

THE VIEW FROM NEW HAVEN:

Timothy Dwight's Urbanism, 1796 - 1817

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ABSTRACT

Agrarian republicanism of the early National Period was suspicious of cities and manufacturing. The historical geography and politics of New England, however, were more receptive to urbanization and industrialization. This paper examines the *Travels* of Timothy Dwight, President of Yale and *de facto* leader of the old order in Connecticut. His text expresses a distinct, Federalist, landscape ideal. I examine Dwight's integration of urbanism and manufacturing into a conservative symbolic landscape, noting four themes: moralizing ideals of urban morphology; the social benefits and challenges of urban size; the projection of a rural model of elite patronage into urban space and city-making; and an affirmative reading of the growth of manufacturing and its centripetal concentration in cities. *Keywords: Timothy Dwight, symbolic landscape, federalist, urbanism.*

Introduction

Agrarian republicanism has been thoroughly inscribed by popular wisdom and by generations of historians as the lost Eden of American national identity. It imagined a world - and more specifically a *landscape* - where freehold land ownership and the labor of improvement guaranteed independence, morality, responsibility, and every manner of civic virtue. The idea was clearly expressed by Thomas Jefferson in what must be the founding quotation of American urban studies:

I view great cities as pestilential to the morals, the health and the liberties of man. True, they nourish some of the elegant arts, but the useful ones can thrive elsewhere, and less perfection in the others, with more health, virtue and freedom, would be my choice. (Thomas Jefferson to Benjamin Rush, 23 September 1800).¹

The idea is implicit in a Constitution in which the word "city" does not appear, and it enters in different forms into American thought throughout the nineteenth century: for example in Emerson's agrarianism, in Thoreau's anti-urbanism, in the idea of the frontier itself, and in the spiritualization of the wilderness in the graphic arts (e.g. Eisinger 1949; John 2004; Smith 1950; Stenerson 1953; Turner 1962). Jefferson expressed a similar animus against manufacturing

which, until it was tempered by the exigencies of protectionism in the War of 1812, was at least as low as his opinion of cities themselves.

I consider the class of artificers [i.e., manufacturers] as the panders of vice and the instruments by which the liberties of a country are generally overturned. (Thomas Jefferson to John Jay, 23 August 1785).

To recover for cities and industries their appropriate place in this mythic landscape is a task that has occupied many historical geographers and historians. Donald Meinig's (1993) *The Shaping of America* is undoubtedly the most far-ranging geographical demonstration of the historical interweavings of town and country, while Richard Wade (1959) portrays towns as the very "spearhead of the frontier," usually developing at least in embryo even before serious clearing began. And when they arrived, farmers were not rooted in place by fee-simple tenure as Jeffersonian pillars of a local moral community. Use value ineluctably gave way to exchange value as land speculation, integration with growing markets, resource exploitation, and labor mobility progressed. Despite the variety of perspectives on American historical geography of the colonial period (e.g., Jordan 1989), many agree in finding burgeoning individualism and enthusiasm for profit and self-advancement in the seventeenth and certainly by the eighteenth century, (Lemon 1972; Mitchell 1983). Soon "millions of [Jefferson's] agrarian worshipers flocked to urban centers or worked to transform their own rural hamlets into cities" (Brown 1974, 30). A host of more regionally and historically specific studies have explored the local complexities of urbanism and manufacturing, their relationship to natural resources and ideology, and their place in the historical geography of capitalist development (e.g., Colten *et al.* 2003; Lemon 1996; Mitchell and Hofstra 1995; Prude 1983). Scholars of the "landscape" school in cultural geography have also explored agrarian republicanism as an ideological construct, suggesting its relation to class, proprietorship, and politics (e.g., Cosgrove 1984; Mitchell 2000; Olwig 2002).

Jefferson's native state was, indeed, one with little apparent need for cities, thanks to the distinctive long-distance trading ties of Virginia planters, the nonurban context of the Anglican congregation, and the function of the plantation itself as a surrogate for cities (e.g., Reys 1965). The world of colonial and early national New England was very different. Cities were present from the first in the commercial and cultural ideals of the Puritans and of their successors in the Federalist and Congregationalist elite. The ingenuity and artifice required in manufacturing were even affirmed in the eschatology of the age. Perhaps the most acclaimed sermons in the generation before Dwight were those of Samuel Hopkins (1721-1803), who celebrated and anticipated great improvements in the "mechanic arts" in his vision of the Millennium (Hopkins 1811, 467). After the Revolution urbanization took on new vigor as capital flows to Britain were redirected internally and protectionism nurtured American manufacturing. Texts of the time are full of ideological readings, reactions, and rationalizations of the new landscapes these trends were producing.

I have argued in previous work (Pipkin 2009) that Timothy Dwight's *Travels in New England and New York* (1821-22) is a text which is exceptionally revealing of landscape ideologies of the early national period. Dwight was President of Yale from 1795 until his death in 1817.

A distinguished theologian, polemicist, preacher, and Federalist ideologue, he was arguably the most influential figure in Connecticut for two decades. His four volume *Travels* comprise an extraordinary compendium, assembled at a time when wide-ranging, comparative, first-hand topographical accounts of the new national landscape were literally thin on the ground. *Travels* takes the form of letters to a hypothetical English correspondent. The text was developed from notes accumulated on trips almost every September and October from 1796 until 1815. They combine personal observation, interpretation of local historical records, portraits of local gentry, economic inventories, and agricultural lore, with brutally simplistic accounts of wars with the “savages” and the French. They juxtapose perceptive geological, agricultural, and botanical observations with incessant moralizing judgments.

Dwight’s preeminence in Connecticut was both political and religious. Indeed these dimensions were inseparable in an era when the “Standing Order” of an established church guided most areas of collective life. Connecticut’s entrenched elite feared the diversity, irreligion, and diffusion of the franchise that were being inspired, they felt, by Democratic-Republicanism, Thomas Jefferson, Jacobins, Deists, freethinkers and atheists (Berk 1974; Fitzmier 1998; Grasso 1999; Howard 1943; Silverman 1969; Wells 2002). Jefferson wrote of this self-perpetuating oligarchy in his *Memoirs*:

From what I have seen of Massachusetts and Connecticut ... there seems to be in those two states a traditionary reverence for certain families, which has rendered the offices of government nearly hereditary ... although this hereditary succession to office ... may in some degree be founded in real family merit, yet in a much higher degree it has proceeded from [the] strict alliance of Church and State. ... In Virginia, we have nothing of this. (Thomas Jefferson to John Adams, 28 October 1813).

In Pipkin (2009) I explored several aspects of Dwight’s reading of the landscape organized around the idea of “aesthetic discipline.” Dwight’s anxieties about the progress of populist democracy, irreligion, and the manifold political threats to the hegemony of the old order in Connecticut led him to seek – and rhetorically impose – discipline and order in a post-Revolutionary landscape that was alive with settlement, land-clearance, migration, and political and economic innovation. He did this, I suggested, by reading the aesthetics of landscapes as signs of moral order and social virtue. Dwight deployed eighteenth century neoclassical aesthetics of landscape and architecture (e.g., “sublime,” “picturesque,” “classical”) and newer ideas of refinement and sentiment (e.g., Bushman 1993), to moralize landscapes and find symbolic order (e.g., Briggs 1988). He does so using several tropes including visual framing of compact villages using language of the picturesque, and detecting the diffusion of good moral influence across rural areas from the “seats” of gentry, whose cultivated scenery and “prospects” he describes in the aesthetic vocabulary of the neoclassical pastoral. He was concerned, above all, to inscribe the northeast as a greater New England, attentively tracking and celebrating the progress of New England settlement in the “wild west” (of upstate New York) and the “wild east” (equally wild tracts of Vermont, New Hampshire, and Maine), anxiously noting the:

[S]ettlements made by the people of New England ... the wilderness converted by

Pipkin: The View from New Haven: Timothy Dwight's Urbanism, 1796 - 1817

them into fruitful fields ... numerous, cheerful, and beautiful towns and villages which under their forming hand have sprung up in a desert (Dwight 1969, 1: 122).²

I argued in the work outlined above that in Dwight's writings we may discern the elements of a Federalist landscape ideal to set against the norm of agrarian republicanism which long ago attained mythic status (e.g., Griswold 1946). The purpose of the present paper is to take this argument further in an exploration of Dwight's conceptions of *urbanism* and *industry*. These phenomena were central to a specifically Federalist world view and both were viewed with suspicion by Jefferson and his allies.

