"*Una herramienta eco-socio-política*:"
Performing Identity and Subverting the City through Madrid's Urban Farms

Abstract:

In this essay, I examine the current reality of urban agriculture in Madrid, Spain, as well as the historical contexts in which it exists. Through interviews, original research, and participant observation, I explore the idea of urban agriculture as a tool in the formation of personal and collective identity, response to contemporary crises, and subversive re-organization of imagined and lived city space. I then work to reconcile the progressive ideals of the urban agriculture movement with the challenges inherent in creating and maintaining multiple-use spaces in a contemporary city, presenting a few case studies and subsequent recommendations for successful connections between urban farms and the communities that sustain them. I performed all research and interviews during my year in Spain as a Fulbright grantee.

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In one of my email conversations with Jorge[*], a founding member of *La Red de Huertos Comunitarios de Madrid* (translated as The Madrid Network of Community Farms and abbreviated as ReHdMad or simply ReHd), I asked him if he and his collaborators had thought about the history of urban agriculture in Madrid or about the current trend of urban agriculture sweeping the world when they formed the network of *huertos urbanos,* urban farms. Had they found inspiration in the legacy of public gardens and spontaneous farming in and around Madrid's urban matrix? Had they perhaps been swept up in the rapidly growing global fad of urban agriculture, determined to put their own spin on it? His answer: neither.

> La verdad es que no pensamos mucho ni en la tradición de huertos en Madrid ni el auge mundial de los huertos urbanos, aunque, claro, todo eso ayuda y le da más sentido. Fue más por pura supervivencia, y también por sacar de la fragilidad a las iniciativas y darles más solidez, más empuje... por convertir la ReHd en una herramienta eco-socio-política. (Personal communication, April 24, 2916)
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> ["The truth is, we didn't think much about either the tradition of farming in Madrid, or the global surge of urban agriculture although, of course, both of those help and give us more context, more sense. It was more purely for survival, and also to give the initiatives more solidity, more impact…to make the ReHd into an eco-socio-political tool."][†]

It is this image of a network of productive green spaces within the city as an eco-socio-political tool that I will explore in this essay. The ways in which Madrid's *huertos urbanos* act as tools, by and for whom, and for what purpose, allow for critical examination of city space as political entity, as well as exploration into the realities and challenges of multi-use spaces that strive to subvert the city space even as they exist within and because of the city's boundaries.

Urban green spaces, by their very reality as constructed and maintained spaces within a created and curated city, are political spaces, reflecting and embodying the configurations of politics and power of a particular historical moment. Michele Foucault, in his writings

[*] *All names changed for privacy.*
[†] *All Spanish-English translations are my own.*

connecting space and power, reflected on what is lost if space is not examined by academics seeking an understanding of historical reality:

> "The use of spatial terms seems to have the air of anti-history. If one started to talk in terms of space that meant that one was hostile to time. It meant, as the fools say, that one 'denied history'…They didn't understand that [spatial terms]…meant the throwing into relief of processes – historical ones, needless to say – of power" (Foucault, 1980).

Foucault's quote reminds us that in the interpretation of any given city, politics and place are intimately connected. Furthermore, if we view a city such as Madrid as a material reality constructed by symbolic components, as Jesús Cruz writes in his article on public space and urban modernity (Cruz, 2015), urban green spaces become instantly recognizable as symbols within that reality, equally as intentional and evocative as any of the buildings, bridges, or streets. *Kois* and Moran, in their comprehensive work on Madrid's history of and current relationship with urban gardening, write that: "Cultivating vegetables in a plot is not a politically neutral or aseptic act. Like all social initiatives, [vegetable cultivation]…transmits specific forms of valuing reality and positioning oneself in relation to that reality" (Kois, 2016, p. 95). For the urban farmers in Madrid today, that reality can be read as the city in which they live and work, as well as the cultural models that structure and are structured by the space and history of the city. The *huertos* themselves, therefore, truly can be seen as the "eco-socio-political tools" that Jorge envisions. They alter and inform the city simply by their existence within it; the ways in which they are utilized and deployed, furthermore, allows a glimpse into the goals and visions of their creators.

