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Narrating the City Beautiful: Edmund Anscombe and His 1928 World Trip

On Wednesday 9 January 1929, widower and architect Edmund Anscombe returned to Dunedin after eleven months overseas, travelling with his two daughters through the middle east and the Mediterranean (Egypt, Palestine, Turkey, Greece and Italy), before visiting England, Continental Europe (Switzerland and France), and America. His journey was chronicled in a serial account published in Dunedin's Evening Star. Titled "A World Trip", it began in irregular instalments from 12 January until 16 March. The travel account drew on newspaper literary traditions more predominantly used for fiction rather than factual writings, a form strongly reliant on a narrative able to carry interest across publication in intermittent newspaper issues. As such the account is surely indebted to strong traditions of travel writings (with varying degrees of fact and fiction) - translations of experience mediated by literary expectations.

While many New Zealand architects were known to have travelled at this time, few appear to have published contemporary accounts, and many of those who did used professional, rather than public, venues for publication. Anscombe's account is uncompromisingly public. His text is a narrated account, intended for a general public, rather than an architectural audience, and one specifically focussed at Dunedin's populace. In Anscombe's account, specific cities are measured against the priorities of the City Beautiful Movement and presented as providing evidence of techniques to avoid, or to improve Dunedin's cityscape. This paper will examine Anscombe's published account as a translation of an architect's view of the City Beautiful Movement for a New Zealand (Dunedin) lay audience.

Introduction

Edmund Anscombe (1874-1948) was a prominent Dunedin architect. His architectural education began in America, and included time as a builder for the Louisiana Purchase Fair in 1904, and draughting for McKim, Mead & White, who, along with Daniel Burham, were proponents of the City Beautiful Movement. This paper examines Anscombe's later 11-month world tour in 1928, or rather, how his published account of it translated City Beautiful ideas for the Dunedin public.

Anscombe's account does not explicitly discuss the City Beautiful Movement, but rather 'City Beautiful' thinking seemingly percolates beneath his travel diary. Almost ten years prior, in 1919, he delivered a lecture at Otago University. The *Otago Daily Times* article announcing the lecture described Anscombe as "an expert [on] the latest ideas and developments in regard to the 'city beautiful'."¹ The lecture reportedly began by stating that "sound town planning aimed to preserve all natural beauty and at the proper time to create beauty wherever possible."² It also referred to zoning, transport efficiency, parks and parkways, street planting, civic ornamentation, financing civic improvements and it identified the garden city as "the accomplishment of efficient planning and the application of advanced but practical methods of community administration."³ Five years later, in 1924, just prior to the 1925-26 New Zealand and South Seas International Exhibition in Dunedin, Anscombe again published his views on city design. In this pre-exhibition context, he advocated clearing slums and replacing them with a tree-lined garden suburb, and implementing a system of parks and parkways à la Kansas City. He referred to the central parks and squares of European cities, zoning (as municipal housekeeping), and he distinguished town beautifying from town planning.⁴

This distinction is relevant because the emphasis in Anscombe's 1929 account is centred on 'town beautifying' rather than his knowledge of town planning, despite the heyday of the City Beautiful Movement being "from about 1900 to 1910" in America.⁵ His serial account is about improvement and aesthetic issues and is perhaps a call for Dunedin to continue some of the town improvement work achieved prior to the 1925-26 exhibition. Anscombe was a proactive advocate of city improvement, and he used newspapers (Letters to the Editor and articles) and social connections to advance his civic scheming. It is in this context that the 1929 newspaper articles can perhaps be understood. Wilson clearly identifies the critical need for public engagement:

"Most City Beautiful programs necessitated an initial democratic ratification, such as a bond issue, for implementation. Therefore, the proponents could not afford to ignore the democratic process or neighbourhood or community concerns. Too many other people had to be persuaded. ... This

1 "Lecture at University," *Otago Daily Times* (23 August 1919): 4.

2 "Town Planning: lecture by Mr Anscombe," *Otago Daily Times* (28 August 1919): 6.

3 "Town Planning: Lecture by Mr Anscombe," 6.