In attending closely to a single source, particularly such a tendentious one as Dwight, one is apt to compound the subject's overt biases with the researcher's inadvertent ones. In the following I have read *Travels* closely for its account of cities, urban society, and industry. The result is a necessarily partial, though I hope not partisan, reading of an author in whose empirical descriptions and partisan special pleading can be discerned a landscape and a landscape ideology distinctive to the Federalist northeast.

Augustan Balance and the Federalist Ideal

Federalists in the early national period were less insistent than Jefferson on the unique association of farming and virtue, and were less convinced that cities were inherently corrupting (Stenerson 1953). They affirmed the roles of centralized government, banking, and the orderly growth of commerce and manufacturing, all under the guidance of elite leadership, who would hold in check the "brawling and boorish tendencies" of revolutionaries and mobs (Wood 1990, 203). Beyond the economic and political aspects of their worldview lay a distinct cultural ideal, one that Gordon Wood underlines with the telling phrase "the Federalist Augustan Age." It was a literary view deriving from classical antiquity filtered through neoclassical English culture of the first half of the eighteenth century, the world of Addison and Pope, and its successor, the Augustan Age dominated by such figures as Samuel Johnson. Georgian England held out a model of society in which city and country were *in balance*. On one hand, landed property was the primary repository of wealth and political power. It was owned by a small minority, familiar in the culture of the time as city-based Tories and their opponents in the Whiggish rural gentry. On the other hand, cities enjoyed a cultural monopoly of representations of power, commerce, and refinement.

Thus Samuel Johnson famously maintained in 1777 that when one was tired of London one was tired of life. Dwight knew Johnson's work well and was aware of his contempt for the American colonials (and their position on taxation and representation). Nevertheless, Johnson's influence is visible at many points in the *Travels*. Significantly, the most extended quotation from Johnson that Dwight uses is from Johnson's satirical poem *London*. It is an aspersion against the French ("the supple Gaul was born a parasite...") which Dwight uses to reinforce his position against Francophile Jeffersonian Republicans. Dwight maintains that the English colonists were "better skilled in the arts of life, were better educated, had better morals and a better religion, and were in every respect a superior race of men" than the French (Dwight 1969, 1: 108-109).

The quotation underscores Dwight's hatred of democracy, Jacobinism, Deism, abstract speculative thought, and all other dangerous cultural innovation emanating from Monticello and Paris, but it also suggests his positive leanings to Augustan urbanism.

An Augustan balance between town and country, which classically educated contemporaries would have expressed as the contrast between Virgil's *Aeniad* and his *Georgics*, was strongly reflected in the elite-sponsored visual arts at exactly the moment when it began to break down in the face of new forms of capitalism (Cosgrove 1984). The devastation wrought by this transition, largely mystified in paintings, is seen more clearly in the oppositional and dispersed forms of literary representation such as Oliver Goldsmith's *Deserted Village* of 1770 (Dobson 1906). For Dwight the Greco-Roman heritage as filtered through the neoclassical values of Augustan England – and specifically the balance it posited between the urban and rural – was congenial. Despite his carefully phrased Calvinist objections to classical paganism, slavery, imperialism, and “opulence,” he was after all an eminently successful product of a classical education. The fanatical regimen of self-discipline that Dwight imposed on himself while he was a tutor at Yale involved parsing one hundred lines of Homer first thing every morning, distant echoes of a society in which “city” and “state” were politically and linguistically identical (Silverman 1969, 19).

But the classics were not the only pro-urban stream in Dwight's consciousness. For he was the grandson of the great Puritan theologian Jonathan Edwards and was an intellectual and political descendent of John Winthrop himself. In a milder, gentler, but no less sectarian form, Winthrop's City on a Hill lives on in Dwight's work: the contrast of a visible, divinely sanctioned urban society, at once an exemplary congregation and a polity, set against a howling wilderness peopled by “savages.”

In *Travels* Dwight is particularly attentive to cities, to their economic base, and to the social and political challenges they pose. The very formulaic and dogmatic quality of many of his assessments testifies to their unreflective and ideological nature. But sometimes they are acutely alert to change, and most particularly to threats to social discipline, morals, and Congregationist orthodoxy. In ways that seem incongruous to a modern reader but which in fact reveal a characteristic eighteenth century association of ideas, Dwight's urban commentaries intersperse subtle readings of the economic social order with simplistic, deterministic readings of visual tokens and “marks of election.” In the following sections we sketch four themes which are particularly salient in his accounts: urban morphology; the social benefits and challenges of urban size; the role of elite patronage and city-making; and most crucially, his reading of the growth of manufacturing and its centripetal concentration in cities.

Urban Plans: “Casualty and Contrivance”

Writing of Boston, Dwight regrets its lack of a regular grid and writes: “The streets strike the eye of a traveler as if intended to be mere passages from one neighborhood to another, and not as the open handsome divisions of a great town; as the result of casualty, and not of contrivance” (Dwight 1969, 1: 353). Dwight's urban ideals are in serious dissonance here. Boston was for him beyond serious criticism as one of the two Puritan heartlands in New England, yet for him neoclassical grids were a primary marker of urban worth and respectability. As John Reps (1965)

and James Vance (1990) have abundantly shown, urban layouts of the time were freighted with moral, symbolic, and practical significance. The towns and cities of New England exhibited striking variety in their forms, ranging from informal street villages to the bastide grid of Cambridge, Massachusetts to the "organic" form of Boston at the apex of the hierarchy.

As Peirce Lewis notes, compared to other regions of colonial North America, New England's embrace of the grid form was "half-hearted" (1990, 98). Dwight's own approval of geometric regularity in urban layouts was far from lukewarm, however, and precisely because it was by no means universal in the zone of his travels, he is able to use it as a convenient index of collective virtue in his endless quest for moralizing distinctions. Olwig (2002) suggests that in the early Republic the crucial modern interpretive dichotomy of organic (natural) and planned (artificial) urban forms may not have seemed compelling, for to the contemporary mind both rationality and geometry were "natural." Thus for Dwight it was not so much a matter of a planned order against an organic growth which might have some intrinsic virtues, but rather a matter of "casualty" that could lead to no good and spoke of a potentially hellish subversion of all order, and "contrivance" which could only – naturally – be expressed in extreme regularity and with a characteristic Baroque disregard for underlying topography.

In fact Dwight makes no distinction between the various kinds of urban layout distinguished by later scholars. Except in the one case of Washington, DC, which we will examine below, he does not acknowledge the existence of the hierarchic radial/grid forms that Vance terms "English Renaissance" typical of planned colonial sites such as Annapolis and Williamsburg. This is surprising, for their hierarchic structuring of places and buildings as central or marginal, important to unimportant, would surely have been congenial to his authoritarian mind. But it is true that such forms were not a feature of the landscapes of New England and New York with which he is mainly concerned. He does, however, approve of public squares. "Nothing is so cheerful, so delightful, or so susceptible of the combined elegancies of art and nature" (Dwight 1969, 1: 354). His rationale is precisely the one that Thomas Jefferson advanced for the layout of Jeffersonville, Indiana; squares combine beauty and health (Reps 1965, 317).

Although it was meant satirically, Dwight would not have been amused by a contrast which associated the logical temperament of Philadelphians with their orthogonal streetplan, while New Yorkers were revealed to be a "crazy-headed ... eccentric ... set of mortals ... the very antipodeans to the Philadelphians" by their irregular, narrow lanes (Burrows and Wallace 1999, 420). Dwight is a severe critic of plans which show slight deviations from absolute regularity. He reflexively reads the simple rectilinear grid as a sign of rationality and moral worth. Significantly he makes no effort to provide his hypothetical English reader with the kind of detailed nationalistic vindication of grid forms that he does for other features he fears may be misconstrued or patronized such as the stone walls of New England and the tradition of taverns also serving as lodging houses. The grid is taken as a shared and uncontroversial value, a norm for assessing other aspects of cities, to be held against them when it seems they have not lived up to the aspirations symbolized in their plans, and requiring extenuations and apologetics in cases such as Boston that he must approve of in spite of their irregularity.

