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Conservation in the Age of Gentrification: Historic Cities from the 1960s

FILIPPO DE PIERI

The increasing interest in the protection of historic districts has been an important aspect of European urban history during the last fifty years. The three books discussed in the present article provide an analysis of different aspects of this phenomenon. They are written by authors belonging to different cultural contexts (a French architectural and planning historian, an international group of three geographers and a British planner and conservation specialist) and do not necessarily share the same interests and points of view, as the keywords that appear in the titles – patrimoine, gentrification, conservation – clearly show. Nevertheless, they may collectively be read as important contributions to a discussion of the role played by urban conservation in contemporary European societies. The books are meant for a wide audience, wider than the academic communities for which they are primarily intended, not only because they are the result of long ongoing teaching activities, but also because the authors hope to actively influence the way in which the historic built environment is perceived and transformed. On the one hand, these works remind us that conservation is becoming progressively recognised as an indispensable activity (the 'age of consensus' evoked by John Pendlebury) and has an increasingly international dimension, epitomised by such Unesco policies as the list of World Heritage sites, created in 1972; on the other hand, they argue that issues of social equality and inequality, of cultural progress and reaction, seem to depend increasingly on how conservation is perceived and carried out. Beneath the surface of consensus, urban conservation is in many ways a highly controversial topic, and the three books provide different interpretations of why this is so.

Françoise Choay's Le patrimoine en questions is a collection of texts that echoes, in its structure, the French scholar's first book – and still one of her best-known works – the 1965 anthology Urbanisme: utopies et réalités.1 The latter volume – a collection of texts on nineteenth- and twentieth-century urban theory – played an important role in the international process of revision of the ideology of the 'modern movement' in architecture and planning. By discussing the origins of urban planning's 'mythology' and criticising its pretensions to scientific objectivity, Choay invited her readers to a critical reassessment of the techniques behind the transformation of the built environment. As in the case of the previous anthology, most of the new volume is made up of collected texts, but the core of the book lies in the dense introduction that weaves together the different threads. The material commented on covers a broad span of time, from the Mémoires sur la consécration de l'église de Saint-Denis of the Abbé Suger (twelfth century) to the present day, but the collection is very much concerned with the discussion of a few contemporary issues, to which most of the introduction is dedicated. Choay has a strongly critical view of present attitudes towards heritage, and her new anthology aims at nothing less than inspiring a critical awareness and a movement of 'resistance' against these tendencies.

The introduction to Le patrimoine en questions elaborates on the arguments originally presented in Choay's previous work on the subject, L'allégorie du patrimoine, published in 1992.2 Choay opens with Alois Riegl's distinction (1903) between 'monument' and 'historic monument'. She retraces the origins of the notion of 'historic monument' through two major historical phases: first, the Renaissance, with its 'new look upon the human individual', its 'new conception of history as an autonomous discipline' and the 'new status of aesthetic activity given to what we call today the plastic arts' (p. x); second, the Industrial Revolution, presented as a 'traumatic' 'destruction of urban and rural territories', inducing a sense of 'nostalgia' and provoking a reaction that led to the 'institutionalisation' of conservation practices in several European countries. Choay is adamant in stressing that, as a consequence of these particular historical developments, 'monument' and 'historic monument' are 'ethnically' charged expressions: they are intrinsically connected to the modern history of the Western world and, especially in the case of 'historic monument', have more than accidental links with the emergence of the modern European nation- states, for the identity of which the nineteenth- and early twentieth-century politics of memory provided a foundation stone. She considers it symptomatic that one of the defining moments in the history of modern architectural restoration, the Athens conference of 1931, saw the participation only of European countries, and that, even three decades later, the Venice conference of 1964 (another important international event in the field) remained a mostly European affair.3 According to Choay, a third notion of heritage seemed to gain prominence during the 1960s: the notion of patrimoine, and, more specifically, of patrimoine culturel, as defended, for example, by André Malraux during his years in charge at the French Ministry of Culture (1959–69). The implications of such a cultural shift seem to her to be most clearly embodied by the 'convention concerning the protection of the world cultural and natural heritage' approved by Unesco in 1972, a text whose rationale lay in the identification of a 'world heritage', with a geographical extension of the policies for the protection of historic monuments from a local and national scale to a planetary one.4 The emergence of the notion of 'world heritage', as developed by the 1972 Unesco convention, is related to what Choay calls the post-Second World War electronic instruments and of telecommunication networks' – and to 'mundialisation', presented as nothing less than a phenomenon whose impact 'has no precedents in the history of human societies since the sedentarisation of our species' (p. 32). By multiplying contacts at an unprecedented scale, mundialisation seems to provoke a 'normalisation' of human societies and their gradual fusion into a 'world society'.

