

Planning as Placemaking: Tensions of Scale, Culture and Identity

By Katherine Fox Lanham

Major Paper Submitted to
Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University
School of Public and International Affairs
College of Architecture and Urban Studies

In fulfillment of the Capstone Requirement for
Master of Urban and Regional Planning

Max O. Stephenson, Chair

Sonia Hirt

April 17, 2007

Keywords: Placemaking, Place Identity, Arts & Cultural Development,
Urban Revitalization

Copyright 2007, Katherine Fox Lanham

Table of Contents

1. Introduction	3
2. Background and Study Overview	5
<i>Research Methodology</i>	9
<i>Key Informants</i>	11
3. Literature Review	13
<i>Sense of Place and Marketplace</i>	13
<i>Place Construction</i>	14
<i>Culturescape</i>	15
4. Roanoke: A Case Study of Placemaking	22
<i>The Art Museum of Western Virginia</i>	22
<i>Henry Street</i>	32
<i>A Common Narrative</i>	43
5. Conclusions	44
6. References	49
Attachment A	54

1. Introduction

This study explores three institutional placemaking efforts through arts and cultural development in the City of Roanoke: the Art Museum of Western Virginia (AMWV), the Dumas Center for Artistic and Cultural Development, and the Claude Moore Education Complex. The scale of the AMWV project, at \$66 million for facility construction, is the largest community initiative developed in the region in the past 25 years. A coalition of private donors, business leaders, and public officials believe that the new AMWV will transform the downtown and [re]define Roanoke as a cultural destination (AMWV 2006).

Placemaking is a socially constructed process that is shaping cities largely through capital investment designed to generate economic growth and promote cultural tourism (Zukin 1995; Martin 2003; Nevarez 2003; PPS 2006). The economic scale and visibility of the AMWV make the museum a primary placemaking strategy for Roanoke. However, investment generated from the relatively small and concentrated financial leadership pool of the region may result in potential conflicts between the new museum and alternate community capital projects. Indeed, local development partnerships and institutions are leveraging this cultural activity as they seek to redevelop, and in some cases redefine, other areas of the downtown and the adjacent neighborhood of Gainsboro.

High-profile projects similar to the AMWV draw interest traditionally from leadership coalitions that seek to expand the role of the arts in central-city economic development and growth and view cultural institutions as viable representations of local pride or heritage (Logan and Molotch 1987; Whitt 1987; Zukin 1995; Gospodini 2002). At the same time, there may be competing claims to the cultural identity of a city that manifest themselves through other streams of community action and discourse. Underpinning the bricks-and-mortar are less understood

flows of social interaction and cultural identity that shape placemaking through smaller scales of action. Beyond the standard retail mall or mixed-use residential development, cultural sites elicit rich discussions about authenticity and legitimacy that may be tied to a broader set of claims about the identity of a city (Zukin 1995; Scott 2000).

This research explores placemaking as a discursive mechanism that articulates cultural and institutional identity through community action. The study hypothesizes that private development partnerships and local governmental entities deploy site-specific placemaking as an economic development and tourism strategy, while cultural institutions and community-based organizations operate through more transgressive activities that reflect the specificity of place, culture, history and community. There are tensions between these two visions. Indeed, several case studies on urban regeneration, most notably by Sharon Zukin (1995) and Gene Bunnell (2002), suggest that the aims of both place marketing and community building have been addressed through cultural projects derived from consensual strategies of change. Through such consensus, unlikely alliances may form between elite and community-based groups in order to restore a building or preserve an historic site. Yet, the scale of action and competing claims to place identity, particularly in the context of neighborhood, often create tensions that obscure common goals and interests (Schneekloth and Shibley 1995). These conflicts of scale and identity are assessed dynamically in this case study, focusing on three institutional placemaking efforts through arts and cultural development in the downtown and adjacent neighborhood of Gainsboro.

2. Background and Study Overview



Figure 1

Source: City of Roanoke Internet GIS Site. Retrieved on 1/25/07 from <http://gis.roanokeva.gov/viewer.cfm?Title=City%20of%20Roanoke>

The City of Roanoke is situated at the foot of the Blue Ridge Mountains in the Roanoke River valley in southwest Virginia. The city's origins in the late 19th century as headquarters for the Norfolk and Western Railway continue to shape the downtown area that is etched by a broad strip of rail track that divides it from the near north neighborhood of Gainsboro, illustrated in Figure 1. Analysis of U.S. Census 2000 data conducted by the Social Science Data Analysis Network at the University of Michigan identify Roanoke as the most segregated city in Virginia based on a dissimilarity index that measures the relative separation or integration of groups across all neighborhoods of a city or metropolitan area (SSDAN 2007). Gainsboro and several adjacent north city neighborhoods suffered several waves of urban renewal in the 1960s and 1970s. These streetscapes contrast sharply with the well-preserved and more affluent

neighborhoods of south Roanoke. The city's population of just fewer than 95,000 is expected to continue to decrease based on census trends for the past several decades (U.S. Census 2000). At the same time, the Roanoke Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA) that includes the surrounding counties of Roanoke, Botetourt, Craig and Franklin, in addition to the cities of Roanoke and Salem, is projected to increase slowly in population. This trend is not unique to Roanoke and has affected numerous mid-sized metropolitan areas in the United States that have faced a decline in the industrial base of their central cities coupled with increased suburban and exurban development (Barnes, et. al, 1976; Ewing & Rusk, 1995; Blakely & Bradshaw, 2002; Berube et. al. 2003).

In the late 1970s, Roanoke launched "Design '79," a revitalization effort led by architect Charles Moore and design team Timm Jamieson to reclaim the downtown area from substantial decline through a redesign of the City Market district (Duany Plater-Zyberk 2006). This initiative led to a series of adaptive reuse projects in the 1980s and 1990s that included Center in the Square, a converted warehouse that serves as the city's downtown cultural anchor housing the Mill Mountain Theatre and three museums, including the AMWV. Several historic buildings across the railroad tracks in the neighborhood of Gainsboro were also renovated during this time, including the Hotel Roanoke through a public-private partnership between the City and Virginia Tech. The Roanoke Higher Education Center (RHEC) now occupies the 1931 Art Deco building that served as headquarters for the Norfolk and Western Railroad, and industrial designer Raymond Loewy's landmark 1955 passenger railroad station was converted into the O. Winston Link Museum to highlight the city's railroad heritage. The AMWV project in particular seems to represent a potential tipping point for the city as government and local leadership seek to build

on this record of progress and downtown cultural growth with a highly visible project. Roanoke design firm SFCS and world-renowned Duany Plater-Zyberk & Co. conducted a planning charrette in Fall 2005 to develop a new plan for the City Market district as a geographic and social focal point for the Roanoke Valley, including façade restorations to several buildings and substantial streetscape improvements for Market Street and Jefferson Street (City of Roanoke 2006). Additionally, Center in the Square's signature facility will undergo renovations in order to enhance its profile for tourists and other potential visitors, and the city has launched a series of arts and cultural events to occur throughout 2007 to celebrate Roanoke's 125th anniversary. These placemaking strategies are reflected in current branding efforts by Downtown Roanoke, Inc. and the City's public relations department that promote Roanoke as "the entertainment, cultural and economic center for southwest Virginia" (Downtown Roanoke Inc. 2007).



Figure 2

Source: City of Roanoke Internet GIS Site. Retrieved on 1/25/07 from <http://gis.roanokeva.gov/viewer.cfm?Title=City%20of%20Roanoke>

This study begins with a brief review of the literature on placemaking followed by an overview of three current cultural development projects: the Art Museum of Western Virginia (AMWV), the Dumas Center for Artistic and Cultural Development, and the Claude Moore Education Complex (CMEC). The essay chronicles the actions of the institutions and individuals engaged in these projects with the aim of situating these efforts in the larger context of placemaking in Roanoke. Figure 2 provides a detailed map of the study area that indicates the locations of relevant institutions. While the literature review provides a conceptual backdrop for

the study, more substantive analysis of the literature is woven into the narrative of the case study that is organized around two central questions:

1. Does the economic scale of cultural development and its scope in the context of the built environment advance an institution's claims to placemaking and its impact on local identity (re)construction?
2. In what ways does site-specific placemaking as an economic development and tourism strategy conflict with community-based interests that reflect the specificity of place, culture and history?

The study first suggests that character of the tensions related to scale and identity in Roanoke differ between the downtown and the neighborhood of Gainsboro, and that each institution in the analysis plays a different placemaking role. Secondly, the research finds that institutional identities associated with site-specific projects at the neighborhood scale tend to conflict with community-based interests unless there are clear objectives to address the history and culture of the neighborhood either through historic preservation, cultural programming or both. Site-specific placemaking actions are not the exclusive purview of tourism and economic development strategies but also serve to reinforce local understandings of place. Finally, a common narrative around transgressive placemaking activities is serving as a bridge between community interests and economic development/tourism interests in Roanoke.

Research Methodology

The qualitative research approach employed here included documents analysis, semi-structured interviews and participant observation, using discourse analysis that emphasized context and narrative. Jane Elliott (2005, 6) has explained the framework for a narrative approach with the following common themes: 1) an interest in people's lived experiences and an appreciation of the temporal nature of that experience; 2) a desire to empower research

participants and allow them to contribute to determining the most salient themes in an area of research; 3) an interest in process and change over time; 4) an interest in the self and representations of the self; and 5) an awareness that the researcher is also a narrator.

Document analysis was used to uncover primary themes and subtleties behind the discussion of placemaking in Roanoke, by means of examination of newspaper articles, press releases, brochures and websites, as well as internal communications such as annual reports, strategic plans and meeting minutes. Situational maps, developed by Adele Clark (2005) as an extension of the grounded theory model of Strauss and Corbin (1998) called situational analysis, were used to address the complex situation of inquiry typically found in the social environment. Clarke's mapping methods seem well-suited to case study involving a particular set of projects because they enable the researcher to build an analytical framework on the ground, rather than after the fact where the risk of participant sensemaking is greater (Weick 1995). Several abstract situational maps were used as analysis tools to articulate elements in the study, such as human and institutional actors, and to examine relations among these elements and identify nonhuman actants such as "ideas, concepts, discourses, symbols, sites of debate, and cultural 'stuff' that may 'matter' in this situation" of inquiry (Clarke 2005, 88). For example, several mapping exercises highlighted the role of *identity* as a veneer that influences placemaking actions and discourse through identities of place, neighborhood, site, community and institution. This layer of meaning could be viewed in the context of different *scales of action* in placemaking (economic development, institutional action, event-based action, neighborhood vs. downtown) to explore potential areas of conflict. Both of these elements, reinforced by a literature review, informed the two research questions at the beginning of this study, as well as an initial set of interview questions posed to key informants.

