culture-building, and neighborhood design; among history, literature, art, design, and environmental studies faculty within the University of Michigan faculty; and among academic, civic, educational, and grassroots partners from the community. In part, Students On Site has proliferated this way because of the lucky coincidence of a huge local public work and a neighborhood that is at once historically rich and culturally underresourced. The so-called Old Fourth Ward and Lowertown districts south and north of the Huron River is the heart of Ann Arbor's rail corridor, the heart of the city's black neighborhood, dating back to antebellum times; the anchor of the German-American community, the city's largest single ethnic community historically; the center of the city's mill and working-class district. Broadway Park is in effect the point of intersection for all the vectors of Ann Arbor's history that are not the University's history. At the same time, like the park itself, these histories are as invisible as they are central. We have been fortunate to have such untapped riches to find, teach with, and publicly present. And we have been incredibly lucky to work with an inspiring group of local teachers and community cultural activists.

At the same time, the growth of this project—and several others that we have undertaken—reflects something of the zeitgeist in the American academy. Students On Site is only one small

example of a larger impulse toward public collaboration and community-based teaching, research, and creative work—an impulse toward what is called (inadequately in my view) public service or service learning. Along with Arts of Citizenship, the University of Michigan has established several community partnership programs, including the Ginsberg Center for Community Service and Learning (recently the recipient of a \$5 million endowment gift) and the Community Partnership Center at our Taubman College of Architecture and Urban Planning. Similar initiatives at other universities include Penn's Center for Community Partnerships, the Great Cities Institute at the Illinois-Chicago, and the Center for Democracy and Citizenship at Minnesota's Humphrey Institute for Public Policy. And here at Miami it is striking how much the founding of the Institute for Urban and Social Ecology, with its mission of "integrat[ing] research, teaching, and service" and "encouraging interdisciplinary thought and action in community outreach" reflects the same impulse to meld intellectual experimentation with civic engagement.

As a humanist trained in interdisciplinary American Studies and now working within a professional school of design, I want to note how unevenly these efforts are distributed across the field of disciplines. Publicly engaged academic work is much more advanced and accepted in the policy-based social sciences, the helping professions, education schools, and planning and design than in the liberal arts. For all the rich scholarship on everyday life, popular culture, and the public sphere in recent years, humanists of even the most experimental bent still tend to envision research as an individual encounter with the archive, collaboration as a conference panel, and teaching as a sedentary conversation centered on a teacher-authorized text. Certainly before I undertook the work that led to Arts of Citizenship, that was largely true of my research and teaching. With the exception of community-based teaching in women's studies and ethnic studies programs and a few initiatives like Ann Whiston Spirn's West Philadelphia Landscape Project at Penn, Arts of Citizenship has not had many models for integrating community practice and project-based work in the arts and humanities. I would add that I see architecture and design schools, with their heterogeneous intellectual commitments to professional practice, applied research, and cultural critique, as crucial settings for dialogue between studio- and charrette-based pedagogy and the theoretical and analytical resources of humanistic cultural studies—a dialogue in which humanists have much to learn from the public engagement of design practitioners and much to teach about the stakes and complexity of public cultural work. This is why, in growing Arts of Citizenship, I have been relentless in defining our mission as the public work of the arts, humanities, and design, and why I have sought to include design faculty, students, and projects in our programming.

In sum, American higher education has begun to show widespread interest in, and widespread evidence of, collaborations between academics and community partners. Calls for the creation of "civic universities" are the buzzword du jour of conferences, national reports, and grant programs from such key funders as the Kellogg Foundation, the Pew Charitable Trusts, and the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching. Indeed, Kellogg's influential report on the state of land-grant universities, *Visions of Change in Higher Education*, calls for these institutions "to revitalize their public service missions" in response to an incipient legitimization crisis threatening the American academy. The symptoms of that crisis, the report argues, include declining budgetary resources and recurrent fiscal emergencies among public universities; "isolation from and loss of legitimacy with external stakeholders"; and broad dissatisfaction both within the professoriat and throughout the public over the dominance of research and professional status in the distribution of resources, power, and intellectual attention within universities.

