

THE CULTURAL CRITICISM OF LEWIS MUMFORD AND THE CREATIVE CITY PLANNING AS AN ANSWER TO THE ECOLOGICAL CRISIS OF MODERN CIVILISATION

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Abstract. The book of young Lewis Mumford (1895–1990) entitled *Sticks and Stones: A Study of American Architecture and Civilization* (first published in 1924) is a condensed version of his philosophy of city and a research program completed in his rich *œuvre*. The title is telling: the starting point of Mumford is the idea that the architecture of a city is an objectified presentation of the value-system of the given civilisation. Stick and stones are not only sticks and stones: the material infrastructure is an embodiment of the values of civilisation, which are the basic motivating factors behind human actions. In other words: city is a mirror of civilisation; if the observer decodes the message encoded in sticks and stones, he/she gets the value-structure of the civilisation having produced the city. However, there is a mutual interdependence: human beings living in the city are not only passive possessors of a heritage determining one-sidedly their actions but they modify and restructure urban spaces: sticks and stones form our values, at the same time our values influence the concrete arrangement of sticks and stones. Creative city-planning is vital important. It gives possibility for the redirection of a civilisation's future historical way. At the same time, creativity, in Mumford's interpretation, does not mean the profit-generating capacity of the city; it has to serve the well-being of all citizens.

Keywords: architecture, city, city-planning, civilisation, creativity, ecology, Lewis Mumford, *Sticks and Stones*, values.

Introduction: metropolis as one of the main catchwords of modern cultural criticism

Urbanisation altered the patterns of everyday life; metropolises, growing in a mushroom-like way both in number and in size, became the theatres of a new way of life for rapidly modernizing societies. This process was taking place in local contexts with different Medieval antecedents. The concrete way of urbanisation fitted in the fabric of national histories. The scale and dynamism of it was different in European regions. The process was connected everywhere to the nation building of modern societies. Cities played an important role in

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emerging modern national consciousness; they were crystallization points for modern political communities.

Modern metropolis, in the second half of the 19th century, became the main target of cultural criticism. Overall metropolis-critique was elaborated in two countries: Great Britain (GB) and Germany. The patterns of British and German cultural criticism inspired American cultural critics, first of all Mumford (Kovács, 2011a). Urbanisation, in GB, was an organic and relatively smooth process in the Middle Ages: British Isles were covered by a network of small and medium sized regional towns. However, in the age of industrial revolution, onward the end of the 18th century, London, England, United Kingdom (UK), and the emerging new industrial cities, Manchester, England, UK, Liverpool, England, UK, Birmingham, England, UK *etc.*, became metropolises with urban masses and industrial pollution challenging the critique of such Victorian thinkers as Thomas Carlyle, John Ruskin, and William Morris (Sussman, 1968). They opposed the merry old England of countryside and the smoky industrial districts around metropolises, the ceketowns as Mumford labelled them borrowing the term of Charles Dickens. There were, besides individual peculiarities, common motifs in Victorian British cultural criticism: its representatives preferred the village and little towns with their simple healthy ways of life and bucolic virtues to metropolises with their hustle and bustle and impersonal mass-existence. The aversion to metropolis was associated with the critique of modern industrial technology based on steam machine. Samuel Butler, a deeply revered thinker for Mumford, connected the *topos* of technology with the subject of evolution (Sussman, 1968, pp. 136–161). His satire, entitled *Erewhon* (first published in 1872), following the British satirical tradition going back to Jonathan Swift, raised the question of technological evolution (Butler, 2006; Taylor & Dorin, 2020, pp. 22–23; Rattray, 1914). Another common motif in British cultural criticism was a dichotomy between the artisanship of Medieval guilds and the factory workers alienated from their activity. Victorian thinkers imagined an alternative modernity based on the new environment-friendly technologies, first of all electricity, and revitalisation of human shaped communities (Kropotkin, 2019).

