The P(leisure) City and Gerontechnology

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C.H. Doevendans. The P(leisure) City and Gerontechnology. Gerontechnology 2009; 8(4):209-219; doi: 10.4017/gt.2009.08.04.007.00 Where theories of the modern city aimed for prosperity, health and hygiene, this contribution argues that the conditions of the experience economy and the so-called post-city have altered severely cultural views on health and well-being. The city has evolved from the metaphor of the machine (functional, productive) to the metaphor of the network. For gerontechnology these general developments make important changes. Health, for instance, is no longer a question of division between healthy and sick, but something to be maintained every day. Consumerism and hyper-consumerism are criticized for simulating experiences, but nevertheless also express a utopian nature that strives for an alternative reality. Every day practices of people are determined by the habit of pleasure and leisure acquired under the influence of consumerist trends and modes which control urban culture, along with the built environment as its scenery, all this supported by ICT and scientific management. Above phenomena can be summarized in the concept of P(leisure) City. This paper argues that pleasure and leisure may have developed too far, but that we do need a broader perspective which includes the experience economy for future social frameworks in gerontechnology.

Keywords: leisure, pleasure, consumerism, experience society, built environment

'But this, all pleasures fancies be…'
John Donne (1572–1631), The Good Morrow[1]

To meet the needs of ageing people, various types of housing have been developed, often based on the extent to which an elderly person is able to function independently, and supported to a greater or lesser extent by gerontechnology. But whether we are talking about service flats, kangaroo homes or complexes for dwelling and care, we should always take into consideration that all these forms of housing are part of a wider built environment and urban culture.

Today this cultural and social context of housing becomes more and more focused on recreation, shopping and leisure. Contemporary sociology describes this phenomenon using terms such as consumerism, the city of middle class consumption, the 'experience' society and economy, or fantasy city. Further it starts developing such symptoms as McDonaldization - when the city becomes similar to a fast food restaurant[2], and

Disneyfication (or Disneyization) – the city perceived as a theme park, a world of fantasy and riskless pleasure[3], or even McDisneyfication, combining both of them. American sociologist George Ritzer in his book 'The MacDonaldization of Society'(first published in 1993)[2] introduced this concept to describe the phenomenon in which society acquires the characteristics of a fast food restaurant and adopts the principles according to which these restaurants function, especially: efficiency, calculability, standardized services and control. It means that every day practices of people are determined by the habit of pleasure and leisure acquired under the influence of consumerist trends and modes which control urban culture, along with the built environment as its scenery, all this supported by scientific management.

In short, all the above phenomena can be summarized in the concept of P(leisure) City. In this article we would like to present our views on the emergence and development of this concept and its relationships with

gerontechnology. Starting from the industrializing city of the late 19th and early 20th century, an attempt is made to review dominant cultural forces and thinking about the urban experience through three stages.

Today's consumerism is not a totally new phenomenon. T. Osborne explained that from at least the 19th century, the city has been represented as promoting a certain type of mentality and sociality, as a consequence of the kinds of pleasures and stimulations that the urban environment offers[4].

P(leisure) City has apparently become by now such a predominant phenomenon that it is even possible to speculate about a new stage in urban development, reflected, for instance, in the so-called experience society and economy. To describe this stage, contemporary sociology uses such terms as post-industrial and postmodern city, or simply post-city, but to give it a strict definition still seems too premature, difficult and risky. How does gerontechnology relate to this new phase of urban culture? Is it an instrument not only aimed at supporting everyday life or relieving pain, but also able to contribute to pleasure and enjoyment? Is it possible to rethink gerontechnology as a potential technology including fun?

HYGIENE AND COMFORT TECHNOLOGY

Let us focus first on the modern city of the 20th century, where the older generation grew up. The concept of this type of city is based on the strive for prosperity, happiness and health, the quest for light, air and space, the deliverance of man from the horrible conditions of the 19th century industrial city where health issues were described in form of epidemics and calamities: the invasion of the urban milieu by cholera or typhus putting its inhabitants at risk of infection[4].

Providing hygiene and comfort was the major ambition for designing and engineering the built environment during the 20th century, the period of development of the modern city, when access to good health was considered to be one of the basic human needs, along with affordable housing, educational opportunities, etc., a fundamental right – right for life – and thus a state responsibility[5]. Urban planning and design were strictly determined by hygienic imperatives and driven by legislative requirements and measures to guarantee the quality of life.