I share this sense that the future of the research university is threatened by a growing divide from "the public"—actually various publics, from legislators to tax-payers to school-teachers to alumni, to whom academics are tied in bonds of mutually testy dependence. And I share the Kellogg report's fear that this divide endangers not only the material base of support for universities but also the legitimacy on which our privileged access to resources and autonomy relies. What are the causes and indicators of this legitimization crisis? It is first of all rooted in the extraordinary success of the post-World War II American academy. The expansion of the research university

during the latter half of the twentieth century was fueled by growing links to the Cold War national state, by the genuine democratization of access to higher education, and by the dissemination of a model of teaching and research based on departmental specialization and professional disciplinary regulation. These developments made American universities vast, expensive enclaves responsible for everything from proto-professional sports franchises to nuclear generators to peer-group communities of thousands of post-adolescents. No wonder they cost so much. With the end of the postwar boom in the mid-1970s, that ambitious agenda pitched universities—most of all, public universities—into ongoing fiscal emergency and growing friction with tuition-paying families, legislative funders, and broad reaches of the tax-paying public.

The divide between the research academy and its publics was exacerbated by the professional regime that organized its internal organization of labor and power. The late twentieth-century American university is a case study in the triumph of hyper-professionalism. Its emphasis on esoteric, specialized research regulated by peer review and circulated in disciplinary publications and conferences has meant that access to tenure and institutional prestige is inversely proportional to public access. Such professionalism took root throughout American colleges and universities during the postwar boom period in higher education, but interestingly the fiscal emergency of the past quarter-century has only intensified it. Hard times, scarce jobs, and the deepening crisis in academic publishing have raised the bar for hiring and tenure and raised the pressure on young academics to think of their career as a Malthusian race for credentialed publication and disciplinary visibility. It is important to credit the enormous achievements of this system of incentives and evaluations in terms of the quantity and the range of the scholarship that it has stimulated. Nonetheless one of its less healthy effects has been to devalue the labor of dialogue with the non-academic public. Research universities often appreciate the civic engagement of their scholars, but they rarely make it salient to fundamental issues of promotion, pay, and power.

I would add one more, painfully ironic factor to the growing divide between the research academy and the public: the scholarly aftereffects of the 1960s. I say painfully ironic, because the academic New Left was in large part driven by a political and epistemological critique of the bureaucratic university, a critique that produced experimental institutions and insurgent modes of teaching and research. Nonetheless the Antiochs and Radical History Reviews have proven in the long run much less important than the astonishing effectiveness with which members of the post-1968 left professoriat have absorbed and been absorbed into the world of academic professionalism. For all the hysteria and ignorance that characterizes much of the attack on "tenured radicals," it is undeniable that higher education served as a refuge, perhaps the only powerful institutional refuge, for progressive politics in the face of the rightward tendency of national politics during the late twentieth century. This "long march" through the academy has had important effects on the content of progressive politics in the United States, an issue I won't discuss here. But I do want to touch on its consequences for the research academy. On the one hand, it seems to me, the intellectual legacy of the '60s has had a vibrant effect on teaching and scholarship in American universities. It brought the resources of politically engaged critique to bear on established fields, for instance, sparking innovative social historical research in my discipline and a turn to nuanced historicist study in literary criticism and art history; it stimulated the creation of new interdisciplinary fields like women's studies and African American studies. It enabled a generation of teachers like me to think reflectively about the role of power, hierarchy, and personal transformation in our pedagogy. For all the occasional excesses and rigidities of the academic left, the legacy of the '60s has been of extraordinary value to academic research and teaching. On the other hand, it is striking how fully the research academy has succeeded in professionalizing the progressive intellectuals who found shelter in it. For all the insurgent energies of recent scholarship, it has not offered a sustained challenge to the institutional regime of the research university itself. The generation of post-1968 scholars made the strategic choice of appropriating rather than changing the canons of status and professional authority, which remain much the same today as they did when Clark Kerr was toppled from the chancellorship of Berkeley. Heterodox movements within the academy have used the apparatus of peer-reviewed

journals, scholarly conferences, and endowed chairs to wrest legitimacy and resources for themselves; and radical scholars now routinely run the professional associations of established disciplines. A generation of academics who were collectively distanced from the mainstream of public politics won a place for itself within the mainstream of academic professionalism.