Another centre of the fin de siècle cultural criticism was Germany, which had, similarly to GB, many medium-sized and small towns in the Middle Ages but, in the 19th century, it was taking place a rapid, explosion-like urbanisation producing modern metropolises and generating social tensions. The most renowned representative of German cultural criticism was Spengler (1926, 2018) whose philosophy of city was embedded in an overall historical philosophy (Farrenkopf, 2001; Felken, 1988; Koktanek, 1968). Spengler used dichotomous notions: it was a generally applied intellectual strategy of modern cultural criticism. Organic–mechanic and culture–civilisation were his central antithetic notion pairs. Spengler amalgamated the biological and symbolic approaches: human cultures were for him living organisms organising around their archetypical ideas. He was, as almost everyone in this period, inspired by the concept of evolution (Darwin, 2009). The adaptation of Darwinian theory by him was ambivalent: he, on one hand, embraced the concept of organic growth and applied it to human history, but, on other hand, refused the cause–effect scheme of Darwin (2009). There is no such thing as progression – Spengler claimed: he was definitely an anti-progressivist thinker (Bury, 2014; Nisbet, 2017). Every cultural cycle is a closed organic entity whose historical way has been predetermined by its inner laws: cultures, in his train of

thought are, similarly to plants, living organisms going inevitably to petrification: civilisation, the fulfilment and the endpoint of historic process, is a dead form, a mechanic way of life. Metropolis, for him, is a symbol of modern civilisation in stone (Kovács, 2011b).

1. American way to modernity: the garden and the machine

However, in American thought, because of the different local cultural context, the problems of metropolis, modernisation and technology appeared in other way than it happened in European scene (Himmelfarb, 2005). The United States (US), until the first half of the 19th century, in the social imagination of the contemporaries, was a new world embodying the physical realisation of the Garden of Eden. At the same time, it seemed to be a wilderness waiting for humanisation by human effort (Marx, 2000). These two versions of the America-image involved two kinds of life philosophy. The conception of garden gave way to an Epicurean approach: you can enjoy the fruits of this earthly Garden of Eden without toiling. The image of wilderness was interpreted in the context of the central moral commandment of puritanism: it needs hard work, incessant this-worldly activity to purge this new world from the tempting evil. The later approach became dominant in the “Yankee” version of American modernisation vehemently criticised by Mumford. The dividing line between the decades of the flowering autochthonous American culture hallmarked by such original thinkers as Emerson (1951) and the “brown decades” following this period, according to him, was the American Civil War (ACW) of 1861–1865. It introduced the age of the machine. This idea was not a personal idiosyncrasy of Mumford: it framed the world-picture of the young generation of American cultural criticism sharply rejecting the Gilded Age, the world of big business with its dehumanized life conduct. Its representatives were Waldo Frank, Randolph Bourne, Van Wyck Brooks, and *The Young Americans* (Blake, 1990). Mumford became the best renowned figure of this generation. Their central idea was the “usable past”: it meant the revitalisation of the Republican tradition of the farmer democracy rooted in the 18th century: one of the main sources of inspiration for anti-metropolitan Republicanism was the thought of Thomas Jefferson.

The problem of modernisation in America, from the scratch, was embedded in geographical, social, economic and cultural contexts radically different from the ones dominated the European scene. There were widely shared illusions about the possibilities of avoiding the dark side of European style modernisation. American travellers visiting the British industrial metropolises were horrified at the slums of Manchester. At the same time, they were taken away by the miracles of modern steam-based technology. This ambivalence was already a characteristic trait of Jefferson’s thought. His routes in Europe strengthened his Republican point of view concerning the incompatibility of Republican values with the modern way of life of metropolises based on mutual dependence of city-dwellers and pursuit of luxury goods. The virtue, it was his deepest conviction, was resided in the bosom of the simple farmer. Jefferson (1999), mingling moral and economic argumentation, was convinced that America’s future would be in farming and not in manufactures (Kasson, 1999). The farmer, in the conception of Jefferson was not a *homo economicus* following his/her interests but a *homo moralis* being moved by moral motivations (Marx, 2000). This philosophical anthropology is a logical consequence of his utopia of egalitarian farmer Republic: economic competition

moved by individual interests inevitably destroys egalitarian society – it was what happened in the 19th century in America.

Jefferson, in one of his letters describing the daily routine of a Parisian upper-class lady, anticipated the critique on the empty, mechanized way of life for metropolis, a peculiar topic of the 20th century cultural criticism. Jefferson (2007) contrasted this conduct of life with the daily routine of an American woman based on healthy simplicity. However, later as president of the US, because of pragmatic political reasons, radically altered his opinion; he pointed out that America, without industry and cities, would become the economic colony of GB.