However, this ambition had its disadvantages. The quest for comfort and hygiene became too predominant; philosopher Bruno Latour[6] compared the effect of the good health imperative to the practice of pasteurization or sterilization of the city, and criticized the result of this practice - the deadly dullness of the modern city. And this is true: the modern city is generally judged as monotonous and 'more of the same', boring because of its uncomplicated geometry, as a product of a strictly functional and rational approach from which all romanticism was expelled.

This sanitized city takes as its maxim the utilitarian hedonism of philosopher Jeremy Bentham (1748-1832) known as the greatest-happiness principle: '*Please, act so as to produce the greatest happiness for the greatest number of people*'[7]. This principle was enhanced by the statement of John Stuart Mill (1806-1873) that intellectual and moral pleasures were superior to more physical forms of pleasure[8].

3RD MACHINE AGE

In the period of the industrial city, under the influence of industrialization and mechanization of labor and production, the city was often compared to a machine. The *city as a machine* became the basic metaphor for urban planning and design in the period of the modern city. But now it had to be a health and happiness machine.

Taking this metaphor as point of departure, architectural historian Reynar Banham in his book Theory and History of the 1st Machine Age distinguishes between three phases of urban development, the 1st, 2nd and 3rd Machine Ages[9]. The 1st Machine Age corre-

sponds to the first period of industrialization, which is characterized by important inventions of scientific nature. The second phase -that of the modern city- is characterized by the availability on a massive scale of industrially manufactured products, aiming to make daily life of people more comfortable.

The third phase, the phase of the post-city, shows a further development and refinement of technology, especially information technology, and is characterized by an interaction between man and machine, a mutual entanglement made possible by ICT. It is the phase of ambient intelligence, embedded systems, etc. Also a phase that makes it possible for man to become a cyborg, and wherein robots take command. As nanorobots (small pieces of engineering circulating in blood veins), or as machines to offer support and even pleasure, as relationships between humans and robots develop and the latter become artificial partners in sex life[10].

In this phase also space for dwelling and living has undergone transformation. It has become an intelligent space, a virtual space. So the metaphor of the machine city was substituted by that of the network city. The British sociologist David Beer speaks about the powers of intelligence or thinking of things and space: networked intelligence is being embedded everywhere, in every kind of physical system, both natural and artificial. Routinely events in cyberspace are being reflected in physical space, and vice versa[11].

Taking these developments into consideration, we need to rethink our concept of the neighborhood. ICT creates new types of spatio-temporalities and various online spaces and communities. For instance, Crang, Crosbie and Graham[12] argue that, in assessing neighborhood impacts of ICT, we need to move beyond static descriptions of neighborhood areas. Neighborhoods are too often defined by where people are sleeping, while a move is needed towards an understanding of the dynamic and continually emerging time, space or place. ICT

might make it possible to escape from the traditional tyranny of geography.

This phenomenon also needs, according to Beer[11], detailed attention in the development of social, cultural and urban theories. The social and cultural transformations in the digital 3rd Machine Age should be considered while setting up a new design agenda. As gerontechnology emerged to a great extent as a result of developments in the 3rd Machine Age, it should be incorporated into these new urban theories and design agendas, with universal or inclusive design as its back bone.

Health in the post-city
As in the modern city, access to good health is considered to be one of the human basic needs in the post-city as well. However, it is important to understand that now the notion of urban health is determined not only in relation to specific groups, such as ageing people, but is envisioned in a different, much more comprehensive, way.

Osborne[4] speaks about the elaboration of a 'network' concept and the 'ecology of health'. He concludes that a new image of the healthy city has emerged: the city as a network of living practices of well-being. This is not a matter of imposing some rational, sterile, planned diagram of sanitary existence, says Osborne. Rather, the aim is to configure the forces immanent to urban life, to shape the ecology of the city in order to maximize the processes that would enhance the well-being of its inhabitants individually and in their communities and to minimize threats.

"All aspects of urban life are now understood as factors that can be mobilized in the name of a norm of well-being: health now appears, simultaneously, as a maximization of the values of community, public safety, economic development, and family life. Roads, traffic and pollution, zoning, the design of buildings and open spaces, the organization of shopping locales, and other elements of ur-

ban design are to be suffused with this eco-logical concern for health"[4].

In this new vision of urban health, the very idea of disease in the city has been transformed. Disease, and ill health in general, are envisaged now in relation with human activities (diet and coronary heart disease, smoking and lung cancer, obesity and all types of threats to health) and relationships (unsafe sex and HIV, rave parties and addiction to drugs). We no longer have the sick on the one side, and the healthy on the other. As Osborne notes, in contemporary society we are all, actually or potentially, sick. Health is not a state to be striven for only when one falls ill, it is something to be maintained by what we do at every moment of our everyday lives[4].