In short, a variety of factors—institutional expansion, fiscal crisis, the triumph of academic professionalism, and the course of post-'60s intellectual politics—have worked to distance the research academy from its publics. In important ways that distance has been a boon for the growth, productivity, and autonomy of universities. But it has come at the cost of attenuating the university as a *place*, an embodied community of inquiry embedded in both a local community and a larger civic realm. All the factors that I have mentioned work to erode the loyalties and interests that bind academics to local, non-academic significant others and to reward them for building translocal loyalties and interests within an academic archipelago of universities, professional associations, peer-reviewed publications, institutes, and conferences. This is the geographic order anatomized so wonderfully in David Lodge's trilogy of academic satires, *Changing Places*, *Small World*, and *Nice Work*, a world in which the best fate professors can hope for is a leave or a job courtship elsewhere and the worst they have to fear is the forced march to find a job elsewhere. Because this geography is so deeply embedded in the structure of the research university as to seem natural, I don't think that we have fully realized how new or how costly it is. As with recent professional sports, it has enshrined a star system that rewards transience and undervalues continuity. And it fuels the mutual ignorance and sometime suspicion with which academics and the lay public too often think of each other.

This seems to me the larger context behind the efforts to build university-community partnerships that I mentioned at the start of this talk. It is certainly the backstory to the creation of the Arts of Citizenship Program and our interdisciplinary project of exploring and expanding the place of the arts, humanities, and design in civic and community life. Indeed the humanities and arts seem to me a particularly complex example of the costs of the university-public divide and the value of bridging it. If the politics of the previous decade has taught us anything, it is that issues of cultural, aesthetic, and critical expression are astonishingly important in American public life. The culture wars passionately engaged conflicts over civic values and invested the arts and humanities with enormous significance in the negotiation of those values. Academics have played an ambiguous role in this Kulturkampf. On the one hand, scholars in literary, historical, and cultural studies have produced rich new research into popular culture, the media, public values, and the meaning of everyday life. Drawing on neo-Marxism, poststructuralism, feminism, social constructionism, ethnic studies, and other theoretical resources, we have produced a body of work that takes seriously precisely the stakes and social complexity of culture as a collective practice of meaning-making and a fault line of political conflict. My own work on nineteenth-century urbanism, nation building, class and culture has drawn insight and inspiration from this body of scholarship, and I am proud to be part of it.

On the other hand, we have pursued this work in forms that are notoriously opaque to the publics we study. The esotericism of recent work in the humanities, arts, and design theory has many sources, including a widespread and to my mind salutary crisis of disciplinary boundaries that has thrown up for grabs what counts as good theory and good knowledge across many fields of study. But another source has surely been the conditions of political marginality and translocal professionalism that I described above: esotericism is a symptom of public withdrawal and scholarly insularity, a symptom of the pre-shrinking, if you will, of the political imagination that animated the work to begin with. The resulting distance between new work on public culture and public cultural debate itself has had the ironic effect of making the arts and humanities lightning rods for conflicts over such issues as the proper teaching of American history, the legitimacy of affirmative action, the sanctity of normative heterosexuality, sex radicalism in contemporary art and feminism, and the imputed moral relativism of theories like post-structuralism. My point is not that the protagonists in sorry episodes like the gutting of the Smithsonian's Enola Gay exhibit or Alan Sokol's hoaxing of Social Text had it right: in both cases, I think, the attacks on controversial

humanities work were extraordinarily ignorant. But it was an ignorance bred by the contradictory situation of the work itself, by the gap between its genuinely radical implications and its insulated community of discourse.