One weekend, I attended a meeting at which members of the over 40 farms connected with the ReHdMad were asked to answer the questions: What purposes do *huertos urbanos* serve? What should they be? What should they do? How, in fact, *should* participants, as urban farmers, position themselves and their spaces in relation to the reality of modern Madrid? The

answers ranged from providing peaceful areas in a busy city, to creating active spaces of alternative methods of consumption and production. As may be imagined, there were as many answers as there were people in attendance.

In some ways, this has always been the case, although when the ReHd first began, definitions seemed simpler. The ReHd as it is known today began in January 2011, with six or seven illegal plots scattered across the city and its outskirts, a few in universities. The founding members of the organization, Jorge included, hoped to bring some structure and stability to the fledgling projects, and to provide educational and material support for new projects by linking veteran gardeners with new participants (personal communication, April 24, 2017). In doing so, they hoped to create laboratories for social experimentation within Madrid, to deepen neighborhood communities, and to create new spaces for building coalitions around environmentalism and social justice, as well as spaces for education on agriculture and compost (Ibid).

Many of these intentions remain. During the meeting in which the purpose and role of the *huertos urbanos* was discussed, members focused one by one on each of the ReHd's three main principles: Agro-environmentalism (*agroecología*), community (*comunidad*), and self-management (*auto-gestión*). The additions made throughout the evening to these umbrella concepts allow us insight into the goals and hopes of Madrid's current urban agriculture scene, and can be seen in the chart below (Meeting, April 27, 2017).

Figure 1: Chart recording community input around the purpose and goals of urban agriculture in Madrid. Meeting, April 27, 2017.

Agro-Environmentalism	Community	Self-Management
• Compost • Natural remedies • Biodiversity • Cooking and nutrition education • Social change and feminism • De-commodification (*Desmercantilización)* • Sustainable seeds • Spaces of caring, that care for people, and in which people care for the land. Spaces that are cared for • No chemicals used • Groups of consumption	• To open the neighborhood • Activities and classes • Training • Working with children and students • Social inclusion • Resources to create neighborhood community (*hacer barrio*) • Outside of the market	• Monthly assemblies • Decisions made for individual farms do not need the consent of the monthly assembly • Co-management with the local government (*Ayuntamiento*) • Self-finance • De-commodification (*Desmercantilización)* • Rights and duties • Participation • Action and ideas

Reading these lists, themes emerge of building community, creating alternate opportunities for consumption and activity, and making space (literally and figuratively) for social change. Less explicit in the list, but no less important, is the enabling of the construction and performance of a specific identity combining Spanish community development with global activism. Through identifying what these spaces should be, the users are also indirectly identifying with what spaces they would like to be connected, in what spaces they would like to spend time, and what values are important to highlight and propagate. In this way, they are defining an identity for themselves through the shaping of and working within these spaces.

Crafting identity through and with urban green space has a history in Madrid. *Jardines de recreo,* or pleasure gardens, came to Spain in 1820 as part of a western European trend begun with the Tivoli in Paris. Spain's first pleasure garden, also called Tivoli, pleasure gardens, was built in Madrid very near the Prado Museum (Cruz, 2015). Like other pleasure gardens around Europe, it offered musical and theatrical performances, recreational activities such as boating,

and a variety of cafés and restaurants where citizens could purchase refreshment, as well as carefully manicured lawns and tree-lined pathways for taking the air. Something between what we would now call a public garden and an amusement park, it acted just as parks, gardens, and indeed, urban farms still do: as a method of escape from the city, and a space for recreation in a construction of nature.