In his description of home – New Haven, Connecticut – we see the principal axes of his understanding of urban space. Beginning in 1638 the town was systematically formed around

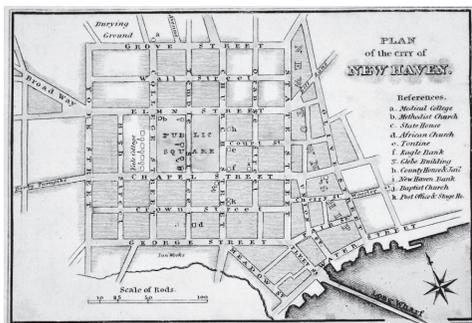


Figure 1. Plan of the City of New Haven, Showing its Layout in Squares. John Warner Barber, 1825. Source: Connecticut Historical Society, Hartford, CT; reproduced by permission. A version of this map appears in Lambert 1838, 52.

mention the devastating yellow fever epidemics that had crowded it beyond its limits.) Cemeteries should be solemn and instructive places, he feels. It cannot be so in a crowded city, “in a gross and vulgar union with the ordinary business of life” (Dwight 1969, 1: 137). A local leader, U.S. Senator James Hillhouse, donated a plot for a cemetery (he was also a major benefactor of Yale College). Dwight links the project both to the geometric rationality of the grid (it is laid out in neatly measured parallelograms), and to aesthetics (it is handsomely railed, the railings are painted white and the monuments include Italian and marble “specimens”). He also symbolically claims the new cemetery for access to an emerging and refining upper middle class: there is room for carriages to pass. It is healthy because the “disgusting mansions” of vaults are not used, and the whole enterprise reveals “an exquisite taste for propriety” (Dwight 1969, 1: 138). The new peripheral cemetery is now known as Grove Street Cemetery. Dwight’s hyperbole is substantially correct. The site was “altogether a singularity in the world,” in the sense that it was the first chartered cemetery in the United States.

A more specific virtue of the grid in Dwight’s mind is that it organizes and therefore underlines the authority of significant, distinguished, or otherwise notable structures that unify the landscape and symbolically subjugate it to the elite who live in those houses, preach in those churches, or rule from those civic buildings. Dwight’s discussion of the town of his birth, Northampton, Massachusetts, nicely illustrates these points. It had been founded on a site of exceptional “size, beauty, and fertility.” It is “eminently pleasant ... and ... makes a most cheerful appearance.” Nevertheless, its ten streets are highly irregular “with no very distant resemblance to the claws of a crab.” Local tradition holds that they were laid out by cows going to feed in the forests. “In spite of this irregularity,” Dwight assures us, “the town with its scenery is a very interesting object to the eye” (Dwight 1969, 1: 238-9). But the failure of the layout adequately to site, orient, and frame important buildings has serious consequences.

nine squares in what Vance terms a “bastidal layout” (1990, 262). It was spacious: perhaps a European city of the same size would have six times as many people, Dwight reports.

The front courtyards and rear gardens thus created possessed a beauty and healthfulness that “need no explanation” (Dwight 1969, 1: 132). In New Haven Dwight sees in neoclassical geometric terms what the next generation was to see through the lens of romantic sentiment and middle class refinement – a rural (or at least a peripheral) cemetery.

He rehearses what were to become familiar qualms about the dangers to public health and morality from the old, crowded, central Burying Ground. (Dwight does not

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[N]ot a small proportion [of the] houses are handsome ... [but they are] ... so scattered in the different streets as to make much less impression on the eye than even inferior buildings [do] in ... other places where they are presented at a single view.

The deficiency does not impede economic progress, however, since

[t]he stores and shops, built on the side of an irregular square in the center, give the traveler a lively impression of the business which is carried on (Dwight 1969, 1: 239).

Even in his original home there has been a decline in religion. His generation was not living up to the standard of their ancestors which Dwight measures by “punctual ... attendance on public worship” (Dwight 1969, 1: 240). The cause of this “degeneracy” is twofold as Dwight sees it: an increase in wealth and an influx of strangers. Both threaten the uniformity and the conformity he seeks.

In his account of Newburyport, Massachusetts, Dwight finds a mismatch between the beauty of the site and the contrivance of the citizens who fail to quite live up to it.

The town is built on a declivity of unrivaled beauty. The slope is easy and elegant; the soil rich; the streets, except one near the water, clean and sweet; and the verdure, wherever it is visible, exquisite. The streets are either parallel or right-angled to the river ... None of them are regularly formed. The first settlers, not expecting the future growth of the town, neglected the peculiar advantages of its situation. Instead of laying it out in squares with wide, straight, and uniform streets, they made some of them wide, others narrow, few of them straight, some of them short, and no two, I believe, exactly parallel. Still there is so near an approximation to regularity as to awaken in the mind of a traveler ... a wish that the regularity had been perfect. For myself I confess, I was not a little mortified to see so fair an opportunity of compassing this beauty in so exquisite a spot finally lost, either through inattention, or undue regard to some private interest (Dwight 1969, 1: 317).

In the case of towns with unimpeachable Puritan pedigrees, Dwight is always willing to make allowances. Such is the case of Salem, Massachusetts. (For his enlightened English correspondent he deplores the witch trials.) His reading of the layout is unpromising. Essex Street, which contains the “churches and ... principal houses” is “handsome,” most of the other streets are disagreeably narrow and unpaved. The commercial success of the town is a triumph over unpropitious circumstances. The harbor is ill-fitted for commercial enterprise. Almost all of the interior trade has been engrossed by Boston and is therefore of little consequence. But the industry, economy, sobriety, and perseverance of the inhabitants of Salem have found a remedy for all the evils of the local situation (Dwight 1969, 1: 323-4). In this special case, then, the streetplan is not diagnostic. In Dwight's description of Salem we also catch a glimpse of older periodic market systems. He notices that some of the “market people” who are used to carrying out sales house-to-house have resisted efforts to tie them down to a fixed market location (Dwight 1969, 1: 323). Providence, Rhode Island, too, has risen in spite of a poor natural endowment. Dwight notes that it may be the first city in the whole of New England for manufacturing, in which Providence has “a spirit and success unrivaled,” and that its merchants are rapidly engrossing the

business of Massachusetts and Connecticut (Dwight 1969, 2: 20).

In areas that are more morally dubious such as the old Dutch city of Schenectady, New York no such allowances are made. “The streets cross each other often ... in many instances at right angles; yet from the differences of the distances between some and the obliquity of other streets, the eye receives no impression of regularity” (Dwight 1969, 2: 340). Similarly, in Portland, Maine, the streets “[l]ike those of most other towns in this country ... are ... destitute of that exact regularity, both in their position and direction, which would have rendered them entirely beautiful” (Dwight 1969, 2: 113).

In Puritan heartlands such as Boston and Salem, then, we find Dwight engaging in special apologetics to justify the historical, moral, and political stature of a city in spite of its unpromising street plan. In fact for him the association between plan and moral standing is not a deterministic one. It is a useful critical reflex that he constantly uses to hold irregularities in street layout as moral indictments against places of which – for innumerable different reasons – he disapproves. It is in his commentary on Washington, DC (excised from the published edition of the *Travels*) that we find perhaps the clearest example of Dwight’s unwillingness to take a regular plan as a conclusive sign of virtue. In fact the city is a result of clear moral and political depravity. As noted in Pipkin (2009) he has the strongest aversion to the project because it is Republican, Jeffersonian, and principally because there are no churches in the plan. Dwight feels that Congress “in the plenitude of their power and with the pleasant emotions which a sense of power produces resolved to create a city and a metropolis. Full of this idea they fixed on a spot where nothing but a romantic imagination could possibly have dreamed of raising up even a village which was to be permanent and flourishing” (Dwight 1969, 2:401). Dwight has nothing against the physical form of the L’Enfant Plan in itself.