To my mind, the core goal of university-community collaborations like those pursued by Arts of Citizenship is not mere civic do-gooderism, although I think civic do-gooderism is a very good thing. The goal is at the same time to overcome this contradiction in the situation of the humanistic academy: to engage the study and pedagogy of public culture with the practice of public life, braiding national cultural politics, transnational theoretical discourse, and local projects together, integrating profession and place. I will sketch below some thoughts about what models this dialectic of civic engagement and intellectual innovation might take. But it is important to begin by saying this: I am not sure yet what counts as successful university-based public work in the arts and humanities, what defines productivity for our civic and academic ambitions. The work is still constitutively experimental and aggregative, without the paradigms of problem solving, expert investigation, and policy consulting that typically organize community-oriented action research in the social sciences and helping professions. Such uncertainty seems to me a defining condition of public collaboration in the arts, humanities, and design. As we all know from interdisciplinary work *within* the academy, certainty about appropriate questions and well-formed answers is underwritten by the closure and discipline of the communities of inquiry that are asking them. Like interdisciplinary research and teaching—perhaps even more—the project of bridging and academic work is by definition disruptive of that closure. It involves proliferating networks of interlocutors, each with their own ethical frames, institutional agendas, and forms of life; even something so simple as scheduling a meeting or defining a timeline of tasks among, say, university faculty, K-12 teachers, undergraduates, and community cultural groups can be the occasion of full-scale cognitive breakdown. More deeply, such partnerships throw up for grabs what counts as good work, who gets to participate in deciding, how we integrate research, pedagogy, and public action. They are necessarily Deweyan experiments, open sites in which the process and products of both knowledge-making and community-building cannot be prescribed but must be explored and critiqued through the concrete particulars of practice.

Let me try to unpack what this civic and intellectual experiment entails, then, by returning to the field trip with which I began, and especially to the comment made by one of the Bach School kids after coming upon a homeless squatter's campsite in Broadway Park: "This must be where people come and leave their old clothes after they buy new ones at the store." The first point to make is that the toolkit of contemporary cultural studies and cultural theory offers important resources for illuminating that moment. Three strands of recent work tacitly inform my understanding of its meaning and context. First, scholarly work on the links between power, cultural representation, and classificatory discourse—I'm thinking here of Foucault and Bakhtin, of course, but also of empirical scholars of cultural hierarchy like Lawrence Levine and Robert Allen—point to the (unself-conscious) process of othering and marginalization in which the boy's self-clarification participated.

At the same time, post-structuralist and psychoanalytical accounts of meaning, with their attention to the power of the erased and unsaid in ideological discourse, help to make clear that the powerful sadness of the comment came from the way that it placed the truth of the situation under repression. The child could not permit himself to apprehend directly why the shirt was hanging on the tree branch, and so the indirect way that he made sense of it gave the shirt an even more unspeakable power than if he had said, "Oh, no, a man without a home has to live here." We know from work like Fred Jameson's *Political Unconscious* that when the fact of human misery is placed under erasure in this way, traces of it make themselves half-known in social narratives. Thus the child instantly refracted into a story about discarded clothing his intuitive sense that here was a discarded human being, refracted into a story about shopping his intuitive sense that here was a man who was being treated as a used-up commodity.

Finally, recent geographic, historical, and architectural scholarship on what Edward Soja calls "the socio-spatial dialectic," especially on the ideological meaning of social space, helped me to understand the salience of Broadway Park as the specific landscape of this moment of revelation. As I noted at the start of this talk, the park is a peculiar mix of centrality and marginality: it is near the heart of Ann Arbor but underused because of the barriers of tracks, bridges, and river. It is almost a geographic representation of an aporia: the unacknowledged gap in the center of a presence, the abandoned heart of the city. It was not surprising to me that homeless people should find such a place to encamp, protected by its invisibility, so near the town center on which they depended for their subsistence.

In short, I came to this field trip with all kinds of academic resources to make sense of the park, its residents, and its effect on the visiting schoolchildren. Yet the second point I want to make is this: because of the *extramural scene* of teaching and learning, because I was with people who did not share the customs that govern on-campus teaching and learning, I was led to questions and explanations that were wholly unexpected. The most important surprise of the field trip was the connection that it suggested between children and the homeless. We are used to thinking of these two groups as antitypes and competitors. Children are the ultimate category of legitimization in our society; in their name any ideological position can be justified. In contrast, the homeless, especially homeless men, are demonized as the ultimate threat—most of all, the ultimate threat to children, despite the fact that all manner of everyday things like cars are more dangerous to children than an encounter with a homeless man. Indeed, when Bob Grese and I discussed his master's landscape studio assignment to redesign Broadway Park as a child-centered space, we worried that a public space consigned to the homeless could not be conceived as child-centered; it was too inaccessible, too forbidding. What I saw in the park, however, was a surprising homology, even a kind of intimacy, between the social needs of the homeless residents and the imaginative needs of the Bach School kids. Both groups took to the secret spaces of the park, to wooded corners and underpaths that offered a mix of security and marginality. Far from being threatened by such edge places, the children were drawn to them by some sort of Huck Finn fantasy of being at once hidden and adventuring, safe and uncivilized and without a home.