(Re-)Enchantment
The modern city was seen by urban planners and designers as a purely rational and functional phenomenon, which is paradigmatic for the general characteristic of modernity. Eminent sociologist Max Weber (1864–1920) has analyzed how this rational and purely scientific approach resulted into secularization and disenchantment of the modern world[13]. Postmodern scholars notice, however, the 're-enchantment' of our world. The renowned social theorist Zygmunt Bauman argues that post-modernity can be seen as restoring to the world what modernity, presumptuously, had taken away; as a re-enchantment of the world that modernity had tried hard to *dis-enchant*[14]. That disenchantment was supposed to be part of modernity's attempt to liberate life from mystery and magic. But it also de-spiritualized and de-animated the world, reducing it to raw material to be shaped by human designs, by instrumental rationality and social engineering. "Left to itself the world had no meaning"- confirms Patrick Sherry[15].

Nowadays many scholars discover various forms of re-enchantment, and not only in the re-emerging individual spirituality, but also as a general phenomenon. Christopher Partridge speaks about culture as 'occulture' and new forms of sacramentality. He describes re-enchantment as a new growth in a secularized, globalized, technologically sophisticated, consumer-oriented landscape – explicitly not as a modern reconstruction of the enchanted landscape of the past[15].

The recovery from the concept of the rational and functional city which suppressed magic, mystery, romanticism and spirituality plays an important role in postmodern consumerism. In the course of city planning debates even the question is raised whether spirituality should not become the core of planning practices, as until now the secular values of planning theory and practice are often indifferent to the religious beliefs of the majority of citizens for whom we plan. Although spirituality and religion are not one and the same, the question remains what their relationship to planning is and what it should be. 'Are we living lives that are in harmony with our own psychological and emotional health? Are we aware of our spiritual as well as our material natures?' The editor of the journal[17] which brings up these questions quotes the famous historian Lewis Mumford[16]: "The segregation of the spiritual life from the practical is a curse".

Should perhaps the emergence of the P(leisure) City concept be placed within the framework of satisfying not only material, but also spiritual needs? Not to mention, of course, the fact that for elderly persons such as the present writer, ICT itself is a form of magic!

Development of consumerism
Consumerism is seen as one of the driving forces in the development of the modern and postmodern city. Urbanism as a way of life[18], which has emerged in the beginning of 20th century, changed gradually into consumerism as a way of life[19]. This does not mean that consumer society was not there yet. Originating from European bourgeois roots, consumerism came forth as the key force in post-war mass society: it became

a general lifestyle - not just limited to the happy few.

The relation between consumerism and technology is obvious. Whilst technological forces command a powerful influence on consumer society, they also furnish consumers with higher standards of living and in some regards greater modes of expression[19].

Today once again we face a change in consumerism as a lifestyle, due to new possibilities offered by technology, for instance ICT. The shift from 2nd to 3rd Machine Age, from modern city to post-city, perfectly fits into the development of consumerism as analyzed by French sociologist Gilles Lipovetsky[20]. In the post-city consumerism becomes an individual lifestyle which includes answering to non material and non rational needs, and thus starts playing a sacramental role.

Lipovetsky[20] distinguishes three stages in the development of consumerism in which we can easily recognize Banham's periods of the Machine Age. The first stage, which started at the end of the 19th century, was characterized by rapid production and distribution of goods. This was the birth of modern consumerism. After WWII the second stage started when the modern city came to completion, and consumerism rapidly increased. Vacuum cleaners, refrigerators, washing machines, and cars came within reach of everyone. Consumption became fulfillment of daily necessities by means of housing, clothing, food, home appliances, sex, etc. People could even achieve a higher social status while possessing cars or houses which distinguished them from their neighbors.

Urbanism at the time of the 2nd Machine Age was fundamentally focused on the merits of ordinary daily life determined by four major functions: living, working, recreation and transport. Living was supposed to be realized in areas with very low density and a lot of greenery. Pleasure and happiness were considered to be equal to usefulness, and as many people as possible should be able to profit from them. For this reason the city had to be organized by separating the functions mentioned above. This was the kernel of modern urbanism with its conventional view on urban health. Pleasure and happiness were mainly seen as an absence of pain, the world as a smooth experience.

