
Sex and the City in Decline: Midnight Cowboy (1969) and Klute (1971)

Journal of Urban History
36(5) 617–633
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DOI: 10.1177/0096144210365458
<http://juh.sagepub.com>



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Abstract

This essay looks at two popular and influential films of the late 1960s and early 1970s, which were both shot in New York City: *Midnight Cowboy* (1969) and *Klute* (1971). It places them in film history, New York City history, and U.S. urban history more generally, finding that they offer an update on earlier century narratives of the connections between urban areas and deviant sexuality. In this modern version, it is not just a moral tale but also an economic one, where, because of the historical decline of the U.S. city and of New York in particular, sex work becomes a plausible, if unsettling means of support. These films find both narrative and spatial terms for advancing the contemporary antiurban narrative, envisioning New York as an impinging vertical space and seeing possible redemption only in the protagonists leaving the city.

Keywords

sexuality, film, urban geography, New York City

The 1960s and 1970s were a time in which many cities in the United States—and those in the Northeast and Midwest in particular—were in difficult economic straits, primarily as a result of economic factors that resulted in the loss of union jobs in the industrial sector; furthermore, and related, many had been the sites of riots in the 1960s, events that had been a regular feature of nightly newscasts in the middle and later years of that decade. For many, New York City stood as the ultimate example of such chaos. But all types of cultural productions of this era associated New York City with images and narratives of urban decline. Network television regularly featured such scenes in both news and entertainment.¹ And feature films with images of urban despair and immorality set in New York abounded from the late 1960s to the mid 1970s, including *Midnight Cowboy* (1969), *Klute* (1971), *The French Connection* (1971), *Shaft* (1971), *Panic in Needle Park* (1971), *The Godfather* (1972), *Mean Streets* (1973), *Serpico* (1973), *The Godfather: Part II* (1974), *Lenny* (1974), *Deathwish* (1974), *The Taking of Pelham One Two Three* (1974), *Dog Day Afternoon* (1975), *Network* (1976), *Taxi Driver* (1976), and *Marathon Man* (1976). Not incidentally, this list includes any number of films that were nominated for Academy Awards as well as many high-grossing productions.

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This essay focuses on two films from the beginning of this cycle, *Midnight Cowboy* (1969), directed by John Schlesinger, and *Klute* (1971), directed by Alan J. Pakula, for their narratives of sex, work, and general urban decline. Both were notably successful with audiences and critics and became part of the larger discourse of antiurbanism, a view with important social and political consequences. *Midnight Cowboy* tells the story of a young man, named Joe Buck (played by Jon Voight), coming to New York from rural Texas to become a male prostitute. He affiliates with a socially marginal character, Rico Rizzo (played by Dustin Hoffman), who offers to teach him the ways of the city and the sex trade. And though success eludes Joe, the film becomes a tale of the evolving relationship between this relative innocent from Texas and a club-footed New York character that embodies the city's trials. The film was nominated for seven academy awards and won three—best picture, best director, and best adapted screenplay. Notably, it was the first x-rated film to win the best picture Oscar and was one of the top-grossing films of the year, earning over \$44 million on a \$3.5 million budget.

In *Klute*, a small-town cop, John Klute (Donald Sutherland), comes to New York in search of his friend, a successful corporate executive, Tom Gruneman, who has vanished in the big city. His search is bankrolled by a man named Peter Cable, who is also a corporate executive and, it turns out, the murderer of Gruneman and several prostitutes. Klute's contact is a young prostitute named Bree Daniels (Jane Fonda), who was one of the last to see Gruneman alive. The film employs many of the conventions of film noir as it chronicles the search for Gruneman and the connection between the cop and the call girl. *Klute* was nominated for two academy awards, best actress and best screenplay, with Jane Fonda winning the Oscar. It grossed \$12.5 million, making it a solid financial success.

To gauge the power of such narratives to elaborate an urban context, one may look no further than the rhetoric of Richard Nixon's 1972 campaign. The president and many of his close advisors well understood that combining antiurbanism and fear—including fear of "unconventional" sexuality—was good politics. Said Vice President Spiro Agnew in 1970, "As long as Richard Nixon is President, Main Street is not going to turn into smut alley."² Jefferson Cowie tells how Nixon, in his right-populist positioning of his campaign of 1972, explicitly sought to define himself as a man who was for law, order, and morality by showing that he was antiurban. Many of his television ads depicted cities as violent places threatening to the white middle class;³ and in the summer of 1971, according to Cowie, an article appeared in the *Wall Street Journal* telling of a memo detailing the president's strategy for the upcoming election, titled "Nixon's plan to maintain an image as a tough, courageous, masculine leader." Cowie goes on to detail a discussion recorded in later 1971 that reveals the president's belief that "civilizations decline when homosexuality rises." Fittingly, Nixon and Spiro Agnew employed campaign rhetoric affirming that they were against "effete" and feminized men, castigating liberals for their "pusillanimous pussyfooting" on matters of foreign policy. Certainly few consumers of such rhetoric believed that such individuals resided in rural Nebraska.

Hollywood's particular interest in New York during the late 1960s and 1970s resulted from a confluence of factors beyond its metaphoric appeal. In 1968, the Motion Picture Association of America, under the leadership of Jack Valenti, issued an age-based rating system for films that replaced a practice of censorship with one that advised consumers as to appropriate film content. Valenti, faced with an industry in financial flux, saw the revised code as a means to appeal to those seeking greater "realism" in Hollywood films—and realism became a kind of short hand for gritty urban textures that often featured scenes of New York City.

Technological developments in the 1960s that made camera and processing equipment lighter and more mobile also encouraged location shoots, allowing directors to emulate and extend the directorial styles associated with French New Wave filmmakers, including Jean-Luc Godard and Francois Truffaut. Francis Coppola, Martin Scorsese, and Peter Bogdanovich, all students of film

history, derived their own methods from these innovators. Furthermore, the relative economic success of some of the early director-driven films, such as *Bonnie and Clyde* (1967), *Easy Rider* (1969), *Midnight Cowboy*, and *The French Connection*, enticed studios to fund other “personal” projects by younger directors, sometimes at their own financial peril.⁴

The glut of feature films shot in New York, unflattering as their portrayal of the city tended to be, was also furthered by the policies of New York mayor John Lindsay’s administration. As a candidate in 1965, Lindsay promised to streamline the cumbersome bureaucratic process of obtaining the permits necessary to shoot films in New York City. In 1966, one of his early acts was to create the Mayor’s Office of Film, Theatre and Broadcasting. It had an immediate impact on production: the number of films shot in 1966 was roughly double that of the year before.⁵

That Mayor Lindsay, the leader of this city facing a massive loss of jobs, abetted the production of so many powerful narratives that portrayed his city as dirty, dangerous, and morally suspect is indeed ironic. But perhaps no one recognized New York City’s precarious economic condition better than its mayor. Film production provided a clean industry to a city in the process of losing all types of productive enterprise. Thus, the city’s efforts could be justified as a means to create jobs and revenue. As job loss continued apace in the late 1960s and 1970s and population declined, New York City increasingly took on the role of film set. As Vincent J. Cannato explains of these productions, “No doubt many of these movies exaggerated New York’s problems, but the image of an increasingly dangerous and chaotic city was real enough. . . . With these portrayals, the image of New York City as a place of danger, decay, and division became solidified in the nation’s mind.”⁶