Also like other pleasure gardens around Europe, this first Spanish pleasure garden and its successors were constantly and consciously utilized by the ruling elites of the time for several very specific purposes, one of which was simply keeping up with the rest of Europe. Modernization entailed Spanish synchronization with other European societies: synchronization that had to be expressed in spatial terms, mapped onto the city as modernization was hoped to map onto the population. The creation of the *jardines de recreo,* therefore, carried huge symbolic weight in the project of crafting a modern urban center. It is clear, moreover, that the ruling elites understood the importance of this symbolism: after the construction of a monument to the Spanish heroes of the Second of May, the garden was expanded to connect said monument with the Prado (Cruz, 2015). In effect, it connected two very Spanish constructions in a very consciously European way. Members of the public who visited the compound could access and perform both Spanish and European identities, and did so in a way that allowed the ruling elites to dictate exactly what both those identities included. The fantasy space of the garden, ideologically set apart from the city but already pressing against the image of a city as a homogenously built entity, had been effectively turned into a political tool.

Cruz writes that the *jardines de recreo* were urban projects that aimed to produce environments that expressed the values, sensibilities, and aspirations of the new liberal bourgeoisie. They must be understood as forms of *artificiosidad urbana*, urban artifice, whose

goal was to embody the social ideals held by specific groups (Cruz, 2015). The Spanish word *artificiosidad* carries a connotation of uselessness, belying the extensive and strategic work of shaping national and cultural identity through re-organizing the physical and economic space of the city. Today's *huertos* can also be said to map the social and political ideals of a specific group, or groups, onto the spatial reality of the city, and to serve as spaces for strategic and performative creations of identity, both collective and individual. Far from useless, today's *huertos* emphasize the physical work done within them as a key aspect of their purpose, although the cultural work of identity formation, as in the *jardines de recreo*, remains largely invisible.

Madrid's *jardines de recreo* decreased in social importance as the 20th century began. When Francisco Franco seized power in 1939, new Spanish identities were needed to solidify and support his new regime. Franco focused on landscape, not cityscape, and idealized uniquely Spanish history and themes over any attempts to connect with the rest of Europe. In fact, Franco chose Spanish agriculture as the mythical foundation for his dictatorship. *Kois* notes that the first years of Franco's propaganda were marked by an agrarian discourse that legitimized the new regime through an idealized (and completely fictional) rural Spanish worldview. "The countryside and its archetypes of simplicity, tradition, and social peace served to distance the paradigm that, according to the conquering faction, had provoked the Civil War in the first place, centered in the working classes, industry, the city, and atheism" (*Kois*, 2016, p. 223). Franco wanted his New Spain to be different, imagined and constructed not in the industrial, globalizing cities but in the clean, pure reaches of the Spanish countryside, and inhabited by mythologized Spanish peasants from a simpler time.

In Madrid, Franco's focus on agriculture shaped a version of today's *huertos urbanos*. Called *huertos familiares*, "family gardens," these privatized urban green spaces were meant to

inspire a strong work ethic, engender pride in the nuclear family, and counteract the continued shortages of food in the capital city (*Kois*, 2016). Franco's propaganda applauded the family garden, and used images and descriptions of successful sites to show the rest of Spain, and the rest of the world, that the new dictator was treating his people well. Here, it was not individual identities, but rather a new national identity being created through and upon the city space of Madrid. Yet another re-organization of city space, this one with a direct focus on much-needed agricultural production, can be added to the legacy of urban agriculture in which today's *huertos urbanos* exist, although looking back at the list created by today's urban farmers reminds us that de-privatization and "opening the neighborhood" are critical aspects of modern-day purpose of these *huertos*: a direct, if unknowing, critique of Franco's *huertos familiares*.

If we think of the network of *huertos* in modern-day Madrid as an "eco-socio-political tool," one use of this tool is undoubtedly to create and perform identity. Referring back to the list of ways in which today's urban farmers hope to utilize their *huertos*, another theme emerges: that of activism, and of actively engaging with societal and political problems that demand multi-layered responses. *Kois* and Moran note that: "Wars and other moments of social conflict seem to provoke an increase in transgressions in the use of the city, a restructuring of the activities that are performed in spaces designed and constructed for other purposes" (*Kois*, 2016, p. 217). The authors go on to applaud these initiatives, not only as examples of practical problem solving but also as "gestures of spatial creation for the continuation of life in extremely difficult situations" (Ibid).