Although in the stage of the post-city, this objective, of course, still remains important and respectable, assumptions of city life undergo visible changes. Functions are mixed, density is raised and sensations, adventures and urban experiences become more and more important. Hedonism is no longer seen in general terms of the greatest-happiness-for-all principle, it becomes individual hedonism.

Describing this stage, contemporary scholars use different indicators. Zygmunt Bauman[21] identifies it as a next stage of modernity: liquid modernity. Liquid modernity refers to a period when new forms of consumption form a shift from the functionality of needs to the diffuse plasticity and volatility of desire. "The solidity of the 2nd Machine Age has gone, and individuals have to produce the continuity no longer provided by society", Bauman writes[21]. Benjamin Barber is more negative when speaking about the naïve consumer [22]. Probably it is not possible yet to develop a theoretical framework for contemporary consumerism, as this phase focuses on freedom and happiness of the individual and individuals are driven by many different aspirations[23]. Gilles Lipovetsky[20] denotes this stage as hyper-consumerism, where the hypermodern individual is oriented towards pleasure and hedonism, but is also confronted with a world which has been stripped of tradition and which faces an uncertain future. People now want to buy emotions and illusions, like any other commodity. Hyper consumerism becomes a phenomenon which absorbs and integrates more and more spheres of social life and which encourages individuals to consume for their own personal pleasure rather than to enhance their social status.

Romantic motive

Lipovetsky[20] further argues that current theories fail to analyze the aspirations of the consumer in the hypermodern times of the post-city. How can we understand the motivations of the postmodern 'shopaholic'?

Colin Campbell already indicates in his book '*The Romantic Ethic and the Spirit of Modern Consumerism*'[24] the same shortcomings: current forms of consumerism and hedonism cannot be explained by the rational ethics of functionalism and modernism. Obviously, such factors as utility and rationality are too narrow to define the basis of the post-city. In his attempt to overcome and escape from the deadly dullness of the modern city, the hypermodern consumer is searching for landscapes full of temptation and seduction, of excitement and ecstasy. What he needs now are romantic ethics! That is why consumerism in the post-city is characterized by such features as expectation, imagination and fantasy.

According to Campbell[24], we are dealing with the utopian nature of shopping and consumerism. His starting point in analyzing the postmodern consumption is its imaginary nature. Postmodern consumers are looking for an alternative reality in a form of serious daydreaming, which means that nowadays consumption is losing its materialistic nature. Consumption is acquiring an increasingly symbolic role.

"…. *The idea that contemporary consumers have an insatiable desire to acquire objects represents a serious misunderstanding of the mechanism which impels people to want goods. The basic motivation is the desire to experience in reality the pleasurable dramas which they have already enjoyed in the imagination, and each "new" product is seen as offering a possibility of realizing this ambition*" [24,25].

P(LEASURE) CITY'S EFFECT ON URBANISM AND ARCHITECTURE

The tendencies outlined above created the background for contemporary urban culture and determined the image of the built environment. We are referring to such phenomena as thematization of the built environment, (fun)shopping, leisure and pleasure, experience-society and experience-economy, the spectacle and the sublime, events and entertainment, the symbolic-economy or economy-of-signs.

Describing current developments taking place in our cities, the Dutch sociologist Hans Mommaas[26] denoted the mentioned phenomena as the process of aesthetic symbolization. He speaks of deliberate and integrated 'imagineering' of physical and symbolic environments.

In his book Fantasy City Canadian sociologist John Hannigan[27], to his merit, perceives the early stage of the P(leisure) City as a purely American phenomenon. Hannigan describes the Fantasy City as the end-product of a long-standing cultural contradiction in American society between the middle-class desire for experience and their parallel reluctance to take risks, especially those which involve contact with the 'lower orders' in cities.

His introduction to the 'landscapes of P(leisure)' starts with the movie theaters, Coney Island and Luna Park (1902),of the beginning of the 20th century, and leads us through the drive-in cinema of the 50s and entertainment parks of the 60s and 70s (Texas Six Flags, Disney World), towards multiplex theaters and shopping malls. According to Hannigan, drive-ins in the suburbs were in decline and were replaced by hundreds of new multiplex theaters, built within the precinct of shopping malls which were being erected at a record pace[27].

Later the city itself was developed as a fun area by inner-city redevelopment: water fronts, convention centers, science museums, aquariums. Festival market was created, which was different from traditional shopping centers. Cities are Fun, the Comeback of Downtown was headlined on the

cover of one of the issues of Time Magazine in 1981[27].