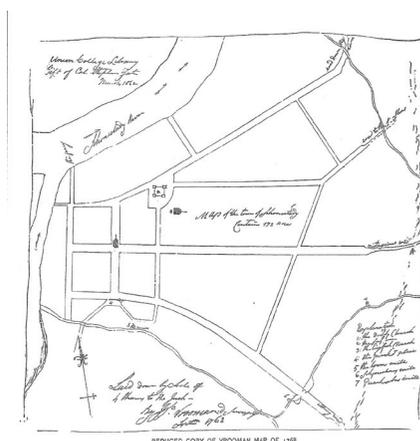


Figure 2. Schenectady, New York: copy of the Vrooman Map of 1768, J. MacMurray 1883, 328

A French architect of great reputation ... was employed to draw up a splendid plan of the future American Metropolis. A palace was erected for the President and a capital (sic) for the Legislature. Magnificent streets were laid down upon paper with magnificent names (Dwight 1969, 2: 401).

In fact speculation in the land incurred “immense ruin ... of private fortunes” and the site stands forlorn and largely empty, a “semi wilderness.” He sees, in fact, a catastrophic mismatch between the physical plan itself and all other features of the site: agricultural, economic, political, and religious.

The Sociology and Politics of City Size

Appropriate size, density, and physical compactness of settlements were extremely important to Dwight's ideal. He provides his hypothetical English correspondent with a formal definition of city in Connecticut (an incorporated place with mayor, alderman, and common council) (Dwight 1969, 1: 127). Technically there were five cities there at the time he wrote: New Haven, New London, Norwich, Middletown, and Hartford. However, he rarely uses the word "city" and occasionally refers to a place as both a town and a city (e.g., Hartford and New Haven). For the hypothetical English recipient of *Travels*, Dwight is careful to explain New Englanders' use of the word "town" (which was very different from British usage). He explains it as essentially a nucleated settlement in the "first parish" of an area, not to be identified with an administrative township. He discusses the ideal layout of such a place. It should not have, like the "landings" he has observed on the Hudson, a crude, clustered layout speaking only of mercantile and mechanical business, where the people seem only to be preoccupied with bargains and sales; where the location of the house is determined by that of the store, which is in turn determined by the location of the wharf, as he puts it. Real towns and cities are devoted to a full range of social relations. Courtyards, gardens, and orchards are natural adjuncts to such a settlement, which speaks of superior intelligence and manners. In such places "[a]ll people are neighbors: social beings, converse, feel, sympathize, mingle minds, cherish sentiments, and are subject of at least some degree of refinement" (Dwight 1969, 1: 246).

Urban size is crucial to Dwight's idea of a well-ordered political process. Recalling the public assemblies of antiquity and the long local tradition of the New England town meeting, Dwight wants the voters to be physically present. This implies for him, just as it had for Aristotle, a definite though unspecified size limit on the body politic. Dwight's insistence on this is by no means at odds with his aversion to what we would recognize as democracy. In fact there is a strong paternalistic subtext affirming the suasion and example of natural leaders in opposition to the less controllable balloting of party-based politics. Dwight favors what Habermas would term representative publicity, a theater of elite leadership in public space, before a passive and politically acquiescent audience (Habermas 1989). In Dwight's view moderate size was an enabling condition for such politics. Excessively large and unruly "popular meetings" such as those of metropolitan Athens and Rome were "disgraceful" and should be avoided. The moderate size of Connecticut assemblies accounted for their good order, their "honorable decorum," and the absence of "noisy, tumultuous proceedings and rash measures" (Dwight 1969, 1: 179).

With a characteristic association of ideas, Dwight links moderate size to a middling condition of wealth and its associated virtue of modest ambition: "that middle state of property which so long and so often has been termed golden, because in this situation the best character and the most sincere enjoyment are usually found. Few are poor, and few are rich" (Dwight 1969, 2: 184). In his mind, this is one of the cardinal virtues of Connecticut compared with other states. Many commentators on Dwight have noted the extraordinary significance he reads into Connecticut's modest size. (It never had a royal governor, for example). While this betrays an undeniable parochialism – in an observer who never left the northeast – Dwight made it a theoretical and political virtue.

In Dwight's lengthy meditation on morals in frontier areas of Maine we find a particularly clear expression of his fundamentally centripetal cultural concept of good order (Pipkin 2009). He is an educator and naturally he focuses on the socialization of children in scattered settlements. His arguments are in fact strikingly reminiscent of the claims made for a "culture of poverty" by conservative American urbanists in the twentieth century. In highly dispersed settlements children grow up "destitute of regular catechetical instruction" and hence they are comparatively ignorant of morals. Occasional "religious parents" may "extend a happy influence over the neighborhoods around them" but the most fundamental requirement for Dwight is regular, organized, locally-funded, "enlightened public worship." Without being "awed and restraint" by such examples children will see as role model "adventurers ... [and] roving, disorderly, vicious men" and with "such examples ever before them" will become "nuisances," and practice "every enormity" (Dwight 1969, 2: 162).

Small size is a religious threat because there may not be enough people to support a minister. Mandatory local support for ministers and their families through payments that fell to some degree within the discretion of local congregations was an extremely contentious issue in Connecticut and Massachusetts where the church was established in colonial and early national times (Berk 1974; Bushman 1967). So crucial was such support that Dwight was willing to bend his denominational principles to permit it. Thus in Manchester, Vermont (Dwight 1969, 2: 285) he notes that the settlers were divided in their religious opinions. But they exercised "a catholicism less common than could be wished" and allowed preaching on successive weeks by representatives of the various denominations. They thereby "secured to themselves that otherwise would have been unattainable, the public worship of God." Citizens of Manchester, by some means that Dwight does not specify, filtered potential preachers by "character, deportment, and preaching" to find those against whom "there could be no reasonable objection." A similar effort, which resulted in a fiasco, was excised from a published version of the *Travels* (along with similar draft passages which are recovered in the notes of the Solomon edition). One such tactful omission is a scathing indictment of the morals of Burlington, Vermont. "All" the religious people in Burlington gathered together to organize a church. (Dwight tells us that there were eight or nine such people. It is hard to know whether he is smiling; probably not.) The law required them to declare what denomination the church was to be. The Burlingtonians considered this requirement. Someone spoke up and said he has never paid this question any attention, and he assumed his neighbors hadn't either. They agreed and everyone went home. The church was not formed. As if summarizing a case for the prosecution Dwight records that he also saw "a large collection of people assembled on the Sabbath at an inn for the purpose of drinking" (Dwight 1969, 2: 402-403).

Dwight uses several other arguments to support what he sees as an adequate community size. It was, for example, implicated in an appropriate but not excessive number of governmental units, particularly counties. Dwight opposes the "spirit of subdividing" both in local government and in church parishes. In the church, it produces parishes too small to repair their churches and support their ministers (Dwight 1969, 1: 127). In politics, he argues that it gratifies the wish for offices for "men ... impatient to become judges, sheriffs, and county clerks." Such offices are apt to be multiplied "to a useless degree" and "[h]e who voted for the last claims the suffrage of him

who has been profited by that vote ... [and so] a silly and deplorable ambition becomes a source of multiplied mischiefs to the community." Here Dwight is seeking to contain what Bushman (1967) suggests was both a cause and consequence of the centrifugal movement of population into new parishes and daughter settlements in New England in the century before Dwight: the desire for upward mobility in church and town offices. Dwight fulminates, for example, about the breaking up of the county of Hampshire, Massachusetts into three smaller counties in 1811 and 1812, which he shrilly associates with a political desire to destroy firm order and sound principles (Dwight 1969, 2: 187).