Midnight Cowboy and *Klute* are distinctly about the sex trade; but they are also about urban life and New York in particular. In the national imagination, New York has been associated with vice since at least the 1840s, a period when the b’hoys of the Bowery—groups of Irish and German working class youths—made headlines with their violent and loutish behavior.⁷ Related images found their ways into early talking pictures, in which the city served as the setting for some of the most lurid of the gangster films, including *The Public Enemy* (1931) and *Bullets or Ballots* (1936), not to mention the overtly sexual *The Divorcee* (1930), Mae West’s *I’m No Angel* (1933), and *Libeled Lady* (1936). *Midnight Cowboy* and *Klute* continue this tradition by employing New York City as a site of, and metaphor for, the extremes of urban existence. But they also recast the role of the city as a marginal place that becomes a destination of choice for those who seek to engage in such behavior. Indeed, these films become part of what Robert Beauregard describes as the discourse of urban decline. Such rhetoric, Beauregard tells us, has the effect of shaping a view of reality. “It [the discourse] legitimates the world as it is. Americans are thereby inclined to be more accepting of the many disruptions and disparities that engulf them, and to acquiesce more readily to society’s dominant interests.”⁸

These two films simultaneously address issues of work and sexuality in an urban setting.⁹ As they help to resituate the city in the national imagination, we might ask how a revised conception of urban life participates in the momentous economic shifts of the period. Indeed, viewed from a certain angle, these films show us the end of an era in American economic and cultural history, a period that began after the Civil War when the burgeoning of industrial production and the mechanization and rationalization of agriculture resulted in a massive migration from rural locales to urban centers. But by the late 1960s cities in the northeastern and midwestern United States were, by almost all measures, failing.¹⁰

Midnight Cowboy and *Klute* in their depictions of urban space and of New York’s geography in particular offer a vision of cities that helps viewers reconceive the physical relationships among apparently discrete geographies, suggesting the relative connection of those spaces, elaborating new terms of interdependence. In effect, through these films—and various others like them—about urban life viewers may begin to develop the geographic perspective that at least

tolerates the globalized economic system of the 1990s and beyond. Such expressions in the realm of popular culture provide a dense point of entry into a moment of significant historical change, allowing an exploration of the terms—material and conceptual—by which the industrial city of the early twentieth century became the city in the service of global enterprise as the twenty-first approached.¹¹

Space, Place, and Uneven Development

Each film begins in a place that is distinctly not New York City, allowing the viewer to apprehend the images that are central to these films in contrast. Each defines its non-New York settings with shots that are framed to emphasize horizontal space, so that we can see the expanse of land in the West and the closeness of families in the exurbs. This framing is distinct from that which emphasizes the vertical lines of New York City. In each film, the emphasis on the horizontal spaces of Texas and Pennsylvania (in *Klute*) defines a central trope of the world beyond New York. In *Midnight Cowboy*, this space is that of the West, a mythic space that resonates with the cult of the individual—even if overcivilization has caused the decay of this tradition. In *Klute*, this horizontal space defines the social closeness of exurban America, a place of families and prosperity—even if that closeness hides transgressive acts and desires. In contrast, the vertical space of New York in both films is dwarfing, socially alienating, and indicative of rigid hierarchy.

The opening shot of *Midnight Cowboy* depicts a blank white frame accompanied by the sound of cowboys and Indians in a movie battle scene. The camera zooms out to reveal a horizontally expansive desert, as a neon sign, “Big Tex Drive-In,” comes to the front of the frame. In this shot, the object that literally cuts the horizontal plane of arid land in half is a movie screen. This screen becomes both a symbol of decay and a symbol of promise. Certainly this arid plain is an uninviting space, but the sounds that accompany this shot tell of a mythic definition of nation, even as the subsequent images show it in the process of being distended.

Since there was once adequate population to support such local enterprise, the viewer can surmise that the demise of the theater defines a demographic shift away from the region, much as it does in the roughly contemporary film *The Last Picture Show* (1971). As the credits play, we follow Joe in close-up and the camera zooms out to locate empty store fronts and idle men sitting on the sidewalk in the town of Big Springs, Texas. Joe hops aboard a bus bound for New York City where, to compensate for the lack of “real men” there, he intends to provide sex for money.

While the reference to Big Springs is general, it adds to our sense of relative geography and historical situation to look at the more specific content of this act of naming. The actual Big Springs is a medium-sized town almost in the center of the state, between Dallas and El Paso. In Joe Buck’s era it was losing population, including Joe. But the 1970s were something of a turning point, and as industrial production in cities like New York continued to decline, by the 1980s places like Big Springs began relatively to prosper. Since this film is about work and relative geographic location, it is instructive to note that Big Springs has since become a manufacturing center, though most jobs are relatively low wage and nonunion, to some degree because of the way in which it has figured in the post-NAFTA era.¹² Viewed through the prism of economic history, Big Springs’s open plains and relative integration into world systems of communication, including good roads, suggest the prospect of industrial development. If we reconsider the space of the drive-in and project some twenty-five years ahead, we might superimpose an industrial plant down the highway from a Wal-Mart.

Klute begins with brief close-ups of two affluent, middle-aged white people and cuts to a wide, horizontally framed shot that emphasizes their closeness. These people, including John Klute, are seated at a rectangular table in a setting defined by the lushness of a verdant yard in the background, the symbol of the modern ex-urban pastoral, denoting comfort, safety, and social

coherence. While *Midnight Cowboy* evokes an earlier romance of the West, *Klute* pictures the suburbs of America as a place where people wear suits to dinner; in effect, the world of late-fifties and early-sixties television situation comedies, productions depicting perfect families with minor and faintly comical problems. The view of this place is slightly ironic, suggesting a social world that existed only in fiction and very myopic views of American family life. But such images do elaborate an ideal vision of America.

As the films proceed, we find that we are not in the suburbs at all. Gruneman and Klute reside some ways beyond New York in Tuscarora, Pennsylvania, a factory town, though the company's corporate center is in New York. Tuscarora is 90 or so miles from Philadelphia and 121 miles from New York City in Schuylkill County, a largely white town in what was once a coal-mining region but which has been in some measure of economic decline since World War II. That it appears as a desirable locale in this film suggests how the scenes shot outside of New York are class bound, picturing not those struggling for work in a depressed region but captains of industry and those with whom they closely associate.

