

## Antonio Da Veiga Rocha

### The New Inner City

From activities in and around an idea of Milwaukee

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Milwaukee thus far scrambles for a present identity, which rumbles the texture of single definitions. My curtailed stay blemishes outright any reservations I might have with familiarity, but familiarity adheres not only to the immediate but hopes to associate with some past, and here I can attribute some characteristic to this city.

The long lines of building cranes, charter the indigestive motives of those who seek to be close. New money hurdles approximation on to the faces of those who want to be near, and so compartments filled with brick and cement, crushed laboring weights and hardened boils—from truculent soils—support an idea of fruition.

A fallacy could be seen in this vast mist of old style industrialism. A new pattern camouflages within. Carefully planted, the new aesthetic assumes. Colors of beige and brick lighten the near river to some sort of resurrection, or renaissance. As I walk these mini dock ports of loft mobility, like old car garages, I see small boats awaiting their owners like young, glazed skin basset hounds sniffing the morning hunt. When the temperature hits, and the winds speak through transparent funnels, their owners are motivated to expand their reasons for such living. Rows of stairs, like old fire-escapes imagined in New York City Mills, weave themselves through three floors of decadent living, and present the new river access to those who can.

Large open double glazed windows, whose curtains are flung open at the day's first light, invite pedestrians stares; they themselves saving, and reconstructing their ideals for their time of purchase. Mechanical bridges make me wait along side these walking ghosts who ponder their day's duties and not the sky which brights the first sun of a rainy week.

The new loft tenants rush and zip, neck tight, their water proof wind-breakers—nautical sailors, Nautica brands—so as to de-gaze our obvious search. They look to us, and act urgently to abstract notions about such tenants and their “parked boats,” no longer “docked boats.”

Their wind powered smooth sails glide through these short river navigations. They form water snakes and cut through the city like spilled blood through our skin's maze. Their occupants travel with some façade, knowing they are being looked at but forwarding the idea that: *this is not just pleasure!* We are to understand that there is craft in such outings. They walk along the edges of such buoyancies, grabbing and tugging, calling out and directing their wives and husband to *get that* and *secure this*. It is a captain's game and someone has to be the crew. All along we, the dazedly guided, wait by the bridges with such vivid day dreams playing themselves out in our weighted mental hopes.

There are signs of the old as well; those which are quickly being ushered to “once there was” banters. Some areas look like they've been hit by small missiles; unguided missiles, for precision at such times need not be. Their targets are old industrialisms and such sprawls are plentiful. Milwaukee does not want to be a London, who sifts carefully its Victorian architectures, those dry streets so common and treeless. Milwaukee has chosen an aimless rampage. “Just tear it down.” is what I heard as I walked through a de-construction site, “Just tear it down.”

It is interesting how “Service” can house both Accountants and House Keepers, as some of its subtext. It is clearly noticeable that we are now deep in to the day-break of the “Service Industry.” This is favored over old labor; the type Chinese industrialists are currently swimming in, that old back breaking factory work; that which is no longer amongst us. We can now enjoy the new dawn of the “Service Industry”. We can begin to pleasure the decadent advantages of this new world boat, and one of its joining captains; Milwaukee. Destroy the signs which once

made us work with greased hands and bad knees, and bring forward the new high-rises of dreams and hopes.

Along the river I see the most change; like Boston and Chicago, and Providence for that matter. Here, this city looks to beautify its gondola rides. These goose-neck boats are not yet here, but soon will. Fake grass pouches and well lit walk ways can be seen from the Third Ward to the River West's extremities. The center will soon be a vision. The recipe for its doing has been provided by the father and grandmother cities of this world: New York, Paris, and London, even the likes of Rome and Lisbon. These cities tell them that to become players in this new Service market of business, leisure and tourism, four things need to be in place.

One is a river, which spans and cuts through the city itself—if not a curving river then a large body of water at least, one able to be seen from specific points of city reference. This creates a favored landscape, with historic vistas promoted by painters and poets, and the occasional business jogger. They will encourage walks, as well as class stratifications; for their shouldering lands will be praised.

The second are museums. These attractions include the documentations of such river-walk histories, and this gives reason for touristy expenditures. Such institutions encapsulate culture, or the idea of it anyway, and display it. In time they become major attractions, as they begin to replace the role of the traveling circus.