Significantly enough, the voice chosen to lead the battle against this movement is the voice of Claude Lévi-Strauss, with one of his more controversial texts: 'Race and Culture', originally written as a lecture given at Unesco in 1971 and perceived at the time as an explicit criticism targeting Unesco's ideals of universal co-operation.5

In his 1971 speech, Lévi-Strauss argued that 'the gradual fusion of groups previously separated by geographic distance as well as by linguistic and cultural barriers has marked the end of a world: the world of human beings who, for hundreds of thousands of years, lived in small and durably separated groups, each evolving differently on both a biological and a cultural level' (p. 23). He showed himself as being wary of the 'movement that is carrying humanity towards a global civilisation – a civilisation that is the destroyer of those old particularisms, which had the honour of creating the aesthetic and spiritual values that make life worthwhile and that we carefully safeguard in libraries and museums because we feel ever less capable of producing them ourselves' (p. 23). He reminded his audience that 'all true creation implies a certain deafness to the appeal of other values, even going so far as to reject them if not denying them altogether' (p. 24). Choay revives these concerns and extends them to Unesco's 'world heritage' policies, challenging the general consensus behind them and contesting their role in the preservation of a world culture. Conservation for the sake of mankind and not for the sake of a given society, she argues, does not seem to make much sense. In an age when cultures increasingly tend to merge with each other in an unprecedented way, the very notion of monumentality, with its reference to a specific, local identity, seems at risk. More broadly, what is in danger in the ideology behind world heritage is the possibility for human societies to retain, and indeed to continue to multiply, their differences and peculiarities: there is a serious risk of losing 'not our identity, but a human identity of which the difference between cultures is a necessary precondition' (p. 43). Two contemporary attitudes towards heritage exemplify the dangers of such a situation: first, the increasing 'museumification' of world heritage and, second, its full exploitation as a 'cultural industry' aimed at promoting mass consumption of historic goods.

These arguments could be applicable to all aspects of the modern 'cult of heritage', but Choay's book keeps a tight focus on the built urban environment, as the author explicitly states in the first line of her preface ('Le patrimoine dont il sera question ici est constitué par le cadre bâti des sociétés humaines', p. 9). It is especially revealing that all the examples chosen to illustrate acceptable ways to reconcile the protection of the historical past with the need to accept historical change are urban examples, as in the case of the Italian universities situated in historic buildings or – perhaps more surprisingly – of the transformation of nineteenth-century Paris led by Georges- Eugène Haussmann. The préfet de la Seine's work is presented by Choay not as an example of systematic destruction but as an example of an urban policy that, despite its radical scope, was able to retain a sensitivity for the scale and the monumental emergences of the historic city.6 It is in cities that the processes outlined by Choay are more visible and it is in cities that strategies of resistance against these tendencies can be put in place. What is at risk is not only human identity but, more importantly, what Choay calls 'the competence of building' – that is, the competence to forge meaningful links between society and urban space. Tendencies towards the globalisation and the commodification of heritage lead to the systematic destruction of these links, but Choay suggests that there is still a possibility for countering this phenomenon.