Another example from Madrid's history pays testament to the use of gardens as response to crisis. With the end of the Second Republic and the onset of the Civil War in 1936, Madrid

turned to the business of fighting. Almost from the beginning of the war, Madrid was held under siege by Franco's forces, and would remain effectively cut off from the rest of the country for two and a half years. During this time, food shortage was a chronic. Small, spontaneous, and often managed and maintained by groups of women, the vegetable gardens that emerged in the vacant lots and along the streets of the besieged city are perhaps the closest relations to the modern-day *huertos urbanos* in their form and many of their perceived functions. The conversion of the iconically Spanish bullfighting ring at Las Ventas into an emergency garden is especially emblematic of these spatial subversions, and the attention lavished on returning the ring to its proper Spanish use by the conquering Fascist army shows that the significance of space was not lost on Franco either (*Kois,* 2016)), as does his emphasis on Spanish rural ideals in the creation of a mythical source for his power, as discussed above.

Farms sprung up on Madrid's periphery as well, mirror images of Franco's sanctioned and celebrated *huertos familiares* While the *huertos familiares* were strategic attempts by Franco and his propagandists to craft a new national identity, however, the peripheral farms responded to a widespread crisis. They were attempts by dispossessed farmers to keep themselves fed, and served also as a way for recently transplanted Spaniards to lay claim to their new home (*Kois*, 2016). Like the *huertos* that sprang into being during the siege of Madrid, these farms came out of a time of crisis and re-shaped the peripherally urban spaces that were available to their creators. In Franco's Madrid, then, existed two types of *huertos*, one of which emphasized identity formation and one of which responded to a basic human need. In both, urban space was shifted to accommodate alternate goals. In this way, today's *huertos urbanos* appear as direct descendants, spatially if not completely ideologically, of these urban farms on which Spaniards were producing food in the city long before the modern urban agriculture trend.

Latest in a line of urban agricultural spaces though they may be, Madrid's current *huertos* depart dramatically from their precursors in one very obvious way: the production of food is not a priority. The list of goals from the April meeting includes related topics, such as cooking and nutrition education, fostering of biodiversity, and a commitment, where possible, to organic methods. Food production itself actually ranks very low, if at all, in the mindsets of many of the urban farmers with whom I spoke. Diego, a professor of environmental history at the Complutense University, dismissed this question out of hand when I asked for his take on the *huertos urbanos* early in my research (personal communication, October 12, 2016). Mateo, a retired mathematician who is now very active in the ReHd's many compost initiatives, also noted that, while urban farms in cities like Sevilla and León do serve as important sources of nutrition for the families that maintain them, none of Madrid's *huertos* serve that purpose. His theory was that, with the current population of Madrid being what it is, there are fewer people who have subsistence farming in their own lived experiences or who see it as a viable option for supplementing their diets, as opposed to Sevilla and León, two cities with much larger populations of recently-relocated farmers (personal communication, May 29, 2017). Furthermore, because of cheaper food prices and a relative accessibility of fruits and vegetables, Madrid's current *huertos urbanos* do not claim to address a food shortage or health crisis, as is the case with urban gardens in many American cities.

The question then becomes: if such a re-organization of city space can be read as responding to a crisis, what crisis, or crises, are today's *huertos urbanos* addressing? Moreover, what solutions are they offering that are compelling enough to increase the number of farms in Madrid from seven in 2011 to over 40 (and growing) in 2017?

Ironically, the same farmers Franco's myths romanticized were, in the early 1940s, being driven out of a not-so-idyllic Spanish countryside by continued, and worsening, scarcity of resources. They came to cities, including Madrid, and built their own neighborhoods on the outskirts when they could not find housing within (*Kois*, 2016). This is known as the *éxodo rural*, the rural exodus, in Spanish history, and fundamentally altered the demographics of Madrid's population. Even today, most young *madrileñas* claim one or two other towns as their own, where their grandparents and extended family still live and where they likely go on vacation. It is difficult to find a *madrileña* all four of whose grandparents were born in Madrid.