In urban development the concept of Rousification was born, named after the real estate developer James Rouse who played a large role in reshaping cities across America. His malls and festival marketplace developments emphasized retail development and attracted visitors. A multitude of projects, in almost all major cities, seek to reshape the real city according to this image of pleasure, not least in order to enter into the competitive market for urban tourism. In these programs and projects, the image of urban space as providing a multitude of spontaneous encounters, of sudden glimpses of architectural oddities and esoteric markets, of bustling yet safe public spaces, this urban experience seen by its celebrants as arising out of the intersection and accumulation of thousands of spontaneous histories and schemes, has been transformed into calculated, rationalized, and repetitive programs for reshaping waterfronts, dockland areas, sites of old buildings, palaces, warehouses, piers, vegetable markets, and the like into tourist attractions. Urban theme parks, each more hyper-real than real[28].

DISNEYFICATION

The process of thematization of the built environment is also denominated as Disneyfication. It means that the principles of Disney theme parks are becoming predominant in more and more sectors of society, creating worlds of pleasure and fun, but… without risk.

Hannigan[27] also speaks about this world according to Disney. He remarks that Disneyfied landscapes such as South Street Seaport in New York or City Walk in Universal City, California, represent what Paul Goldberger[29] termed urbanoid environments, sealed-off private environments purporting to be public places. As such, they contribute to the rise of the 'private city' in which the disorganized reality of older streets and cities is replaced by a measured, controlled and or-ganized kind of urban experience which is intimately linked to a fusion of consumerism, entertainment and popular culture. Such quasi-urban environments, Hannigan maintains, seek to provide all the energy, variety, visual stimulation and cultural opportunities of the real thing, while, at the same time such environments shut out the problems that have come to accompany urban life, notably poverty and crime[27]. In return for the assurance of safety and certainty, Hannigan continues, theme park visitors surrender an extraordinary degree of control, both in terms of freedom of movement and freedom of imagination[27].

British sociologist John Urry[30] considers these disneyfied places in terms of hyper-reality, as simulated experiences which are more real than the original. The visual, reduced to a limited set of features, is excessive and dominates the other senses. In his turn, theologian Graham Ward draws comparisons between this phenomenon and the baroque culture, which is built on the experience of the sublime, and is often denominated today as the personal fascination, but originally emerged as a hybrid experience of fear and satisfaction[31].

In the 70s, when consumerism was too shallow to meet the fundamental existential needs of people, this experience of the sublime was referred to as a critical notion. Consumerism was short of emotions, adventure, thrill and risk. In urbanism the so called psychogeographical map of a city showed marginal places and sites, loose spaces as the counter-site of the consumerist sites. These places and spaces were not determined by the mechanism of consumer society. They were rather the stage for man as *Homo ludens* (playing human)[32]. The experience of the sublime was seen in its twofold dimension: fascinating and horrible, amusing and frightening at the same time.

As for Disneyfication, it focuses only on the pleasure side; adventure and risk are banished. Therefore from the point of view

of Graham Ward Disneyfication leads to kitsch[31]. And the kitsch geography which is created by urban developers is no longer limited to inner cities and shopping malls, but also to daily living: thematic residential neighborhoods, often realized as retro-architectural or thematized dwellings. Maybe we can even state that *Homo ludens*, living in these thematized environments, has been encapsulated in consumerism as a hyper-consumer?

P(LEISURE) CITY AND GERONTECHNOLOGY

Technology, including gerontechnology, is rooted in the 2nd phase of the Machine Age. It meets the imperatives of that period: health and hygiene, pain relief, convenience and support of a comfortable everyday life.

But it clearly also has the characteristics of the 3rd phase of the Machine Age, especially in what concerns the intertwining of man and machine.

For sure ICT changes our day-to-day world: it creates new technological possibilities to support everyday life and opens new modes of expression and communication, which is fundamental for gerontechnology. This also means that: gerontechnology is part of virtual and digital space in which elderly people are living, and which creates new types of spatiotemporalities different from traditional spatiotemporal units such as the neighborhood[12]. And in his private sphere man is even able to build relationships with artificial partners.