Choay's anthology dedicates special attention to the emergence of urban conservation in the twentieth century, pointing to the Italian engineer and architect Gustavo Giovannoni as the key figure in the decades-long process by which cities or parts of them came to be considered as monumental sites in their entirety.7

The process is seen in a positive light, as a way of progressively going beyond the traditional policies focused on individual monuments and buildings. Choay must here face a paradox: the 1960s and 1970s, the period when this vision seemed to gain consensus in several European countries and when modern, CIAM-inspired intervention techniques based on the tabula rasa lost much of their popularity and technical influence, was also the period when globalisation, mass culture, tourism and the commodification of heritage brought to the foreground a way of protecting historic cities judged by Choay as inauthentic and deprived of any serious cultural base. Tourism, especially, is seen as the global phenomenon that can potentially destroy historic cities while apparently saving them, with its pressure on historic spaces, its quest for a standardised experience, its penchant for a superficial representation of the past, often on the verge of 'disneyfication'. International tourism is presented as the first enemy of the historic built environment, and the role played by Unesco in supporting its diffusion is seen as definitive proof of the potential 'deadly' impact of its policies. How can these trends be resisted, while at the same time a more culturally rich approach to the preservation and transformation of the historic built environment is promoted? The strategies of 'resistance' suggested by Choay seem to imply a mix of top-down and bottom-up intervention: on the one hand, she insists on the need for a better education in the field of art history and a wider diffusion of the cultural instruments that are required for an 'intellectual or aesthetic' appreciation of the urban landscape; on the other, she stresses the potentially important role played by local communities, intended as 'non-traditional' communities and as groups 'whose members would experience solidarity not on the ground of their ethnic or geographic origin ... but because of their shared and present insertion into concrete spaces, natural as well as social' (p. 47). To describe Loretta Lees, Tom Slater and Elvin Wyly's Gentrification as mostly concerned with the transformation of historic cities would be a not entirely accurate representation of the book. 'Gentrification' designates a process by which working- class neighbourhoods are progressively 'invaded' by middle- and upper-class groups, bringing a rehabilitation of the housing stock but also an expulsion of its former population, incapable of affording the rising prices for land and rents. The notion, first coined by Ruth Glass, a British sociologist, in 1964,8 originally evoked historic, central neighbourhoods of metropolitan cities, but Lees, Slater and Wyly argue that defini- tions of gentrification have changed over time, encompassing a wider plurality of cases of urban transformation characterised by the displacement of lower-income groups. Gentrification claims to be the first comprehensive attempt to provide an introduction, 'aimed at a broad range of readers', to the ever-growing body of literature on its subject. Gentrification claims to be the first comprehensive attempt to

be the first comprehensive attempt to provide an introduction, 'aimed at a broad range of readers', to the ever-growing body of literature on its subject. Gentrification claims to be the first comprehensive attempt to provide an introduction, 'aimed at a broad range of readers', to the ever-growing body of literature on its subject. itself and a book about the history of the urban transformations the word refers to; it follows the mutations of gentrification over time and the different interpretations of it proposed by the international debate on urban geography. The text oscillates between the construction of broad, general frameworks and the presentation of specific case studies or the discussion of a few influential scholarly works that are analysed at some length. An anthology of texts, aptly called The Gentrification Reader, has recently been published by the same authors as a potential companion to the book.9

Approximately the first half of Gentrification is dedicated to 'classical gentrification' – the transformation of historic residential neighbourhoods as observed by Glass and other urban scholars in European and North American cities. These pages provide an analysis of the phenomenon that could be opposed almost point by point to Choay's description of the conservation of historic cities. Here the focus is not on public-led conservation policies but on cases of neighbourhood transformation that are the result of decisions mostly made by private actors, such as investors, developers and specific groups of the urban middle class (although it is recognised that public decisions at times play a relevant role). The book takes the 1960s as its starting point; this was the decade when the term 'gentrification' first appeared, although the authors do not make it clear whether they consider the emergence of the word to be simultaneous with the emergence of the phenomenon. The first examples of gentrified historic neighbourhoods taken into account are Barnsbury, in London, and Park Slope, in Brooklyn: from then on, the presentation of case studies focuses mostly on North American cities, returning to Europe with the discussion of the 'mutation of gentrification' and 'contemporary gentrification' in the fourth and fifth chapters. Barnsbury, for example, is invoked again to illustrate what the book calls 'super- gentrification', a recent phase of gentrification largely driven by the international elites connected to the world financial sector and investing in already gentrified historic neighbourhoods.