So the field trip offered up a complex encounter: one in which the children seemed to identify with significant others whose identity they could not fully recognize. Let me briefly sketch how the UM students and I responded to this encounter and explored its possibilities. As they went about completing their assignment of proposing a redesign for Broadway Park, the master's students were only partly able to incorporate the lessons of the Bach kids' response. On the one hand, the process of collaboration—designed and implemented by Mary Van Alstyne and Bob Grese—pushed them to engage the children as clients, partial co-creators, and social interlocutors. The two classes were organized into interage teams of about eight people; they explored the park together and worked together in a follow-up school visit to do sketches, brainstorming, and collage- and model-building. The landscape architects took these materials back to the studio, where they drafted, critiqued, and revised individual plans for the park. Five plans were selected by the master's students for presentation in Mrs. Van Alstyne's classroom, where the first and second graders subjected them to searching questions and sometimes probing critique; by now, the kids were deeply invested in the outcomes and knew their own minds about what they wanted. Bob Grese's students, in short, went through a more extended experience of mobilizing their expertise within dialogue, like the one I described for myself above. Apart from the landscape and ecological issues raised by the park site, Bob's pedagogical goal was to teach his students skills of deep listening to inexpert partners—and to teach them to view children as competent but marginalized social actors in the community design process. Mary Van Alstyne's pedagogical goal was, concomitantly, to teach her students to view themselves as social actors with the power and responsibility to shape their place in the world—but also to teach them that such power was constrained by the reality principle. Both teachers were skilled at melding these goals in the project, and the process of collaboration met both sets of goals admirably.

On the other hand, the *product* of the collaboration—the plans themselves—were only partly able to incorporate the park's multiple constituencies and potentialities. The landscape architects were rightly struck by the unexpected opportunities that Broadway Park offered children. Where the site had seemed forbidding and inaccessible at first, the field trip and the kids' reaction to its secret spaces taught them that the qualities of centrality, seclusion, access to the riverfront, and links to important but invisible parts of Ann Arbor's history made the park opportune as a set-aside children's space and even a dedicated outdoor classroom. The designs reflect this conclusion: many proposed multizonal plans thematized the history of the area as a rail corridor, mill district, and native American pathway and foregrounded the appeal of its proximity to rail and river. Taking their cue from the kid's exuberant, peripatetic response, most plans minimized hardscape and sought to preserve the feel of exploration and adventure, of tree-climbing, rock-climbing, racing across meadows, and hiding. Nonetheless the most difficult issue raised by the park—the links or conflicts between children and homeless squatters—was not directly addressed by any of the master's students, although they had discussed it extensively in studio. Rather, traces of the homeless showed up symptomatically in many of the plans, as an expunged presence that has become a safe object of fantasy. Such landscape elements are not unlike the "vanishing Indians" that populate children's playscapes: dangerous others whose displacement makes them into objects of imaginative identification. This symbolic expulsion and re-introjection of the homeless was not, of course, a matter of conscious political choice by the master's students. Given the ways that homeless squatters are figured in public discourse and policed in public space, I think it was simply impossible for the masters' students to envision an unembarrassed relationship to the park's existing residents, to envision a design solution that could accommodate both the park's users of secret space—even as they recognized the unexpected bonds between them. The result was a recreational program in which homelessness was placed under repression.

For myself, as I thought about how Broadway Park might be revived, and what role Arts of Citizenship might play, I turned again to intellectual resources to advance the dialogue I had begun in the park. Children's studies scholars like my UM colleague Elizabeth Goodenough provided me with a body of literary and design research that contextualized the Bach student's attraction to "the secret spaces of childhood" (in Goodenough's wonderful phrase), the rough but sheltered margins of the park. Design criticism such as Nan Ellin's anthology *Architecture of Fear* explored the ways that the exclusion and policing of the socially marginal are designed into recreational and leftover spaces in the urban environment—as well as reporting on bottom-up design responses to homeless encampments. Other interpretive came from outside the academy. Ann Arbor community historians Grace Shackman and Bill Browning, who serve as informal consultants to the Students On Site historical website that we are building, taught us that Broadway Park had been known in the 1930s as Hobo Park because of the tramps who camped and hopped freight trains there. Going back to the turn of the century, our student researchers discovered that it was "the wretched condition of this property" as a railside cinder yard redolent with danger and vice that had animated the campaign to create the park in the first place. Clearly, Broadway Park had its own history of hidden spaces, of survival on the margins, of casualized labor and invisible men, whose traces the children had sensed and taught to us.

