

Introduction to the *Kritike* Special Issue on Philosophy of the City

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On July 1–3, 2024, the annual summer colloquium of the Philosophy of the City Research Group was held at the Ateneo de Manila University in Quezon City, Philippines. Sixteen participants, representing the US, Germany, South Korea, Kazakhstan, Paraguay, and the Philippines, gathered for three days of focused discussions surrounding the theme of resilience in the city. The following essays are fruits of these discussions.

In the opening essay, “Should I Stay or Should I Go? An Analysis of the Selective Permeability of Busan,” Matthew Crippen, Maria Almendra Sotelo, and Dana Jang (Pusan National University, South Korea) explore the concept of “selective permeability” in Busan, South Korea, analyzing how various cultural, social, and physical factors create different experiences for individuals based on their identity. Using James Gibson’s “affordance theory,” Crippen, Sotelo, and Jang show that urban environments are not equally accessible to all but present positive or negative affordances depending on gender, age, language, and culture. In doing so, the authors offer a nuanced examination of how Busan’s urban and social environment differentially affects residents and visitors, influencing whether they feel welcomed or marginalized in the city.

Do the conditions in the city enable one to experience the other as a neighbor? In “Necessary Visions: Richard Sennett’s Levinasian Neighbor in Pre- and Post-War Manila,” Philip Z. Peckson and Dean A. Mejos (University of Asia and Pacific, Philippines) examine how Manila’s pre-war elite engaged with public urban life in contrast to the enclave urbanism of contemporary Metro Manila. Using Richard Sennett’s concept of the Levinasian neighbor, the authors argue that the elite of pre-war Manila experienced the city with openness and intensity—interacting with a diverse range of people in public spaces, from structured encounters to the more spontaneous and carnival-like. By critically examining Metro Manila’s transformation into an

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archipelagic city of enclaves, where the wealthy interact without true exposure to public life, Peckson and Mejos point to the possibility of reconnecting with a lost urbanism that encourages interaction and responsibility toward strangers, one that might cultivate a more humane and dynamic urban environment.

In her essay, “The Lotus at Dawn: Rethinking Climate Resilience in an Archipelago,” Marie Franchesca Borrás Manalo (Ateneo de Manila University, Philippines) applies the Benjaminian concept of the *flâneur* to women and draws from key Heideggerian themes of dwelling and taking-measure as she explores climate resilience in the Philippines, particularly in the aftermath of Super Typhoon Rai (locally known as Odette), which devastated General Luna, a tourist hub in Surigao del Norte. Adopting an autoethnographic approach and employing the concept of *flâneuserie* (female wandering as a way of engaging with space), Manalo examines the ethical responsibility of city dwellers as tourists, their impact on island communities, and argues for a shift toward mindful tourism and an ethics of care to foster resilience in the face of climate crises. Furthermore, Manalo urges city dwellers to recognize their interconnectedness with island communities and to adopt responsible practices that promote climate resilience. By rethinking tourism, urban engagement, and care ethics, individuals can contribute to a more sustainable and compassionate world.

In “Looking at the Cracks and Broken Fragments: Ressentiment in the Narrative of Resilience,” Jasmin Advincula (Ateneo de Manila University, Philippines) critically examines how resilience is portrayed in disaster narratives, arguing that mainstream discourse often distorts resilience into a form of *ressentiment*, a term borrowed from Nietzsche and elaborated by Max Scheler. Advincula contends that resilience, when framed superficially as mere endurance, can suppress true suffering and justify governmental neglect and systemic failures. Using the Japanese art of *kintsugi* (golden joinery) as a metaphor, the author advocates for an *authentic resilience*—one that acknowledges loss, integrates suffering, and leads to genuine transformation. By rejecting *ressentiment* and embracing a more profound ethics of care, societies can move beyond mere endurance and build a future that truly learns from the past.

Anton Heinrich L. Rennesland (University of Santo Tomas, Philippines) offers yet another critique of the idea of resilience, widely used and abused as it is. In “Immunology in the ‘City Interior’: Questioning Resiliency in Everyday Life,” Rennesland examines the prevailing understanding of resilience as shaped by neoliberal urban design, arguing that it functions as an *immunological mechanism* to maintain the status quo. Using Peter Sloterdijk’s concept of *immunological reason*, the author suggests that cities develop resilience not only against external threats (e.g., climate

disasters, migration, terrorism) but also against internal disruptions, shaping urban life around consumerism and exclusion. Rennesland calls for a shift in perspective from the city exterior—the formal, neoliberal urban landscape—to the city interior, where resilience is redefined through everyday encounters and marginal experiences. By shifting focus to the city interior, we avoid merely reinforcing existing power structures that adhere to neoliberal urban norms of resilience, thereby redefining resilience beyond economic recovery and toward embracing care, solidarity, and lived realities.

In “Existential Resilience in the City,” Shane Epting (Missouri University of Science and Technology, USA), who also delivered the keynote address at the summer colloquium, brings to the fore two aspects of the city that are often missing in studies mostly anchored in science and economics, namely, the complex ethical considerations and the concrete existential context that inhabitants of the city face on a daily basis. Resilience is not just a technological or business issue but, more fundamentally, an ethical one. Epting explores resilience in the face of climate change, not just as a structural or policy response but as an ethical and existential issue. He argues that efforts in developing resilience should go beyond infrastructure and disaster response by fostering meaningful engagement between city residents and municipal governments. Through co-planning—a participatory approach to urban planning—Epting highlights how communities can take responsibility for their cities, thereby finding meaning in their efforts toward resilience.

It is perhaps only fitting that this collection of essays ends with a view to hope. In “Spinoza and Urban Imagination: Resilience as the Persistence of Hope,” Jan Gabriel S. Boller (Polytechnic University of the Philippines) explores how Spinoza’s metaphysical and ethical philosophy can be applied to the concept of the city, arguing that urban resilience should be understood as a persistence of hope. Boller presents a Spinozist view of the city as a dynamic, relational entity shaped by individuals and their ethical relations. In doing so, he critiques static definitions of resilience, proposing instead that resilience emerges from the interplay of hope and fear—two key Spinozan affects that shape urban life and its transformations.

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