FROM SKYSCRAPERS TO TREETOPS: SOCIAL CONNECTIVITY IN THE WORK OF

BARBARA MORGAN

by

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Barbara Morgan’s 1959 photomontage *Hullabaloo* (fig. 1) groups seemingly disparate photographic fragments of summer camp, the city, and a dancer into one work of art, an initially puzzling image that encodes the characteristics of social organization in Morgan’s work. Her grouping of these fragments in a single image shows that summer camp, the city, and dance are related parts of societal systems, which create order regardless of geographical location. Just as *Hullabaloo* interrelates fragments from her various projects, Morgan’s body of work illustrates interactions between control of society, control of nature, and control of the body in both rural and urban environments to reveal that humans’ methods of ordering their world are complex and incomplete. Rather than seeking to situate Morgan’s works more broadly within photographic history, this thesis will contextualize *Hullabaloo* within Morgan’s oeuvre to show that the various domains of Morgan’s photography are not discrete, but rather participate in a shared attempt at depicting societal order.

*Hullabaloo* brings together imagery from Morgan’s photographs of Camp Treetops, in Lake Placid, New York, and the Martha Graham Dance Company, as well as her photomontages of New York City, to demonstrate that although humans create order in diverse ways, the desire for control and organization is a unifying force. The image at the top right of *Hullabaloo* shows three girls from Camp Treetops, who jump all together as they stretch their arms above their heads. Created over a span of seven years leading up to the publication of Morgan’s book *Summer’s Children* in 1951, her photographs of Camp Treetops illustrate summer camp activities in a day-in-the-life format. Collectively, these reveal the heavy influence of adults on children’s experiences and the role of summer camp in encouraging democratic, American values, an American mode of social organization that contrasts with the Communist models of its time. The bottom third of *Hullabaloo* features crowds composed of many small, unidentifiable
individuals, recalling imagery that Morgan previously included in her photomontages of New York City. Made between the 1930s and 1970s, these works distort scale and space to portray the city as a place in which socio-political forces shape human experience, while the natural world also exerts influence. The central element in *Hullabaloo* is a dancer who leaps into the air while flinging a rope above and behind him, an image that originates in Morgan’s 1930s images of the Martha Graham dance company. It is fitting that she positioned this figure at the center of this photomontage because dance functions as a unifying element throughout Morgan’s oeuvre, marrying bodily motion and control.

The title *Hullabaloo* suggests the potential disarray and excitement of a world in which multiple types of order coexist. The word “hullabaloo” traditionally denotes a commotion, an idea that suggests that, despite numerous systems of control, the world is subject to unexpected chaos. In 1940, the United States was on the brink of World War II, a crisis that would upset the order of American life. Around the time that Morgan created *Hullabaloo* the term appeared frequently in the *New York Times* with regard to issues as wide-ranging as the environment, politics, and culture. Despite their disparate topics, the articles in which “hullabaloo” appears usually focus on converging and conflicting systems of control. One such article about noise disputes chronicles an altercation between a working woman cleaning her apartment in the evening and a neighbor with a sleeping infant.¹ In this case, two different systems of ordering family life, one in which a woman works outside the home during the day and another in which a woman stays home to care for children, caused conflict. The church and politics appear as clashing organizational systems in another article in which a church elder complains about “too

many political hullabaloos on Sundays.”² Clashes between humans and nature are also evident in an article about the use of insecticides, which was opposed by environmental activists. Journalist John W. Randolph predicts: “If spraying continues next summer, and there is every reason to believe that it will, there will be another hullabaloo.”³ The term “hullabaloo” continued to have cultural relevance into the 1960s thanks to the rock and roll television program, *Hullabaloo*, which ran in 1965 and 1966 and featured celebrities such as the Beatles’ manager, Brian Epstein.⁴ Thus, through its association with this popular term, Morgan’s *Hullabaloo* conveys that order and disorder exist together, as multiple systems of control work at the same time but fail to structure an energized and rapidly changing society.