An excellent example of Dwight's disapproval of a city he perceives as too small appears in his account of Montpelier, Vermont. Montpelier had been chartered in 1781 in a land grant to settlers from Massachusetts. It was chosen as state capital in 1805 six years before it was chosen as county seat for its county. When Dwight saw it, it comprised "thirty or forty buildings, houses, stores, and shops" clustered in a valley, with a statehouse already begun. Dwight feels that it is far too small. With his usual eagerness to assign moral blame he concludes that the choice was so unwise that it must have been based on "very limited or very prejudiced views" (Dwight 1969, 2: 304). He enumerates what he sees as the basic requirements for a state capital. The town should be large and if possible commercial. Blurring cause and effect, perhaps, he would expect "agreeable accommodations [for] governmental agents ... [and a] stream of business" alongside "improved manners, extensive information, and acknowledged respectability." Furthermore "[a]ll busy men must have their hours of relaxation; and, where refined and superior amusements cannot be obtained, will to a great extent spend those hours in such as are trifling and contemptible" (Dwight 1969, 2: 304). Detailing the local configuration of routes and mountains with his usual sensitivity to physical geography, Dwight concludes that the site of Montpelier is such "as to forbid the hope of any future, material enlargement." The key issue in his mind seems to be the need for a match between the respectability and refinement of the natural aristocracy who rule, and the urban amenities that are their due. He presents New York City as a magnet for an elite with "superior talents and information" who are drawn to the city because "[t]he field of effort is here more splendid, and the talents are more needed, honored, and rewarded than in smaller towns" (Dwight 1969, 3: 331). When Dwight discovers refinement and polish in places that he sees as too small, he is startled into patronizing approval. For example, in Provincetown on Cape Cod, Massachusetts the manners were "becoming, plain, frank, obliging, and obviously sincere. Nothing was perceived of the roughness which I had expected from a mere collection of fishermen and sailors" (Dwight 1969, 3: 63).

Yet on another level, urban size was a threat. Dwight's idea of urbanism is one that is threatened by diversity; one of the principal functions of cities is to awe and restrain newcomers. Here he rehearses critical mass and threshold arguments in terms that foreshadow modern subcultural theories of urbanism (e.g., Fischer 1975). Dwight is particularly concerned about the way that cities catalyze the formation of unorthodox and heretical congregations. Thus, again writing of Maine, he notes that when people with different views, educations and opinions come together, and the settlements become sufficiently "advanced" (large) to support a minister, they find themselves split into several discordant sects, "each too small and poor to maintain a minister for itself." They bicker, and "end in alienation from religion and dissoluteness of manners." In

fact they come to see religion as nothing other than an “odious” form of “party zeal.” They will end, as miscreants so often do in the homilies embedded in Dwight’s texts, in “mere nihilism, and a total disregard of moral obligation.” The precarious religious order is in danger of subversion from the outside, too, by “ignorant, wandering, and unprincipled preachers” (Dwight 1969, 2: 162-3).

Diversity is specifically a threat because it breaks up the monolithic religious and moral uniformity which is central to his idea of urbanism. For example, speaking of Tolland and Stafford, Connecticut Dwight briefly notes that they have been divided by “religious and political and religious contentions” and “have very little cause to congratulate themselves on the moral influence of these divisions” (Dwight 1969, 2: 137). His unpublished notes indicate that inroads had been made by Methodists who had the temerity to build a small church (Dwight 1969, 2: 389). Religious diversity is a problem in Portland, Maine, too, despite the fact that “few towns in New England are equally beautiful and brilliant.” There are three Presbyterian, one Episcopal, one Baptist, and one Methodist, congregations, and

[s]uch a collection of inhabitants, gathered by business and by accident from many quarters, must be supposed to bring with them a corresponding mixture of principles, and in many instances may easily be believed scarcely to have formed any principles at all (Dwight 1969, 2: 142).

This is an unfortunate moral state of society for Dwight and he wishes, but does not expect, the influence of “superior talents united with superior piety.” In an unpublished note he expects these “mere counterfeits of Christianity” to continue (Dwight 1969, 2: 390), although were such efforts to be made “they could ... hardly fail of success” (Dwight 1969, 2: 142). This thought reveals Dwight’s almost wistful insistence on the scope of elite moral effort to elevate whole cities.

Urban Benefactors: Zeal and Liberality

Dwight visits President John Adams (no political friend of his) in retirement in Quincy, Massachusetts. He is turning, very literally, into a farmer. Dwight salutes this metamorphosis, noting that for an old man to engage in business (“the counting house”) would be awkward and troublesome; that in a legislature, his influence and reputation would be in decline; besides, a rural retreat is spiritually the place to spend one’s little remaining time on Earth (Dwight 1969, 3: 81). This trope of rural retreat, with its resonance of Whiggish gentry on their country estates resisting Tories in London was one that Dwight was familiar with. In previous work (Pipkin 2009) I noted the role of elite leadership in shaping rural society and projecting urban refinement outward to discipline rural populations. The point I want to illustrate here is a symmetrical but distinct idea, namely that for Dwight elite benefaction is at work shaping urban destinies. Social leadership and patronage of a “natural” aristocracy were, of course, axiomatic in the age of Jeffersonian democracy (e.g., Sargent 1997, 161). Indeed, the lack of any mandates about municipal government in the Constitution left a political void in urban administrative machinery that was filled by elite benefactors, with consequences that lasted until the Progressive Era. Thus,

as late as the time of the City Beautiful Movement, elite *ad hoc* commissions were still a common source of municipal improvements. In the Federal period such patrons were active in many ways and Dwight's *Travels* implicate them as benefactors of towns and as authors of new ones. In fact his treatment of elite improvement projects strongly *unifies* his sense of town and country.

Sometimes the effect of elite patronage is incremental. Thus, the regrettable streetplan of Boston is being greatly improved by elite projects around Beacon Hill. But sometimes Dwight celebrates actual town-making. In his journey to Niagara Falls in 1804 he visits Hudson, New York. He had been there in 1792 and at that time had misgivings. He feared it "had arisen to the utmost height of its prosperity, for it evidently appeared to be stationary, if not retrogressive." But twelve years later he finds it "much improved." In fact "[e]verything which I saw had the air of sprightliness and vigor ... the appearance of enterprise and prosperity." He recounts Hudson's history. It was a naked waste in 1783 when it was settled by two Rhode Islanders, Seth and Thomas Jenkins and other New England proprietors who "united to themselves a considerable company of adventurers" (Dwight 1969, 4: 91). A close reader of Dwight will sense a moral shadow falling with the word "adventurers." However, their adventure was justified because it was successful. They were seeking to develop a safe whaling harbor out of reach of the British navy. They aggressively laid out a grid and built 150 houses with stores, shops, and wharves. Within two years the city was chartered (1785), and ultimately came within one vote of being the capital of New York State. This "commendable spirit of exertion" (Dwight 1969, 4: 92) is revealed by houses which are "generally built of brick, and make a handsome appearance ... The river is a noble object ... the Catskill Mountains, here seen in the best view imaginable ... are eminently sublime." A sublime setting and commendable human industry invariably signal for Dwight a sense of moral uplift. And, in fact, Hudsonians "are said to be justly distinguished for their temperance" (Dwight 1969, 4: 92). The Jenkins family became ensconced as hereditary mayors of the city (Dwight 1969, 4: 381), very much in the tradition of Connecticut Federalism.

In Dwight's mind, elite patronage of religion was a powerful force for urban transformation. In 1815 he visits the little river town of Catskill, New York which

has become a considerable town, containing many valuable houses and stores, a courthouse and a Presbyterian church, both new and handsome. Its moral aspect has also materially changed. Religion has spread, and is still spreading, extensively over this settlement. A Bible Society for the county of Greene was formed here on the day of my arrival, with a zeal and liberality very honorable to the gentlemen concerned (Dwight 1969, 4: 124-125).

Academic leadership (in an age when "academies" were rapidly diffusing) was another key source of urban patronage and discipline in Dwight's mind. On several visits to Schenectady, New York, he keeps close watch on the development of Union College. On his second visit in 1799 he lodges with President Jonathan Edwards, who is in fact Dwight's uncle, son of the great New England theologian Jonathan Edwards. Dwight does not inform us of the relationship, but he assures us that "The Rev. Doctor Edwards, president of Union College in Schenectady, is considered, extensively, in this country as not inferior to his father, either as a logician or as divine" (Dwight 1969, 1: 243). This pairing of logician and divine nicely combines the secular

and religious facets of Dwight's approval.