Seven in-depth interviews were conducted in February and March 2007 with key informants drawn from Roanoke government, private development partnerships, community organizations and cultural institutions. This reflects a purposeful, criterion-based selection rather than a random sample. Participants were identified based on their direct involvement with cultural development projects in downtown Roanoke and the adjacent neighborhood of Gainsboro. To ensure data integrity, all interviews were audio-recorded with IRB approval and supplemented by field notes. The semi-structured interviews of 45 to 60 minutes included a set of open-ended questions, providing opportunities to adapt the discussion to an interviewee's particular expertise as well as follow-on queries based on individual responses to the core topics. This format revealed prevailing narratives of placemaking, from the informant's perspective, within the context of the study area and the specific cultural development projects addressed. Attachment A provides the interview protocol.

Key Informants

Wanda Alston
Museum Manager, Harrison Museum of African American Culture

Evelyn Bethel and Helen E. Davis
Historic Gainsboro Preservation District, Inc.

Georganne Bingham
Executive Director, Art Museum of Western Virginia

Annie Korchalis
Roanoke Chapter, Virginia Organizing Project

Tom McKeon
Executive Director, Roanoke Higher Education Center

William Penn
Task Force Director, Dumas Center for Artistic and Cultural Development

Brian Townsend
Director of Planning Building and Economic Development, City of Roanoke

Eight semi-structured interviews were also conducted with IRB approval in March and April 2006 with board members, private donors, municipal and county officials, university partners, and museum staff as part of a separate case study by this author on the Art Museum of Western Virginia. Interviewees included Roanoke Mayor Nelson Harris; Roanoke City Manager Darlene Burcham; Ed Murphy, AMWV Board President; W. Heywood Fralin, AMWV Donor and Board Member; John Williamson, AMWV Donor and Board Member; Roanoke County Administrator Elmer Hodge; Mark McNamee, University Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs at Virginia Tech; and Georganne Bingham, AMWV Executive Director. Due to the sensitivity of information (many of the financial details had not yet been released to the press) taped interviews were not permitted; however, extensive field notes were taken. Additionally, informal interviews were conducted in December 2006 with Gabriel Villa, Elena Gonzales and Argelia Morales at the National Museum of Mexican Art in Chicago (formerly the Mexican Fine Arts Center Museum) for the purpose of gathering comparative information on neighborhood-based cultural institutions. These interviews were not audio-recorded but captured by field notes. In all, a total of eighteen interviews were conducted for this study.

In addition to literature review, documents analysis, and these eighteen interviews, further analysis was undertaken under the auspices of the activities of the Henry Street Studio, a multi-disciplinary effort of the Advanced Masters Program in Virginia Tech's Department of Landscape Architecture. The studio used the Harrison Museum of African American Culture's exhibit "Henry Street Live" as part of an inquiry into the nature of the ever-changing terrain of place in the neighborhood of Gainsboro. The interdisciplinary Studio has explored the narrative of place in the context of the social landscape and built environment of Henry Street, through

participant observation in local events involving the Harrison Museum, the Dumas Center for Artistic and Cultural Development, and the Gainsboro Public Library.

3. Literature Review

A review of the relevant literature reveals several dimensions of placemaking that address image (re)construction and place marketing through a politics of representation. This case study explored these dynamics by studying documents and interviewing leaders from several institutions and organized entities operating at different scales of action and reflecting different sets of cultural values. While far from exhaustive, this literature review sought to understand how placemaking has evolved as professional practice and how the prevailing rhetoric of *place*, *identity* and *authenticity* are now commonly understood as points of departure for everyday practice.

Sense of Place and Marketplace

Often we think of place as a settled community, an analog to *home*, with a distinct character that is defined by its physical environment and cultural traditions (Massey 1995). A place may be constructed, in part, by imagined worlds (Anderson 1983) but is largely shaped by a patchwork of actions and everyday practices that set up patterns of familiarity over time (Jacobs 1961; de Certeau 1984; Massey 1995). Kevin Lynch (1960) addressed the complexities of place in the context of history and meaning in *Image of the City*:

...we need an environment which is not simply well organized, but poetic and symbolic as well. It should speak of the individuals and their complex society, of their aspirations and their historical tradition, of the natural setting, and of the complicated functions and movements of the city world. But clarity of structure and vividness of identity are first steps to the development of strong symbols. By appearing as a remarkable and well-knit *place*, the city could provide a ground

for the clustering and organization of these meanings and associations. Such a sense of place in itself enhances every human activity that occurs there, and encourages the deposit of a memory trace. (Lynch 1960, 119)

As a reaction to the perceived sterility of modernist cityscapes, many urban scholars have echoed Lynch's observations by advocating a return to the vernacular through human-scale urban design that mixes the civic with the private (Jacobs 1961; Boyer 1983; Frampton 1985). These sentiments are reflected, in part, by strategies for revitalization developed over the last several decades in response to the declining industrial base of central cities (Blakely & Bradshaw, 2002; Barnes, et. al, 1976; Ewing & Rusk, 1995). Certainly the latest design trends in the "new urbanism" aim to promote sustainable communities through neighborhood-scale mixed-use, transit-oriented development and walkable streetscapes (Katz 1994; Duany et. al. 2003). Yet, the recent work of several urban theorists and geographers suggests that these understandings of place overlook conflicts that arise when meanings and associations are organized into structure and symbology; who is empowered to take on this organization? (Harvey 1989; Appadurai 1996; Olds 2001) These conflicts, primarily over specific sites, may be greater at the neighborhood scale where the balance between civic and private spaces differs greatly from downtown and commercial areas, and where there may be less capacity to absorb new development.

Place Construction

Anthropologist Arjun Appadurai (1996) has observed that the micro-scale dynamics of place constitution—site-specific development and competing cultural claims on the urban landscape—yield a notion of placemaking that reveals how power operates in shaping the built and imagined environments of cities. Local leadership with the capacity and will to promote large-scale urban transformation often become drivers of the most visible aspects of

placemaking, using capital projects to broaden a city's appeal for its residents and to promote tourism and external recognition. At the same time, residents themselves may seek to derail those efforts if they fail to align with local definitions of place and may marshal coalitions on behalf of these counter-claims. This may explain, in part, why historic preservation has become an accepted avenue for engaging citizen participation and support while furthering agendas for economic development and tourism.

Some argue that the effects of globalization challenge these local definitions of place, reinforcing patterns of uneven development through dominant power structures (Harvey 1989; Massey & Jess 1995). As an example, the public funds used to attract Disney to Times Square in New York City were largely commensurate with the cultural currency that the Disney name carries as a widely recognized symbol of family entertainment (Zukin 1995; Comella 2003). Logan and Molotch (1987) have extended this concept of "glocalization" (Martin 2003), suggesting that placemaking is a discursive mechanism that articulates an external identity for a city through its institutions, private sector enterprise and elite urban regimes. In this sense, placemaking may not be reflective of Lynch's city world in which a *sense of place* transcends structure and organized action. Instead, it may be more realistic to contend that history, memory and connections to the landscape are part of a social grid that is invariably woven in good part by flows of capital.

Culturescape

Geographer David Harvey (1989) has argued that the cultural and historical specificity of a place is defined and sustained as spatialized moments governed by hierarchical flows of capital, money, goods, labor and culture (Lefebvre 1991). Harvey's work is useful not only for

his understanding of place construction as an integrated web of social processes, but also because he recognizes the integration of cultural claims in the cityscape:

The whole history of place building suggests that a cultural politics has just as frequently been at the root of the inspiration of place construction as has simple desire for profit and speculative gain. Yet the intertwining of the two is omnipresent... (Harvey 1993, 19).

Harvey has broadened the argument concerning the production of space, often narrowly interpreted through the lens of capital investment and exchange, to encapsulate a cultural reality also shaped by dynamic actions and events. For many cities, these actions take the form of festivals and art installations that render new meanings to sites by challenging definitions of culture and promoting interconnectedness (Kwon 2004). As an example, the Edinburgh Festival Fringe in Scotland has become the world's largest arts festival with well over two hundred ad hoc venues in historic churches, city parks, abandoned buildings and reclaimed sites as well as traditional performance venues and public spaces. Premised on open access for all participants, "The Fringe" reshapes the historic city's iconic Royal Mile and environs during the month of August. Edinburgh is now identified by the success of this annual event.

Allen J. Scott (2001) has reinforced Harvey's notion of place building by arguing that the economy is a hybrid system that far from being governed by a single logic, is also constructed by the cultural economy. Drawing on Becker (1982), Bourdieu (1984) and Crane (1992), Scott argues that the socialized nature of artistic and cultural activities renders unique communities of creative knowledge workers who possess the potential to influence an urban environment profoundly. Richard Florida's (2002) creative capital theory sketches a similar portrait of the "creative class" of individuals (in the arts, design and high-tech industries, to name several) who are engines of social capital and economic growth by generating high concentrations of creativity and demanding the amenities that typify life in prosperous urban centers.

Placemaking as a concept has been popularized, in part, through dominant rhetorical claims similar to those sketched by Joli Jensen (2002) as she examined the contradictions between art, culture and mass media. Jensen contended that the arts, in particular, are presented as vehicles to counter-balance the perceived ills of commercialized culture and marketplace mediation of much public meaning making. The rhetoric of redemption, distorted by expressions of economic value, projects an instrumental view of art and creative enterprise as panaceas to address societal fragmentation, economic difficulties and presumed failures in quality of life (Zukin 1995; Jensen 2002; Florida 2002). Interestingly, the argument that Jensen outlined, a social reconstruction strategy, implies a leap of faith that the connections between art and daily life are self-evident. Cities have been willing to take that leap by pursuing transformative capital projects that appear to hold such promise.

Beyond the economic development interests of a municipality, place construction reflects cultural interests at multiple scales of action across a range of venues; however, the influence of the built environment can limit our ability to understand locality and the conscious moments, events and actions that transform space into place (De Certeau 1984; Appadurai 1996). Placemaking has a fixity of scale by nature of the spatial or jurisdictional boundaries it targets that, at times, are in tension with cultural interests occurring in overlapping scales of influence. Further, places are animated and shaped by various dimensions connecting the objects in an environment, including concentric areas of affiliation, social networks, history and unseen layers of memory (Buell, 2001; Throgmorton, 2003). What some individuals see as dilapidated buildings, others regard as placeholders of memory or hope. Neighborhoods perceived as distressed are held together (or not) by more than physical structures. The central thread running through these arguments is that placemaking does not occur in a cultural vacuum and is always

undertaken in relation to the realms of cultural practice and human experience. As development shapes the built environment of a city, planners and urban designers seek to legitimate these actions by infusing them with local qualities that will attract a creative class seeking authentic, place-based experiences.