In its presentation of 'classical gentrification', the book dedicates special attention to two families of theories that have polarised the geographical debate since the

1960s: namely, theories focused on the production of gentrification and theories focused on consumption. In production theories, which are well represented by Neil Smith's 'rent gap' approach,10 the emphasis is on the economic variables that explain the processes of urban decay: gentrification is presented as an aspect of the cycles of investment and disinvestment that form the dynamics of urban economy, with their unequal allocation of values and resources. The deterioration and depreciation – with subsequent regeneration – of some parts of the housing stock is seen as a process of

'creative destruction' that allows urban investors to move their capital from one area to another in search of maximum profitability. In consumption theories, on the contrary, the emphasis is placed on actors and their choices: who are the 'gentrifiers' and what attracts them to historic neighbourhoods? Changes in gentrification are connected to changes in the composition and ideals of the urban middle classes. Consumption studies attach a strong significance to the social differences between the 'gentrifiers', and observe their lifestyles and consumption habits. They describe in detail the social change affecting gentrified parts of the city, from the social mix of the early stages, when 'pioneers' enter a neighbourhood and start to renovate properties – often with little public attention and without the support of conventional mortgage funds – to later stages, when large-scale speculation and social displacement go hand in hand and are accompanied by growing media interest.

With its emphasis on economic and social factors, Gentrification barely takes heritage debates into account – these are often presented as purely instrumental factors in legitimating the strategies of developers or new residents. The authors see urban conservation as a key aspect of the social class struggle in the city and seem especially interested in asking by whom and for whom preservation is carried out. Cultural approaches to the study of the social representations and practices that shape gentrification are, if not dismissed, certainly considered with suspicion. For example, the book argues that 'the focus on the constitution and practices of middle-class gentrifiers – one of the beneficiary groups of gentrification – has ... shifted attention away from the negative effects of the process' (p. 121). The book urges gentrification scholars to keep an eye on urban inequalities, and explicitly evaluates their studies on the basis of their role in fostering an active resistance to the phenomenon.

In the second part of their work, Lees, Slater and Wyly show how gentrification has changed in recent times, progressively moving 'away from its classical referent, the historic built environment of the metropolitan central city'. Recent waves of gentrification seem to affect not only historic quarters but also newly built developments, suburban neighbourhoods, former industrial sites and rural communities. Gentrification, in their view, has also changed its geography and has become an almost 'inevitable' aspect of urban economies in the age of globalisation.

'It is no longer confined to North America and Europe; it now spans the globe and can be found in Mexico, Israel, Japan, South Africa, and New Zealand, and indeed in many other countries around the world too' (p. xx). Such an 'expanding definition' of gentrification is not without its dangers, and the authors recognise that the word risks collapsing 'under the weight of its own burden', but they deliberately stick to it as an essential tool for exposing the social and spatial contradictions of modern capitalism, arguing that 'the term ... is one of the most political terms in urban studies (implying, by definition, class-based displacement), and to lose the term would be to lose the politics and political purchase of the term' (p. xxii).

A relevant aspect of Lees, Slater and Wyly's contribution to the discussion of the transformation of historic cities since the 1960s lies in their refusal to consider historic cities as a world apart. The book sees historic neighbourhoods as the theatre of processes of class-based displacement and argues that similar processes can be observed in several spaces of contemporary cities. Gentrification is considered as an essential aspect of urban change in the age of globalisation. The book is especially effective in questioning the role of representations of heritage in the transformation of the built environment. It shows how the sense of place and the appreciation of the environmental qualities of the historic city can become important points of

reference for the property market and for middle-class groups in search of new symbols of 'distinction'.11 It suggests that social inequality and displacement can be almost unavoidable aspects of the transformation of historic urban sectors and deconstructs the optimistic discourses that are often put forward to claim the positive effects of 'urban regeneration'.