Duplication and repetition function in *Hullabaloo* not only to highlight themes from throughout Morgan’s career, including motion and crowd dynamics, but also to show that systems of control are human patterns that recur in various settings. A network of white strips filled with equally spaced holes runs throughout *Hullabaloo*. These strips both divide and unify the various components of *Hullabaloo* by framing each into its own portion of the image, while also serving as a consistent motif. Their diagonal lines draw the viewer’s eye back and forth throughout the photomontage, encouraging a sequential viewing of each individual element. The strips look very much like the perforated strips that run along the edge of continuous form paper. The malleability of the strips reveals that they are paper, as some lie flat while others are twisted or folded. Insofar as the strips come from continuous form paper, which was used with dot-

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matrix printers and produced carbon copies, they illuminate the significance of duplication within *Hullabaloo*. The crowd itself is repeated within the photomontage, whereas the dancer at center and the children at upper right were previously published as part of Morgan’s respective projects on the Martha Graham Dance Company and summer camp. By repeating elements within the work and throughout her oeuvre, the artist suggests that human behaviors follow patterns and persist regardless of time and place. Duplication is characteristic of photomontage because this medium recombines existing negatives into new images. Further, Morgan writes “I feel that photomontage with its endless technological and esthetic possibilities can be not only an inspiring medium for the meditative artist, but that it will increasingly serve the general public as a coordinating visual language.”⁵ This idea of “a coordinating visual language” extends the theme of societal order by implying that photomontage can bring people together, uniting them through the shared structure of a communication system.

Dancers reappear throughout both *Hullabaloo* and Morgan’s oeuvre, emphasizing ideas of bodily control and of a life energy, which Morgan understands as universal. Around 1935, Morgan became interested in photographing dance after watching the Martha Graham Dance Company and discovering, after a shared conversation with Graham, that they both had an interest in Native American rituals.⁶ In a video interview, Morgan traced her fascination with motion to a story her father told her about “dancing atoms” that are present in all beings.⁷ Thus, it is fitting that dancers appear throughout Morgan’s oeuvre, not only in her book, *Martha*

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*Graham: Sixteen Dances in Photographs*, originally published in 1941, but also in city
photomontages, such as *Spring on Madison Square* (fig. 2). While the photographs from Camp
Treetops do not show professional dancers, they do show children leaping by a lake, as well as
participating in square dancing. In this way, dance serves as a symbol of bodily control and
expression throughout Morgan’s works, while also illustrating the way that ritualized movement
orders lives.

The dancer (fig. 3)\(^8\) at the center of *Hullabaloo* offers connections between physical and
spiritual control, showing the power of dance to evoke religious practices and connect people
across history. This image comes from Morgan’s Martha Graham project, specifically her series
on the dance “El Penitente.” Erick Hawkins, the dancer, clenches his muscles tightly, exercising
extreme bodily control. From his tight fist to his flexed toes, every part of his body is actively
engaged, with visible arm veins attesting to the intensity of his strength. The composition
consists primarily of hard, diagonal lines, with few curves, creating a dynamic and jarring
viewing experience. The rope that the penitent uses to flagellate himself, held above his head,
follows the same line as his arm and becomes an extension of his body, suggesting that physical
forces can create spiritual control.

Through the depiction of spiritual practice in the photograph of Hawkins, dance reveals
connections to the religious landscape of the Southwest United States, which included multiple,