On a subsequent visit to Schenectady in 1811 Dwight encounters the most famous and long-serving President of Union College, Eliphalet Nott. They do not appear to have been previously acquainted. Nott had impeccable credentials in the religious sphere, having previously served as a successful pastor of First Presbyterian Church in Albany. He shared Dwight's interest in moving modern sciences forward in the older classical curriculum, seeking to do at Union essentially what Dwight had accomplished at Yale. Yet Dwight the Congregationalist theologian must have had reservations about Union's aggressive non-sectarian stance, and it is hard to imagine that Dwight the Francophobe wholeheartedly approved of Union's new motto, significantly phrased not in a classical but in a modern language: "*Sous les lois de Minerve nous devenons tous frères.*" In this context of a college founded in an old and quite large city - one which Dwight sees as Dutch and regressive - he must address what he perceives to be a morally dangerous social gradient, in which town-boarding students are apt to be corrupted by morally "dissolute" river men. He feels that students will do better on a residential campus, under the direct supervision of their instructors. On his last fleeting visit in 1815 he glimpses in the distance Joseph Ramée's new residential campus for Union College which was just beginning to take shape, a landmark in American campus design. He wholeheartedly approves of the way it insulates students from moral corruption and from what he could see of the new structures, he "thought them handsome buildings" (Dwight 1969, 4: 128).

There are limits, however, to Dwight's willingness to approve city-founding patronage by magnates. At several points in the *Travels* Dwight excoriates Ethan Allen, despite his having been born in Connecticut, and despite his having "made some noise" in the Revolution (Dwight 1969, 2: 283). Dwight rehearses several anecdotes impugning Allen's lack of self-control and most particularly his agnosticism. Dwight was contemptuous of Vergennes, Vermont, Allen's city-founding project of 1788, named to honor the French foreign minister who was instrumental in concluding the Treaty of Paris. The association with the hated French is not a matter that Dwight passes by without comment, noting scathingly that "ardent, uninformed, and short-sighted Americans ... believed [the Comte de Vergennes] to be a friend to this country" (Dwight 1969, 2: 293). Dwight dilates at length on the "freak" of Colonel Allen and the "equally freakish" legislature in believing that the city, intended as a seat of government, had any chance of success at such a remote location. Dwight registers some skepticism that the mobile legislature of Vermont would ever settle down in one place. If it were to, he argues that it would make more sense to locate in Burlington or Windsor than on tiny Otter Creek in Vergennes, because people will "never come hither for trade" (Dwight 1969, 2: 294). Two hundred years later Vergennes remains one of the smallest cities in the United States and it is hard to deny that Dwight had a point. But undoubtedly his animus against Allen as a morally unworthy patron of the place played a role in his assessment. It is in the context of this tirade that Dwight's unpublished remarks on Washington, DC found their place. "[W]hatever emotions of sport or contempt a traveler may indulge while contemplating the dream of Ethan Allen and ... the people of Vergennes, both are perfectly kept in countenance by a dream equally baseless of their superiors" (Dwight 1969, 2: 400).

Dwight's moral reading of urban grids and his symbolic insertion of rural elite leadership

into cities come together in his assessment of the Commissioners' Grid for Manhattan which had been unveiled in 1811. Commissioners Morris, Dewitt, and Rutherford were promoting a vision of Federalist land development and empire building under a state mandate to promote health along with public convenience and commerce (Burrows and Wallace 1999, 419). The "fearful symmetry" of their epochal plan inscribed with brutally simplicity commerce, efficiency, and elite values – in a word, Federalist values – backed by the state. The grid was being staked out on the ground precisely during Dwight's 1811 visit. Naturally, he wholeheartedly approves and criticizes the narrow and "winding" streets the plan was replacing (Dwight 1969, 3: 315), although he seems to overestimate the amount of open space and land "sequestered for public use" that the cramped grid would produce. Anticipating the good effects of the layout, Dwight carefully inscribes an elite presence over the whole of Manhattan. Among "houses of an inferior class, belonging to gardeners, farmers and mechanics who live in them through the year" are "[a] great number of villas ... placed in almost all the pleasant positions on the island ... [which] spread over it a brilliancy and cheerfulness not surpassed in the United States" (Dwight 1969, 3: 314-315). Thus an elite group of rural magnates are assimilated into the growing fabric of the city.

Manufacturing

Just as Dwight seeks to incorporate rural gentry into urban settings, so he makes an even more significant elision in his Federalist enthusiasm for manufacturing industry. He associates it in several ways with elite patronage and with social discipline, a thoroughly un-Jeffersonian perspective. Laura Rigal (1998) traces what she sees as a profound connection between the transformation of the labor process from artisanal, craft, and workshop production to larger scale mill and factory work, and new symbolic representations of nation and culture using a language of production. She suggests that a culturally constructed idea of labor simultaneously "manufactured 'nation' together with 'work' and 'labor.'" Indeed enlightenment constructions of rational artifice, contrivance, efficiency, and scientism, saturate the educated discourse of the time, including Dwight's conservative, religiously shaded texts.

A telling juxtaposition of hereditary and entrepreneurial leadership occurs in one of Dwight's accounts of Albany, New York. Within the city stood the manor house of a genuine feudal aristocrat, heir to the Patroonship founded by the van Rensselaers around 1630.

At the head of Market Street stands the mansion of the Hon. Stephen Van Rensselaer ... [it] struck my eye as ... comporting with the fact that for a long period it has been the residence of an ancient and distinguished family. The situation though not much elevated is fine, cheerful, and prospective ... beyond it is seen a handsome acclivity ... upon which stands the neat, sprightly village of Bath. The house is large and venerable, and looks as if it was the residence of respectability and worth (Dwight 1969, 2: 348).

Dwight notes that van Rensselaer "holds probably the first or second landed estate in the Union, and by the benevolent use which he makes of his large fortune has given ample proof of a mind

suitably entrusted by Providence with the disposal of such extensive property” (Dwight 1969, 2: 408). The manor house was soon to be engulfed by industrialization and lumber yards and the Erie Canal was to pass through its grounds (idealized by Thomas Cole in *The Gardens of the Van Rensselaer Manor House* in 1840, well after the changes had begun).

Immediately after his hagiographic account of the mansion’s inhabitants, and without any discursive break, Dwight turns his eye west to celebrate elite leadership of a different kind.

[A] small distance from this house westward is the most extensive collection of manufacturers (sic) which I have seen in the possession of a single man. The proprietor is James Caldwell, Esq. In these works barley is hulled, peas are split, and hair powder, starch, snuff, tobacco, mustard, and chocolate are manufactured. I visited them in the year 1792 and thought the manner of performing the business ingenious and happy (Dwight 1969, 2: 348).

Caldwell was a relatively poor Protestant Irish immigrant. He worked as a retail courier in Pennsylvania and then moved to Albany, setting up a grocery retailing business, catering specifically to Scots-Irish immigrants, and specializing in tobacco. During the Revolution he supplied the army and later developed the extensive tobacco and food processing plant Dwight saw. It was water-powered and covered more than an acre. Barbagallo (2000) provides a detailed account. Humble though Caldwell’s origins were, Dwight was ready to salute his industriousness and success, noting approvingly how he had bounced back from a devastating fire in 1794 and how he employed 40 boys in addition to other workers. Dwight thoroughly approved of Caldwell’s politics. Indeed Caldwell was hit by a brick while marching as a Federalist in an Albany parade to celebrate ratification of the Constitution. Dwight approved of his religion and his generosity too. Caldwell erected a Presbyterian Church in 1810 at his own expense in the eponymous village of Caldwell, near Lake George, New York (Dwight 1969, 2: 408). With this textual juxtaposition and glowing praise of a feudal hereditary aristocrat and an unprecedentedly successful Irish manufacturer, Dwight approves and symbolically unifies old and new avenues of elite patronage. Prowess in manufacturing becomes a dimension of a natural aristocracy, and technical innovation becomes kind of gift that his elite give to the world. Thus among the “polished people” residing in Lancaster, Massachusetts, “distinguished for industry, sobriety, and good order,” is Colonel Caleb Wilder, the “author” of a method of mass producing potash, the main industrial chemical of the eighteenth century (Dwight 1969, 2: 175; Roberts 1972).