Tuscarora represents a locale where such manufacture could still, as of 1971, take place, since the town was in the center of a reasonably sized population belt but in a region where property demands were relatively weak.¹³ That this location's relative proximity to New York is a matter of the film's narrative shrinks that actual space. In reducing the distance between this region and New York, *Klute* extends the physical space of suburban sprawl. Such a vision of sprawl looks prescient from the perspective of 2005, as commuting two or so hours to New York City has become, if not commonplace, not unheard of. And the perceived necessity of such commuting is a matter of middle-class workers viewing much urban space as undesirable and virtually uninhabitable, which is not to mention its considerable price.

Both films disrupt their allusions to a better past by elaborating the difficulties that define the present. In *Klute*, the film jump-cuts from that perfect Thanksgiving scene to one that shows an empty chair in the same room, which is now darkened. The scene introducing father and husband Tom Gruneman's disappearance emphasizes the isolation of its participants through a succession of close-ups and an occasional cut to a wide shot, which allows us to explicitly contrast this scene to the preceding one. Family and community coherence in this setting was defined by the physical proximity of the people pictured, a closeness accentuated by the horizontal framing of the shots, but now the group has spread apart.

Both films define New York as Manhattan, which is densely populated with both affluent and less affluent people and substantially filled with tall buildings. There is little definition of a middle class and almost no view of materially productive employment, no central characters are married, nor are there any children. Arguably, both movies' plots emanate from this definition of place, a historically current view of New York.¹⁴ Since these films are both about work and the accruing of capital, they situate New York City in a broader geography of exchange, defining it as both an area significant for commerce and a place where goods that may be traded are no longer produced. The only productive enterprise we see is a small loft run by two older Jewish men, a father and son, in which women's clothes are cut and sewn. The workers are largely Hispanic women. The loft is alternately pictured: by night, when Bree visits the older Mr. Goldfarb, it is a place that recapitulates the terms of Victorian paternalism; by day, it is a place where poor women labor. That productive enterprise is pictured in this manner is significant, romantically situating the past and harshly situating the present, even as both temporal references picture the same physical space.

The Goldfarbs' loft shows a type of enterprise that still existed in New York in 1970 and that would continue to exist, though the number of New Yorkers working in the apparel industry had dropped significantly, by over 30 percent, between 1950 and 1965. By the 1960s it had become increasingly a low-wage enterprise and, if unionized, governed by contracts that were either

ignored by employers or riddled with exceptions that allowed manufacturers to reduce wages and benefits to remain “competitive” with nonunion southern shops.¹⁵ Increasingly, as we moved toward the end of the century, such enterprises often employed large numbers of Asian immigrants, both legal and illegal, in dirty and dangerous conditions, often paying below minimum wage.¹⁶

The paucity of enterprises that might employ characters such as Joe Buck and Bree Daniels and pay them decent wages makes the sex trade all the more attractive. Viewed as a type of work, we can see prostitution as a service enterprise but one that has little to do with the movement of capital, more like working in a hotel than selling securities. Joe and Bree assume that proximity to the centers of commerce that drive the nation’s economy will provide opportunity. However, this view employs a perspective that was far more appropriate in the 1920s than in the late 1960s and 1970s. With the advent of modern systems of communication and transportation, the role of cities had shifted significantly and would continue to shift, from centers of all phases of productive enterprise to nexuses of communication that coordinate the far-flung components of such enterprises. New York, in the late 1960s and in the 1970s, was in a moment of transition, one caused by the shift from a regional and then national division of labor to a global means of organization. Explains Diane Perrons of this transition,

While the highly paid control and strategic functions remained in major cities [e.g., New York, London, and Paris] generally in already industrialized countries, the day to day operations were located near to raw materials, labor supplies or markets . . . and correspondingly widely dispersed across the globe. This pattern tended to perpetuate uneven development, as what are perceived as routine activities provide only low wage employment.¹⁷

For Joe and Bree, if they cannot or will not service those who manipulate such enterprises, there is no work that will reward them sufficiently.

Dramatically, *Midnight Cowboy* shows us the relative place of marginal workers almost immediately. *Midnight Cowboy* takes place not in gentrifying West Greenwich Village, the locale of the Stonewall Inn, but in Times Square, where there is a kind of furtiveness and shame that attaches to the sex acts the film depicts. The role of this location and its resonance as a place of relative urban blight become apparent in the first scenes after Joe arrives in New York. As he opens the blinds of his hotel room, our eyes follow his as he looks on the cityscape, which yields a vision of Times Square. What we see is not the glamour of Broadway, or the scale of skyscrapers; we instead see mostly billboards—for Haig and Haig Scotch, Canadian Club, Coca Cola—a low-slung movie marquee, and the chaos of traffic meandering almost without pattern. The color is drab, featuring washed-out pastels.

Times Square becomes one of the central locations of the film and a key visual metaphor of deviance and decline. After this initial scene of Joe in his Times Square hotel, he ventures out walking, seeking the city of his imagination. He finds his way to Fifth Avenue, which is densely populated, but the camera pays particular attention to Joe’s eyes assaying the various well-dressed and remote women. Joe ogles these women and at times maneuvers himself into an inappropriate proximity, which, if noted, is ignored. As Joe continues his hunt, we see a city of opulence. The streets of midtown Manhattan framed by the physical structures of the tall buildings accentuate Joe’s smallness within the cityscape and his excessive closeness to the women he targets.

Eventually he approaches a well-dressed, middle-aged woman crossing Park Avenue with the question, as he leans toward her, “Ma’am, how can I get to the Statue of Liberty?” As he asks this, he and the woman are framed in a midrange two-shot with Park Avenue in the background, shot in deep focus so that he is diminished within an urban canyon. The woman warily “reads” his innocence and is taken aback by it. Joe’s leering, shot in close-up, reveals his intentions, to which she

responds, "You ought to be ashamed of yourself," as she walks away. The New York that defines the beginnings of Joe's experience is indeed the one he envisioned when he migrated from Texas: wealthy women and men who lack his overt "masculinity." But in one sense he has overestimated the cultural distance between New York and Big Springs. Such behavior would be as out of place in rural Texas as it is in Manhattan. But in another sense, he has failed to see how cultural distance is far more a matter of demeanor related to class than it is of proximity and in this failure of analysis misunderstands how truly inaccessible this woman is, even as she stands beside him.

Immediately after this Park Avenue encounter, Joe does "seduce" Cass, a woman walking her poodle who does not object to his breaching of the normative physical distance between them; but, as we see later in their interaction, it is she who is hustling him. When Joe asks her for money, she asks him if he thinks "she's some old slut on Forty-Second Street." Cass's question not only results in Joe paying her, it also highlights what becomes obvious as the film goes on: people in this more prosperous region of New York are attractive, well dressed and self-assured; the city is clean, the buildings are impressive. But Joe finds that he has no place in such environs and is consigned to be relatively close to these spaces, but in a distinct region, Times Square. And while Times Square in a previous era signaled the glamour and possibilities of the city, it is that implied contrast between then and now that animates the film's representation of decay.