Nevertheless, the ambition of Gentrification to provide a comprehensive overview of its subject is weakened by its limited historical and comparative perspective. The book fails to discuss whether the urban phenomena that are considered as part of 'classical' or 'contemporary' gentrification are rooted in longer processes of change, and a closer look at current debates in urban history could certainly have helped to foster a broader understanding of some of its key notions.12 Gentrification is also limited in its scope by its reliance on a limited choice of case studies. The definitions of 'classical gentrification' provided in the first chapters would be difficult to apply to continental European cities, where patterns of growth were often entirely different from North American ones: we learn many things about the 'brownstoners' of New York but not very much about the transformation of historic neighbourhoods such as the Marais or the Halles in Paris (Choay's most frequently quoted city does not even appear in the book's index). Finally, the book is based almost exclusively on sources written in English: sensible as they are to the rights of minority groups in the city, the authors of Gentrification do not show the same degree of concern with regard to scholars working in other European languages, thus indirectly but actively contributing to an academic marginalisation of their work.

John Pendlebury's Conservation in the Age of Consensus is written from the point of view of a town planner (and town planning historian) involved in the professional practice of urban conservation, and its main focus of attention is the link between conservation and planning: how this link was forged, how it changed over time and how it is embodied by current practices. Pendlebury recalls the 'semantic distinction between conservation and preservation, established in the 1960s' and chooses, for the title of his book, 'conservation', intended as a broad concept that encompasses not only the protection of the built environment but also the management of change.13

The geographical centre of the discourse is the United Kingdom, but Conservation in the Age of Consensus also hints at potential comparisons with other contexts, and dedicates some of its pages to an analysis of international conservation policies, most notably those related to Unesco's World Heritage List.

As the title of the book makes explicit, Pendlebury chooses as one of his objects of study the almost unchallenged consensus gained by conservation practices: 'perhaps the key characteristic of conservation in the thirty or so years since [the mid 1970s] is how accepted it has become' (p. 1). Like Choay, he is interested in tracing a cultural history of modern conservation and bringing to the foreground the potential

discontents and contradictions behind it; like Lees, Slater and Wyly he is aware of the social issues hidden behind conservation practices. The book is intended as an instrument to increase the awareness of those who confront the daily problems posed by conservation activities. It also aims to encourage a debate on the prevailing trends in present-day conservation practices.

In its first chapters, Conservation in the Age of Consensus traces a short history of conservation planning in the United Kingdom. Pendlebury recalls the role played by such laws as the Town and Country Planning Act of 1947 and the Civic Amenities Act of 1967 – these respectively introduced listing and conservation areas into the British planning system – but also stresses that an equally important role was played by those planners who focused their interest on historic cities, such as Patrick Abercrombie or Thomas Sharp in the 1940s and 1950s.14 The analysis subsequently moves on to influential cases of urban conservation studies such as those carried out in the late

1960s for Bath, Chester, Chichester and York, which are interpreted as an evolution of earlier attempts rather than as the sign of a 'sea-change approach' to conservation (p. 56). The 'shifting context' of the 1970s is presented as the period when the attention paid to the social aspects of conservation seemed to reach its peak, most notably during European Architectural Heritage Year – 1975 – as designated by the Council of Europe. Paradoxically, the full consolidation of public consensus around conservation and the 'consolidation and strengthening of conservation policy at a previously unprecedented level' came under the strongly anti-planning UK Conservative governments of the 1980s and 1990s. During the same years, however,

'the post-industrial focus on culture as an economic good' brought an increasing

'commodification of heritage' and forced conservation 'to demonstrate its usefulness as part of a broader set of social and economic processes' (p. 123).