The American “mania of invention”, the enthusiastic attitude toward technology, which struck European visitors, got along well with the aversion to the metropolises (White & White, 2022). Jefferson himself was passionately interested in technical problems and grounded a manufacture in Monticello, Virginia, US. However, this ambivalence was fed on the exceptional geographical-economic conditions of America: the abundance of land promised the possibility of modern industry in countryside without metropolises corrupting Republican morals. This utopian concept accommodated modern technology and modernisation with the survival of Medieval origin network of localities, little and medium sized towns giving room for the intimacy of a modernized *Gemeinschaft*, a human sized settlement-form with a face-to-face conduct of life. The utopian version of garden seemed to be a realistic illusion in the first decades of the 19th century but the 1850s proved a watershed; it became clear that, using a metaphor, the machine gained upper hand of the garden. In other words, it came clear that capitalist modernisation and industrial technology in America, similarly to Europe, would intertwine with the appearance of great industrial metropolises. The ACW was a historic milestone. In the interpretation of Mumford, the ACW was the overture of the brown decades, the Gilded Age, the epoch of industrial robber barons. The slavery *i.e.*, the total dominance of human beings over human beings, in his pessimistic historical philosophy, was replaced by the dominance of the machine over human beings (Mumford, 1926, 1973).

2. Lewis Mumford, the generalist and the problem of the city

Mumford was socialized in the peculiar atmosphere of the decades preceding the World War I (WWI) – the grand war as it remained in historic recollection. He passionately interested in different fields of human knowledge: history of America and human civilisations, history of arts, history of architecture, history of city, in addition sociology, philosophy, evolutionary biology and geography. This many branched interests had been canalised by eco-sensitive cultural criticism mediated mainly by Patrick Geddes, the Scottish biologist, sociologist and one of the renowned city planners of these decades in the British Empire (Novak, 1995; Meller, 2005). Mumford had a deep aversion to formal education. He attended different courses in colleges and universities but did not complete his studies (Miller, 1989, pp. 25–45). He was a self-taught thinker; it was a conscious life strategy inspired by the motto of Geddes: learning from living (*vivendo discimus*). This was the role model of the generalist trying to embrace the different fields of human knowledge. It was a conscious opposition to the role model of the specialist based on the idea of compartmentalisation of the different areas of science. At the same time, having gained reputation by his books in the later decades, he became a

welcomed lecturer of American universities: University of California, Berkeley (US), Stanford University (US), Columbia University (US) *etc.*, but he remained a freelance public intellectual to the end of his life (Mumford, 1975, 1979, 1982).

In the surprisingly many coloured *œuvre* of Mumford the problem of city and city-planning is a red thread woven into the fabric of his thought from the beginning. However, this interest was rooted in personal experiences acquired by his long walks in the streets of New York City (NYC), US with his grandfather (Miller, 1989, pp. 25–45). Mumford, one of the fore-fathers of green thought in the 20th century (Kovács, 2009), was a passionate lover of former NYC whose streets he was roaming during his childhood and youth. This attitude coloured his later interest concerning the problems of urbanisation. City is a recurring main actor of his books. In 1931, Mumford took the over architectural columns of *The New Yorker* magazine in which he was writing articles for decades. At the same time, he was one of the founding fathers of the Regional Planning Association of America (RPAA) in the early 1920s (Thomas, 1990). He was the fourth member of this group and the other three were the outstanding persons of the 20th century American city-planning: Clarence Stein, Henry Wright, and Benton MacKaye. Mumford, in 1923, became the secretary of the association and later he was the main spokesman and the theoretician of this group whose main ambition was to elaborate an alternative way of city planning to the congested and overcrowded metropolis embodied in NYC.

This program, in the case of Mumford, focused on the idea of a green civilisation and the core of his conception was the notion of regionalism. In his first book, *The Story of Utopias* (Mumford, 1922) he gives not only an overview on utopian conceptions but outlines the idea of the transformation of modern nature-devastating civilisation by the network of small, human sized towns living in a mutually advantageous symbiosis with their countryside including natural and social environment. Ideas, according to the deep conviction of Mumford, have a strong reality-transforming power. Human being, in his philosophical anthropology, has been invested by the capabilities of mind and hand; it is both a tool-maker and cultural symbols maker animal whose balanced existence needs the production of immaterial symbolic culture and that of material technology. Human values are embodying in physical objects; the buildings of the city are the symbols of human values objectified in stone.