4 Edmund Anscombe, "Dunedin North End Scheme," *Evening Star* (28 June 1924).

5 William H. Wilson, *The City Beautiful Movement* (Baltimore and London: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1989), 1.

need for popularly approved results remained because a park and boulevard system, a street beautification-improvement program, or a civic centre was practically never complete with one bond issue. Popular approval of the next phase of land acquisition or construction depended upon citizen acceptance of what was created before. So the relationship between public and expert or citizen board was not authoritarian or undemocratic but reciprocal.⁶

The City Beautiful Movement, influenced by images of European cityscapes, was a distinctly American one, and, as noted above, Ancombe's formative architectural training occurred in the United States. The images of the Columbian Exposition's White City, Washington's Mall, and the administrative buildings of state capitals such as Denver, form the stereotypical images of a more complex architectural and urban design phenomenon. Other aspects of the Movement, such as slum clearance, beautifying and amenities societies, and park projects - rather than ambitious civic geometries crowned with classical architectural ensembles - typified the New Zealand infestation of the City Beautiful Movement, although some later unbuilt projects, such as the 1936 Gummer and Ford Dominion Museum, which was "intended to lie on an axis extending through the Carillon and along a tree-lined boulevard to Courtenay Place" - demonstrated New Zealand aspirations for axial townscapes.⁷ Peterson, and Wright identify the three key strands of the City Beautiful Movement as: civic design, the municipal improvement movement, and outdoor art,⁸ while Wilson acknowledges the Movement's aspirations for social change:

"The goal beyond the tangible was to influence the heart, mind, and purse of the citizen. Physical change and institutional reformation would persuade urban dwellers to become more imbued with civic patriotism and better disposed toward community needs."⁹

This paper will use these themes to reconsider Ancombe's travelogue as a mini-treatise on the City Beautiful Movement translated for his Dunedin audience.

Civic Design: Composing, and Co-Ordinating the City

Civic art or design deployed utilitarian street furniture and urban infrastructure to achieve a coherent urban aesthetic.¹⁰ It also endowed public sculpture with a new civic artistic function. Civic

6 Wilson, *The City Beautiful Movement*, 76.

7 For a discussion on Dunedin's late nineteenth-century attitudes to slums see Pamela Wood, *Dirt: Filth and Decay in a New World Arcadia* (Auckland: Auckland University Press, 2005), 184-200. Caroline L. Miller, "New Zealand's planning history - quo vadis?" *Planning Perspectives* 13, no. 3 (1998): 266; Thelma Strongman, *City Beautiful: the first 100 years of the Christchurch Beautifying Association* (Christchurch: Clerestory Press, 1999). For example Cornwall Park, Auckland which was modelled on Golden Gate Park, San Francisco. "National Art Gallery and Dominion Museum (Former)," *New Zealand Historic Places Trust* (10 September 2008). <http://www.historic.org.nz/TheRegister/RegisterSearch/RegisterResults.aspx?RID=140>.

8 Jon A. Peterson, "The City Beautiful Movement: Forgotten Origins and Lost Meanings," *Journal of Urban History* 2 (1976): 429; William H. Wilson, "The ideology, aesthetics and politics of the City Beautiful movement," in *The Rise of Modern Urban Planning 1800-1914*, ed. Anthony Sutcliffe (London: Mansell Publishing, 1980), 165-98.

9 Wilson, *The City Beautiful Movement*, 1.

10 Peterson, "The City Beautiful Movement," 416. Wilson, "The ideology, aesthetics and politics of the City Beautiful movement," 169.

beauty in this sense was found in the co-ordination and composition of civic objects. Anscombe examines street geometry, public sculpture, and urban parks, gardens and squares. In his 1919 lecture, he had identified the street system as “perhaps the most important” phase of town planning, and his evaluation of the geometric ordering of a city plan is apparent from his travels: Modern Cairo, for example, is “beautifully laid out”.¹¹ Such assertions are often extended to give a sense of the formal characteristics which he values.

In contrast, while Walter Mantell’s 1853 map of Dunedin shows the strong geometry and axiality that Anscombe seemingly admired in international cities; the drafted lines of the Octagon (rippling outward into suburbia), along with the strident march south of Prince Street, appear cartographically undeterred, while a wayward shoreline threatens the plan’s geometric completion. Dunedin’s public spaces in the 1920s had wide footpaths, and dirt roadways accommodating trams, horse-drawn carts and carriages and motor cars. The green space of the Octagon appears unadorned with public sculpture.