Sometimes Dwight registers positive sympathy for small manufacturing enterprise that shows little promise of success. For example in Ipswich, Massachusetts he finds a small family-run woolen manufactory, with a few people carding and spinning. He entertains “faint hopes of its future success” and pities the proprietor whose “enterprise and public spirit we thought merited a better reward” (Dwight 1969, 1: 320). But the work of this petty manufacturer is cast as a public benefit. The problem, Dwight feels, rests with sparse population, very high labor costs, and in the fact that workers will only be available at slack times of agricultural production. He notes that things would go better if machinery were substituted for labor and proceeds to criticize conservatives who denigrate industry because they feel that prosperity rests on commerce alone.

An account of the scope of manufacturing in the United States was provided in a report issued during the Madison presidency by Albert Gallatin. Portions were widely published in the newspapers of the times (e.g., *Connecticut Herald* 4 June 1810). Dwight extracts data from the Gallatin report directly into *Travels* (Dwight 1969, 4: 339). The report covers precisely the time when Dwight's autumn journeys were occurring regularly, when the book project was taking shape in his mind, and when manufacturing was gaining in cultural acceptability. As Hartford's *American Mercury* had put it as early as 18 April 1791, "Those politicians who deride the idea of Connecticut's becoming a manufacturing country should never be considered as friends to the state." At roughly the same time Hamilton was declaring "The expediency of encouraging manufactures in the United States, which was not long since deemed very questionable, appears at this time to be pretty generally admitted" (cited in Griswold 1946, 681). By the time Gallatin wrote even many Jeffersonian Republicans were taking a nationalist and pro-manufacturing position (Shankman 2003). The protective and nurturing effects on manufacturing of Jefferson's embargo, which earlier critics had discovered spelled "O! grab me" backwards, were coming to be appreciated.

In the northeast the history of artisanal production was already long. It included ubiquitous use of local materials such as bog-iron, the production of clothing locally from wool and flax, and waterpower used extensively for grist and saw milling. The relationship between manufacturing and urbanism in antebellum New England was, however, far from integral. Bog iron was widely dispersed along with charcoal fuel; waterfall sites were usually rural; and processing of food products and some early large scale manufacturing processes such as potash burning were intrinsically oriented toward farms. In fact, as Prude (1983) notes, the "set apart" character of many early manufactories resonated with cultural reserve, "rural discretion" and – far more compellingly – with the protection of secret and proprietary technical processes. Yet, as Prude also notes, it was in towns, and one might add all the more in cities, that the "pressing together" of difference, of the old and the new, was particularly acute, and particularly "conscious and vivid in cultural representation." As the mill system expanded larger cities became more and more attractive as sites of labor that was not merely cheap but was also unconstrained by a key constraint on rural labor (Prude 1983). This is a question that Dwight did not apparently address but which was an extremely pressing one for farming families. Should their sons and daughters go to work in manufacturing? Was it right? How would the farm work get done? Although in principle the family was the least formal and prescriptive of the local ties that bound people into the matrix of township, village, and locality, the sway of family was extremely strong (Brown 1974). Custom, tradition, and function all made it difficult to leave home. This applied with much less force to urban populations.

Dwight seems more comfortable with factories because he thoroughly approves of the space-time disciplining of labor associated with the new dispensation of the mills. He was well aware of the technical restructuring of skills that underlay the transition to the mill system, as he reveals in a hagiography of Eli Whitney (Dwight 1969, 2: 196-99). Dwight would surely have favored the boarding conditions, to say nothing of the religious obligations, of the mill "girls" and of the Lowell system as it developed immediately after his death. He certainly also celebrates the traditional family as locus of industrial discipline, for example where weaving is

done as piece work “in private families” (Dwight 1969, 4: 348). But between the disciplines of the mill and the family lay a morally treacherous world of “shops.” Dwight is incessantly scandalized in the *Travels* by finding people in taverns, particularly early in the day, an observation that provides a glimpse of the work rhythms of the workshop mode of production where time was measured out with liberal informal breaks, with and without alcohol. In one such setting near a Susquehanna River crossing, “[a] traveler ... is molested by night and by day by a collection of dram drinkers, who offend his eye by their drunkenness and his ear with their profaneness and obscenity.” In fact dramshops “spread little circles of drunkenness throughout the state” (Dwight 1969, 4: 11-12). He makes no mention of the intellectual aspirations, the reading rooms and cultural events of urban artisans of the time (Wilentz 1984).

Like other Calvinist moralists Dwight was also uncomfortable with the idleness which the New England winter thrust upon the men, although hardly the women, in farming communities. Better manufacturing than the devil to find work for idle hands. At the site of one of the first rolling mills in New England he notes that “[i]n the winter season, the inhabitants of Middleboro are principally employed in making nails.” Not only is it profitable but also “fills up” part of the year in which they would otherwise “find little employment” (Dwight 1969, 2: 2).

Dwight does not appear to register any concerns about the emergence of the culturally distinct class of industrial workers in cities which was to form the “other” of refined middle class and elite sensibility for most of the rest of the century. The words “artisan” and more often “mechanic” were equally applicable to craft and factory based workers. For him, mechanic connotes a non-mercantile manual worker, practicing a trade or craft. (The *Oxford English Dictionary* actually uses a portion of *Travels* to illustrate early nineteenth century usage of the word.) Dwight usually inscribed mechanics above a line that marked off vagrants and laborers. In New Haven, for example, there was a class of worker about whose morality Dwight was very doubtful. He calls them “laborers.” He does not seem to extend this term systematically to farm employees or to industrial workers *per se*, whether in workshops, piece work, or in mills. He appears to apply it to temporary or transient day-laborers “who look to the earnings of today for the subsistence of tomorrow.” In fact the ranks of urban day-laborers were growing because the door to the traditional apprentice-journeyman-master roles had been closed to them by the new organization of production. Dwight sees such men as “shiftless, diseased, or vicious” (Dwight 1969, 1: 139). But these lines are apt to be blurred by New England exceptionalism and special pleading. In New Haven Dwight morally approves of the work habits, “industry,” and “economy,” of *all* the inhabitants. As for an ideal New England town as he describes it abstractly to his correspondent: even the “mechanics” in such places “aim at a higher degree of respectability than in most parts of the country.” Some of them, indeed, “merit the appellation of gentlemen” (Dwight 1969, 2: 231).

The various threads of Dwight’s approbation of manufacturing and its innovators come together in his account of Humphreysville, Connecticut, the site of new cotton and woolen mills. Dwight celebrates the patronage of David Humphreys, one of Washington’s aides-de-camp, whom Dwight knew and with whom he had much in common. They were Connecticut Congregationalists and Humphreys was a Yale graduate in addition to being a military officer and a diplomat who harbored literary aspirations as high as Dwight’s own. Both men were

"Connecticut Wits" (Howard 1943). Humphreys supposedly admired Washington so much that he came to look like him. It certainly appears so in John Trumbell's painting of 1824, *General George Washington Resigning his Commission*, which has Humphrey standing immediately behind Washington. Humphreys' *Collected Works* contain odes, a burlesque epithalamium, elegiac stanzas, lives of several public figures, a pastoral, political observations, a dissertation on the merino breed of sheep, and a poem on the industry of the United States. The latter argues nationalistically for domestic manufacturing, particularly in textiles:

But what vile cause retards the public plan?
Why fail the fabrics patriot zeal began?
Must nought but tombs of industry be found,
Prostrated arts expiring on the ground?
Shall we, of geegaws gleaning half the globe,
Disgrace our country with a foreign robe?
(Humphreys 1804, 103)

Humphreys had founded a very successful woolen mill in 1803. Dwight paints him as a patron of the land. "The people of this country are ... indebted not a little to General Humphreys" (Dwight 1969, 3: 276). Unlike foreign artificers such as Samuel Slater, Humphreys is a specifically *national* hero. Moreover his contributions solidly tie together agricultural and industrial innovation. The *Gallatin* report had noted that a principal constraint on the American textile industry in New England was the availability of wool. Humphreys introduced the merino sheep to the United States and overcame the prejudices of local farmers against it. Dwight the educator also notes that apprentices in Humphreys' mill are instructed in reading, writing, and arithmetic.