The Times Square of *Midnight Cowboy* delineates a central feature of the city Joe Buck and Rico Rizzo inhabit, a different city from that defined by shots of Fifth and Park Avenues. In the first scenes in Times Square we see Joe walk by the male prostitutes dressed like cowboys, while the street itself appears in a state of decay. The crowd, while less dense than that of Fifth Avenue, is also more racially mixed, and not as well dressed, with people too young or too old to participate in the prosperity of the city. Soon, when he is locked out of his room, economic necessity drives Joe to become one of the "cowboys" he has seen in the movie arcades. It is after his initial assignation with an adolescent boy, one that nets him no money, that a long shot finds him pacing the middle of Forty-Second Street, dwarfed and entrapped by the street and its buildings, with the movie marquee advertising *The Twisted Sex* in the foreground. As the film goes on, Joe's increasing comfort within the world defined by Forty-Second Street defines his "urbanization."

Times Square becomes a synecdoche for New York at large and for cities in general, expressing urban decadence and physical decay. By 1960 Times Square's status as a center for runaways and hustlers was a matter of concern to many. Forty-Second Street had long been a gay cruising spot, but its tendency toward commerce and violence was a change. In 1966, with the Supreme Court's decision protecting pornographic expression, the Square saw its legitimate businesses give way to pornographic bookstores, peep shows, and massage parlors. Again, these enterprises were a matter of expedience. The new businesses replaced older, less profitable ones.¹⁸ The sex trade flourished as retail and manufacturing businesses fled.¹⁹ Urban sociologist Robert P. McNamara in his study of the Times Square sex trade provides an evocative description of the place in the years just after Joe's time: "The 1970s and 1980s offered the area no relief from the deterioration and Times Square became a chaotic scene of drugs, sex, and crime. The Deuce and 8th Avenue became a no-man's land of the crack trade. Amid the denizens of porn palaces, con men, hookers, drug dealers, and muggers, Times Square's fall into disrepute reached its nadir."²⁰

As the film goes on, Times Square becomes the city's center of commerce—not Wall Street or Fifth Avenue. In this film about the distinctions among contiguous spaces, and the redefinition of the concept of proximity itself, to be physically close to these more significant centers of trade may be relatively meaningless: to be linked by other more compelling means to those who live, work, and shop there—class, knowledge base, business interest—may be far more meaningful.

Joe's relative proximity to potential clients in New York emphasizes the distinctness of this urban locale, not only for its built features but also for the ways in which its interpersonal space

is socially configured. This becomes all the more notable in the context of the film's composition, as these early scenes of New York quickly follow its opening in Texas. While these New York shots emphasize vertically bound space that literally pushes strangers toward one another, the non-New York scenes emphasize the vast horizontal spaces of the Texas prairie, spaces in which a relative paucity of population both constrains and enables possibility. While we see Joe tormented by the social conformity of small town life, we also see a place that potentially allows physical room for development, both personal and economic.

Strictly in terms of the images of region that mark this film, the distinction of rural and "urban" space provides a visual means of showing the city as a decaying environment, a view that reflects the economic conditions of older U.S. cities of the Northeast and Midwest during the late 1960s and early 1970s. While the West evokes nostalgia, the economically retrenching city has no comparable allure. These films view the city in terms that contrast with their opening scenes. New York appears as declining and, conceivably for the working classes, a place without a future.

In his 1984 study, *Uneven Development*, and then later in *The New Urban Frontier* (1996), the geographer Neil Smith articulates the manner in which capitalist enterprise relies on and creates radically distinct geographies to sustain its dynamism. He finds that these geographies are a matter of the way in which the relative landscape of development is configured and reconfigured by powerful social and economic forces, a process that redefines the value of a given space, and thus its use, and then through its use, its subsequent reevaluation. He explains that urban areas in the northeastern and midwestern United States in the 1960s and 1970s had become less interesting to investors because of their relative high ground rent, a fact that made the possible increase of such rent relatively unlikely. This inescapable cost also made production in such areas uncompetitive in a world where capital and goods were becoming increasingly fluid. Capital sought more dynamic spaces, such as the suburbs and exurbs, and later migrated to regions where costs were a fraction of those in developed regions.

Smith shows how the use value of space is not a matter of its natural geography; rather, he explains that all space is relational and therefore its relative value a matter of human volition based on rational assumptions of how it may be configured to yield profit. Technology has altered both the meaning of space and the meaning of distance, creating new equations for the profitable production and movement of goods. And indeed, both films play with representations of time and space to destabilize these categories and show the power of humans to redefine such concepts.

Joe rides on the bus to New York through a range of distinct physical spaces; initially these are rural, and then more populated. We see Joe sitting behind the driver as an arid southwestern landscape appears out of the bus's window, and then the world changes at irregular rhythms. He arrives in Dallas relatively slowly, and then he is soon amid neon lights and heavy industry and then within reach of New York radio. These irregular connections between time and space—distance traveled and time of traveling portrayed on screen—provide us with a view that suggests modernity has altered the meaning of those terms. What was once a matter of more than a thousand miles and a vast cultural distance now is a few days on the bus, a few hours on a plane, or split seconds on the phone or television. New York and Big Springs are closer than Joe thinks. But Joe has no vocabulary for seeing how technology has altered the relative space between New York and Big Springs, so maintains a view that physical proximity to his market allows for commercial access. He goes to New York to sell sex, but he might be more financially successful if he markets himself in a less immediate form of commerce from a more physically remote locale—like rural Texas. Indeed, Joe's constant "partner" on his bus ride is his transistor radio, which might provide him with a more plastic view of relative time and space, as well as modern commerce, but only if he were to interrogate its power to provide a representation of New York—and one that references sex and sexuality as constituent elements of the city—in a manner that extends its terms of allure far beyond its physical borders.

In *Klute*, Tuscarora's connection to New York is greater than Big Springs's as a matter of proximity, a fact well represented in the films. In John Klute's case, New York is easily reached and part of the world of the Tuscarorans. New York is where Cable and Gruneman go for work, to engage in the business activities of the city; but they also engage New York as a place where one's transgressive self may partake of the various opportunities available. In their world of higher echelon executives, New York is a physical center of both information exchange and vice. The conjoining of these activities is very much a matter of the city in transition, as both activities burgeoned as industrial production subsided. And while New York may seem quite close to Gruneman and Cable who can travel by helicopter or corporate jet, this proximity is further asserted by Klute's nontrip to New York. He simply knocks on Bree's door with no representation of his having traversed any distance ever appearing on screen. Both films play with the connection between temporality and distance, suggesting how modernity has altered their relationship, and the way in which they have become relative can enable a far-flung model of commerce.²¹

And the class implications of such a model of trade also extend to a range of social interactions; for example, in the matter of housing this issue of relative proximity and closeness becomes a matter of class rather than of geography: a resident of Manhattan may live only a mile or so from an East Harlem housing project and possess a town house with a value of several million dollars. But that individual may have more contact with an estate owner from New Jersey or Westchester County. Each of these films pictures a neighborhood on the verge of substantial gentrification, poised between desolation and the rebuilding and habitation of those areas by a largely white, substantially middle-class group of "urban pioneers," individuals who represent the vanguard of the emerging new economy of the late 1980s and 1990s.²² For these gentrifiers, proximity does matter, as it brings their residences into an orbit of other property owners with whom they share elements of upbringing, class, and race, even if they are not quite in their league in matters of wealth.