Appreciation of a clear organising geometry and the capacity to read this urban structure recur in Anscombe’s account. Diagonal streets and a spacious boulevard make Brussels’ layout “very interesting”.¹² Berlin’s well-planned city is associated with “spacious ... streets, with magnificent boulevards”,¹³ and Paris is to be experienced from the top of the Arc du Triomphe or the upper balcony of the Eiffel Tower:

“When standing on the top of the Arc du Triomphe one gets a fine view of the beautiful tree-lined boulevards radiating out as spokes from a hub. It is from the upper balcony of the Eiffel Tower that Paris is best seen from this elevated position, 900 odd feet above the ground, the city is laid out as a map beneath one.”¹⁴

The new Egyptian city of Heliopolis, created by Edouard Empain’s Cairo Electric Railway and Heliopolis Oases Company in 1905, was singled out for particular attention.¹⁵ It is “a new and beautifully laid-out city”, which Anscombe additionally praises as being “as fine a piece of city planning as is to be found anywhere”.¹⁶ The influence of European planning is evident.¹⁷

There is no mention of Heliopolis’ design, based “on the model of British Garden Cities” such as Welwyn and Letchworth, by Reginald Oakes,¹⁸ which were industrial utopias, contrasting the City

11 “Town Planning: lecture by Mr. Anscombe,” 6. Anscombe, “A World Trip: Sights in the Near East: Egypt and Palestine,” 20.

12 Edmund Anscombe, “A World Trip: Great Continental Cities,” *Evening Star* (18 February 1929): 7.

13 Anscombe, “A World Trip: Great Continental Cities,” 7.

14 Edmund Anscombe, “A World Trip: Switzerland and France,” *Evening Star* (9 March 1929): 9.

15 Agnieszka Dobrowolska, and Jaroslaw Dobrowolski. *Heliopolis: rebirth of the city of the sun* (Cairo; New York: American University in Cairo Press, 2006): 42-45.

16 Edmund Anscombe, “A World Trip: Sights in the Near East: Egypt and Palestine,” *Evening Star* (12 January 1929): 20.

17 Dobrowolska & Dobrowolski, *Heliopolis* 101, 116.

18 Dobrowolska & Dobrowolski, *Heliopolis* 137. Ilbert, Robert. “From Alexandria to Cairo 1830-1930,” *UIA international architect* 14/15 (1 January 1985): 15. Beattie, Cairo, 185-86.

Beautiful Movement's aspirations for the future.¹⁹ Instead it is in England at Port Sunlight that Anscombe explicitly praises the garden city but only after praising the Lever brothers' factory: "The Garden Village of Lever Bros., is one of the finest in existence; the houses are picturesquely designed, each having its own garden, with a fine display of beautiful flowers and shrubs."²⁰ As is apparent from his earlier confluences of scientific planning, the City Beautiful and garden suburbs, Anscombe was clearly not the purist compliant with neatly packaged histories that many architectural historians prefer.

The provision of art within city contexts was also an important aspect of the City Beautiful Movement. As Wilson notes "[t]he inspiration for civic art came from Europe."²¹ This emphasis on Europe is also reflected in Anscombe's account, as it is in his descriptions of European cities, rather than Middle Eastern or American metropolis, that an appreciation of sculpture in public spaces is evident. Gardens are the site of many of these artworks. The beautiful statuary in the gardens of the Tuilleries "convinces one that Paris is the artistic centre of the world", while Vienna is "a city of artistic monuments, wonderful fountains, and glorious vistas."²² Anscombe takes the opportunity while reflecting on the pleasure of public art to urge local action at home:

"While in this land of art I many times thought of the apparent lack of appreciation, or shall I say our lack of realisation of the great pleasure and inspiration and the educational value that sculpture would have for the people, especially the young of our city. The money is undoubtedly here, yet not a single piece of sculpture adorns our beautiful botanical gardens."²³

Here he both encourages urban beautification and explicitly links this to a sociological effect: that art might shape behaviour. Wilson identifies the City Beautiful style of social control as Darwinian, normative and behavioural rather than sinister and coercive.²⁴ Similarly Anscombe's promotion of public sculpture relies on public support and sponsorship to enact, and echoes his earlier 1919 proposal for a Hall of Sculpture to complement a Combined Factory and perform as war memorial in which "Sculptured friezes and panels would depict the doings of our soldiers in all the more notable battles."²⁵