The history of utopian thought is a history of value-creating attempts for realizing a better reality – it is the starting point of *The Story of Utopias*. The motto on the front cover, below the title is telling: “A Map of the World that does not include Utopia is not worth even glancing at...” (Mumford, 1922). Having read the book becomes clear that what Mumford was thinking of was not a geographical but a mental map necessary for us to chart the right way in the world around us. This approach is based on a new ecological conception of the relation of human being and its environment. There is no cleavage between outer, physical and inner subjective world; Mumford refuses the subject–object dichotomy of Cartesian thought. Human race, similarly to other biological species, lives in a symbiosis, in the state of a dynamic ecological balance with its environment; it means an adaptation to nature. In the case of human communities, it takes place in the form of an active adaptation: human beings shape their environment with their technology. He gives an explicitly ecological definition of the machine:

“Machines have developed out of a complex of non-organic agents for converting energy, for performing work for enlarging the mechanical or sensory capacities of the

human body, or for reducing to a measurable order and regularity the processes of life. The automaton is the last step in a process that began with the use of one part or another of the human body as a tool. In back of the development of tools and machines lies the attempt to modify the environment in such a way as to fortify and sustain the human organism: the effort is either to extend the powers of the otherwise unarmed organism, or to manufacture outside of the body a set of conditions more favorable toward maintaining its equilibrium and ensuring its survival" (Mumford, 1934, pp. 9–10).

3. City as the mirror of civilisation

The concrete way of human activity has been determined by the ideas of our mind. Ideas carry values which are solid facts of reality similarly to physical objects of outer world. The second book of young Mumford (2021) entitled *Sticks and Stones*, is a condensed version of his philosophy of city and a research program completed later in his rich *oeuvre*. The title is telling: the starting point of Mumford is the idea that the architecture of a city is an objectified presentation of the value-system of civilisation. Stick and stones are not only sticks and stones: the material infrastructure is an embodiment of the values, which are the basic motivating factors behind human actions. In other words, city is a mirror of civilisation; if the observer decodes the message encoded in sticks and stones, he/she recognises the value-structure of the civilisation created by the city. However, there is a mutual interdependence: human beings living in the city are not only passive possessors of a heritage determining one-sidedly their actions but they modify and restructure urban spaces: sticks and stones form our values, at the same time our values determine the concrete arrangement of sticks and stones; as a consequence of this conception city-planning is vital important for the direction of a civilisation's future historical way. Architecture, according to Mumford, is a social art with moral message: it must express the idea of good life and ensure a theatre of realising this idea for its inhabitants. The point of view of Mumford (2021) is holistic: what matters is not the single building but architecture, the living context of buildings.

Mumford's philosophy of city has been fitted into the framework of his cultural criticism. The target of this criticism is the overcrowded modern metropolis with its skyscrapers; it is the translation of the value-system of modern technological civilisation into steel, reinforced concrete walls and glass: it is fostered by vested capitalist interests in land speculation and in pathological swelling of the city. Mumford and his colleagues after the WWI in the RPAA elaborated plans of an alternative urbanization based on the architectural and cultural traditions of American civilisation. The historic model for Mumford is the New England Village (NEV), New England, US with its communal and architectural patterns inherited from the European Middle Ages, first of all from GB and the Low Countries. Tradition is important because it supplies material of the usable past for cultural-social and political renewal, which, according to first generation of the American cultural criticism emerging after the turn of the 19–20th centuries, is the main task of their epoch. The idea of renewal comes from a deep aversion to the America of the robber barons emerged after the ACW and the civilisation of the big business whose product, the modern metropolis with its acquisitive life of way based upon the value system of industrial civilisation. What is in their mind is some kind

alternative urbanisation appearing in the context of alternative modernisation: this idea is a common denomination of modern cultural criticism (Rohkrämer, 1999).