Websites and marketing materials often suggest a formulaic approach as *practice* reinforced by the flow of capital to create commercial appliqués of “place” that are layered over less tangible dynamics of everyday culture and identity (De Certeau 1984; Lefebvre 1991). Depressed cities and regions in search of the next best thing to catalyze their economies run the risk of buying in to this superficial spectacle of turnaround, appropriating ideas without understanding their origin or relationship to their histories (Debord, 1994, 1967; Zukin 1995). Project for Public Spaces (PPS), a nonprofit urban planning and design organization based in New York, promotes a place/community driven approach to the design of public spaces. But the language on its website seems at odds with the intent of community efforts that seek to address the inherently local and particular characteristics of a place. Like a self-help magazine, “what makes a great place?” is followed by 11 key principles for “turning a place around” and tips for “building communities” by sustaining public spaces (PPS 2006). The work of urban critic Jane Jacobs (1993 [1961]) has become a clarion call for placemaking. Who wouldn’t want their cities to be livable, walkable, flourishing and diverse? When so conceived, the practice of placemaking appears to be knowable and transferable from place to place.

Project for Public Spaces was built on the work of sociologist William H. Whyte (1980) who developed a series of insightful studies on street life and city dynamics for the New York Planning Commission beginning in 1969 (PPS 2006). Using Whyte’s work as the cornerstone for its methodology, PPS engages in a holistic approach to placemaking that, for the sake of brevity,

is encapsulated in Figure 3. Some of the attributes outlined by PPS such as “sense of pride” and “sense of belonging” are difficult to quantify, whereas “safe for pedestrians” and “greater connections between uses” are largely dependent on physical or spatial attributes. British architect John Thompson advocates placemaking practice that speaks to “the human necessity to come together for the sole purpose of exchange—spiritual exchange, civic and civil exchange (governance), economic exchange and social exchange” (RIBA 2007). While all of these elements serve as useful markers for understanding placemaking practice in the context of the social and built environment, they imply that there is a dimension to placemaking that cannot be addressed by urban design and capital investment alone (Whyte 1980; Knox 2005).

The Benefits of Place		
<p>Builds & Support the Local Economy</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Small-scale entrepreneurship • More quality goods available • Higher real estate values • Local ownership, local value • More desirable jobs • Increased currency velocity • Greater tax revenue • Less need for municipal services 	<p>Nurtures & Defines Community Identity</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Greater community organization • Sense of pride and volunteerism • Perpetuation of integrity and values • “Mutual coercion, mutually agreed upon” • Less need for municipal control • Self-managing 	<p>Fosters Frequent & Meaningful Contact</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improves sociability • More cultural exposure, interaction • Exchanges and preserves information, wisdom, values • Supports barter system • Reduces race and class barriers • Feeling of interconnection
<p>Creates Improved Accessibility</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More walkable • Safe for pedestrians • Compatible with public transit • Reduces need for cars and parking • More efficient use of time and money • Greater connections between uses 	<p>Promotes Sense of Comfort</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Visually pleasing • Generally stimulating • Sense of belonging • Greater security • Better environment quality • Feeling of freedom 	<p>Draws a Diverse Population</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More women, elderly, and children • Greater ethnic and cultural pluralism • Encourages a range of activities and uses • New service, retail, and customer niches • Variation and character in built environment • Encourages community creativity

Figure 3
Source: Derived from Project for Public Spaces (2007)

Dolores Hayden has argued that placemaking should be a process of “locating ourselves in the cities of the United States in a serious way, coming to terms with the urban landscape as it exists and has existed, connecting the history of struggle over urban space with the poetics of occupying particular places” (1995, 11-12). Literary critic Lawrence Buell (2001) has offered a workable concept for understanding the importance of place sense to cultural imagination through five dimensions of place-connectedness: 1) concentric areas of affiliation (home, neighborhood, town); 2) archipelago of locales (complex technological and environmental pathways); 3) imaginative landmarks (the invisible landscape of history and events); 4) mobility and migration (composite memories of people moving into and out of places); and 5) virtual or fictive places. While Buell argues that place cannot be fully perceived or definitively theorized, he sketches a portrait of change relative to place that broadens our understanding of specific placemaking practices. As with the language of placemaking that attempts to describe complexity with sound bites, perceptions of place that are grounded primarily in one dimension such as home or neighborhood affiliations may become fixed and inaccessible to change. So too, the invisible landscape of history and events may play an important role in placemaking practice but must be enriched and sustained by other dimensions (Buell 2001; Throgmorton 2003). Extending Buell’s premise, Kris Olds (2001) suggests that the complex, overlapping and disjunctive nature of place construction can be understood in the context of a global space of flows navigated by various actors or agents (Castells 1989; Appadurai 1996). Buell’s conceptions are used as a backdrop to analyze specific narratives of the individual actors who are influencing the three cultural development projects in this study. Community-based interests that reflect the specificity of place, culture and history may draw on several dimensions, such as imaginative landmarks or mobility and migration, that conflict with economic development and

Five Dimensions of Place-connectedness

Placemaking Tensions:

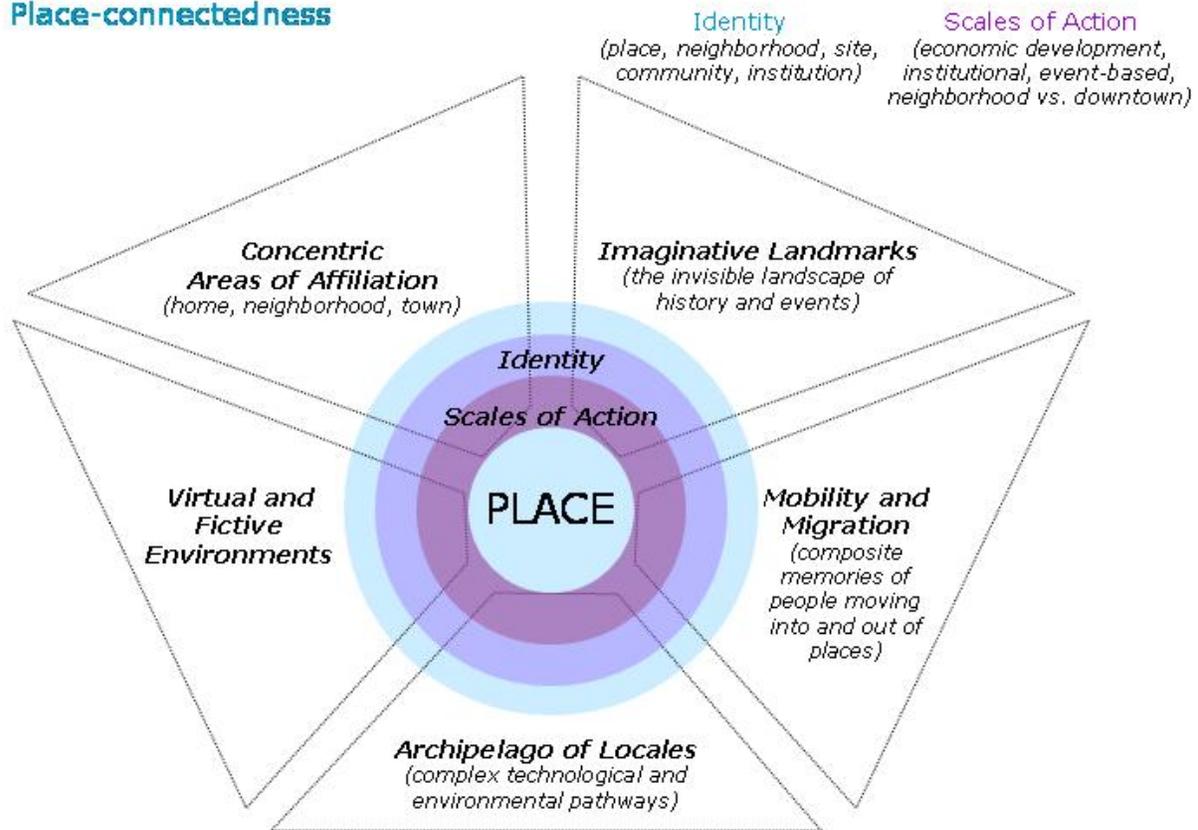


Figure 4

Source: Derived from Lawrence Buell (2001), "Writing for an Endangered World," Cambridge, MA, Belknap Press.

tourism interests. As illustrated in Figure 4, the purpose is not to shoehorn these narratives into Buell's five dimensions but to use this framework to understand overlapping perceptions of *identity* and how different *scales of action* advance institutional and community claims to placemaking in Roanoke.

4. Roanoke: A Case Study of Placemaking



Figure 5
The Art Museum of Western Virginia under construction in March 2007.
Source: Photograph by the author

The Art Museum of Western Virginia

The Art Museum of Western Virginia (AMWV), currently located in Center in the Square, is building a new \$66 million facility on a site where the railroad meets Williamson Road, a main entry point to the City from the north. The 81,000 square foot facility is conceived by private donors and city officials as a regional museum that will project a national and even international identity for the city (G. Bingham, personal interview, 2/15/07). Los Angeles-based architect Randall Stout, a protégé of Frank Gehry, designed the “dramatic composition of flowing, layered forms in steel, patinated zinc and high performance glass paying sculptural tribute to the famous mountains that provide the city's backdrop and shape its spirit” (AMWV 2006). As with many large-scale urban projects, the charismatic effect of the structure itself seems to be defining the current narrative of placemaking for the downtown (Zukin 1995).

Georganne Bingham, Executive Director for the AMWV, has described her first impressions of the project:

After the model was complete, when I saw that building, I thought that if this conservative, blue collar town has the leaders in it that are bold enough to put a building like this in western Virginia where there's not another building like it in the southeast, something was happening here... and I had this sense that I was supposed to be part of it (G. Bingham, personal interview, 2/15/07).

The art museum design has been described as a “signature building,” “iconic” and “symbolic,” although there is little to suggest that people yet see beyond the architecture to identify it with Roanoke as a place or to recognize it as contextual to the site (B. Townsend, personal interview, 2/23/07; T. McKeon, personal interview, 2/16/07). In part, this fact may be related to the scale of the project. For the time being, the AMWV is strongly identified with its private donor base and the City's desire to stimulate economic activity in the downtown. The facility is now under construction and while the steel girders define it structurally, the broader impact of the institution on community outreach, tourism and economic development remains to be seen. Bingham describes this impact:

When we do open this building in 2008, for a short period of time, the international world is going to be looking at this town. And the press is going to be coming in from all over the country...that's going to happen, it just happens with a building, the press follows architecture...and if their impressions aren't positive, they're going to say that. So we have *one* chance to do it right in Roanoke (G. Bingham, personal interview, 2/15/07).