Less apparent in Anscombe's account is an awareness or an appreciation of utilitarian objects to provide a consistent aesthetic throughout an urban precinct, but there are urban experiences referred to which engender a poetic sense in the narrative. The skyline of Constantinople's domes and minarets "appear as sentinels, break the sky line at every turn, and make the place, especially

19 Wilson, *The City Beautiful*, 78.

20 Edmund Anscombe, "A World Trip: Through England by Car;" *Evening Star* (9 February 1929): 7.

21 Wilson, "The ideology, aesthetics and politics of the City Beautiful movement," 169-70.

22 Anscombe, "A World Trip: Switzerland and France," 9. Anscombe, "A World Trip: Great Continental Cities," 7.

23 Edmund Anscombe, "A World Trip: Impressions of Italy;" *Evening Star* (23 January 1929): 6.

24 Wilson, *The City Beautiful Movement*, 80-81.

25 Edmund Anscombe, *Modern Industrial Development* (Dunedin: Evening Star, 1919): 17.

at sunset, a most picturesque and strikingly beautiful and impressive picture.”²⁶ More pragmatically, New York’s ever-changing skyline sees its “office structures ... climbing higher and higher”;²⁷ and in Venice, Anscombe exclaims: “What a change from other world cities! Once away from the shore there is complete quiet, no honking of motor horns and hustling of cars, and no dust: just the swish of the oar of the gondolier and his quaint cry when approaching a corner.”²⁸

The pleasure found in foreign cityscapes, that urban skylines might be poetic, beautiful and aspirationally progressive, reflects a commitment to the city as an aesthetic experience. For Wilson, the “culminating constituent of the City Beautiful ideology was its enthusiastic welcome of the city. ... In its comprehensive view of the city and in its nonpartisan concern for improvement, the City Beautiful partook of a revived civic spirit.”²⁹ This commitment underlay an optimistic acceptance of the city and rejection of “a return to a rural or arcadian past”³⁰ and was manifest in an enthusiasm for civic improvement, which Anscombe documents and praises during his northern hemisphere trip.

The Clean, the Tidy and the Well-Maintained: the Municipal Improvement Movement

Civic or municipal improvement movements dated from the Stockbridge improvements by the Laurel Hill Association in Stockbridge, Massachusetts (1853), where “the old Stockbridge, dreary and dirty, had given way to a well-paved, tree-shaded summer resort town.”³¹ Often municipal improvements were small in scale but collectively they made significant contributions and might include street cleaning, gardening and street paving. As Szczygiel notes: “What does stand out is how the success of one club on a particular project - such as water purification or street paving and cleaning - served as inspiration and guidance nationwide.”³² Civic beauty in this sense was found in cleanliness and tidiness, including infrastructure provision, such as sewerage systems, and focussed on the cleanliness and tidiness of a civic-scaled housekeeping to effect civic pride.

Wilson identifies the key aspects of municipal improvement as: house painting, tree-planting, the promotion of tree-lined clean streets, all of which Anscombe praises or desires in the different cities he visits.³³ His pleasure in seeing Parisian “tree-lined boulevards”, driving through “the lovely

26 Edmund Anscombe, “A World Trip: Visits to Turkey and Greece,” *Evening Star* (16 January 1929): 14.

27 Edmund Anscombe, “A World Trip: Through America,” *Evening Star* (16 March 1929): 6.

28 Anscombe, “A World Trip: Impressions of Italy,” 6.

29 Wilson, *The City Beautiful Movement*, 86.

30 Wilson, *The City Beautiful Movement*, 78.

31 Wilson, “The ideology, aesthetics and politics of the City Beautiful movement,” 168. Peterson, “The City Beautiful Movement,” 416, 422. Bonj Szczygiel, “‘City Beautiful’ Revisited: An Analysis of Nineteenth-Century Civic Improvement Efforts,” *Journal of Urban History* 29 (2003): 115ff.; Wilson, *The City Beautiful Movement* 42-43.

