

Modern Masses of Moroseness and Mediocrity

By Sidney Secular



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At the end of the Victorian era, our towns and cities began losing their character as centers of civilization, and became more and more merely centers of population. Modern man shows little emotional attachment to the place in which he lives. One's residence is mainly an accident occasioned by fluctuating employment opportunities or one's destination after being buffeted by the hands of fate. Of course, the cost of living greatly factors into the matter, and especially for the lower middle class and retirees. For the latter, the area's climate is also a matter to be considered. The fluidity of residences manifested by the frequent changes of abode diminish the formation of a solid bond between the resident and the area in which he lives. Of course, the decrease in the quality of urban environments and the impact of displacement of original residents through and by the mass movements of hordes of migrants and refugees intensifies especially "white flight" from metropolitan areas to the suburbs and exurbs, something already set in motion long ago by the formation of ghettos and barrios with their associated crime and grime.

Now the policies of many urban "governments" have led to a sudden surge in the numbers of vagrants and the homeless, accelerating the "outward bound" movement of former city dwellers. That is, the former "Blue city" dwellers who now

have “the blues” over their places of residence are moving to the purple (intermediate) and red areas.

It’s a mystery how any thinking person could become sentimentally attached to places that have become carbon copies of one another, losing local color and character. They all have the same national chains from which residents have to buy as they are now bereft of mom and pop and other locally oriented stores driven out of town to be replaced by malls with their sameness. People used to become sentimentally attached to local sports teams but that’s increasingly hard to do as the teams move around to wherever the pastures are greener, thus leaving the locals in the lurch. With few exceptions, sports teams and their players are moved around as if on a big chess board.

Cities and metro areas have become barren of uniqueness as they expand with the growth of their populations. It is at this point that the urban planners install their ugly “modern” architectural and “artistic” creations which appear to be the same everywhere. Children using Legos produce more artistic and cultural marvels than do modern architects! All of our remaining notable cities are living on the glory and the treasures of the past that were associated with that locale, forming the basis for their tourist trades. Every venerable and noteworthy citadel of yesteryear had prominent monuments attesting to its glory and designed to have enduring appeal. These monuments bound individuals to their town in a way that’s almost incomprehensible today. Private dwellings of former times were mainly mediocre, while one’s eyes and attention were drawn to imposing community structures that belonged to the People. Communal works and communal activities – often religious in nature – were the centerpieces giving the community its sense of place in the larger polity and even in the universe.

What we admire in the ruins of the ancient world are the temples and other significant monuments and communal

structures. Even in the decrepit atmosphere of late Rome, it wasn't the villas and palaces of the aristocrats that attracted attention and veneration, but the temples, public baths, stadiums, the circus venues, the aqueducts, the basilicas, etc. belonging to the state and the people. The ornate cathedrals and city halls and places in which public business was conducted exhibited the pride of the people in their civilization or polity. Special artwork was commissioned to venerate the mission of the government bodies and the acts of the functionaries who conducted the business of the state. Even movie theaters in the 20th century were tastefully created as individualized works of impressive architecture and art as if to celebrate what the dramatic works shown therein were reflecting in the hopes and dreams of the audience which were awed by them.

We are now arriving at a desultory state of empty desolation where the individual will be totally indifferent to the look of his surroundings and the fate of his city. In these edifices nothing is celebrated because nothing is worthy of being celebrated. That is a marker of our cultural decay and coming collapse. Our era is preoccupied with pointless pursuits and pleasures associated with individual material acquisition and frivolous entertainment while the attainment of the people as a whole and the big picture is lost on little minds.

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