Table .: City features of the different periods in the 19th to 21st century

Sources & characteristics	Period		
	Modern city 1	Modern city 2	Post-modern city
Banham[9]	1st Machine Age	2nd Machine Age	3rd Machine Age Man-machine-entanglement
Lipovetsky[20], Miles[19]	Happy-few consumerism	Mass consumption	Hyper-consumerism
Bauman[14]		Solid modernity	Liquid modernity
Health	Hygienism	Health and comfort technology	Ecology of health
Perspective	Dis-enchantment	Functionalism Utilitarianism Rationalism	Experience Emotions and Illusions Romanticism Re-enchantment
Economy		Economy of scale	Economy of scope Experience economy Economy of signs
		MacDonaldization	Disneyfication P(leisure) City with gerontechnology as fun technology
Course of life of technology generation (born around 1930)		Formative years and active old age in experience	Active old age in reality
Individual life styles in experience-society[35]	Level environment	Harmony environment	Self-realization Environment
		Integration environment	Fun-and-Action Environment

Man living in the conditions of the post-city is, generally speaking, the hyper-consumer driven by a romantic spirit. Is this also true for older persons? Why not? But is man as a hyper-consumer and a disneyfied person living and dwelling in thematic environments, looking for pleasure, experience and sensation, but without risk, a serious category for gerontechnological aspirations? And can gerontechnology be developed in the direction of fun technology? Some remarks which could contribute to answering this question are mentioned in Table 1. Here the perspective of the authors analyzed above are linked to perspectives on health, economy, technology and lifestyles. (*Table 1*).

Sociology has brought us the notion of the technology generation[33]. The man-made environment to which we were exposed in our formative years remains our benchmark for technology evaluation throughout life. Today's ageing men and women in the phase of active old age - the target group of contemporary gerontechnology - grew up in the context of the modern city. Now they have to operate in the context of the postmodern city where technology in many ways becomes intertwined with the man who strives for pleasure. What is the extent of this discrepancy? If the idea of the technology generation is true, is this category of people living in a different phase?

Postmodern hedonism and hyper consumerism, as analyzed by Campbell, overemphasizes on mind and emotion. Sharon Boden and Simon J. Williams indicate that Campbell underestimates the physical dimension[34]. So if gerontechnology adopts the characteristics of the hyper-consumerist phase of the 3rd Machine Age, then mind and body, emotional and physical dimensions should be balanced.

In what concerns thematizing or Disneyfication of the built environment: architects, urbanists, policy makers, etc., please be careful. Do not see people as comic characters in a disneyfied environment, as caricatures living in the hyperreality of a kitschy geographical theme park!

However, in a weaker form P(leisure) City could be realized as lifestyle oriented environments, for instance, as resorts of golf dwellings, or as pseudo-historical retro-environments, as emotional geographies and memory-making landscapes. But the main objective should remain the same: high quality architecture and urban planning are desirable and necessary.

EVALUATION THROUGH LIFE STYLES

Although older persons have spent their formative years in the 2nd Machine Age and most of their references are rooted in this period, in reality they live in the experience-society of the 3rd Machine Age. Their lifestyles and daily practices will be more and more shaped by this society.

German sociologist Gerhard Schulze[35] has distinguished several lifestyles within this experience-society. Taking his classification into account makes it possible to avoid generalizations. Lifestyles as drawn by Schulze are: (i) Level Environment (civil levels to distinguish between high and low culture); (ii) Harmony Environment (reflecting the old workers' ideals of the emancipation), (iii) Self-realization Environment (hedonism, narcissism), (iv) Fun-and-Action Environment (tension and action, games, etc.), and (v) Integration Environment (containing all elements of the lifestyles distinguished above, but this apparently does not differentiate high and low culture.)

Lipovetsky[20] argues that there is nothing wrong with hyper-consumerism. It is better to buy something nice, than to have an unpleasant boss. For the older man or woman the latter is probably no longer actual. But the question still remains whether hyper-consumerism, with its pursuit of emotions and illusions, is the most appropriate line of behavior.

Based on the developments outlined in the stage of hyper-consumerism and 3rd Ma-

chine Age, it could be inferred that the city in this stage, denominated as P(leisure) City, is the scenery especially favorable for the Self-realization and Fun-and-Action Environments. But probably these lifestyles are not that typical for the present target group of gerontechnology, which has spent its formative years in the phase of 2nd Machine Age.

Barber[22] criticizes the present tendency to see nowadays' hyper-consumerism as naïve consumerism. This probably goes too far, but a demand for a more normative approach to the development of hyper-consumerism and focused on communitarian and social goals, is certainly crucial in the case of gerontechnology.

Perhaps the most appropriate concept for including P(leisure) City in gerontechnology is that of the Integration Environment, combining main characteristics typical to the Harmony Environment with watered-down elements of the Self-realization Environment and Fun-and-Action Environment. These environments could be regarded as social frameworks for gerontechnology in general, but also for a gerontechnology of individual and communal fun.

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