32 Szczygiel, “‘City Beautiful’ Revisited,” 117.

33 Wilson, “The ideology, aesthetics and politics of the City Beautiful movement,” 169.

tree-lined lanes” of England, and observing “judiciously planted ... shade trees” in Cairo is evident.³⁴ Equally, his frustration at Istanbul’s absence of house paint and deferred maintenance is clear:

“The houses are mostly of wood, and many have very elaborate detail, but the Turks never paint their homes. ... In many sections of the city the houses have an appalling appearance through lack of any attempt at maintenance. In ninety-nine cases out of one hundred houses that could be beautiful are allowed to fall into decay for the want of a coat of paint.”³⁵

But it is the street - asphalted, pot-holed and paved - which drew Anscombe’s closest attention within the realm of civic improvement. Perhaps it was his more general interest in cars and car repairs, evident in the expansive garage that he would soon design for himself at his Oriental Bay apartment block, or his hobby of ‘motoring’ - clearly apparent in his recommendation that the “best way to see the Old Country is undoubtedly by motor car”, and his purchasing of a motor car in England to do just this³⁶ - which gave him a particular insight into the importance of road texture on the experience of driving, beyond his partiality to the City Beautiful? Regardless, Anscombe’s account is permeated with references to street improvement schemes and roading surfaces, often related to ideas of modernity and progressiveness. In modern Cairo “the streets in this section of the city are well surfaced with asphalt”, while in Berlin they are “well-paved”, and after driving 4,500 miles through England and Wales, he declared that “[t]he roads were a treat to drive upon”.³⁷ These exemplar were contrasted to less modern quarters in cities such as Athens, where “[m] any streets in other sections are in a shocking condition.”³⁸ Bad roads were also evident more generally in Greece, in Constantinople, and in Quebec where “[t]he streets are in poor condition, and run down generally.”³⁹ But the road from Naples to Pompeii appears to have exceeded all others in its lack of surface: “We in New Zealand sometimes complain of bad roads, but the condition of the thoroughfare leading from Naples to Pompeii, with its potholes, surpassed anything we have experienced; in fact, it became necessary to change down to get out of some.”⁴⁰

This sensitivity to road surface and street paving was typical of advocates of the City Beautiful movement. As Wilson notes: “Dirt streets swirling dust in summer, gluey, sucking mud in spring, redolent with horse droppings - were the norm in many American cities” at the turn of the twentieth century.⁴¹ In New Zealand, Dunedin had its own problems with volatile roading surfaces. Before

34 Anscombe, “A World Trip: Switzerland and France,” 9. Anscombe, “A World Trip: Through England by Car,” 7. Anscombe, “A World Trip: Sights in the Near East: Egypt and Palestine,” 20.

35 Anscombe, “A World Trip: Visits to Turkey and Greece,” 14.

36 Anscombe, “A World Trip: Through England by Car,” 7. “Dunedinite Abroad,” 6.

37 Anscombe, “A World Trip: Sights in the Near East: Egypt and Palestine,” 20; and similarly for Athens: Anscombe, “A World Trip: Visits to Turkey and Greece,” 14. Anscombe, “A World Trip: Great Continental Cities,” 7. “Dunedinite Abroad: Return from a World Tour: Mr Edmund Anscombe’s Impressions,” *Evening Star* (10 January 1929): 6.

38 Anscombe, “A World Trip: Visits to Turkey and Greece,” 14.

39 Anscombe, “A World Trip: Through America,” 6.

40 Anscombe, “A World Trip: Impressions of Italy,” 6.

41 Wilson, “The ideology, aesthetics and politics of the City Beautiful movement,” 171-72.

Anscombe was born in 1874 Dunedin had been given, in 1856, the title "Mun-edin", while the road by Market Reserve became Mud Terrace, reflecting the fact that "[r]oads were then in a 'primitive state' and the wearing of knee mud-boots was indispensable."⁴² Wood notes that by 1900, Princes Street - Dunedin's main thoroughfare - had "... good footpaths for pedestrians. Road surfaces, however, were still rough and horse droppings still a nuisance."⁴³

Anscombe's narrative is also very observant regarding degrees of cleanliness. Turin, Leicester and Cologne are praised for their respective cleanness, Turin and Leicester being each one of the cleanest cities in their respective countries.⁴⁴ In contrast Cologne is representative of German standards, cleanness being "the case with practically all German cities".⁴⁵ Switzerland, surpassing all other countries, "as a whole, is surely the cleanest country in the world; even the farmyards appear broom clean, and for cleanliness and order the Swiss towns are an example to the world."⁴⁶ Szczygiel, following Spain, attributes an anxiety about immigration as an explanation for civic cleanups: "Middle-class women embraced projects that would create, as Spain suggests, '... mechanisms by which the city could be cleansed symbolically of strangers'."⁴⁷