In *Midnight Cowboy*, Joe and Rico Rizzo squat in a condemned tenement on the Lower East Side. As the building next door undergoes demolition, Joe and Rico walk by an ever-growing pile of rubble to enter their squat. This debris suggests that Rico's own residence will soon be facing the same fate, further providing a sense of urgency to his desire to move to Florida. In broader terms, such demolition signifies the beginnings of redevelopment, as the expense of razing one structure is justifiable only when there is some hope that the land on which that derelict structure stood has some substantial worth as a site for redevelopment. Demolition illustrates the point at which values have hit bottom and investors see the prospect of a market for new construction; in effect, in the near future Joe and Rico would be displaced by the forces of gentrification. Indeed, such a process was well at work to the west of their hovel, as West Greenwich Village was beginning to make the transition, a change that would take place over the next decade or so, from counterculture center to a district of increasing affluence.²³

Not incidentally, this glimpse of a gentrifying city is also a matter of one of its culminating scenes. Joe and Rico, while sitting in a coffee shop, are given a flyer by two "characters," as Rico calls them, inviting them to a party. The area of the city where this event takes place is still in the rudiments of redevelopment, but the fact that middle-class artists have discovered the underutilized spaces of the city represents an early phase on gentrification. This gathering of "freaks" signifies an alternative space for Joe and Rico to ply their wares, a market that is neither Times Square nor Park Avenue. A woman who, despite her association with these artists, has a corporate veneer buys Joe's services. Despite Joe's initial inability to perform, he seems to have found his market and is possibly on the road to success in his chosen profession. The party and this client represent the emergence of urban "pioneers," revealing that the bohemian bourgeoisie is finding its way to the margins of Manhattan. Paradoxically, however, though this migration may be good for commerce, it seems possible that soon Joe and Rico will have no place to live. Explains Smith in his discussion of the role of the art industry in the gentrification of the Lower East Side during the 1980s,

For the real estate industry, art tames the neighborhood, refracting back a mock pretense of exotic but benign danger. It depicted the East Village as rising from low life to highbrow. Art donates a salable neighborhood “personality,” packaged the area as a real estate commodity and established demand.²⁴

Joe benefits from his lack of sophistication, becoming part of the novelty of the gentrifying city. However, as development burgeons, it is likely that he will himself become increasingly marginalized.

Bree Daniels and John Klute live in somewhat better circumstances, and their danger is not so much a matter of location as the fact that Bree is being stalked. Nevertheless, her Harlem apartment consists of one large room and is often shot through a dingy skylight. The streets are dirty, as are the entryway and stairway to her building. Klute sleeps in the basement of this structure, in a cell-like room that has no window and no furniture but a cot. Such relative squalor situates the declining city in a way that brings attention to the historical fact that by the late 1960s and early 1970s, there had been broad disinvestment in the city’s housing stock, an economic condition that is also connected to the decline of the middle class as a presence in Manhattan. Unlike the Lower East Side, which was about to become highly desirable as a site for gentrification, the politics and economics of race would make Harlem a place where demand for housing would never be as low as it was in Rico’s neighborhood in the late 1960s, nor would it be as high as it was in that neighborhood some thirty years later. Thus, we see Bree and Klute’s residence amid relative squalor that is fairly stable.²⁵

While there were any number of local policies—the ineffectiveness and corruption of the police, tax polices, and so on—that exacerbated New York’s decline and the sense of its decline, a broader view situates it within a changing world system of exchange.²⁶ The chronology represented in the films is one defined by economic historians as the time of transition between the postwar economic system elaborated in from 1944 to 1946 and the less encumbered routing of capital that marked the 1990s, the period in which multinational corporations dominated a far-flung global economy. The postwar system was defined by the Bretton Woods treaty, which pegged international exchange rates and established the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank. By the late 1960s, with the United States no longer the clear center of world production, the Bretton Woods system was no longer having its desired effects. Domestic spending as a result of the ongoing war in Vietnam and the Great Society programs, and competition from Japan and Germany in particular, created deficits that were draining the United States of its gold reserves and driving the economy into recession.²⁷ The Bretton Woods era and the later globalized system are related but marked as distinct by the U.S. government’s renunciation of the gold standard in 1973, which allowed the relative value of national currencies to float on the international market, creating fluidity in capital circulation and, as a result, in investment and production.²⁸

The role of the United States in the production of manufactured goods shifted gradually and eventually became a national phenomenon. But its first symptoms occurred in the cities of the Northeast, both large and small—New York, Boston, Philadelphia, Springfield, Massachusetts, Hartford, Buffalo, and Newark—as these urban locations found their manufacturing base eroding during the 1940s and 1950s. It next became apparent in the centers of heavy industry in the Midwest—Detroit, Cleveland, and Pittsburgh—as the production of steel and automobiles declined precipitously in the 1960s and 1970s. The process we see in motion is that of capital seeking out new venues for cheap production, leaving behind the unions of an earlier era, as well as a range of other infrastructural costs.²⁹

Such a shift signifies a transitional moment within the capitalist epoch, with New York serving as its symbolic “case.” Neil Smith explains that one of the paradoxes of capitalism is the way in which urban infrastructure constitutes fixed capital in that it represents investments that cannot

be moved to more suitable geographies. Such an infrastructural buildup has its own history and its own cyclical significance within a discrete regional, interregional, and international economy.³⁰ In the late 1960s New York City and cities like it were undergoing substantial capital flight. In these films we see the impact of such flight in the deterioration of the built environment and the paucity of available work. Though both of these characters experience different financial results from the sex business, both recognize that the prospects for reasonable gain outside of that trade are limited and are in the area of service or entertainment. In a moment of despair and with his money running out, Joe momentarily considers the prospect of working as a dishwasher, a job he had in Big Springs, but chooses not to. Bree on the other hand, actively seeks to work as an actress but is never hired. Both films locate the alternative to the sex trade outside New York, where one may assume a different position in the world of social and economic relations.

In more concrete terms, both of these films concern themselves with how individuals who are on the lower end of the economic scale make a living. Both films define sex for money as a particularly urban phenomenon, an instance where physical proximity reaches its point of excess, an insight stemming from the broader economic fact that more successful individuals have assimilated the fact of the postindustrial economy: more economically developed—more uniformly prosperous—locations and individuals are those who can either strategically employ or transcend their geographies—as those in the other, more prosperous, New York are able to do. For the “other” class, New York becomes an ensnaring location, limiting the prospects of leaving. The characters featured in these films experience the city as site degradation.