Mumford in the *Sticks and Stones* finds the usable past, *i.e.*, a model for renewal and regeneration based on native America tradition: it is the NEV, whose architectural arrangement mirrors the communitarian attitudes and social structure inherited from the Middle Ages (Wood, 1991). It, according to Mumford, was able, for a time, to be a counterbalance of the inquisitive, business-centred American individualism. Mumford, with an obvious exaggeration, writes about “Yankee Communism” preserving the institution of the common lands inherited from the history of the European Middle Ages. The architecture of it embodies a special value-system of this region and age (Mumford, 2021).

This idealised description of the NEV is important for Mumford because it stands for him as a historical prefiguration of garden city, an idea that was elaborated by the contemporary English city planner Howard (1965). Mumford and his colleagues in the RPAA, in their alternative model of urbanisation, saw the garden city as a possible way out of the dead way of the overpopulated, congested metropolis. That is why the NEV is important as usable past for Mumford (2021) in his conceptions of a new ecological civilisation and a new ecological sensitive communal city planning.

Locality and ecological-sensitiveness were the catchwords of the alternative urbanizations not only for Mumford but for all the members of the RPPA in the 1920s. Mumford himself, in his later books, put his conceptions about the relation of architecture and civilizational values into the framework of world history. His book entitled *The Culture of Cities* (Mumford, 1970) is a survey based on cultural critical approach about modern, European-rooted civilisation and its city-variations from the Middle Ages to industrial society with its metropolises. In his another seminal book on this topic, *The City in History: Its Origins, Its Transformations, and Its Prospects* (Mumford, 1962), his referential frame is enlarged with the ancient times before the Middle Ages, including the historical beginnings of city-formation, from the Eastern empires and their cities to the Greek, Roman and Hellenistic cities; but the core of his conception explained in the *Sticks and Stones* about the NEV remains a lasting element in the pattern of his thought (Mumford, 2021).

Medieval European town, in the historical philosophy of Mumford, is a petrified form of a human-scaled civilisation based on the idea of mutuality: the organically developed Medieval city with its curving streets is the habitat of citizens who form a corporation applying the institution of self-government; it was the moment when locality, at least for a time, was able to become the agent of history. Medieval town, in his theory, is based on social mutuality sanctified partly by custom law and partly by written charters warranting the life world of lower social strata. This was not of course political democracy in modern political meaning; it based on group privileges and not on individual liberties and it existed among actors who were in unequal political positions; but it proved an important historical precondition and prefiguration of modern democracy. This approach was inspired by the thought of the Russian anarchist, Peter Kropotkin whose idea of mutuality as a natural law was adapted by Mumford into his own conception.

However, in the thought of Mumford, there is no a value-cumulative progression or amelioration in human history. For briefly description of his philosophy of history, the metaphor

of pendulum seems to be illuminating. In human history, there is pendular movement between the extreme positions of *dominium* and *communitas*. Middle Ages was the age of *communitas* which was replaced, after the centuries of the post-Medieval crisis of disintegration, by early modern mechanistic civilisation whose characteristic product was, according to Mumford, the baroque city, an objectified form of the value-orientation of emerging power civilisation based on the machine. There is a parallel, according to him, between political and architectural despotism. Baroque state with its complicated bureaucracy is governed by a despotic political centre, by the will of the *le Roi Soleil*; the structure of baroque city is the mirror of a political idea driven by ingrained power ambitions; both of them are rooted in the cosmological concept of early modern civilization based on the attitudes of domination concerning both its relations to nature and arrangement of human society. The approach of René Descartes, Mumford argues, is a symptomatic expression of mechanistic world-view with its insensitiveness to the organically grown locality. What is problematic for Mumford it is the aversion to traditions and a dangerous cleavage between past and present. He cites word by word, in his both grand city-books, Descartes' (2006) train of thought from the *Discourse on the Method of Rightly Conducting the Reason, and Seeking Truth in the Sciences* (first published in 1637) as an emblematic expression of modern mechanistic power-civilization (Mumford, 1962, p. 393, 1970, pp. 122–123).