The third are shopping districts. Here Milwaukee has some catching up to do, but I suppose with the loft-scapes this inclusion is inevitable. For those who seek to live close to the center of the city—and who do it both out of access and nobility—will soon demand this of their surroundings. As they grow to become the economic generators of the city, they will be listened to. Shopping by the new river access will remind persons of a history of prosperity—when goods came via ship docks and the first to access them were the noble. Such histories still lay within us, and though goods are now trucked in, the idea of buying by the river still echoes a sense of opulence within us.

The fourth and last, but not least by any means, is cleanliness. Memory is an ever present motivator for return customers—yes, a city has customers. In such prized service cities as Tokyo and Copenhagen, some of the richest in the world, street cleaners can be seen everywhere. Participants of such cities should not be distracted by filth. They should be made to feel taken care of. This, at all times. There is no better subject who encompasses contemporary *Service*(men) than the street cleaner. She represents this new age of duty, but also the transitional period we are in. They are still the lowest paid city employers, yet a prominent part of this new *Inner City* formula.

These four ingredients will insure new business investments, promote new hotels, build restaurants, and construct more private schools (this is very familiar to Milwaukee), all which generate strong money currents. They are also all Service Jobs.

When I walk in Milwaukee's near quarters I see other highly motivated cleaning crew. They are the maintainers of this new *Inner City*. This new *Inner City* is the continuation of a circum, part of a sphere of incredible movement, and of which its extremities, its circling, will one day soon be completed; a full rotation will occur. I am here speaking about history and its movements. In such circumference lies the ambulating idea that history repeats itself, and that this sphere is constantly in rotation. That every so often it needs to complete itself. The earth does it daily, so how strange is it for history to do it.

The new *Inner City*, will replace the old "inner city." The *old* is the one which comes with attachments and definitions; un-favored. It sits petulantly within most of us and we want rid of such manners. The new cleaning crews want action, and they are acting. They want to reclaim their territories and hex those who've taken such mockery with their succulent earths. You know the ones I speak of, those troublesome groups, destroyers of peaceful park walks and instillers of fear.

This new *Inner City* cleaning crew differs from the old Crew. For one, they have money and the ability to choose. I have seen them shopping in markets which charge \$4.80 for a slice of carrot cake, and \$5 for a pound of yellow apples. If you have been there you know the one I speak of. This incredibly clean market sits on the corner of Water Street and DePaul. If our new Generic Super Markets are listening to what the public shoppers ask for—in regards to cleanliness and perfection—then this market listens to a new shopper; it listens to the new *Inner City* customer.

The new Inner City habitants are not foreign visitors, well at least not outer-state inhabitants (except for the artists who've settled here, as their creative traveling ships docked for education and seized to de-anchor itself), they are local statesmen and often old city dwellers. Many are actually persons who rushed to build homes in Cedar Brook and now, interestingly enough, have rushed back. By this nature, and their quiet reserve, coupled with the young money minds in this ever green earth of wealth and Right, such return occupants have sought an oppositional stance to those old city dwellers. This new group does not disturb the park walks like the former group, even though they've used the same tools to keep others at bay, the ever present comfort of segregation. The city is highly cooperative when it comes to segregation, so it must be comfortable! This new group is highly skilled and with their history of sparse mobility, they can organize environments which best suite their standards; the *old* needs to go.

Milwaukee has this interesting space, where the new *Inner City* is expanding and the old "inner-city" will soon find its rear-end grazing the dry grasses of the country side. There, old sentimentalities lay lurking and hungry, or possibly intricately visible like common day school segregation. Maybe things will clear themselves again. Roles will realign to that once clear stratification system. The old style farms with young 'colored' persons will spring up again. Maybe cotton production will resurface as we increasingly become despondent with China's failing mechanisms, and Mexico's inability to contain its peoples. I see the reincarnation of a strong labor force in our future. Despondent nations will recast on to us our pride glee for self sustainability. Our reproduction skills will resurface and we will accentuate the nobility of nations-cities. This will allow us to carve deep mountains of sustainability, where those beneath, the working mass, will labor once again. It is only a matter of time before this new 'Service Industry' collapses.