For now the story of Broadway Park has reached a pause. Over the next year, as the adjacent bridges are rebuilt, much of the park will be used as a staging area for construction materials and equipment, and most if not all the hardcore homeless will be displaced, presumably to secret public spaces elsewhere in town. Yet the question remains whether this park can and should become something more than a homeless encampment and pass-through space. The park is both lovely and unlovely, central and marginal. A riverside meadow in the heart of the city, it is a crossroads of nearly every vector of Ann Arbor's history that is not the university's history; it is also neglected by everyone, including the Parks Department, except the dozen or so squatters who live there, the handful of anglers who fish there on warm mornings, and a small number of walkers who cherish its quiet and vacancy. For all of these reasons, there is a powerful argument to redesign it and revivify its use. My own view is that Broadway Park will never do well as a

neighborhood recreational space; there are two parks within blocks of it that can better fill such needs. Yet, if a solution could be found to its physical segregation—say, a footbridge and small parking area on the north side of the river—and to the genuine issues of security that the park's seclusion and homeless users pose, it could serve uniquely as a citywide outdoor classroom for environmental, cultural, and historical education, or perhaps an intergenerational space bringing together children and seniors from a nearby geriatric center. My sense of the site's value as a space for public education, cultural display, and community storytelling is partly fueled by a boardwalk and millrace along the north shore of the Huron River opposite the park, a wonderful place for signage and interactive exhibits about Ann Arbor's history as a milltown and a multiethnic community. The story of Hobo Park would surely be part of that public history.

Can that reprogramming be done without simply displacing the homeless encampment, the usual effect of park reclamation efforts like this? More to the point, can a university-based program like Arts of Citizenship advance such a strategy of accommodation—in both senses—of homeless, children, and other potential stakeholders? It seems to me that publicly engaged academics might contribute to transforming Broadway Park in two divergent ways. On the one hand, we would need to mobilize but also democratize our powers of cultural analysis, to craft a public language with which to converse about the ways that homeless people are demonized in public space and public culture, a language that can combat the sometimes hysterical reactions that accompany the prospect of unpoliced contacts between the homeless and ordinary citizens. On the other hand, we would need to enlarge the process of cultural collaboration to include precisely homeless stakeholders or their advocates in a conversation that transcends the embarrassments and erasures that marked the work of Bob Grese's landscape students. What sort of park and park structures might accommodate the residents of the park and at the same time accommodate them to other users such as schoolchildren? What sort of shelter spaces, storage spaces, play spaces might such a place contain? What temporal rhythms of activity and rest would structure the daily choreography of encounter, toleration, and avoidance? What tacit agreements would be reached about boundaries, zones, and permissible conversation? To make Broadway Park such a place of accommodations would be a genuinely important intervention in both public design and the politics of culture.

We are a long way from this solution in Ann Arbor. And yet the Students On Site project has constantly surprised me in the dynamism with which it has proliferated during the past year. When I presented the work of Bob Grese's studio to the Parks Department—including the issue of avoiding homeless displacement—they invited Arts of Citizenship to convene a group of designers, historians, artists, and community arts leaders to develop a proposal of opportunities for park redesign, public art, and community history exhibits around the bridge reconstruction and Broadway Park. At the same time, our teaching partnership in the Ann Arbor schools has grown from three classrooms in our first year of work to nearly a dozen this year; we are about to institute a university-wide course that will recruit UM undergraduates into project teams for credit. Our Students On Site website—an online historical archive of this neighborhood's history—includes some 150 documents hyperlinked and is currently being used in elementary, high-school, and UM classrooms. Moreover we have just won a grant to expand Students On Site in two ways. Working with the local Ecology Center and a third-grade teacher, we are developing an interdisciplinary pilot curriculum called "Environmental Legacies," a five-week unit that will use Broadway Park to teach elementary students both ecology and local environmental history. Similarly, working with the local African American Cultural and Historical Museum, we are researching the history of the Underground Railroad in Washtenaw County with an eye toward creating a place-based curriculum, outdoor and traveling exhibits, and a cultural bus tour.