Examples of similar cultural development projects exist across the country. Davenport, Iowa, a city of comparable size, opened the new Figge Art Museum in August 2005 on the banks of the Mississippi River, with a 100,000 square foot facility designed by Herbert Lewis Kruse of Blunck Architecture (Figge Art Museum, 2006). In 2000, the Iowa General Assembly passed the Vision Iowa Program (VIP) Act authorizing up to \$300 million in bonds to fund construction projects related to recreation, education, entertainment and cultural activities. VIP was

established to receive \$15 million per year for 20 years from gambling receipts to pay the debt service on the bonds (Iowa Legislative Fiscal Bureau, 2000). The City of Davenport submitted a proposal to Vision Iowa in 2001 for “River Renaissance on the Mississippi,” an economic development strategy designed to draw visitors back to the city’s riverfront. The Figge Art Museum became a primary component of this broader strategy when the museum, formerly called the Davenport Museum of Art, was considering expansion of its existing facility. A strategic move to Davenport’s downtown rendered the museum project eligible for funding as part of “River Renaissance” and provided an opportunity to link the project with other riverfront initiatives. According to the Travel Industry Association of America, cultural tourism grew 13 percent in 2004 and is the fastest-growing market opportunity in the U.S. (AMWV, 2005). Cities worldwide have taken note that leveraging public funds with private development interests and the donor base of cultural institutions can reap substantial tourism benefits for entire regions.

The City of Roanoke recognized the potential economic benefits of a landmark cultural attraction to its downtown and committed to the AMWV project early by donating the land for the museum site and pledging \$4 million in bricks-and-mortar funding over various phases of construction (N. Harris, personal interview, 4/4/06). Even with this level of support, the AMWV project has been largely donor-driven rather than an integral component of a municipally-driven development strategy as in Davenport. Susan Clarke (1998) argues that increased mobility of capital, globalization, and economic restructuring has placed smaller municipalities at a disadvantage in negotiating for the kind of transformative development seen as necessary for downtown revitalization. Still, Clarke suggests that this creates a niche opportunity for more local development activism and may prompt changes in the roles and orientations of local officials. Indeed, Bingham believes that the AMWV project has forced city officials and private

developers to think differently about the downtown (G. Bingham, personal interview, 2/15/07). She cites the trend in downtown living that has developed in Roanoke gradually over the past several years (with strong City encouragement) as young professionals, empty nesters and retirees move in to renovated condominiums and converted lofts (Cox 2006).

Although the impact of the new facility on downtown development has been factored into its long-range planning, the City of Roanoke's financial commitment has remained constant even as the project scope increased from an initially projected \$46 million to \$66 million, (N. Harris, personal interview, 4/4/06). Further, in the context of the AMWV project, the City has not availed itself of traditional redevelopment tools for leveraging federal monies, such as Community Development Block grants or heritage conservation funding, although the prospect of creating an assets district funded by a 1% county or state sales tax has been suggested as a potential future strategy (J. Williamson, personal interview, 4/7/2006). This implies that the burden remains on the AMWV as an institution to marshal the necessary resources, through strategic partnerships, to maintain momentum for the capital project, although Roanoke's efforts to brand and market the downtown as well as implementation of the 2006 City Market District Plan may well contribute to the community's attractiveness and clear identity as a tourist destination.

According to Brian Townsend, Director of Planning and Economic Development for the City of Roanoke, specific sites represent numerous layers of actions and activities reflecting various timeframes in the evolution of an urban center. This layering tends to be dynamic and frequent in urban settings, particularly in downtown districts where several generations of reuse and redevelopment are common:

As styles change and tastes change, in terms of individual buildings, our job is to make sure that the conversation of place between the buildings, and therefore the

people in the buildings, is maintained. Without that, we have great examples in cities all across our country where that conversation wasn't allowed to be maintained...streetscapes become deadened, the buildings have less adaptability and you begin to see that they become one-trick ponies and can't survive the evolution that happens in cities (B. Townsend, personal interview, 2/23/07).

The museum site is bordered by railroad tracks and surrounded by several historic buildings in the City Market district that are rooted in context. Yet, the history and memory infused on this site seems to carry little baggage as a downtown location where there is no disruption of community, and where an amenity of this nature is welcomed by neighboring shops and restaurants seeking increased activity. Some disagreed with the downtown placement, stating that the architecture would be appreciated more fully "in an open setting where its beauty could be seen" (E. Bethel and H. Davis, personal interview, 3/6/07). City-owned park land on Mill Mountain, the scenic overlook that hosts Roanoke's signature neon star and the Mill Mountain Zoo, had been suggested by several donors as a viable alternative before the city stepped up with its proffer of land. In the context of placemaking, site functions as a central organizing principle while at the same time it can disappear from analytical purview unless deeply contested (Gupta and Ferguson 1992). Site is traditionally identified by the built environment and either defined by layers of history and memory or, as with the AMWV, it serves as a more neutral backdrop for reinvention at a different scale.

The multiple dimensions of place identity tend to circle back on each other through meta-narratives mediated by arts and culture. With the 1999 opening of architect Frank Gehry's Guggenheim Museum in Bilbao, Spain, the concept of image identity reconstruction through the arts was brought to the attention of city planners worldwide (Zukin 1995; Gospodini 2002). Gehry's project transformed an underused industrial area into a magnet for tourism through a large-scale spectacle of avant-garde design. Soon thereafter, cultural institutions became

recognized as more than community anchors and were identified by city governments as key drivers for economic development (Bunnell 2002; Gospodini 2002). Such transformative projects came to be seen by many commentators as key attractions for the creative class who, beyond cultural amenities, crave authenticity and place distinctiveness (Florida 2002). In this context, Allen Scott's (2000) discussion of place-bound culture in cities, and the symbolic content generated by creative industries, becomes a useful reminder that authenticity is a moving target. According to Sharon Zukin (1995), this symbolic economy is generated by attempts to imprint a new place identity on cities by financing innovative design of cultural complexes with little regard for local heritage. While packaged culture runs the risk of losing its origins in translation, the nature of symbolically iconographic buildings does not seem to allow planners and architects to assure authenticity nor are its origins always well understood.

The institutional identity of the AMWV and its community outreach imperatives are overshadowed by its potential impact in the region and beyond as a projection of Roanoke's identity as a city. To what degree is the museum used as a mechanism for this identity construction rather than a reflection of local culture? Some suggest that museums as privatized sites tend to hold themselves separate from the public, political sphere; yet, many assume transformative roles in the cityscape through the exercise of capital or by mediating place-based, public conversations (Luke 2002; Martinon 2006; Preziosi 2006). Individuals critical of the AMWV project believe that resources will gravitate toward the museum at the expense of smaller arts organizations struggling to survive (A. Korchalis, personal interview, 2/28/07). But few openly contest the museum's iconic identity and all interviewed for this analysis recognized its potential to draw national interest. The sheer scale of the project sets the AMWV apart from other development initiatives in the city as well as other cultural institutions. Tom McKeon,

Executive Director of the Roanoke Higher Education Center and chair of the education committee for the AMWV, suggests that the museum needs to design its programming to overcome the stereotyped profile of a privately-funded project:

Art museums do tend to have an elitist reputation for the wine and brie set that contribute a lot of money to it...[but] local people will come to see this facility, the architecture will stand out. We're going to program it to make it warm, inviting, friendly and interesting to people across the board (T. McKeon, personal interview, 2/16/07).

McKeon and Bingham see the visibility of the project as a way to make these community connections through educational outreach, with a balance of exhibits that celebrate the richness of regional arts and culture while maintaining credibility in the international art world. Bingham cites the success of the museum's 2006 exhibit "Car Crazy" that traced the evolution and impact of cars, racing, and artistic styles from the 1920s to the 1960s, including objects showcasing regional automobile history and design as a local example of this sort of effort. To the extent that exhibits and outreach play a role in shaping identity, the museum has an opportunity to reshape its institutional identity as well:

We've been challenged to think of how to plan for underserved people in an elitist art museum world...[and] this museum was the most elite of all when I got here. They started out with five-hundred members fifty-four years ago, they had five-hundred members when I got here and they were all living in south Roanoke (G. Bingham, personal interview, 2/15/07).

McKeon remarks that he has seen a transition over the past several years where a diverse mix of young professionals are moving into leadership roles traditionally held by a long-standing power structure in Roanoke. William Penn, a musician and community leader who chaired the task force to renovate the Dumas Center for Artistic and Cultural Development on Henry Street, describes some of these changes:

I see more racial interaction than when I first came here. I see more people of color involved on boards, in politics, in leadership positions in industry, and I

think that's a very good sign of growth...though it's still a bit cliquish, even across race lines within the black community (W. Penn, personal interview, 3/22/07).

To bridge the divide that has been widened by the scale of the AMWV project, Bingham is hopeful that outreach and partnership will extend to other cultural institutions in the city.

“Celebration and Vision: The Hewitt Collection of African American Art” highlighted fifty-seven works by twenty notable African American artists in 2006, and the AMWV engaged members on the board of the Harrison Museum of African American Culture in planning for that exhibit (G. Bingham, personal interview, 2/15/07). Continued alliance between the Harrison Museum and the AMWV may well serve both institutions positively.

Established in 1985, the Harrison Museum was an integral part of a community effort to save the Harrison School, a national historic landmark that opened in 1917 as the first public high school for African Americans in southwest Virginia. The school was once the center of the neighborhood originally called Northwest that is now Harrison and Gainsboro. Northwest was defined by a dense grid of homes, churches, schools and businesses that were the fabric of a segregated African American community. By the early 1980s, Gainsboro along with the adjacent neighborhoods of Northeast and Kimball, had suffered tremendously from several waves of urban renewal in the 1960s and 1970s that erased much of their original tapestry. Wanda Alston, Museum Manager, describes the museum's impact in the neighborhood:

The [Harrison] museum came around at the right time, maybe not as early as it should have, but it plays an important role in the Roanoke Valley and in this part of the state...we have a lot of community groups that use the museum as a gathering place and we'd like to see expanded outreach to fulfill our educational role in the community, to preserve the history of the African American culture here since some of that is not very visible to the overall community (W. Alston, personal interview, 3/21/07).