In a city full of transplants from other parts of Spain and the world, creating ownership and fostering community within neighborhoods is certainly addressing a crisis. "*Hacer barrio,"* creating neighborhood community, is a common theme in any conversation about the functions of Madrid's farms. Furthermore, as can be seen in the list, threads from many different activist narratives are present, from feminism to anti-capitalism. Madrid's urban farmers are indeed utilizing their *huertos* to address a number of crises, although not necessarily the food-based crises that might be expected from the nominal connection to agricultural production.

Still, these spaces are called *huertos*, a name that bears connotations of small-scale agricultural production. The name separates them from other urban green spaces, such as *jardines*, gardens, or *parques*, parks. The separation can be delineated by the kind of engagement expected from an individual interacting with these spaces. All three types invite users to escape the city's streets and noise; *huertos,* however also imply cultivating vegetables, caring for the plot of land, and harvesting crops, whereas gardens and parks usually invite only relaxation and recreation. I am speaking here of the target audiences, the users for which these spaces are

constructed, and I do not wish to belittle the substantial amount of work that goes into maintaining a city park or a public rose garden. Still, it is telling that the maintenance of a city park, for example, is not the responsibility of those who go to relax there, but rather outsourced to landscaping companies and maintenance teams, and largely meant to be invisible. By contrast, in a *huerto urbano*, the maintenance of the space is the responsibility of the *huerto* community, and the work of planting, weeding, and harvesting is a large part of why people spend time in that space.

The urban farms of Madrid, therefore, bill themselves as something separate from the parks or the gardens that exist elsewhere in the city. Their invitation to actively engage with city space is unique both in the context of urban green space, and the context of the city as a whole. Like all urban green space, these sites challenge the image of the city as a concrete wasteland and enable city dwellers to engage with spaces coded as natural in multiple ways. Far from urban, as we think of the term, neither are these spaces completely natural, for what is natural about a carefully cultivated and strategically planned vegetable patch, or a continually groomed city park? Urban green spaces can thus be said to exist as a third kind of space: anti-urban in their design and goals, but implicitly urban in that they must have urban spaces within and against which to exist. *Huertos urbanos* take this one step farther. By bringing agriculture into the urban footprint, the dichotomies between urban and rural, between consumption and production, are explicitly complicated, often in profoundly political ways.

When they began as illegal farms, it was clear that the *huertos* were engaging in subversive and revolutionary re-organization of vacant city space. Over the past several years, however, the ReHd's relationship with the *Ayuntamiento*, Madrid's city government, has changed dramatically. Once antagonistic, it has become much more cooperative, with the

Ayuntamiento providing water, soil, and even start-up costs for some of today's farms, and gardeners in the ReHd working with *Ayuntamiento* representatives to present public education sessions and spread the word about urban agriculture. One of the goals in the list from the April meeting, in fact, is "Co-management with the local government). And yet, some within the ReHd, this causes a different kind of problem. In October 2016, a few months before the April meeting, I attended another meeting at one of the gardens at which the conversation focused on how to continue the activist legacy of these gardens now that they are no longer inherently subversive (read: illegal). In other words: What can we protest now?

We have already seen that urban green spaces, because of their reality as constructed spaces and by virtue of existing within an urban area, are historically political spaces. By consciously collaborating with other citizen initiatives, Madrid's *huertos urbanos* have taken this to another level. At the October meeting, I asked Jorge what he thought the *huertos* could or should be protesting now. His answer described the ideal *huerto urbano* as a "space of eco-social transformation, that is to say, of transformational initiatives, and thus of citizen activism: groups of agro-environmental consumption, composting, promotion of cycling, barter systems…Hopefully we can act as the vanguard, as living laboratories of activism" (personal communication, October 16, 2016). And his vision for the future of the *huertos urbanos*? "Consolidated, normalized, functioning as a citizen resource for health and mutual learning, working in the ReHd, and involved with other social, environmental, and political movements" (Ibid). In other words, each individual *huerto* has the potential to be its own microcosm of activism, connecting individuals and activists from all walks of life and providing support and space for groups engaging in everything from bicycle repair to bartering. Each individual *huerto* has the potential to also be connected with other *huertos* in the city, providing mutual support

and learning for greater and more effective reach. These *huertos* then, are not only producing negligible quantities of vegetables: they're producing activism, the activists to do it, and the spaces to make it possible. The image of a network of urban vegetable plots as an eco-socio-political tool seems more relevant and possible than ever, moving beyond the inherent activism of planting vegetables in a city to the opening, the complicating, and the intentional restructuring, both spatially and culturally, of that very city.