Housing patterns show that any number of residents, primarily those of the waning middle class, were moving to non-New York environs. Not surprisingly, many of those leaving had formerly been employed in relatively lucrative industrial-sector, primarily union jobs. As the U.S. economy, and particularly its urban economy, in the early 1970s and 1980s shifted away from such activities, cities in the Northeast gradually remade themselves, with varying results, as centers of a new economy. In New York, this change was dramatic. John Mollenkopf and Manuel Castells tell us, “The shift toward corporate, nonprofit, and public services produced important changes in the city’s labor market at a time when racial succession and immigration were simultaneously reshaping the city’s population and labor force.” The decline of good-paying work in the production sector accelerated a trend that saw white ethnic families leave the city in large numbers during the late 1950s and 1960s, to be replaced by new immigrants, female-headed households, and eventually white male professionals. Mollenkopf and Castells go on to elaborate,

New York has thus been transformed from a relatively well-off, white and blue-collar city into a more economically divided multiracial white-collar city. These transformations had a strong impact on space and place. The magnificence of the Manhattan central business and shopping district and the resurgence of luxury residential areas may be juxtaposed with the massive decay of the city’s public facilities and poor neighborhoods.³¹

These films define the beginning of this process in their visual terms, dwelling on the decline of public space, showing clear distinctions between regions of the city and defining who belongs to which sector.

In *Klute*, Bree guides Klute through a subterranean city defined by the sex trade. This world updates images of various film noirs from the late 1940s and 1950s, as this enterprise largely defines the city, much as corruption in politics and business defined the city in Robert Rossen’s *Body and Soul* (1947), Abraham Polonsky’s *Force of Evil* (1948), and Jules Dassin’s *Naked City* (1948).³² These noir conventions include a voice-over narrator, severe high- and low-angle shots, and high-key lighting. Bree introduces Klute to her amoral former pimp, a madam who tells of a man from Grosse Point who likes to scrub her bathtub (Mr. Clean), and a storefront porn theater.

But all of these encounters take place in only private or quasi-public space—the pimp’s overdecorated apartment, the madam’s rooftop patio, and a badly lighted storefront. We never see sex workers on the street, nor are there many street scenes at all. Where Joe inhabits the afflicted city, the various characters of low morality that define *Klute* afflict the city, so that interior space becomes a place for deviance. Though *Klute* comes to New York because of his regard for the missing person, his attachment to Bree draws him into the ever-present world of drugs and prostitution. This world of immorality is the shadow of a more conventional life that we cannot quite see. And as Bree points out, that conventionality merely hides a deeper perversion.

Klute’s vision of New York’s interiors reveals an afflicted city, virtually the opposite of the vibrant urban community Jane Jacobs had lauded in 1961.³³ Where Jacobs saw the commercial life of the street as the key to urban vitality and safety, *Klute* depicts a city where vice has moved indoors because the life that exists on the street is too squalid and violent. The exterior shots of New York feature almost no glamour; the film primarily depicts New York as a place where voyeurs strain to see the sordid acts that take place beyond its doors and windows, an emphasis that is an explicit formal strategy. It is no accident that streetwalkers, the lower rung of prostitutes, are those who are murdered.

And though Bree does consort with some element of prosperous New Yorkers, she only fleetingly encounters such people. As in *Midnight Cowboy*, *Klute*’s city is a place where those who do not prosper are all but shut out of the world of the successful. Such a vision signals something of a departure. Historically U.S. cities had been, since the onset of industrialization in the nineteenth century, and particularly with its acceleration after the Civil War, both the symbol and the engine of prosperity. This is not to say that there was not a tradition of antiurbanism within U.S. culture. But coexisting with that tradition was the fact of the city’s economic dynamism. This fact resulted in the demographic shift of an overwhelming majority of the U.S. population to cities. By 1970 approximately 74 percent of the nation’s population was living in urban areas.³⁴ Cities, partially as a result of the pressures that a rising population put on real estate, became places where people of various classes lived in relative proximity to one another.³⁵ In the 1970s and 1980s, with New York, and Manhattan in particular, becoming increasingly a two-tiered economic system, this was less true. Adrienne Winghoff-Heritier notes the middle-class flight in the period around 1980:

For most households with an annual income around \$40,000 life in Manhattan had become too expensive. And for social and racial reasons, it no longer seems acceptable in many parts of Brooklyn and the Bronx. As a result, many middle-class New Yorkers withdrew to the suburbs. . . .

While the white and (to some extent the black middle class) can escape expensive or deteriorated living conditions in the inner city, the poor are the prisoners of the city, unable to leave it behind for a more pleasant life in the suburbs.³⁶

These films of Manhattan depict this increasing segregation by class.³⁷

Such segregation, viewed within the context of world trade, reveals that by the late 1960s the postwar system of economic organization among the United States and its allies was under duress. Various economic historians place the center of this disruption between 1965 and 1973, a time, as Robert Brenner notes, when formerly omnipotent U.S. producers were experiencing reduced rates of return on investment, with profit falling by a rate of 43.5 percent.³⁸

In such an economic environment, relatively unskilled younger workers like Bree and Joe Buck had few legitimate employment opportunities that would promise significant economic return. They resituate sex as a commodity that speaks to that condition. In such a view, the commodification of sex becomes a symptom of the catastrophic success of consumer capitalism in having turned all human activity into a transaction of goods. *Midnight Cowboy* and *Klute* help to define

a moment of transition, a time between the decline of the city that burgeoned with industrialization in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries and a certain type of gentrified rebirth. Fittingly, they show the sex business as primarily a buyer's market. Sex work becomes like any other kind of unskilled labor—devalued by its oversupply.

The New York of these films, in effect, mirrors the economic situation found in developing countries where traditional units of economic self-sufficiency—families, clans, and villages—are being eroded by market systems of exchange. In such a condition, a significant number of women who migrate to the city work as prostitutes who serve relatively prosperous males of their own nationalities, and at times foreign visitors—some of whom travel to that locale primarily to partake in the sex trade.³⁹ Like these women, Joe migrates from an underdeveloped locale to partake of a relatively marginal existence within a more developed place; and Bree's clients, like those of some number of those women in developing locales, tend to be visiting businessmen. As the city situates our protagonists as workers in a rapidly changing economy, one that is beginning to become involved in far-flung systems of trade, we can project that the sex trade itself is about to become an increasingly global industry in the 1990s, providing the motivation for international migration, as women move, or are moved, to cities in nations with higher standards of living.⁴⁰ What they often find is a system of virtual slavery and a permanent place on the social margins.⁴¹ And despite the vicissitudes of such work, it is possible that in the later century both Joe and Bree would find themselves under further economic duress as sex workers from outside of the United States find their way to New York.

Finally, these films show us the degree to which economic success is a matter of adapting to the ethos of the postmodern city. New York is too unpredictable for Bree to remain safe and too limited in opportunity for her, or Joe, to find sufficiently remunerative work. The cautionary tale of her life spills over as a lesson for Joe: the sex trade is no way to make a living.

The Escape from New York

Neither film resolves its plot in New York: each ends with its couple leaving New York in search of a better life. In both films this out-migration suggests to us that life in New York can never be anything but arduous and perverse. The world beyond is depicted elliptically, but the viewer is led to believe that it is a land of the possible. In *Midnight Cowboy*, Florida, Joe and Rico's destination, is potentially the anti-New York, and in *Klute*, the joining of Klute and Bree as a conventional couple can take place only in the somewhere beyond the city, as New York becomes the geographic barrier to "normal" American life.