Part of the analysis proposed by Pendlebury follows the lines of those histories of architectural conservation that have emphasised the importance of such nineteenth- century figures as William Morris or John Ruskin in influencing theories of conservation.15 Pendlebury insists on the continuity between contemporary conservation practice and these 'founding fathers', and reminds us that conservation must be considered as an inherently 'modern' activity, the opposition between the 'conservation movement' and the 'modern movement' in architecture being less grounded than it may appear. Pendlebury's position regarding urban conservation is more interesting, since he argues that urban conservation is not entirely grounded in the same cultural roots as its architectural counterpart. His interpretation of the history of urban conservation differs significantly from Choay's: while the French scholar, emphasising the pioneering role played by Giovannoni, implicitly insists on the roots linking modern urban conservation to nineteenth-century debates on architecture and planning, Pendlebury dedicates more attention to the English debates of the

post-war years. It was between the 1940s and the 1960s, he suggests, that most of the basic principles concerning urban conservation were set in UK planning.

According to Pendlebury, professional practice in Britain has traditionally favoured a 'visual' approach to urban conservation, one that has tended to privilege the conservation of a certain 'character' of the built environment. He examines different aspects of this tradition, from 'townscape' – the visual analysis of cities 'loosely' codified in the post-war years – to 'façadism'

- ‘the retention of a historic façade or façades as the public face of what were essentially brand new constructions’ (p. 173)– the latter being presented as an essentially postmodern practice, often in contrast with those principles of architectural conservation that insist on the preservation of the material and structural ‘truth’ of buildings. Pendlebury also argues that, throughout its history, urban conservation in Britain has been an essentially pragmatic activity: it has shown a somewhat opportunistic tendency to favour a ‘wildly heterogeneous’ set of practices and to ‘adapt its arguments to suit the context of the times’ (p. 190), while avoiding any confrontation on ‘universally agreed values’. Both aspects – the centrality of a visual approach to conservation and the catholic pragmatism of professionals involved in it – have been important in securing for urban conservation the high level of consensus it seems to enjoy among both decision makers and the general public. Nevertheless, they have also contributed to its lack of definition.

‘There are no generally agreed principles for the management of the wider urban environment, and the sheer extensiveness of protection means that there will never be the resources, and never the skills, for a modern conservation ideology to prevail in all these cases, even if there was political and societal support for doing so’ (p. 218).

Pendlebury’s book offers a nuanced and detailed understanding of the practices of urban conservation in the United Kingdom. The book sees conservation as a contradictory affair that can have different meanings and implications for all those involved in it. Conservation in the Age of Consensus has no recipes to offer, but its exercises in ‘thick description’ of specific case studies of conservation practice provide the reader with the elements for an informed discussion. The book pays marked attention to the actors and their roles and especially to the heterogeneous mix of associations, groups, institutions and individuals that has fought the battle for conservation at different moments of British history.

Although Pendlebury’s book lacks the dramatic tones of Choay’s or Lees, Slater and Wyly’s, his view of contemporary urban conservation is not always more optimistic. Recognising the ‘patrician’ origins of many images and theories behind conservation, he asks whether conservation is entirely ‘compatible with ... a progressive modern liberal agenda’ (p. 222), and his answer to the question is not exempt from doubts. He recognises that the consensus enjoyed by urban conservation has its dangers and admits that, in many cases, conservation practices have actively helped to ‘engender gentrification, displace non-powerful groups and suppress narratives of place that do not sit easily with new commodifications’. Although in recent years, he argues, conservation has become increasingly aware ‘of the socially constructed nature of heritage and the consequent implication that perhaps conservation experts should not have a monopoly over conservation values’ (p. 185), this renewed attention to inclusion, diversity, pluralism and multiculturalism has yet to provide ‘alternative frameworks capable of practical implementation’ (p. 223).

The three books discussed in the preceding pages propose different interpretations of the recent history of urban conservation while seeming to share a few very broad ideas about it. They share the belief that the attitude towards historic cities has become a crucial issue for modern society, one that reveals the sense and direction of many aspects of globalisation and is likely to become an arena both for those promoting and for those fighting it. They recognise that, after the social and cultural fights of the last few decades, there is now a general consensus behind urban conservation, but they argue that this consensus should once again be challenged in order to open the way for different – more aware, more socially inclusive – ways of transforming historic cities. They share a militant interpretation of their work, explicitly stated in the subtitle of Choay’s book (‘Anthology for a Fight’), and an urge to translate the results of academic research into action. Nevertheless, the ways the authors imagine their role as scholars and the potential impact of their work on debates and policies could not be more diverse.