But are the *huertos* really open to everyone in a given community? When I asked Mateo who uses today's urban farms the most, he quickly answered with ages (mostly people between 30 and 60) and gender (fairly equal, but in many gardens, majority women) (personal communication, May 29, 2017). He and Diego both noted that young people are difficult to keep, as a mobile population with shorter attention spans (Ibid, and personal communication, October 16, 2016). When I asked Mateo where most of the ReHd's participants are from, he replied that "we have people, immigrants, from all over," but proceeded to clarify that he meant from as far away as Murcia – not quite the immigrants I was expecting (personal communication, May 29, 2017). The ReHd is a diverse community in some ways, but not in all ways, evidenced in one way by the lack of readily available information or materials in any language other than Spanish.

It is important to note that today's *huertos,* like their illegal forebears during Franco's regime, tend to exist peripherally, in spaces on the edges of the city and in areas that were not being used – that is, not being used in ways seen as "productive" by the government and other citizens. There is privilege in the claiming of such spaces, in the defining of productivity, and power in the doing so. Ágata, a woman who has been part of a *huerto* in the western suburbs of Madrid for five years now, described the site of the farm before it was a farm using words like

"trash" and "chaos." "People used to hang out and burn things," she noted with a grimace (personal communication, November 9, 2016). Now she and the other participants in the *huerto* are working on a reforestation project as well as expanding their growing areas. There was a clear sense of pride that now the land is being used well, for purposes that enhance the neighborhood socially and ecologically. One could ask, though, where the people who used to light the fires are now that they have been pushed out of that particular space. Have they been welcomed back? Do they see the new *huerto* as a space that is open to them? Written into the text of that place as the undesirable precursors that enabled the space to be seen as vacant, and thus, open for the *huerto urbano* to be formed, their place in the reconstruction is tenuous.

The shift from "vacant" lot—that is, a space coded by mainstream sensibilities and power structures as unused—to urban farm echoes a larger trend visible across Madrid: that of the claiming of public space by private interests, or what J. Sequera and M. Janoschka, in their article on gentrification in Madrid's historic neighborhoods, call the gentrification of public space. This process takes many forms, although is perhaps most visible in the tendency of restaurateurs to designate part of a public space, such as a plaza, as seating for that restaurant's customers only, thereby making supposedly open areas unavailable for non-clients (Sequera and Janoschka, 2015). The article examines Lavapiés, a neighborhood just south of Madrid's tourist center, and its double reputation as home to large numbers of immigrants and rapidly expanding cultural center prized by the urban creative class. Today, Lavapiés as a neighborhood boasts the highest density of cultural institutions in Spain, with more than a dozen public arts centers, performance spaces, and universities situated within its confines (Ibid). Sequera and Janoschka classify such a space as a "culture-place," emblematic of current economic trends of specialization and place-based consumption (Ibid, p. 383). "Creative industries and culture are

key assets of contemporary capitalism, simultaneously promoting urban development, tourism, and other dynamics that promise economic growth" (Ibid, p. 383). The presence of such spaces within Madrid prompt and allow for new lifestyles based on distinctive models of citizenship and consumerism that draw from trends both global and local (Ibid).

What role, then, do Madrid's *huertos urbanos* play in this production of a city in which certain "public" areas are so effusively welcoming to a modern, creative citizen/consumer, and so potentially alienating to others? Do they work against the commodification of public space and leisure, as members think they do? Or do they, in their connection to a global trend of strategic re-organizations of space that necessarily displace certain citizens even as they invite others, advance the very thing they supposedly work against, contributing to a place-based model of activist-inspired consumerism? Especially now that many of Madrid's urban farms are funded, or at least subsidized, by Madrid's government, the lines between citizen-driven spaces for revolutionary activism and consumer-oriented, creative products are blurred.