Anscombe notes Chicago's intention to clean up their city, and he links this to their forthcoming exposition in 1933: "The city needs cleaning up, and it will only be done by something big enough to challenge its citizens to one great united effort."⁴⁸ His commentary is encouraging, referring to a broad community commitment.⁴⁹ The link to a forthcoming exhibition would have been received positively by Anscombe, given his self-perception as an exhibition expert, his work as a builder at the St Louis Purchase Exposition, his being the architect of the New Zealand and South Seas International Exhibition, and his attendance, whenever possible, at international exhibitions (including during this sojourn, the 1928 Turin exhibition). His account of Jerusalem's lack of cleanliness is in stark contrast. Jerusalem is condemned as dirty, which is both linked to its citizens and a lack of civic pride, and easily read as an example of environmental determinism:

"its greatest need is a thorough cleaning up. The habits of the people and the lack of decency in the poorer sections of the town, combined with the total absence of anything approaching civic pride, brand Jerusalem as one of the dirtiest places to be found anywhere."⁵⁰

42 Wood, *Dirt*, 48, 55.

43 Wood, *Dirt*, 56.

44 Anscombe, "A World Trip: Impressions of Italy," 6; Anscombe, "A World Trip: Through England by Car," 7.

45 Anscombe, "A World Trip: Great Continental Cities," 7.

46 Anscombe, "A World Trip: Switzerland and France," 9.

47 Spain, in Szczygiel, "'City Beautiful' Revisited," 118.

48 Anscombe, "A World Trip: Through America," 6.

49 Anscombe, "A World Trip: Through America," 6.

50 Anscombe, "A World Trip: Sights in the Near East: Egypt and Palestine," 20.

While the City Beautiful is known for “belief in the positive effects of behaviour modification through environmental improvement”,⁵¹ the distinction made between the dirtiness of Chicago and of Jerusalem is suggestive of cultural misunderstanding, or racism. Yet Anscombe’s reports of the Middle East, in which he expresses surprise “... that so many people pass by Egypt on their way to England”, and his infatuation with Istanbul’s minaretted skyline contrast significantly with his parting comment from Jerusalem: “... we left with little desire to return.”⁵²

Communing With Nature

Outdoor art, which included “... the beautification of school grounds, the school garden movement, the anti-billboard crusade and other efforts to control urban ugliness, and rural scenic preservation”, assumed there was a need for people to be in contact with the clean, healthier environment more typical of the country than the inner city.⁵³ As Wilson notes it was recognized that “working-class people could not afford vacations, suburban residences and surcease from the urban environment. ... Olmsted’s creations were partly for the “tired workers” who lacked alternatives to their hard, harsh surroundings, partly to promote class intermingling on park promenades. ... Unimproved working-class surroundings, they feared, would eventually demoralize and debase their inhabitants.”⁵⁴

Recreational spaces and facilities, such as parks, playgrounds, public baths, and tennis courts resulted. Civic beauty in this sense was found in connecting with nature, and enabling healthy non-work activities to also address an “... awareness that an increasing proportion of Americans were engaged in confining occupations.”⁵⁵ This sentiment is also evident in Anscombe’s earlier opinions on town planning where he had stressed the “... importance of establishing public playgrounds ... [because t]hey provided for fresh air and sunshine, the recognition of impulses and intuitions, which might be developed and trained properly, and relaxation and rest for mental and physical fatigue.”⁵⁶

Gardens and parks are perhaps the most obvious way in which the City Beautiful movement brought nature or countryside into cities. In Anscombe’s travelogue it is in Athens, that the first reference to parks occurs, but it is not until the narrative permeates Italy that a substantial “natural” intervention in a city through park design becomes evident. Milan is “a city of beautiful parks”,⁵⁷ with the *Gardini Pubblici* exemplifying this. Dresden is “famous for its gardens”, Potsdam has “beautiful

51 Szczygiel, “‘City Beautiful’ Revisited,” 107.

52 Anscombe, “A World Trip: Visits to Turkey and Greece,” 14. Anscombe, “A World Trip: Sights in the Near East: Egypt and Palestine,” 20.

53 Peterson, “The City Beautiful Movement,” 416; Wilson, “The ideology, aesthetics and politics of the City Beautiful movement,” 167.

54 Wilson, “The ideology, aesthetics and politics of the City Beautiful movement,” 174.

55 Mel Scott, *American Planning since 1890* (Berkeley; Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1969): 72.

56 “Town Planning: lecture by Mr. Anscombe,” 6.