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\(^8\) In addition to its use in *Hullabaloo*, this image is published in two distinct formats. It appears
under the heading “Flagellation of Penitent” in *Martha Graham: Sixteen Dances in Photographs*
(pg. 91), where it is cropped as a trapezoid, with the diagonal line at top. The dancer is large
within the page and his lower set of toes are cut off. In the 1972 monograph, *Barbara Morgan*,
published by Morgan & Morgan in cooperation with the Amon Carter, the image appears as plate
19, entitled *Martha Graham, EL PENITENTE (Erick Hawkins Solo, “El Flagellante”)*. This
version of the image takes on the rectangular shape of the page and includes Hawkins’s full
body, which is centered. This is the version of the image that is included in the figures for this
paper. Notably, the image of Hawkins used in *Hullabaloo* is flipped to face the opposite
direction of both of these images.
competing systems of control. Graham’s *El Penitente* is based on penitents in the Southwest who participate in a long-running tradition that emerged from the colonial Spanish Catholic Church.\(^9\) Morgan’s photograph emphasizes this spiritual element by showing the dancer against a backdrop of only sky with no ground visible, making him seem part of a heavenly realm. Michael Carroll describes the practices of the penitent brotherhood in New Mexico and quotes a first-hand witness, Josiah Gregg: “Not far behind followed another equally destitute of clothing, with his whole body wrapped in chains and cords, which seemed buried in the muscles, and which so cramped and confined him that he was scarcely able to keep pace with the procession.”\(^10\) The penitents’ practice was deeply rooted in bodily control and restraint, providing a physical dimension to their spirituality. Carroll addresses flagellation as a way for the faithful to participate in the passion of Christ by drawing them closer to an important spiritual figure while also atoning for sins and appeasing an angry God.\(^11\) In her brief essay in *Martha Graham: Sixteen Dances in Photographs*, Graham writes, “It is the activity produced by this Spirit-of-body that is Dancing.”\(^12\) Thus, Graham herself identifies a connection between controlled, specific movements of the physical body and spiritual forces. The choice of the penitent brotherhood as a subject matter is surprising in light of Morgan’s and Graham’s shared love for Southwestern Native American ritual dances because the two represent competing and even contradictory systems of religious organization. Carroll suggests that the idea that the Pueblo Indians are mystically connected to the land in a way that allows them to preserve what American society has lost through modernization is deeply entrenched in the public


\(^11\) Ibid., 79.

\(^12\) Martha Graham, “Dancer’s Focus,” in Morgan, *Martha Graham*, 11.
imagination. In reality, these Native Americans experienced complex and problematic interactions and conflicts with the Spanish Catholics. In this way, the Southwest appears as a place where multiple structures of religious order exist, neither becoming universal or all-controlling.

As in *Hullabaloo*, Morgan incorporates Martha Graham dancers in her photomontages of New York City, including *Protest* (fig. 4), a work that reveals the psychological and physical potentials of bodily control, while simultaneously suggesting the delicacy of political and social stability. Made just prior to the United States’ entry into World War II, *Protest* fits within a series of photomontages that expose broad societal changes as the 1930s menace of yellow journalist William Randolph Hearst gives way to anxieties about nuclear conflict in the 1960s and ‘70s. While Morgan’s images of New York feature both sinister socio-political forces, as in *Protest*, and transcendent natural ones, they all critique “the anthropocentric, machinesmothered, self-obsessed, high-decibel, smog-belts of a metropolis.” Like *Hullabaloo*, *Protest* features a comparatively large body of a dancer moving above a crowd. However, whereas the dancer in *Hullabaloo* is separated from the crowd by the border of perforated strips, the dancer in *Protest* seems to rise out of the crowd in that his left leg fades into the crowd and the foot is not visible. Paradoxically, the dancer seems both disconnected from the crowd, due to differences in scale, and to grow out of it. The crowd includes a large densely packed group on the left, as well as a group of marchers, some of whom carry a flag and a sign, on the right. The marchers walk in rows, creating a sense of order. The dancer’s energetic, marching step fits with the idea of protest and suggests bold action, functioning as a projection of the crowd’s desires. However, despite