These are research works that are acutely aware that the keywords behind their research are slippery and potentially open to debate. They dedicate several pages to a discussion of their terms: Pendlebury focuses on ‘conservation’ and points out that ‘the term heritage’ has become ‘problematic in UK discourse’ (p. 9), Choay discusses at some length the etymology of her title-word, patrimoine, knowing that the English term ‘heritage’ – often used as a translation – does not bear exactly the same meaning. These debates reveal that the historic city is the field of a competition between concurrent words, many of which belong to different historical or research traditions. Perhaps the most surprising common trait of these three books is how little they try to transcend these intellectual barriers in order to find a shared ground for discussion. The bibliographies of these works, for example, do not seem to have much in common, apart from a few minor details. Somehow, while they insist on the global and/or international traits taken on by the urban conservation turn, these books also show how much the research in the field of conservation and reuse of historic urban sectors is still divided into a plurality of regional traditions and specialised sub- disciplines, with their specific research agendas. Taken together, the books provide many interesting materials for a comparative history of the transformations of historic cities in Europe and the United States from the 1960s to the present day, but the construction of a wide-ranging debate on the impact of these transformations on European societies, free from academic and geographic fragmentation, remains no easy task.

1 Françoise Choay, Urbanisme: utopies et réalités (Paris: Seuil, 1965).

2 Françoise Choay, L'allégorie du patrimoine (Paris: Seuil, 1992); trans. Lauren M. O'Connell as The Invention of the Historic Monument (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001).

3 Françoise Choay, ed., La conférence d'Athènes sur la conservation artistique et historique des monuments (1931) (Besançon: Editions de l'Imprimeur, 2002); Matthew Hardy, ed., The Venice Charter Revisited: Modernism, Conservation and Tradition in the 21 st Century (Cambridge: Cambridge Scholars Publshing, 2009).

4 For the text of the World Heritage Convention see http://whc.unesco.org/en/conventiontext (last visited 2 June 2010).

5 Claude Lévi-Strauss, 'Race et culture', Revue internationale des sciences sociales, 23 (1971), 647–66; English translation: 'Race and Culture', in Lévi-Strauss, A View from Afar (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992), 3–24. See also Michel Izard's introduction to Claude Lévi-Strauss, Race et histoire. Race et culture (Paris: Albin Michel, 2001).

6 See also Baron Haussmann, Mémoires, ed. and with an introduction by Françoise Choay (Paris: Seuil, 2000).

7 Gustavo Giovannoni, Vecchie città ed edilizia nuova (Torino: Utet, 1931).

8 Centre for Urban Studies, London: Aspects of Change (London: MacGibbon & Kee, 1964).

9 Loretta Lees, Tom Slater and Elvin Wyly, eds., The Gentrification Reader (London and New York: Routledge, 2010).

10 Neil Smith, 'Toward a Theory of Gentrification: A Back to the City Movement by Capital, not People', Journal of the American Planning Association, 45 (1979), 538–48.

11 Pierre Bourdieu, La distinction. Critique sociale du jugement (Paris: Les Éditions de Minuit, 1979).

12 To give just one recent example, the comparative research carried out by Richard Dennis, Cities in Modernity: Representations and Productions of Metropolitan Space, 1840–1930 (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 2008), extended to the case studies of New York, London and Toronto, provides an interesting analysis of the international circulation of images of residential modernity and its impact on neighbourhood change.

13 On the latter aspect see also Lisanne Gibson and John Pendlebury, eds., Valuing Historic Environments (Farnham: Ashgate, 2009).

14 John Pendlebury, guest ed., 'Thomas Sharp and the Modern Townscape', Planning Perspectives, 24, 1 (2009), 1–97.

15 Jukka Jokilehto, A History of Architectural Conservation (Oxford: Butterworth-Heinemann, 1999).