4. The idea of creative city in the mirror of Lewis Mumford's theory

Creative city narrative, emerging in the late 1990s, lends itself for confronting it with Mumford's conception on city-planning rooted in his cultural criticism. This narrative is far from to be a coherent discourse – there different interpretations of it reflecting their authors personal intellectual-ideological backgrounds. Some of them are resonated with Mumford's intentions while others contradict it. It is highly probable that he would agree with the approach of Charles Landry, one of the grounding fathers of creative city narrative. The starting point of Landry (2008) is that the new developments of our civilisation, first of all globalisation and its necessary consequences, put a new challenge to our cities. In this new situation, creativity became a central notion for them. But what is creativity? Its original meaning associates it with an array of individual attitudes and dispositions. A creative person is able to give unforeseeable and successful responses to the new challenges of reality he/she lives in. The notion most frequently is associated with artistic activities; but Landry argues, it has many dimensions. Creativity is always must be situated: it manifests itself in concrete situations. City, as a special kind of human settlement form has been a pool of creative persons from the beginnings of human history – this idea is would be welcomed by Mumford who sees cities as locomotives of human civilisations. The starting point of Laundry is that new globalized economy is a knowledge economy whose competitive spear-head is culture industry producing immaterial goods – it generates, maintains, manages and distributes cultural symbols. City is predestined to be the place of cognitive-intensive cultural industry. At the same time, his approach is holistic and man-centred: competitiveness, in his interpretation, is not a self-serving aim but its fruits must be enjoyed by the whole city instead of a small minority

possessing elite-positions. City, for Landry, is a living organism and not a profit-generating machine. Competitiveness is embedded in the cultural context of the city:

“By taking a broad sweep of a city’s economy, social potential and political traditions, we assessed how cultural assets could be turned to economic advantage. [...] We even considered the ‘senses’ of the city from colour, to sound, smell and visual appearance, also taking a broad sweep through mutual aid traditions, associative networks and social rituals as we saw that these could make a city competitive. This approach to the concept of cultural assets made me think of the city as a malleable artefact shaped both by built projects and by activity; I thought of the city as having a personality and emotions, with feelings uplifted at one moment and depressed in the next. The city conceived of in this way was a living organism, not a machine” (Landry, 2008, pp. 7–8).

New cognitive-cultural capitalism, from the perspective of Landry, must be harnessed in the service of the prosperity for city; but there is a contradiction between the short-term profit seeking and the long-term interests of city as a living organism. However, he is optimistic concerning future: a paradigm-shift from industrial to post-industrial society brings itself a shift from wealth to well-being, from economy-centrism to life-quality centrism (Landry, 2008). This conception is absolutely consonant with Mumford’s approach who, in his theory of city planning always emphasized that capitalist enterprise must be used but must be controlled by the community of city.

Richard Florida, undoubtedly, is one of the main renowned protagonists and propagators of the idea of creative city whose theory has been provoked many criticism. His referential framework is different from Landry’s. His model based on the American scene while Landry’s (2008) theory is drawn on the experiences of the regions of Europe. In the focus of Florida’s (2005, 2012) interest is the problem of competitiveness for cities in globalized cognitive capitalism. The notion of creativity in his theory appears as the attribute of a social group; it is the creative class consisted of creative individuals. However, it is a very heterogeneous social stratum – according to the critics of Florida, it is cannot be defined as a class:

“I define the core of the Creative Class to include people in science and engineering, architecture and design, education, arts, music, and entertainment whose economic function is to create new ideas, new technology, and new creative content. Around this core, the Creative Class also includes a broader group of *creative professionals* in business and finance, law, health care, and related fields. These people engage in complex problem solving that involves a great deal of independent judgment and requires high levels of education or human capital. In addition, all members of the Creative Class – whether they are artists or engineers, musicians or computer scientists, writers or entrepreneurs – share a common ethos that values creativity, individuality, difference, and merit. [...] Members of the Working Class and the Service Class are primarily paid to do routine, mostly physical work, whereas those in the Creative Class are paid to use their minds – the full scope of their cognitive and social skills” (2012, pp. 8–9).

To make the city attractive for the members of the creative class – it is a vital important task for cities in the age of cognitive-cultural capitalism. Creative class, in the theory of Florida, is the main profit and growth-generating factor in the age of creative economy based on cognitive and cultural skills. Consequently, the allurements of the creative class into the

city must enjoy a priority among the considerations of city-planning. Florida's conception provoked a wide discussion pro and contra: many interpreters hailed it as a recipe for city planning, as a promising strategy for cities to give successful response to the challenges of new globalized economy. At the same time, his critics labelled it as an ideology of neoliberal capitalism fostering social inequalities and giving birth to a precariate society exposed to the caprices of market forces. One of these critics writes about "creative city mantra" (Vivant, 2013). This kind of critique reflects a definite cultural criticism. However, it does not mean a total rejection of the idea of creative city but proposes the reassessment of it, accommodating economic and social considerations and harnessing creativity to the service of the whole urban community. City, from this perspective, is much more than a profit-making machine. Creativity, Pratt argues, is always situated (2011, p. 123). Florida, according to him, is very tolerant to neoliberal kind of globalization exacerbating inequalities (Pratt, 2011, p. 126).