Still, the line is there. Madrid's *huertos* may be difficult for some to access in a number of ways, but are, more often than not, utilized and cared for by members of the communities in which they exist. A huge fence that is only open at certain gardening times encircles Huerto Adelfas, where Mateo works, which discourages non-gardeners from spending time there. When the gate is open, however, a wide range of ages, genders, and backgrounds do come together from the surrounding apartment buildings to weed and water, the shared stewardship of the space creating connections within that specific community. Lavapiés's oldest *huerto urbano*, called *Ésta es una Plaza* ("This is a public space") strives, in name and practice, to be a welcoming space for non-gardeners as well, with ample spaces for seating, playing, and community events as well as garden times clearly posted and links to the space's blog inviting visitors to get

involved. The space itself is always open, and usually contains several people from the surrounding neighborhood hanging out, not always speaking Spanish. Perhaps, then, it can be said that one way to push against the exclusion and gentrification that *huertos* sometimes unwittingly bring is to create *huertos* that are not solely active spaces, but that also incorporate elements of gardens and parks in the providing of passive, and necessary, opportunities for recreation and relaxation. After all, recreation itself, when practiced by those who society claims should always be working (immigrants, the poor, etc.), is its own revolution.

Ángels Canadell and Jesús Vicens, in their heady book on what it means to live in cities, write that the restructuring of lived space implies the restructuring of the culture that shapes and is shaped by said space (Canadell, 2010). This is a useful way to envision what Madrid's *huertos urbanos*, and the people who create and maintain them, are attempting to do: create a new culture, a new set of cultural values, through the creation of green, productive space, necessitating a reorganization of the city itself with the complication of the supposed dichotomy between urban and rural. Complexities inevitably arise, as the *huertos* exist within and against an ever-changing city that exerts powerful influence on them, even as they strive to influence it. Still, the actions of planting seeds in a city, creating community through activism, and locating people in space, not just in time, are all revolutionary actions and should be recognized as such. To once more draw from Canadell, Madrid's *huertos urbanos* act as spaces in which communal re-imagining of the city, and of the communities that comprise the city, can be engaged and acted upon (Ibid).

I will end with Horacio Capal's description of gardens as material aspirations: as pursuits of an ideal world that he links to the Garden of Eden before the Fall (Capal, 2006). Certainly the pleasure gardens of the 19th century worked to create an idealized paradise, separate from the

city but inextricably linked to the political currents of their day. Franco's family gardens, too, used the aspirational power of gardens to paint a false picture of happiness and prosperity in a Spain that he had subjugated, and the urban farms during the long siege of Madrid, as *Kois* notes, endeavored to craft certainty and safety in a deeply uncertain and unsafe time.

I would argue that this aspiration, this search for an earthly paradise, is also visible in the *huertos urbanos* of today's Madrid. Their search is pointed toward something different, perhaps, and at times runs the risk of producing something antithetical to their goals. Nonetheless this search, like others before it, utilizes urban green space to reshape the culture of the city by reshaping the city's physical layout. Madrid's *huertos urbanos* are, at root, spaces of intersection: the intersection of urban and rural, the intersection of culture and space, the many intersecting activist causes of Madrid's current political and economic reality, and the complex intersections of neighborhood development and gentrification with which modern activists must continue to grapple. Amid the challenges of creating a new world while still existing in the old, the *huertos urbanos* continue as new kinds of spaces that restructure antiquated models of thought regarding the purpose of agriculture and ways of engaging with a city. The inherently political roles urban green spaces in all their various forms can play show us that the current political nature of today's urban farms is not an anomaly, but a given. Power exists in the intentional blurring of boundaries between city and countryside that happens when seeds are planted and produce is grown in an urban center. When we recognize that power, we can begin to recognize too that today's urban farms are harnessing said power for a myriad of goals and with a variety of outcomes; outcomes that deepen in complexity and scope as the *huertos* grow and change, and that must be continually examined if the spaces are to become what their creators hope they will.

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