From Humphrey's mills Dwight the moralist draws three lessons. First, that manufacturing can be successful in Connecticut; second, that the workers can be "preserved" in good health. And third is his key moral conclusion: "the deterioration of morals in such institutions, which is so often complained of, is not necessary, but incidental, not inherent in the institution itself, but the fault of the proprietor" (Dwight 1969, 3: 277). Here Dwight is explicitly refuting the European (and Jeffersonian) claim that manufacturing establishments lead to vice and disease. Anticipating the kind of argument that was to ensue about the employment of the mill girls in Lowell, he notes that parents were originally reluctant to have their children work for Humphreys, but that now they are satisfied. He records, nevertheless, the constant policing of the mills by state appointed visitors and notes the firing of anyone found to be "openly immoral" (Dwight 1969, 3: 276). In this extraordinary piece of rhetoric, Dwight seeks to tie together and legitimate sheep rearing, urbanism, factory-based manufacturing, moral education, and elite leadership.

Conclusion: The Symbolic Center and Elite Control

Living at a time when the “agrarian dream” (Ekirch 1963) was fading and in a place where the earliest effects of urbanization and manufacturing were all around, Dwight presents us with a paradox. He was a conservative and parochial apologist for the religious and political *status quo* of New England, but he lived in an age of political and economic revolution. Thus we find a mind predisposed to take the dimmest view of innovation anxiously observing and celebrating it in the landscapes around him, but striving always symbolically to assimilate it to his Federalist and Congregationalist precepts of order, morality, and elite dominance. Visiting Troy, New York in September 1811 Dwight records:

Troy is one of the most beautiful and well-built towns which I have seen ... The streets are wide, straight, and spacious; and the town ... perfectly regular ... Upon the whole, there is hardly a town in the country forming the object of these letters which makes so cheerful, brilliant, and beautiful an appearance (Dwight 1969, 3: 295-296).

Dwight was just passing through and perhaps did not probe for moral turpitude and backsliding as thoroughly as usual. At any rate this description is a uniquely positive one among his accounts of cities outside the Puritan heartland. Dwight reads all the superficial signs very affirmatively – a picturesque location, many churches, “neat” brick buildings with gardens, and a perfectly regular grid. Nevertheless as his account proceeds a political shadow falls. It is cast by the embargo of 1807. The locals assure him that real property in Troy had lost a quarter of its value because of this economic reversal. Before the embargo Troy had “engrossed” the trade of the western half of Vermont and was

one of the most prosperous towns in the American Union ... [but that] disastrous measure ... drove the people of Vermont to Montreal. This channel of commerce having been thus fairly opened, the stream will not probably return to its former bed without extreme difficulty (Dwight 1969, 3: 296).

This account well illustrates the disconcerting contrast between Dwight’s impulse to stereotype and moralize landscape (e.g., taking a regular grid as a sign of virtue) and his penetrating observation of the emerging features of the new economic and social order. He was alert to the mercantile networks, banking, debt, trade hinterlands, central places, points of attachment, supply routes, and entrepôts penetrating every corner of his world. Above all, he was alert to the outburst of creativity in American manufacturing that flourished under the Jeffersonian protectionism which Dwight theoretically abhorred.

Not only does he understand the growing scope of manufacturing, but he sees it as an adjunct to commerce in recouping the mercantile losses of the embargo years and as a way for smaller communities to offset the concentration (“engrossing”) of commerce in Boston and New York City. He clearly observes what we would term the externalities and multiplier effects of the new mills, which awakening a “new animation” in

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almost every other pursuit ... laborers, diggers of canals, lumber merchants,... brass and iron founders ... carpenters, masons, ... blacksmiths are all employed in greater or less degrees by the erection of a cotton manufactory (Dwight 1969, 4: 348).

He even anticipates the possibility that cities may ultimately come to depend on manufacturing to the exclusion of other business. In Rhode Island

It would be no exaggeration to say that five eighths of her inhabitants are directly or indirectly employed in the manufacture of cotton [and dependent industries] ... Whether this direction of the industry of Rhode Island will promote her moral prosperity, time only can determine. There can be no doubt ... that it will increase her wealth and population (Dwight 1969, 4: 347).

This move from confidence in economic success to doubt about moral consequences signals Dwight's ideological agenda: to subordinate social and economic change to traditional elite control.

Cities were the traditional locus of this control in New England. Dwight takes them for granted as the principal organizing force in the landscape, exerting discipline –as they had since the seventeenth century – over a margin of farmers, foresters, and unruly wanderers, who might always engage in insubordinations like Shays' Rebellion (1786) or worse. This "rebellion" in west-central Massachusetts had made very clear the rural reach of urban merchants, mortgage-holders, issuers of scrip and ultimately of the militia that suppressed the minor uprising (Peet 1986). Dwight, the moralizing conservative, was alert to the new infusions of urban population and ideas after the Revolution, notably the mobilization of opposition to traditional northeastern Federalist elites for whom urban artisans and mechanics were no longer natural allies (e.g., Clark 2006, 65). To think through an appropriate size for cities was an anxious business for Dwight. As we noted above he was alert to what we would call the threshold and subcultural effects of size, which could have potentially good consequences (e.g., critical mass for a congregation) but which posed risks of religious diversity, party politics, and democratic enfranchisement. Through all manner of metaphors Dwight symbolically reaffirms elite control of urban space. Reading deviations from regular morphology as if they were lapses of elite morals, and inscribing a rural pattern of patronage into city founding and urban leadership are two examples.

If the cities of New England were old, large-scale manufacturing was new. Dwight was well aware that there was nothing intrinsically urban about a mode of production so deeply tied to water power, farm output, rural workshops, "putting out," and dispersed raw materials. But his impulse is centripetal, and he symbolically fuses industry with urbanism. Factories provide a new locus of moral discipline. They act as nuclei for new settlements around rural waterfalls, provide work for idle farm labor in winter and for boys all year round, and they discipline drunken mechanics. They are celebrated as icons of elite patronage and are interpreted in nationalistic, anti-immigrant terms. Thus the mill technology brought from England by Samuel Slater (founder of the Pawtucket Mills) in 1789 was considered mysterious and hazardous for a few years, but then the "fearlessness" and "vigorous ingenuity" with which American "gentlemen" took to the innovation guaranteed not only its success but the exclusion of foreign workers

(Dwight 1969, 4: 348). And in all cases the moral effects of such places are read as being entirely within the control of sufficiently strong leaders: iconic figures such as David Humphreys, who personified a fusion of nationalism, agricultural innovation, manufacturing prowess, city-founding, and moral leadership.

Dwight's *Travels* provides both an extraordinarily rich source of empirical information for historical geographers and an egregiously ideological exemplar of the "symbolic landscapes" that preoccupy cultural geographers. In its empirical descriptions and its partisan special pleading can be discerned a landscape distinctive to the Federalist northeast. As a measure of how divergent from agrarian republicanism and how pro-urban this worldview was, we may note that Dwight is sometimes willing to make an almost unthinkable inversion (or rather, a re-version to the Augustan age). He sometimes suggests that cities are morally superior to rural areas. Thus, based on his observation of a decline of commerce on the Sabbath because locals increasingly see it as "an indecent intrusion," Dwight sweepingly concludes:

The morals of Providence are probably superior to those of any other town in this state [Rhode Island]. The usual order of things with respect to morality seems here to be inverted. In most other states the country is more virtuous than the city (Dwight 1969, 2: 17).

This sequence – penetrating observation followed by entirely disproportionate magisterial generalization – is entirely typical of Dwight. Along with the sheer magnitude of his *Travels* project, it is this combination of acute observation and dogmatic ideological reconstruction that render his work such an interesting moment in the history of American symbolic landscapes.

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Notes

1. All references to the work of Thomas Jefferson are from the Thomas Jefferson Digital Archive, University of Virginia, <http://etext.virginia.edu/jefferson/> (last accessed 4 May 2009).
2. All references to *Travels* cite page numbers in one of the four volumes, indicated by a Arabic numeral, of the edition edited by Barbara Solomon.

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