Others emphasize that the theory of creative city needs a wider and robust referential framework; it is cognitive-cultural capitalism (Scott, 2014, p. 569). Cities cannot be mere "entertainment machines" attracting creative class:

"One fashionable view about this matter can be summarized in Florida's claim that cities with abundant amenities are apt to grow because the creative class will preferentially migrate to such cities, and their presence will then be reflected in bursts of local economic dynamism [...]" (Scott, 2014, p. 571).

The narrative of creative city, warn these critiques, refers to a very complex phenomenon of real life with far reaching social consequences; one of them is gentrification which is interpreted by them as a symptom of socio-spatial segmentation of urban spaces (Scott, 2014, p. 573). Florida's approach, according to Stefan Krätke, is an ideological one based on the embracing of neoliberal capitalism with its harmful social consequence coming from the ideas of low costs, flexibility and ruthless competition among the members of a precariate society. It has a methodological weakness: the theory of creative class does not take the necessary distinction between correlation and casual relationship: from the fact that flourishing urban economy correlates with the presence of this very heterogeneous stratum does not base the conclusion that creative class is a cause of it (Krätke, 2012, p. 142).

Confronting the creative city narrative with the conception of Mumford, the question lends itself: what kind of this narrative would get his assent? It is not too risky suppose that he would strongly refuse the approaches based on an uncritical acceptance of the neoliberal economic paradigm as the natural state of things. This economic arrangement with its social, political and ecological consequences, in the terms of the Mumfordian thought, is the latest version of the inhuman megamachine responsible for the dead way of modern technicized power civilization. At the same time, the idea of creative city beyond a strict economic interpretation probably would be appealing to him. There is a high probability that he would embrace the approach proposed by Allen John Scott:

"Three imperatives, responding to core economic and social breakdowns in the large city today, are of particular importance and urgency. The first is to build institutional frameworks that can effectively manage the common-pool resources that abound within the cognitive-cultural economy at the scale of the individual city and that are otherwise susceptible to gross inefficiencies. The second is to rectify the huge discrep-

ancies of incomes and life chances that currently distort the social landscape of large cities all over the world. The third is to secure the wider democratization of urban space and to promote the rehabilitation of communal life” (2014, p. 574).

Conclusions. Creative city planning as a catalyst: “regional city” and the vision of a new civilisation based on the network of eco-regions

Mumford sees the way out of the dead end of modern civilization in the networks of eco-regions crystallized around regional towns. It is important that he strongly refuses universal, totalizing utopias trying to enforce reality into a uniform casting mould without respect to the regional differences and peculiarities. That is why he is very suspicious to modern nation-state, which, in his interpretation, is a centralized social-political organization, which destroys localities. For this reason, he strongly rejects the totalitarian utopias of the interwar period: Bolshevism, Fascism, and Nazism. These, he points out, homogenise the plurality of human reality with the means of a centralized, despotic state. The natural and cultural resources of eco-regions must be utilized by the participative decisions of local communities with respect to ecological concerns – he links ecological approach with American Republican tradition. The network of local utopian green communities, according the young Mumford (1922), can be an Archimedean point from which the system logic of modern power-civilization, the realised dystopia, will be changed. The perspective of Mumford, in the last period of his long intellectual carrier, in the 1960s and 1970s, becomes sceptical concerning the possibilities of the transformation of our over-mechanized civilisation insensitive to nature exploiting and depleting limited natural resources. At the same time, his commitment to the idea of creative city-planning based on the interests of local communities and ecological concerns remains alive to the end of his life. However, this transformation of urban environment could not be the business of a small group of experts. It needs an active participation of all inhabitants who use the urban spaces. Successful city planning needs the mobilisation of the cultural heritage of whole community.

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