57 Anscombe, “A World Trip: Impressions of Italy,” 6.

gardens and glorious fountains", and the gardens of the Tuileries have beautiful statuary.⁵⁸ In Genoa, a different kind of park is praised, consistent with the rural cemetery movement which Wilson notes was launched in 1831 with the opening of Boston's Mount Auburn, provided stylized romantic landscape retreats for the living who had the leisure and inclination to go to the city's edge.⁵⁹ The Camposanto is the cemetery referred to: "... [h]ere is to be seen the greatest collection of sculptured monuments in existence. In some groups the entire family are sculptured in pure white Carrara marble, all life size, and mourning at the bedside."⁶⁰

While praising an Italian love for trees, Anscombe states that:

"[o]nly one land surpasses Italy for a beautiful countryside, and that is England. We in New Zealand could profit greatly by following Italy and many other foreign countries, and planting trees where now our roadsides are bald and uninteresting. I should very much like to see Arbour Day brought back in this dominion, and for the first few years have everyone plant two trees in place of one to catch up with the opportunities we have missed."⁶¹

With the exceptions of the reference to Cairo's shade trees, and a generic reference to the "lovely tree lined lanes"⁶² of south-east England, this advocating for New Zealand to re-adopt Arbour Day is a substantial plea for trees, made explicitly to his Evening Star readers. Tree-planting was also specifically identified in Anscombe's earlier 1919 lecture when he noted that: "... there was no one thing that added so much to the attractiveness of a town as tree-lined streets."⁶³

Conclusion

Mary Louise Pratt in *Imperial Eyes* coins the term "contact zones" to describe "social spaces where disparate cultures meet, clash and grapple with each other".⁶⁴ Her work primarily relates to colonial contexts, yet contact, whether personally, or vicariously, such as through newspaper accounts like Anscombe's "A World Trip" serial, enables an exchange and translation of ideas. Anscombe's "World Trip" text was not the first time the Dunedin public had been exposed to his beliefs about town planning, and it was not the first time that Anscombe explicitly related international ideas to the built environs of Dunedin. Rather this serial travelogue amplified the knowledge and awareness of other built environs through a congenial depiction. Anscombe's descriptions of city spaces are interspersed with anecdotes about language difficulties, hotel parrots, and thirsty Scotsmen. The

58 Anscombe, "A World Trip: Impressions of Italy," 6. Anscombe, "A World Trip: Great Continental Cities," 7. Anscombe, "A World Trip: Switzerland and France," 9.

59 Wilson, "The ideology, aesthetics and politics of the City Beautiful movement," 177.

60 Anscombe, "A World Trip: Impressions of Italy," 6.

61 Anscombe, "A World Trip: Impressions of Italy," 6.

62 Anscombe, "A World Trip: Through England by Car," 7.

63 "Town Planning: lecture by Mr. Anscombe," 6.

64 Mary Louise Pratt, *Imperial Eyes: travel Writing and Transculturation* (London: Routledge, 1992), 4.

pace varies. The time and detail given to the granite statue of Rameses II, also covers - via speedy motorcar - Derby, Nottingham, Leicester, Lincoln, Peterborough, Norwich, Ely, Cambridge and Oxford, as the text incorporates what Bugge describes as "... the two essentials of travel writing: information and entertainment."⁶⁵

This series of newspaper articles in many ways typifies Anscombe's *modus operandi*. It both brings new information into play in order to reinforce his persistent thinking, and it clearly illustrates the pleasure and excitement experienced when travelling overseas, permeated as it is with recommendations and must-sees for a reader's next trip overseas. But this series is, I think, more than advisory, when one recalls that Anscombe's most successful venture up until that time was the initiating of the New Zealand and South Seas International Exhibition. That venture was funded through public subscription, and it is perhaps this need to engage, educate and convince a newspaper-reading public, which facilitates Anscombe's seeming promotion of 'City Beautiful' thinking.

65 Anscombe, "A World Trip: Sights in the Near East: Egypt and Palestine," 20. Anscombe, "A World Trip: Through England by Car," 7. Peter Bugge, "'Something in the View Which Makes You Liner': Bohemia and Bohemians in British Travel Writing, 1836-1857," *Central Europe* 7, no. 1 (May 2009): 4.