Midnight Cowboy offers the more explicit resolution. Joe and Rizzo take the bus to Florida, a locale that Rico repeatedly asserts will deliver him from his physical infirmities and the squalor of his life. In his final days in New York, Rico seems to literally succumb to his environment, as he becomes more disheveled and obviously febrile. Says Rizzo in close-up so that we can see the fear on his face, "I can't walk. Do you know what they do to people who can't walk?" Such a sentiment grows from a vision of urban life as pitiless, and both men resolve to leave as quickly as possible.

Their need to leave the city sends Joe back to Forty-Second Street. As Joe sees the necessity of removing Rico from New York, he becomes a far more effective economic being, changing from a benign hustler to a cold-blooded thief and assailant, entrapping a middle-aged man whom he beats and robs. Joe has apparently learned how to make money as a hustler, casually allowing himself to be picked up at an arcade. The camera shows us his craftiness through two-shots of him and his john, named Townie, as they proceed to Townie's hotel.

Once they enter the room, the two men are shot in a sequence of close-ups. When they enter the same frame, Joe has become a menacing presence looming over his victim. In response to Townie's offer of \$10 for him to leave, Joe informs him that "it's not enough," empties his wallet,

and beats him bloody. The close-ups of Joe striking Townie with a telephone capture his face contorted by rage; low-angle shots show his presence enlarged. This act of attaining money defines him as having mastered the ways of the city, but it has transformed him. It is through this culminating act of urban desperation that Joe recognizes the necessity not only of taking Rico away but also of getting away himself. This transformation of Joe confirms the economic lesson: in a world defined by the absence of amenities, one must get money at any cost—or migrate to a different world.

As the bus traverses the interstate, the skies brighten and the world becomes greener. On leaving they take on new personas, as Ratso asserts that he should be referred to only as Rico, since that was the reason to leave, to start anew. When they reach the Florida, Joe casts off his cowboy clothes and declares his wish, in a close-up, to “get some sort of job. Cause hell, I ain’t no kind of hustler. There must be an easier way to make a living than that.” As he declares his intention to get outdoor work, the camera cuts to a two-shot of Rizzo and Joe, revealing that Rizzo has died. The film ends as the bus pulls into Miami and Joe, wearing his pastel shirt and chinos, blends into a milling crowd. Though it is difficult to picture Joe as a success story, it is clear from the moment the bus crosses into Florida—where he is greeted by the freckled and friendly young waitress at the coffee counter, who wishes him well—that he has entered a less hostile world.

Klute offers a slightly more ambiguous judgment of the New York effect. Bree sees her tormenter killed, as Klute saves her by knocking Cable through a window. While this resolves the question of who is stalking Bree and what has happened to Gruneman, it does not resolve the problem that is Bree’s life. The scene cuts to a two-shot before the fireplace in Bree’s apartment, with Bree on the floor and Klute in a chair, her head in his hands, asserting both domesticity and submission. We then see her apartment, emptied of furniture, with Klute distant in a long shot and off center, as Bree’s voice-over tells her therapist, “Whatever is in store for me, it’s not going to be setting up house-keeping in Tuscarora.” Bree enters the scene, and as she leaves, Klute follows her, both with suitcases in their hands as the voice-over tells the therapist, “I have no idea what’s going to happen. I just can’t stay in the city.”

The United States that exists outside of the boundaries of New York offers at least hope. As our protagonists reach out to the world of another America, their actions suggest a cultural resolution to the film’s economic problems. Both films leave us to assume that the problems of making a living may be resolved in the world beyond New York, that Joe in his “Average Joe” clothes might live gainfully and productively in south Florida; that Bree, with her straight-John husband will leave New York, and perhaps her neuroses, behind and set up housekeeping in Pennsylvania. Such a perspective well blends with the antiurban rhetoric of the day, where structural problems of the national economy were cast politically as moral problems of urban behavior. Such antiurban rhetoric only exacerbated existing economic trends. Capital and population flight were a matter of the general movement toward an increasingly globalized economy, but one that was made more palatable by the general sense that cities like New York, as depicted in these films and elsewhere, were not only in a state of chaos, but that they were in, but not really of, America.

Declaration of Conflicting Interests

The author(s) declared no conflicts of interest with respect to the authorship and/or publication of this article.

Funding

The author(s) received no financial support for the research and/or authorship of this article.

Notes

1. Urban crime was a regular feature of both national and local news, particularly the riots in Watts in 1965 and in Detroit and Newark in 1967. Related images of violence and squalor were featured in any number of police dramas, including *McCloud*, *NYPD*, *Kojak*, and others.
2. Quoted in Rick Pearlstein, *Nixonland: The Rise of a President and the Fracturing of America, Volume 2* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 2008), 530.
3. One ad had Nixon facing the camera and saying, "There is no cause that justifies the rule by mob instead of by reason," in James David Barber, *The Pulse of Politics: Electing Presidents in the Media Age* (New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Publishing, 1992), 301; while another showed a middle-aged woman in an obvious urban setting clutching her hand bag in fright as the voice over recites, "Crimes of violence have almost doubled in recent years. Today a violent crime is committed almost every 60 seconds, etc." Karen S. Johnson-Cartee and Gary Copeland, *The Manipulation of the American Voter: Political Campaign Commercials* (Westport, CT: Praeger, 1997), 159-60. Another defining episode in the Nixon administration's treatment of sex and morality was its response to the September 30, 1970, Presidential Commission on Obscenity and Pornography's final report, stating that all laws prohibiting the sale of pornography to adults should be repealed. The report of the commission immediately became a galvanizing political document, with the Nixon administration denouncing it within days of its announcement. See Peter Braunstein, "Adults Only: The Construction of an Erotic City in New York During the 1970s," in Beth Bailey and David Farber, eds., *America in the 70s* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2004), 129-56.
4. For an entertaining discussion of this period, and one that illuminates some of the period's most celebrated directors, including William Friedkin, Francis Coppola, and Martin Scorsese, see Peter Biskind, *Easy Riders, Raging Bulls: How the Sex-Drugs-and-Rock 'n' Roll Generation Saved Hollywood* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1998). Also see Aniko Bodroghkozy, "Reel Revolutionaries: An Examination of Hollywood's Cycle of 1960s Youth Rebellion Films," *Cinema Journal* 41 (Spring 2002): 38-58, for his well-documented discussion of Hollywood's search for the youth market.
5. See the Web site of the Mayor's Office of Film, Theatre and Broadcasting for a full history (http://www.nyc.gov/html/film/html/office/history_moftb.shtml). In 1974, Lindsay's initiative was further sweetened by Abe Beame, whose Mayor's Advisory Council on Motion Pictures and Television recruited investment in productions. Also see Vincent J. Cannato, *The Ungovernable City: John Lindsay and His Struggle to Save New York* (New York: Basic Books, 2001), 561-62.
6. Cannato, *Ungovernable City*, 562.
7. See Vincent DiGirolamo, "Such, Such Were the B'Hoys . . .," *Radical History Review* 90 (2004): 123-41.
8. See Robert Beauregard, *Voices of Decline: The Postwar Fate of US Cities*, 2nd ed. (New York: Routledge, 2003), 245.
9. See Daniel Lazare, *America's Undeclared War: What's Killing Our Cities and How We Can Stop It* (New York: Harcourt, 2001) for an extensive discussion of antiurbanism in U.S. thought and policy, but particularly 191-211 for a detailing of how post-World War II policies created massive subsidies for racially segregated suburbanization, paying whites to move out of cities and trapping African Americans in decaying urban centers. Also see Douglas Noe, *City: Urbanism and Its End* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2003) for his discussion of how public housing inadvertently froze an under class in cities with a declining industrial base during the 1950s and 1960s, 278-82.
10. Beauregard, *Voices of Decline*, 150-78, 181-97.
11. Not incidentally, in 1975 President Gerald Ford denied the city government's request for assistance in meeting its obligations to bond holders, resulting in New York defaulting on its debt. The famous headline in the October 30, 1975, edition of the New York *Daily News* was "Ford to City: Drop Dead."
12. See <http://www.bigspringtx.com/>, the city's Web site.