I've offered this catalogue of Student On Site's growth over the past year not simply to toot our horn—which I'm all too happy to do—but also to return to my larger question. What does the project's plurivocal structure, chaotic expansiveness, and omnibus energy say about academic-public collaboration in the arts and humanities? What model does it offer for the dual aim of civic

engagement and intellectual experimentation? I would point to three implications about the way that we have tried to put the university in its place through this work.

First of all, it should be clear bridging academic work in the arts and humanities with public cultural work leads to an expansion of the tasks and relationships that constitute the community of inquiry. Unlike much problem-based action research in the social and policy sciences, *Students On Site* is relentlessly multiple in the cultural products it aims to create, the media and disciplines upon which it calls, and the community partners it engages; and all of these elements and projects are mutually permeable and reinforcing. There is an eclectic, improvised quality to the project's development, and it is constantly threatening to overrun our financial and imaginative resources, but that very disorganization points to the pent-up energy, the latent demand for new linkages and projects, that ordinary academic professionalism has left untapped. It also underscores a key truth about such public partnerships, a truth that is obscured by their sometimes modest scale. This is not about a retreat into localism, not about rejecting the cosmopolitan linkages of the research academy. Rather it is about creating new, place-based forms of intellectual cosmopolitanism by enlarging the range of partners and peers and languages and public effects in our work.

Second, doing cultural work in public—with the omnibus range of partners and products that such collaborations entail—will always involve the forging of interdisciplinary linkages on campus. Public engagement necessarily destabilizes and transforms the boundary system of the disciplines, sometimes in ways that go beyond the boundary crossing of academic interdisciplinarity. In the case of *Students On Site*, local history, cultural studies, design, and K-12 education are placed in dialogue with one another.

Third, enlarging our community of discourse means transforming our pedagogy as well. It involves collaborative projects of cultural cocreation that are different not only from conventional academic pedagogy but also from the community service-learning model of student placements and the social-scientific tradition of action research that provides the academy's two principal existing models of community-based teaching and learning. Here the aim of the pedagogy is neither the experiential learning that service work provides nor the focused problems of action research, but rather a larger effort at the collaborative cocreation of new cultural resources: an effort in which the community partner is neither the object of research nor the provider of experiences but genuinely a collaborative producer. Such pedagogy tends inevitably to involve multiple modes of teaching style and student work, modes that are not necessarily neatly contained within one type of setting or academic unit. It asks students to move between a multiplicity of roles: the normal state of affairs for such projects will be one in which undergraduates are at once classroom learners, researchers, project collaborators, and mentors to younger students. There is a craft to this sort of pedagogy about which humanities faculty have very little experience. We have much to learn from other members of the teaching faculty, especially in professional schools where the mix of analysis and projects, class and fieldwork, is more developed in studios, practicums, clinics, and internships. And at the same time, I am coming to think that these projects will have an interdisciplinary reach that will helpfully enlarge the models of practice-based learning in design, law, and education schools.

I want to make clear that I do not believe this sort of public engagement can or should infect every institutional interest in a university like Michigan. But I *am* talking about a research university that makes the collaborative work of renewing public life a part of its ordinary intellectual practice and backs that work in the most consequential decisions concerning power, pay, and privilege. For the story of Broadway Park is precisely a story about the renewal of public life. Much has been written recently about the attenuation of the public sphere and the privatization of social life in contemporary America. This is the burden of Mike Davis' account of Los Angeles in *City of Quartz*. For Davis, the twin images of the dystopia toward which he sees Los Angeles tending are the militarized downtown of surveillance and policing on the one hand and the gated community on the other. When I first read Davis's book, I believed that his account

was overdone, that this was some sort of LA thing. But anyone who has watched the proliferation of gated communities across America over the past decade has to admire his prescience. Universities are one of the few institutions—perhaps the only institution of local, embodied community—with the capacity to challenge this gating of American social life. Most Americans live with us at some time in their lives, and universities serve as unique social laboratories in which new forms of living and collective practice can be modeled. Part of the job of the academy, it seems to me, is the engagement of our intellectual work with the practice of public life. For we cannot live in a society of gated communities without becoming, as we may already be, a gated community ourselves.

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