14 Ibid., 77.
the dancer appearing to arise from the crowd, his elevated foot seems poised to fall on the unknowing protesters who carry the flag and banner, squashing both their bodies and their ideas. The absence of the dancer’s face makes his intent ambiguous and echoes the anonymity of the crowd. In this way, *Protest* captures a moment where control and order are fragile, poised on the edge of looming destruction and chaos, suggesting the tenuousness of the city’s social order. The diagonal character of the horizon line extends this feeling of uneasiness, which would have been especially potent due to the growing threat of World War II. A single mounted figure, presumably a police officer, watches the goings on from his position at the periphery of the crowd. At first glance, his presence contributes to the sense of order and control. However, he could easily be overtaken by the masses, revealing that the crowd is orderly because it has been conditioned to be so, not because it is physically forced. On the whole, the inclusion of the dancer in *Protest* conveys the power of both the individual and the collective to the control of crowds.

*Spring on Madison Square* (fig. 2), another city photomontage that includes a dancer, demonstrates interactions between nature and the built environment that juxtapose boundaries with inescapable natural cycles. In this work, individuals and small groups walk along the sidewalk, mostly moving in the same direction. The pattern of the sidewalk offers a formal parallel to the perforated paper in *Hullabaloo* because both create a path of movement through their respective works. In *Spring on Madison Square*, the uniformity of the people’s movement and dress constitutes a crowd-like similarity, which is furthered by their small scale and anonymity. Indeed, they are tiny compared to the park, tulips, and dancer in the photomontage, suggesting that they are insignificant as individuals, especially when compared to the immensity of nature. The park in this work is fenced off from the street and sidewalks, with undisturbed
snow indicating that humans have not strayed from their paths. Just as the sidewalk shows the pedestrians where to walk, the cold, wet snow provides an equal force, indicating where they should not walk. Although the large male dancer seems to stride across the park, his feet are not visible, suggesting that his presence is somewhat intangible. Because seasonal changes occur globally and throughout time, they also contribute to the idea that the city cannot escape the immensity of nature, making the attempt to separate humans and natural areas with a fence seem futile.

*Spring on Madison Square* creates a sense of absent presence and intangibility through the symbolic interactions of large flowers and the figure of the dancer. Formally similar to another photomontage, *Leaf Floating in City* (fig. 5), *Spring on Madison Square* contains two large tulips that distort scale and space, following Morgan’s pattern in the city photomontages of combining architecture, people and natural elements in ways that are complex and disorienting. The flowers extend across the work, overlapping the street, park, and large figure of a dancer, and dwarfing these other elements in comparison to their large scale. Functioning similarly to the large, empty leaf shape in *Leaf Floating in City*, the flowers evoke an absent presence and reiterate the sense of intangibility created by the dancer. Barren winter tree branches are visible through the flower petals, engendering an ironic contrast between fertility and dormancy. The photogram process adds additional complexity to the idea of the flowers as an absent presence. When creating the image, Morgan set actual flowers on top of the negative of the dancer during the development process.\(^{16}\) Although the tulips appear as flat negative cut outs in the final image, they were once a tangible and three-dimensional presence in the artist’s studio.

Spring on Madison Square balances the personal and the collective, while also portraying dance as a connective force between humans and nature. The large dancer who strides boldly across the park is Erick Hawkins, the same dancer at the center of Hullabaloo, but in this instance, appearing in Graham’s “American Document.” Morgan’s choice to include Hawkins grew out of her own personal experience and by chance. According to Leonard Amico and Stephen Edidin, Morgan was looking at the snow in Madison Square out her window while she was organizing negatives of Hawkins. A friend unexpectedly arrived, bringing her tulips and tidings of the arriving spring. This anecdote about the creation of the photomontage has relevance to the medium as a whole because, according to photography historian Anne Tucker, “Morgan described herself as ‘living a photomontage’,” a highly personal statement about the way she experiences the world. In this way, Morgan situates her own personal, momentary experience within global, long-lasting seasonal cycles. Yet, Hawkins’s presence in Spring on Madison Square has a deeper meaning than can be attributed to chance alone. As explored above, Morgan associates dance with the Southwestern United States and the Native American rituals that took place there. Further, in a video interview, she unequivocally identifies the Southwest as her favorite part of the United States, a locale she would much prefer to the urban setting she critiques in her photomontages. Indeed, as Amico and Edidin suggest, “If the photomontages express the urban anxieties and misgivings of one bearing deep affection for the Southwest, then the dance photographs seem to overcome them.” Thus, Spring on Madison Square becomes an attempt to bring the spirit of the Southwest to New York. Additionally,