The Harrison Museum has announced plans to move from its neighborhood location to Center in the Square in the space to be vacated by the AMWV when its new facility opens in 2008 (Flowers 2006). William Penn is optimistic about the increased visibility for the Harrison Museum that this possibility represents:

This move will be good for them because their location now is not in the mainstream of things, to get to it is an effort...and it will help the cause of black history because it's more readily available to people (W. Penn, personal interview, 3/22/07).

Some residents oppose the museum's pending move to the downtown, arguing that its move constitutes the "loss" of an "anchor for the black community" (Eaton 2006). But the challenge of sustaining the museum in a fragmented neighborhood where foot traffic is sparse, and trying to grow as an institution, seems to demand more visibility and an opportunity to link with other cultural activity in the city. Gainsboro resident Evelyn Bethel captured this dilemma:

At one meeting, the [museum] director was asking the city manager for help writing grants. She said "you need to charge them something"...and Miss Bolden said that she wouldn't charge kids coming in to the museum. She told two kids that they had to have shoes and shirt to come in, so one boy went in and came out and said "you've got to go in and *see* this" and gave his friend his shoes. It's the hub of the community. And the city manager said "well if you stay here you're going to suffer the consequences" (E. Bethel and H. Davis, personal interview, 3/6/07).

The museum's identity as a neighborhood center in an historic building lends it credibility as storyteller and cultural mediator, using the power of its exhibits to dignify social and cultural claims in the context of place. It might be argued that a museum embedded in a neighborhood has a better chance of reflecting local identities and narratives through programs and activities that involve ongoing community engagement. As an example, the National Museum of Mexican Art in Chicago (formerly the Mexican Fine Arts Center Museum) began in 1987 as a community cultural center for Mexican immigrants residing in the city's neighborhood

of Pilsen/Little Village where it is located. Gabriel Villa, Youth Programs Coordinator, stresses the museum's importance to the Pilsen/Little Village community and suggests that its strength derives from its accessibility (G. Villa, personal interview, 11/17/06). The presence of the museum in the neighborhood is evident not just in the physical space it occupies, but in street murals scattered on the sides of buildings and in youth programs fostering cultural identity through family oral histories. Beyond the museum's place in the everyday life of Chicago's Mexican-American community is a reflected cultural identity that extends across physical boundaries and spaces of representation. Some have argued that today's museums are venues where many key cultural realities are first defined through processes that bring the personal into the political sphere (Luke 2002; Martinon 2002). Villa implies that the National Museum of Mexican Art would not function the same way if it were transplanted outside the neighborhood of Pilsen (G. Villa, personal interview, 11/17/06). At the same time, the museum uses engagement at the neighborhood level as a springboard for dialogue about a national identity for Mexican-American communities (E. Gonzales, personal interview, 11/17/06).

Museums of art, culture and heritage are understood, in part, as managers of collective memory, curators of representation and mediators of cultural discourse (Luke 2006; Martinon 2006; Preziosi 2006). While these descriptions imply some degree of stewardship and public responsibility, they also place museums at the heart of situated conversations on everyday life. Museums have great potential to transform from fixed, iconic structures to open forums that shape themselves around transgressive cultural realities. Set against Lawrence Buell's five dimensions of place-connectedness, the AMWV and the Harrison Museum are emblematic of the ways in which cultural imagination can shape place identity, either through dynamic representation or through a web of narratives that depict the social landscape.

Henry Street

In spring 2006, the Harrison Museum launched an exhibit designed by Roanoke artist Charlene Graves on the rich history of Henry Street (now called First Street), a once vital center of African American commerce and culture that has become a symbol of the ill effects of urban renewal and the incremental deterioration of Gainsboro. “Henry Street Live” reconstructed a narrative spanning nine decades on the street, known by former residents as “the Yard,” where only two buildings remain standing today (Davis 1992). The exhibit’s timeline showed a progression of businesses, theatres, hotels, restaurants and barber shops that have gradually disappeared, leaving behind memories of place. Oral histories and photographs depict sadness over something lost; the African-American diaspora represented against a backdrop of the street as we know it today. Over the years, Henry Street has been at the center of numerous failed revitalization strategies devised by city planners and private developers alike who recognized its



Figure 6

The former Dumas Hotel (left) and the former Strand Theatre (right) are the only two original structures remaining on Henry Street, September 2006.

Source: Photograph by the author.

proximity to downtown and hoped to revive a once lively music scene that hosted Duke Ellington, Cab Calloway and Count Basie, among others (Henry Street Live 2006). Empty of all but two of its original buildings, Henry Street is as much a privileged place of memory as it is contested ground. Recently, several key actions within the community catalyzed a movement to reclaim these historic structures in order to bring Henry Street back to life. Community agency Total Action Against Poverty (TAP) renovated the former Dumas Hotel and opened it anew in November 2006 as the Dumas Center for Artistic and Cultural Development, providing office and performance space to several nonprofit groups including Opera Roanoke, the Downtown Music Lab, the Dumas Drama Guild, the Northwest Jazz Band and the YOYO players (Youth on the Yard Outreach), a theatre-based youth development program (W. Penn, personal interview, 3/22/07). Directly across the street from the Dumas, the former Strand Theatre is under renovation to become the Claude Moore Education Complex, a culinary arts program developed through a partnership between the Roanoke Higher Education Center and Virginia Western Community College (RHEC 2006). These two facilities are linked to the downtown by a bridge that is currently being restored and will be (re)dedicated as the Martin Luther King, Jr. Memorial Bridge (Flowers 2005).

A narrative of place unfolds in the context of particular actions within an urban area. At the same time, that narrative, in concert with the context that ideally both spawned and defined it, determines a community's dominant social themes. The two central threads woven into the collective impressions of the individuals and institutions that are part of this study speak of renewal. *Urban revitalization* describes the cultural development efforts currently underway in Roanoke that includes preservation of historic architecture, as with the two sites on Henry Street, and rearticulated notions of place through the construction of the new AMWV. On the other

hand, *urban renewal* speaks to the heavy history of past mistakes that are now indelible marks on many landscapes through highways and byways, sites of resistance and marginalized neighborhoods (Schneekloth and Shibley 1995; Fullilove 2005). The contrast between the downtown City Market district and the area around Henry Street is striking to any newcomer. The dense assemblage of historic buildings in the downtown gives way to a fragmented neighborhood defined by a patchwork of vacant lots. Gainsboro resident Evelyn Bethel heard it described by one participant in a public meeting as “one side looking like heaven and the other side looking like hell” (E. Bethel and H. Davis, personal interview, 3/6/07). Bethel organized the Historic Gainsboro Preservation District, Inc. in the early 1990s when she returned to Roanoke to settle in the neighborhood where she grew up. At that time City planners had proposed a realignment of Wells Avenue behind the Hotel Roanoke that would have wiped out several blocks of residential homes near Henry Street that were still maintaining a foothold in the neighborhood. Bethel’s group was able to persuade the City simply to widen and not realign the road. Nonetheless, some historic homes were lost and she considers it a small victory in light of recent events:

Most people realize that urban renewal was destructive, but they don’t know that this march of destruction and demolition is continuing. People are angry and upset, they see it slipping away. Now they want to take the tiny bit that’s left on Henry Street (E. Bethel and H. Davis, personal interview, 3/6/07).

Bethel refers to a \$15 million Social Security building that is now proposed by the Roanoke Neighborhood Redevelopment Corporation (RNDC) for the site adjacent to the Dumas Center on Henry Street (Flowers 2006). Over the years RNDC, a non-profit, minority-led organization has collaborated with the City and the Roanoke Redevelopment and Housing Authority to facilitate development in Gainsboro on land that was taken through eminent domain. Its first proposal, Crew Suites, was an office and retail development that has yet to be implemented. The Social

Security building, seen as an opportunity to anchor the revitalization on Henry Street and to funnel a share of the federal government's rent back into the community, is described by RNDC board chairman Charles Price as "the pebble that hits the pond and has many ripple effects" (Flowers 2006). Bethel opposes the project and, along with her sister Helen E. Davis, consistently attends public meetings to make sure that a critical voice is heard. Brian Townsend asserts that the Social Security building is seen as a way to show positive new investment in the area to build on current activity with the Dumas Center and the Claude Moore Education Complex. Townsend admits that city planners at the time were short-sighted when they chose to disrupt the street grid with a new 2nd Street bridge that essentially bypassed the heart of the neighborhood on Henry Street: "Each time something happened in that neighborhood, it didn't build on the context that was there" (B. Townsend, personal interview, 2/23/07). The City's strategy in recent years has been to identify institutional uses for what little context is left on Henry Street. Annie Korchalis, a former Roanoke city planner, is a community activist who works with the Virginia Organizing Project (VOP). She describes the public process surrounding the site:

There's one group of stakeholders who will never agree to any compromise, the historically minded folks who want to preserve what's there. Then there are some folks who are willing to make some compromise...maybe a Martin Luther King Jr. park...some storefront windows that are historical. The city's position is to bulldoze and build. They don't understand the concept of institutionalized racism...they don't see this as more urban renewal which is what it is (A. Korchalis, personal interview, 2/28/07).

Unlike the AMWV site downtown, the land on Henry Street has a history that is carried forward by strong place memories of loss and disrespect for a community that has been disrupted. The Social Security building is seen by many as a symbol of that lack of respect:

In an effort to soothe, trick, entice us into accepting that building, it's been proposed that they have a sidewalk museum...you know, those things you see in

shopping malls, they plan to put those on Henry Street. They would put something in the window back there about our black history (E. Bethel and H. Davis, personal interview, 3/6/07).

Bethel cites similar gestures to appeal to residents with historical markers or plaques as placeholders for the past, including several stone walls with signage that identified “Historic Gainsboro” as part of Roanoke’s project to widen Wells Avenue. Ironically, representatives of the Historic Gainsboro Preservation District was never involved in the design or placement of the walls, nor do residents view the walls as reflecting the culture of the community in any way:

They would never know from that wall that this was the first historic neighborhood in Roanoke. They would never know from that wall that Gainsboro was chartered before the City of Roanoke was chartered (E. Bethel and H. Davis, personal interview, 3/6/07).