13. See <http://www.idcide.com/citydata/pa/tuscarora.htm> and <http://www.city-data.com/city/Tuscarora-Pennsylvania.html> for details on Tuscarora. Tuscarora is 91 miles from Philadelphia and 121 miles from New York.
14. See, e.g., Richard Harris, "The Geography of Employment and Residence in New York Since 1950," in John H. Mollenkopf and Manuel Castells, eds., *Dual City: Restructuring New York* (New York: Russell Sage, 1991), 129-52.
15. See Joshua B. Freeman, *Working-Class New York: Life and Labor since World War II* (New York: New Press, 2000), 145-47.
16. Roger Waldinger, *Still the Promised City: African Americans and New Immigrants in Post-Industrial New York* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1996), 137-55.
17. Diane Perrons, *Globalization and Social Change: People and Places in a Divided World* (New York: Routledge, 2004), 66.
18. David Harvey, *Justice, Nature and the Geography of Difference* (Cambridge, MA: Blackwell, 1996), 316-17.
19. See James Traub, *The Devil's Playground: A Century of Pleasure and Profit in Times Square* (New York: Random House, 2004), 116-24.
20. Robert P. McNamara, *The Times Square Hustler: Male Prostitution in New York City* (Westport, CT: Praeger, 1994), 20-21.
21. See Harvey, *Justice, Nature*, 207-326, for an evocative discussion of the changing relationships between time and place through modernity and postmodernity.
22. See Neil Smith, *Uneven Development: Nature, Capital and the Production of Space* (Oxford, UK: Basil Blackwell, 1984), 97-130, and *The New Urban Frontier: Gentrification and the Revanchist City* (New York: Routledge, 1996), 51-89.
23. See Smith, *New Urban Frontier*, 92-118, for a discussion of the economics of gentrification and William K. Tabb, *The Long Default: New York City and the Urban Fiscal Crisis* (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1982), 89-106.
24. Smith, *New Urban Frontier*, 19.
25. *Ibid.*, 140-64.
26. For a discussion of the Knapp Commission's investigation into police corruption in 1970 and the hearings that resulted in 1971, see Cannato, *Ungovernable City*, 466-78; for a fairly conservative political and economic analysis of New York's road to default and one that primarily focuses on city policy and its relationship with municipal workers unions, as well as its participation in the New Deal welfare state, see Siegel, *The Future Once Happened Here: New York, D.C., L.A., and the Fate of America's Big Cities* (New York: Free Press, 1997), 197-212.
27. For overviews of this process, see Robert Brenner, *The Boom and the Bubble* (New York: Verso, 2002); Giovanni Arrighi, *Long Twentieth Century: Money, Power, and the Origins of Our Times* (New York: Verso, 1994); and Immanuel Wallerstein, *World-Systems Analysis: An Introduction* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2004), 60-100.
28. See Neil Smith, *The Endgame of Globalization* (New York: Routledge, 2005), 122-48, for a lucid discussion of this change in the U.S. economy and in the relationships among various regional producers.
29. Tabb, *Long Default*, 110-12.
30. Smith, *New Urban Frontier*, 80-83.
31. Mollenkopf and Castells, "Introduction," in John H. Mollenkopf and Manuel Castells, eds., *Dual City: Restructuring New York* (New York: Russell Sage, 1991), 7-8.
32. For a discussion of the urban contours of 1940s and 1950s film noir, see Peter Dickos, *Street with No Name: A History of Classic American Film Noir* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 2002), 62-95, and Edward Dimendberg, *Film Noir and the Spaces of Modernity* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2004), 21-85.
33. See Jane Jacobs, *The Death and Life of Great American Cities* (New York: Random House, 1961), 35-38.

34. See <http://www.census.gov/population/censusdata/table-4.pdf> for these and related demographic statistics. New York's population rose from 3,437,202 in 1900 to 7,781,984 in 1960, but the city lost population from 1960 to 1980. Cities in the East and Midwest, such as Chicago, Philadelphia, Detroit, Baltimore and Milwaukee, reported similar patterns of increases and decreases in population during these periods.
35. Douglas Noe's discussion of interclass residential patterns in earlier twentieth-century New Haven connects such residential patterns to the health of the city itself. *City: Urbanism*, 116-35.
36. Adrienne Windhoff-Heritier, *City of the Poor, City of the Rich: Politics and Policy in New York City* (Berlin and New York: Walter de Gruyter, 1992), 16-17.
37. Brenner, *Boom and Bubble*, 16-17, and Ellen Meiksens Wood, *Empire of Capital* (New York: Verso, 2003), 118-42. Also see Mollenkopf and Castells, "Introduction," 1-17, and Michael Peter Smith, *City, State, and Market*. (New York and Oxford, U.K.: Basil Blackwell, 1988), 87-117.
38. Samuel Rosenberg, *American Economic Development since 1945* (New York: Palgrave, 2003), 164-71. See, e.g., John Agnew, *The United States in the World Economy: A Regional Geography* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1988), 69-88. The rupture of this system had significant economic implications: European economies that were deeply involved with that of the United States also experienced retrenchment. As the United States sought for its major creditors to forego the conversion of their surplus dollars for gold, currency crises were triggered throughout Western Europe.
39. Perrons, *Globalization and Social Change*, 113-17.
40. Joanna Brewis and Stephen Linstead, *Sex, Work and Sex Work: Eroticizing Organization* (New York: Routledge, 2000), 190-91.
41. See Rosemary Hennessey for an intriguing discussion of the sexual division of labor at the point of industrialization in the United States during the late nineteenth and early twentieth century in *Profit and Pleasure: Sexual Identities in Late Capitalism* (New York: Routledge, 2000), 25.

Bio

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