The mobility of individuals and the broad accessibility of cultural products and practices contribute to a profound sense that cultures have lost their need to be moored in specific places. The individualistic claims of multiculturalism also contribute to this erosion of cultural distinctiveness, described by Appadurai as a “corrosion of context” (1996, 198). Marshall McLuhan (1996) has suggested that the immediacy and amplification of culture consumption obscures the assumptions behind mediation. How do we know what is inherently local? All culture is blended and contextual, but only time tells us what is worth remembering or preserving as our own. Ray Suarez (1999), former host of *Talk of the Nation* on National Public Radio, warns against “the sleight of mind” that he observed while interviewing community members about the South Shore neighborhood of Chicago. He saw residents construct stories of a lost golden age that not only trivialized the complexity of the old neighborhood, but also implied that it was an irretrievable gem. Brian Townsend suggests that the burden of history often prevents planners and individual communities from reaching consensus on how to move forward:

There are a lot of reasons why it can't survive the way it did 70 years ago. In many ways, Henry Street and Gainsboro were the creations of a segregated society, good, bad or indifferent. The vibrancy that was created by necessity became less important. The breaking down of segregation was a great social victory for this country, but ironically it had impacts that people didn't anticipate. So can you weave this back into something, celebrate their history, recognize what little is left physically? You can't recreate it like Disneyland, that's not organic, and you can't force it to happen (B. Townsend, personal interview, 2/23/07).

Placemaking practice runs the risk of pandering to nostalgia, acting as a locking mechanism that reinforces sentimental interpretations of place and privileges local identity at the expense of innovation and future vision on behalf of a community. At the same time, the processes that shape the urban environment are often glacial in pace. Well-conceived plans for development that streamline this process may appeal to city planners but can fail to dignify community claims to place:

We're not asking to go back to the previous quilt, we know you can't go back there. We're not asking them to do anything for us, just give us the opportunity. All this time, they could have had businesses on Henry Street. But it seems that the city administration deliberately left it idle after it was taken through eminent domain (E. Bethel and H. Davis, personal interview, 3/6/07).

Tom McKeon doesn't believe that Gainsboro residents are asking for reparations but rather seeking institutional support for the elements that hold a community together such as affordable housing. As placemaking strategies, the reclaimed historic buildings on Henry Street are seen as positive steps toward a revitalization that is context-sensitive. Beyond the private and institutional value of preservation, the policy of preservation focuses public opinion on Henry Street's affirmative qualities rather than its pathologies of loss and decline (Campbell 2002). The former Strand Theatre, previously known as the Lincoln Theatre and subsequently the Ebony Club, is under renovation and is scheduled to open as the Claude Moore Education Complex in Fall 2007. Historic tax credits were leveraged with foundation funding for the \$5 million project

to renovate the theatre and adjacent retail space for a culinary arts program offering an Associate of Arts degree through Virginia Western Community College. Tom McKeon describes the role of the Roanoke Higher Education Center (RHEC) as institutional partner in the project:

I don't know that we're really a driver; we're more of an anchor of positive change for the community. We felt that the [RHEC] project was a major shot in the arm for the city, for the region, but also for the neighborhood, and I think these other buildings will do the same thing. They were dilapidated and yet had some historical value, and they particularly had historical and social value for the Gainsboro community (Tom McKeon, personal interview, 2/16/07).

McKeon promotes the potential for the building to become a lively addition to Henry Street, with teaching kitchens in full view from the sidewalk through large plate-glass windows. RHEC itself was established in 2000 through historic tax credits in Norfolk and Western's former headquarters, and offers workforce training programs as well as undergraduate and graduate level programs of study through partner institutions that include Virginia Tech, the University of Virginia and the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, among others. RHEC has a strong presence and substantial footprint in Gainsboro. McKeon stresses that he has tried to support community concerns by participating in various planning processes with neighborhood groups without stepping too far into an advocacy role:

I've always gone to those associations with information on any new projects to get letters of support and so forth. In my opinion, they spend more time fighting tooth and nail than figuring out how to make some things happen. It's a vicious circle where city government sees them as hurdles rather than groups to be listened to and worked with. If they have that attitude then anything that neighborhood groups do is seen as a barrier (T. McKeon, personal interview, 2/16/07).

Site-specific placemaking strategies gain momentum through the galvanizing effects of capital investment but it is far too easy to overlook, intentionally or otherwise, the everyday layers underneath. Space itself is often perceived as "a neutral grid on which cultural difference, historical memory, and societal organization are inscribed" (Gupta and Ferguson 2006). Even

when would-be place-makers evidence sensitivity to past definitions of place and meaning, efforts to centralize, organize, name and institutionalize may rekindle old conflicts or spark new ones. Overlapping flows of culture and ethnicity have profound effects on conceptual boundaries, many of which are anchored in strong identities at the scale of neighborhoods and streets (Massey 1995; Appadurai 1996).

Definitions of locality and the uniqueness of place often rely on spatial boundaries as common markers. Neighborhoods and districts are distinguished from each other by street grids; regions are defined by geographic features. Planning tools such as overlay districts and enterprise zones reinforce the notion that neighborhoods, cities and regions can easily be defined and represented accurately on a map. One need only observe the effects of urban renewal on numerous cities across the country, most notably highways slicing through neighborhoods, to understand the impact of maps without meaning behind them (Zukin 1995; Fullilove 2005).¹ Lynda Schneekloth and Robert Shibley (1995) have explored boundary seeking and protecting as manifestations of a cultural phenomenon that establishes who is legally responsible for various actions through several in-depth case studies on placemaking practices across the country. They argue that boundaries created by professional planners to separate and distinguish various forms of placemaking often actually work against the knowledge of place and the grounded work of placemaking by individuals and community entities:

Placemaking happens in one-time events (designing a downtown plan, landscaping a park) and it is also repetitive, continuous and, like housework, invisible unless poorly done (Schneekloth and Shibley 1995, 191).

Two of the case studies in their 1995 book chronicled their community-building efforts in the 1980s with the First Baptist Church in Gainsboro, seeking to rebuild after a devastating fire, and

¹ Roanoke's I-581 divides the once-cohesive neighborhood of Northeast that was destroyed by two waves of urban renewal; the Commonwealth project in 1955 and the Kimball project in 1968.

the Roanoke Neighborhood Partnership that became a successful bridge between neighborhoods, city government, nonprofit agencies and the private sector (Schneekloth and Shibley 1995).

These analyses suggest that dynamic community actions and events shape a cultural reality that deepens the inquiry of placemaking and stimulates the production of space through social interaction (Harvey 1993). A musical in the early 1990s called “Henry Street!” was performed at Mill Mountain Theatre with all local talent and generated tremendous interest in a revitalization of Henry Street. Written by the late Greta Evans, a community activist and television personality, and co-directed by William Penn, the musical set in motion a series of actions that resulted in the \$4.1 million project by Total Action Against Poverty (TAP) to renovate the 1917 Dumas Hotel as the Dumas Center for Artistic and Cultural Development. Penn describes the impact of the musical:

It gave a real nice voice to the community, an awareness of the talent in the Roanoke Valley. And it stirred up interest in the Dumas. After TAP bought the building, a commission was formed with a cross-section of everybody in Roanoke, all of the citizens, to figure out what to do with it (W. Penn, personal interview, 3/22/07).

Noel C. Taylor, Mayor of Roanoke at the time, had launched a campaign in the late 1980s to save Henry Street and his administration had worked to the move these interests forward on behalf of the city with a plan for future development as a dining and entertainment district. TAP purchased the Dumas Hotel in the early 1990s and, to qualify for historic tax credits that would enable a full restoration, added a Head Start kitchen with roughly \$800,000 in grants to reclaim the first floor which was used initially as a meeting place for community organizations and receptions, as well as small performances by the Dumas Drama Guild, a multi-cultural theatre troupe (W. Penn, personal interview, 3/22/07). Shortly after, Penn was asked to be chairman of

the task force to determine future use for the building and develop a plan for moving forward with renovation.

Ironically, gaining support for the Dumas Center within the African American population in Roanoke was a struggle. As Penn admits, marketing efforts “almost had to sell the Dumas to the Black community.” While the task force was working to generate enthusiasm for the project, several transitions in the 1990s with city government administration stalled initial development plans for Henry Street and contributed to ill feelings within the community:

Before Bob Herbert retired as City Manager [in 1999], he came over and walked the neighborhood with us...they were talking about closing the library and we told him the history of the library, and he understood and helped us save it. Now every time our organizations try to do something positive, to build on what's left, along come the big arms of the city with another plan to destroy it (E. Bethel and H. Davis, personal interview, 3/6/07).

Historic Gainsboro Preservation District secured national and state historic designation for the Gainsboro Public Library, a cultural oasis in the community and described by Bethel as a stabilizing force for schoolchildren and residents. The library is bordered by Gainsboro Road which was widened to four lanes in the late 1980s when the 2nd Street Bridge was added and now serves to move traffic quickly through the neighborhood. This road interrupts the original street grid and essentially bypasses Henry Street, dividing many residential homes in the neighborhood from safe access to the library. A comprehensive Gainsboro Neighborhood Plan had been developed through a steering committee chaired by Bethel and adopted by the city in 2003. The plan recognized the city's 1997 plan “Outlook Roanoke” that included a Henry Street Initiative to redevelop the area as a village center with shops, restaurants and offices; however, the buildings on Henry Street remained empty and idle for years in the wake of these and other failed plans. Annie Korchalis describes this outcome in the context of the proposed Social Security building:

We do a lot of work as citizens on community plans but they don't carry the weight of law. They had an historic district overlay in Gainsboro and for reasons of economic drive in both instances, city and county, they tossed it to the wind and said "it's not working fast enough, we're going to put something else in." It flies right in the face of the original Historic Gainsboro plan (A. Korchalis, personal interview, 2/28/07).

The story of the Dumas Center is one of rebirth, consensus building, partnership and stewardship. As with the Claude Moore Education Complex, the renovation of the Dumas Center is a placemaking strategy that saw its way forward through strong institutional and stakeholder support rather than city-wide backing. Brian Townsend remains cautiously optimistic, although he contends that there may not be enough critical mass on Henry Street and within the surrounding neighborhood to support a commerce center consistent with the plan:

The Martin Luther King, Jr. Bridge will be important symbolically...this neighborhood is an icon for the black community. But to build it back, no one project is going to do that. The institutions there are "newbies" and their ability to be standard bearers is less (B. Townsend, personal interview, 2/23/07).

Townsend describes the City's role as the standard bearer to advance a community vision that reflects Roanoke as a whole. Development projects, when economically feasible and well-conceived, may operate like "flypaper" to attract other activity around them (B. Townsend, personal interview, 2/23/07; T. McKeon, personal interview, 2/16/07).

A speech at the opening ceremony of the Dumas Center in November 2006 referenced Ezekiel's prophecy of the valley of the dry bones:

He spoke of the bones beginning to rattle, to come together, of sinews forming, and flesh and blood growing. He told of a great army emerging as a symbol of the community coming together to rebuild itself.²

² Based on field notes taken by the author on November 4, 2006, this passage is an excerpt from Mark Warren's book, *Dry Bones Rattling*, which chronicles the story of the Texas Industrial Areas Foundation (IAF), an interfaith and multiracial network of community organizers (2001, 3). The name of the individual who delivered the speech at the Dumas Center opening has not been verified.

Rebuilding takes time. Overall, it took roughly 15 years to design and implement a plan for the Dumas Center following Mayor Taylor’s call for action. During the planning process Penn urged Ted Edlich, President of TAP, to begin work on the project quickly to demonstrate to the community that something was going to happen and to build their trust over time. While TAP owns and manages the building, the Dumas Center’s identity will be shaped by the individual arts and cultural groups running their programs and events through the space. Penn asserts that it will be an anchor and catalyst for the community:

Although segregation was not a pretty thing, life went on and people still had their pride. The Dumas Center will be the star building or flagship for this place developing more, and if it starts from the right place, with the right attitude...get everybody involved so it’s not just a black place or a white place, I think that will be a good thing (W. Penn, personal interview, 3/22/07).

A Common Narrative

“Place” is one of the trickiest words in the English language, a suitcase so overfilled one can never shut the lid (Hayden 1995, 15).

A Hindu parable tells of six blind men who touch different parts of an elephant’s body and argue over their individual impressions—a wall, a spear, a snake, a tree, a fan, a rope—all failing to describe it as a whole.³ The truth in any given situation lies as much in each perception or judgment as in the discourse that links them, so perhaps it isn’t useful or even relevant to attempt to describe place as a whole. If there is a common narrative of place in the context of these cultural development projects, it centers on efforts to secure a quality of life for two communities in Roanoke, black and white, coming together in a city that still feels largely segregated. There are many ways to extend the conversation of place across these boundaries to address

³ Although the original source of the parable is debated, several versions include the well-known poem by John Godfrey Saxe “Six Blind Men and an Elephant” and A.J. Arberry’s translation of the Persian poet Maulana Jalāl al-Dīn Rūmī. (1961). *Tales from the Masnavi*. London: Allen and Unwin.

placemaking as a shared practice; by preserving the heritage of an African American streetscape, by renovating historic buildings for arts, culture and education, or by producing events such as the Harrison Museum's annual "Henry Street Festival" in Elmwood Park, the Blue Ridge Blues & BBQ Festival staged last summer on Henry Street, or the downtown arts festival planned for the city's 125th anniversary celebration. Quality of life seems to function differently for each individual through reaffirming connectivity with other individuals, neighborhoods, institutions and buildings in the cityscape. For a neighborhood, the continual patterns of social exchange reinforce a community's identity through transgressive activities that bring people together over contested ground, history or revitalization. For a downtown pinning its hopes on a cultural icon, these patterns of exchange are even more important to address in the reinvention of a place identity. Perceptions of place grounded in any one dimension limit the possibilities for this exchange (Buell 2001). On Henry Street, the invisible landscape of history and memory can seem to get in the way of positive, structural change that might benefit the community. In the downtown, structure and symbology can appear to override the necessity for place-based exchange that serves as connective tissue.

5. Conclusions

Historian and architect Dolores Hayden (1995), through her collaborative work with planners and artists in various ethnic neighborhoods in Los Angeles, has addressed the ways in which public memory and everyday practice inform placemaking:

The politics of identity – however that may be defined around gender or race or neighborhood – are an inescapable and important aspect of dealing with the urban built environment, from the perspectives of public history, urban preservation, and urban design (Hayden 1995, 7).

Hayden's use of public history to shape urban preservation and public art projects around community identity challenged the premise of image repackaging by which cities attempt to reinvent themselves on the basis of claims and symbols not rooted in the industries and economic activities that originally defined them (Scott 2000). While criticized for overlooking the realities of urban politics, Jane Jacobs (1993 [1961]) also recognized that the community cultural claims embedded in the practices of daily life contribute to its residents' sense of place (Lynch 1960; De Certeau 1984). Henri Lefebvre's (1984) distribution of experienced, conceptualized and lived space offered a deeper understanding of social matrices and how communities come together to influence place identity. When coupled with Harvey's (2006) expression of absolute, relative and relational space-time, this perspective suggests that place is contextual and relative to social action so that the cultural and historical specificity of a place becomes sustained by reaffirming structures that are as much social as geographic. Within individual communities, these structures may take the form of family, religion, schools, property or nearly infinite combinations of these that manifest themselves in social gatherings and community action. Museums and cultural institutions seek to mediate and represent collective conversations about place that, in some sense, embody these claims. Few of these institutions, however, recognize their potential to bridge competing claims to place identity or to counter the deeply corrosive effects of placemaking on many local cultures (Massey 1995; Zukin 1995; Scott 2000).

This study suggests that the public language of placemaking fails to represent the true complexities of place and merely offers a thin veneer in its conception of place identity. This intricacy can be seen through the concentric circles of affiliation between individuals and institutions that socially construct place and influence the built environment. The case descriptions focused on two central questions:

Does the economic scale of cultural development and its scope in the context of the built environment advance an institution's claims to placemaking and its impact on local identity (re)construction?

The scale of the AMWV as a highly visible, private project seems to advance its claim as a primary placemaking strategy by showcasing its iconic impact in the region and beyond as a projection of Roanoke's identity as a city. At the same time, this also seems to overshadow the museum's institutional identity that, until the AMWV opens its doors in 2008 and perhaps for some time thereafter, may be largely defined by the narrative of its architecture and patronage. How will this narrative evolve and will it dissolve or symbolically reinforce the racial divisions that continue to undermine Roanoke as a city? An emerging role of art is to undercut formal philosophy with the vernacular, to privilege ordinary practice and individual expressions of identity that don't conform to social archetypes (Hayden 1997; Jensen 2002). The museum as cityscape icon challenges the notion that cultural institutions are fixed in space or site or that they merely represent privatized meanings of art and cultural identity. Through alliances with other cultural institutions such as the Harrison Museum as well as through its programming and exhibits, the museum has the potential to construct a local identity that reflects specific, place-based cultures.

The preservation projects on Henry Street are operating at a significantly smaller economic scale than the AMWV, but their scope in the context of the built environment in Gainsboro seems to advance the identities for both while also reinforcing Henry Street's affirmative qualities and reconstructing a local identity for the neighborhood. The Roanoke Higher Education Center and Total Action Against Poverty have provided strong institutional support for the Claude Moore Education Complex and the Dumas Center, respectively. These entities serve in facilitating roles that influence the built environment of the neighborhood but

whose identity may become secondary to the dynamic actions and events that will occur in these buildings. The success of the Dumas Center may rely on how well the participating groups, and their performances and programs, extend this conversation of place and Henry Street beyond the neighborhood. The Claude Moore Education Complex will need to assess its role as an educational institution that may also serve the immediate needs of a local community by offering opportunities to sample its culinary arts in a unique setting. These events and the movements of people through these spaces and on the street over time will shape place identity through cultural imagination and narratives that depict a dynamic and current social landscape.

In what ways does site-specific placemaking as an economic development and tourism strategy conflict with community-based interests that reflect the specificity of place, culture and history?

In the context of Roanoke, conflicts around site-specific placemaking seem to hinge on the identity of the particular site in question rather than a project's intention as an economic development and tourism strategy. The Art Museum of Western Virginia is strongly identified with its private donor base and, by nature of its project scope, aligns with the city's desire to stimulate economic activity in the downtown. But the museum site seems to serve as a neutral backdrop for reinvention and does not seem constrained by perceptions that hold it up as sacred and imbued with collective meaning. As a downtown site, the numerous layers of activity over time seem to reinforce this neutral identity. However, these constraints are more apparent at the neighborhood scale in Gainsboro where the ground is richly contested. The Social Security building is seen as a potential threat to community-based interests because it is perceived by nearby residents as continued destruction to a street that was once a vital commercial center for the African American community. The conflict stems less from the project's intent to stimulate economic development and more from the identity of the site with this lost history. Symbols of

this heritage, through sidewalk displays or commemorative plaques, are not seen by residents as appropriate means to claim this identity. Yet this conflict does raise the question of whether Henry Street is capable of supporting the kind of commercial activity at a human scale that revives both its history and its vitality. While those interviewed for this study see the Dumas Center for Artistic and Cultural Development and the Claude Moore Education Complex on Henry Street as potential enhancements to economic development and tourism, these projects also reinforce local understandings of place because each clearly addresses the history and culture of the neighborhood through preservation and cultural programming. Further, the focus of educational, youth-based programming for both entities is a positive linkage that connects community-based activity with economic development interests. What remains to be seen is whether Henry Street will continue to serve as a battleground or if these projects, including the Social Security building if it moves forward, will catalyze investment that addresses the community's long adopted view of itself as a village center.

Systems of cultural value and expressions of class distinction through taste and style are developed and maintained not just by dominant power structures in society, but also by subaltern groups that may exercise different forms of influence (Foucault 1979; Bourdieu 1979). Within any particular urban economy, neighborhood-based or community groups may challenge redevelopment schemes, demanding greater attention to local, community-based identities and concerns (Martin 2003). A cultural institution may be viewed as an agent of these structures or, more hopefully, it may be seen as autonomous of these or as spanning them. To the degree that these institutions are used as mechanisms for identity construction, and to the extent that they are well-conceived and selected, they may also reflect local identity in ways that are not mutually exclusive.

6. References

- Appadurai, A. (1996). *Modernity at large: cultural dimensions of globalization*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
- Art Museum of Western Virginia (AMWV). (4 April 2006). *Construction phase of new art museum building project to begin*. Retrieved on 10 April 2006 from <http://www.artmuseumroanoke.org/future/press.html>
- Barnes, N., et. al. (1976). *Strategies for an effective public-private relationship in city industrial development. Prepared for the Society of Industrial Realtors*. Washington, DC: Economic Development Administration (NTIS).
- Becker, H.S. (1982). *Art worlds*. Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press.
- Blakely, E. & Bradshaw, T. (2002). *Planning local economic development: Theory and practice*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
- Bourdieu, P. (1984). *Distinction: a social critique of the judgement of taste*. (R. Nice, Trans.) Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Boyer, C. (1983). *Dreaming the rational city*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.
- Buell, L. (2001). *Writing for an endangered world: Literature, culture, and environment in the U.S. and beyond*. Cambridge, MA: Belknap/Harvard University Press.
- Bunnell, Gene. (2002). *Making places special: Stories of real places made better by planning*. Chicago, IL: American Planning Association.
- Campbell, M.S. (2002). "Harlem: parable of promise or peril." *Position Papers from Imagining America National Conference*. University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, MI.
- Castells, M. (1989). *The informational city*. Oxford: Blackwell.
- City of Roanoke (2003). *Gainsboro Neighborhood Plan*. Retrieved on 9/26/07 from <http://www.roanokeva.gov/webmgmt/ywbase61b.nsf/vwContentByKey/0477E02E1C815712852570D00070EC94>
- City of Roanoke. (2006). *City Market District Plan*. Retrieved on 9/26/06 from <http://www.roanokeva.gov/WebMgmt/ywbase61b.nsf/vwContentByKey/N26GEJNQ367FGUREN#About%20the%20Plan>
- Clarke, S. (1998). "Economic development roles in american cities: A contextual analysis of shifting partnership agreements." *Public-private partnerships for local economic development*. Norman Walzer and Brian D. Jacobs, Eds Westport, CT: Praeger Publishers.

- Comella, L. (2003) "Cultural value and the reconstruction of place." Lewis, J. & Miller, T. (Eds.) *Critical cultural policy studies: a reader*. Oxford: Blackwell Publishing.
- Cox, S. (September/October 2006). "Downtown living: it's time has come." *The Roanoker*. Retrieved on 2/25/07 from http://www.theroanoker.com/favoritearticles/downtownliving_so06/index.cfm
- Crane, D. (1992). *The production of culture: media and the urban arts*. Newbury Park, CA: Sage.
- Davis, K. (21 March 1992). "'Henry Street!' captures moods of 'The Yard's' glory, fall, hopes." *The Roanoke Times*.
- De Certeau, M. (1984). *The practice of everyday life*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Debord, G. (1994 [1967]). *The society of the spectacle*. (D. Nicholson-Smith, Trans.) New York: Zone Books. (Original work published 1967).
- Downtown Roanoke, Inc. (2007). Retrieved on 3/13/07 from <http://www.downtownroanoke.org/index.htm>
- Duany, A; Plater-Zyberk, E. & Alminana, R. (2003). *The new civic art: elements of town planning*. New York: Rizzoli Publications.
- Duany Plater-Zyberk & Company, Inc. (2006). "City Market District Plan." Retrieved on 9/25/07 from <http://www.roanokeva.gov/WebMgmt/ywbase61b.nsf/vwContentByKey/8A0B620A8EDD52998525715E006ADC3D#Download%20the%20Plan>
- Eaton, J. (13 September 2006). "A cultural change." *The Roanoke Times*.
- Ewing, R. & Rusk, D. (1995). *Cities without suburbs*. Washington, DC: Woodrow Wilson Center.
- Figge Art Museum. (2006). Project description retrieved on 3/25/06 from <http://www.figgeartmuseum.org>.
- Fitzgerald, J. & Leigh, N. (2002). *Economic Revitalization: Cases and Strategies for the City and Suburbs*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
- Florida, R. (2002). *The rise of the creative class*. New York: Basic Books.
- Flowers, S. (4 December 2005). "Bridge would be a fitting tribute." *The Roanoke Times*. Retrieved on 9/23/06 from <http://www.roanoke.com/columnists/flowers/wb/wb/xp-43274>.

- Flowers, S. (25 June 2006). "Area with rich past now has a future." *The Roanoke Times*. Retrieved on 10/26/06 from <http://www.roanoke.com/columnists/flowers/wb/wb/xp-71063>.
- Flowers, S. (1 October 2006). "Museum has a plan; not it must act." *The Roanoke Times*. Retrieved on 10/26/06 from <http://roanoke.com/columnists/flowers/wb/wb/xp-85079>.
- Foucault, M. (1979). *Omnes et singulatim: Toward a criticism of 'political reason.'* Tanner Lectures on Human Values archived at <http://www.tannerlectures.utah.edu/lectures/foucault81.pdf>.
- Frampton, K. (1985). *Modern architecture: a critical history*. London: Thames and Hudson.
- Fullilove, M.T. (2005). *Root shock: how tearing up neighborhoods hurts America, and what we can do about it*. New York: Random House.
- Gille, Z. (2006). Detached flows or grounded place-making projects? G. Spaargaren, A. Mol & F. Buttel, eds. *Governing environmental flows: global challenges to social theory*. Cambridge: The MIT Press.
- Gospodini, A. (2002). European cities in competition and the new 'uses' of urban design. *Journal of Urban Design*. 7.1:59-73.
- Gupta, A. and J. Ferguson. (2006). Space, identity, and the politics of difference. H. Moore and T. Sanders, eds. *Anthropology in theory: Issues in epistemology*. Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing.
- Harvey, D. (1989). *The urban experience*. Baltimore, MD: The Johns Hopkins University Press.
- Harvey, D. (1993). "From space to place and back again: reflections on the condition of postmodernity." *Mapping the futures: local cultures, global change*. Eds. John Bird et al. London and New York: Routledge.
- Harvey, D. (2006). *Spaces of global capitalism: towards a theory of uneven geographical development*. London: Verso.
- Hayden, D. (1995). *The power of place: Urban landscapes as public history*. Cambridge: The MIT Press.
- Iowa Legislative Fiscal Bureau. (2000). *Vision Iowa Program*. Retrieved on 4/12/06 from www.legis.state.ia.us/lsadocs/IssReview/2000/IR820B.PDF
- Jacobs, J. (1993 [1961]). *The death and life of great American cities*. New York: The Modern Library.
- Jensen, J. (2002). *Is art good for us?* Oxford: Rowman and Littlefield Publishers, Inc.

- Katz, P. (1994). *The new urbanism: toward an architecture of community*. New York: McGraw-Hill.
- Kennedy, J. (15 January 2007). Rebuilding a bridge, in more ways than one. The Roanoke Times. Retrieved on 3/15/07 from <http://www.roanoke.com/columnists/kennedy/wb/100176>
- Knox, P. (2005). "Creating ordinary places: slow cities in a fast world." *Journal of Urban Design*. 10.1: 1-11.
- Kwon, M. (2004). *One place after another: site-specific art and location identity*. Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press.
- Lefebvre, H. (1984). *Everyday life in the modern world*. Somerset, NJ: Transaction Publishers.
- Lefebvre, H. (1991). *The production of space*. Translated by Donald Nicholson-Smith. Cambridge, MA: Blackwell.
- Logan, J. & Molotch, H. (1987). *Urban fortunes: the political economy of place*. Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press.
- Luke, T.W. (2006). "The museum: where civilizations clash or clash civilizes?" Ed. Hugh Genoways. *Museum philosophy for the twenty-first century*. Lanham, MD: AltaMira Press.
- Martin, D. (2003). "Place-framing" as place-making: Constituting a neighborhood for organizing and activism. *Annals of the Association of American Geographers*: 93.3: 730-750.
- Martinon, J. (2006). "Museums and restlessness." Ed. Hugh Genoways. *Museum philosophy for the twenty-first century*. Lanham, MD: AltaMira Press.
- Massey, D. (1995). "The conceptualization of place." Massey, D. & Jess, P. (Ed). *A place in the world?* Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- McLuhan, E. & Zingrone, F. (1996). *Essential McLuhan*. New York: BasicBooks.
- Nevarez, L. (2003). *New money, nice town*. United Kingdom: Routledge.
- Olds, K. (2001). *Globalization and urban change*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Preziosi, D. (2006). "Philosophy and the ends of the museum." Ed. Hugh Genoways. *Museum philosophy for the twenty-first century*. Lanham, MD: AltaMira Press.
- Project for Public Spaces (PPS). (2007). Retrieved on 10/12/06 from http://www.pps.org/info/placemakingtools/casesforplaces/gr_place_feat
- Royal Institute of British Architects (RIBA). (2007). Retrieved on 2/25/07 from http://www.riba.org/go/RIBA/Member/Practice_4861.html

- Scott, A.J. (2000) *The cultural economy of cities*. London: Sage Publications.
- Schneekloth, L. & Shibley, R. (1995). *Placemaking: the art and practice of building communities*. New York: John Wiley & Sons, Inc.
- Social Science Data Analysis Network (SSDAN). (2007). *CensusScope*. Population Studies Center, University of Michigan. Retrieved on 3/2/07 from http://www.censusscope.org/us/s51/rank_dissimilarity_white_black.html
- Suarez, R. (1999). *The old neighborhood: what we lost in the great suburban migration, 1966-1999*. New York: Free Press.
- Throgmorton, J. (2003). "Imagining sustainable places." Eckstein, B. & Throgmorton, J. (Ed.) *Story and sustainability: Planning, practice, and possibility for American cities*. Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press.
- Warren, M. (2001). *Dry bones rattling*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Whyte, W. (1980). *The social life of small urban spaces*. Washington, DC: The Conservation Foundation.
- Zukin, S. (1995). *The cultures of cities*. United Kingdom: Blackwell Publishers.

Attachment A

Interview Questions

1. If I were planning to visit **Roanoke** for the first time as an outsider, how would you describe it to me as a place?
2. In your view, how does your institution contribute to or influence your definition(s) of Roanoke as a place?
3. What are the most striking changes you have seen happening in Roanoke over the past few years?
(Follow-on) What has been your institution's role, if any, in these changes?
4. What changes in Roanoke would you like to see occur?
(Follow-on) Do you see your institution as having a role in some of these changes?
5. How would you describe the **Gainsboro** neighborhood as a place?
6. In your view, how does your institution contribute to or influence Gainsboro as a place?
7. What are the most striking changes you've seen happening in Gainsboro over the past few years?
(Follow-on) What has been your institution's role, if any, in these changes?
8. What changes in Gainsboro would you like to see occur?
(Follow-on) Do you see your institution as having a role in some of these changes?
9. What are some of the attributes that you might use to describe any city (in general) to someone who is thinking of visiting there?
(Follow-on) What attributes would you use to describe it to someone who is thinking of moving there to live?
10. How would you describe the communities that your institution serves to someone who doesn't live here?
(Follow-on) In what specific ways would you say your institution has influenced these communities and their constituencies?
11. May I contact you again if I have some follow-up questions?

Acknowledgements

The City of Roanoke, Henry Street and the neighborhood of Gainsboro provided a rich backdrop for this case study. I wish to express my sincere thanks to the individuals who welcomed my questions and contributed their insights and expertise, including Wanda Alston, Evelyn Bethel, Georganne Bingham, Helen E. Davis, Annie Korchalis, Tom McKeon, William Penn, and Brian Townsend.

I'd like to thank Brian Katen and my colleagues in the Henry Street Studio, Chris Calorusso, Lauren Doran, Melissa Philen and Andrea Smith, for the opportunity to explore methods of inquiry used by landscape architects and to participate in a collaborative environment that inspired much of my work.

I extend a special thanks to my gifted committee, Max Stephenson and Sonia Hirt for their support and guidance throughout this process that challenged me analytically and kept me on target.

Finally, I thank my husband Ryan for his love, encouragement, curiosity and deep intellect as my moral compass and partner for life.