17 Morgan, Martha Graham, 137.
19 Barbara Morgan, quoted in Tucker, The Woman’s Eye, 96.
20 Barbara Morgan: Everything is Dancing, Theodore R. Haines.
21 Amico and Edidin, The Photographs of Barbara Morgan, 8-9.
Morgan identifies the interrelations of humans and nature as one of the reasons she was so fascinated with the Native American’s dances. In the photomontage, the tulips and the dancer are closely related, with the flower’s horizontal stem following his outstretched arm. The dancers wide, open left palm mimics the shape of and energizes the unfolding of the flower that he nearly touches. In this way, the dancer becomes a bringer of new life, using his body to find unity with nature.

Time is complex in *Spring on Madison Square*, interrelating momentary experiences and the enduring natural cycles discussed above, as well as creating a sense of liminality and transition that connects New Yorkers to natural cycles and spiritual forces. Several of the small figures walk just ahead of a shadowy, ephemeral twin, with their bodies overlapping. These pairings suggest a warping of time, collapsing previously-taken steps into the present moment. The idea of warped time and transitions resonates with the more macrocosmic elements of the image as well, as winter snow and spring tulips intermingle. This changing of seasons puts the city in a time of transition, creating a liminal space. Anthropologist Victor Turner writes about the liminal period as a stage in rites of passage, suggesting that such rituals are strongest when, among other factors, “change is bound up with biological and meteorological rhythms and recurrences rather than with technological innovations.”²² In Morgan’s photomontage, one can read ritual in the day-to-day routine of New Yorkers who walk around the city, in a liminal space between their homes and offices. Their movements, repeated over time and choreographed by sidewalks and traffic lights, even take on dance-like characteristics. The dancer in the center of the image also evokes ritual as he strides alone into nature, as do the young men in the tribal

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rituals that Turner discusses. Even the act of dancing itself is comparable to ritual because both involve a sequence or pattern of actions that construct meaning. Indeed, the dances that most deeply inspired Morgan were part of Native American religious rituals that medicine men conducted. While New York was certainly not immune to technological forces, Spring on Madison Square places more emphasis on the seasonal cycles because the large flowers and wide, snowy plain of the park are much larger and more centrally placed than the cars that line the edge of the park. Further, Turner discusses liminality as a state that brings people “into close connection with deity or with superhuman power, with what is, in fact, often regarded as the unbounded, the infinite, the limitless.” This is true in Spring on Madison Square because the people who walk New York’s streets also move through the immensity of nature and come in close with the superhumanly large dancer.

Urban space also appears in Hullabaloo, suggested by repeated crowds that are homogeneous and controlled. In Morgan’s photomontages of New York City, people often appear as part of groups or crowds, moving in an organized way and staying within established boundaries. In these images, the built environment and political agents shape the lives of the city’s human inhabitants, while failing to constrain nature and other immense forces. In Hullabaloo, two city crowds fill the lower third of the image. Morgan prevents them from being read as one entity by varying their scale as well as by separating them with a border of perforated strips. The crowd on the left is larger in scale, although the number of individuals comprising the crowd is not demonstrably greater. Although these figures are larger than those in the crowd on the right, they read as silhouettes without identifiable individualized characteristics. Race and

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23 Ibid., 50.
24 Barbara Morgan: Everything is Dancing, Theodore R. Haimes.
gender, for instance, are not discernible. The relationship between the two crowds, which are similar in shape and density, continues this homogeneity and suggests that Morgan may have been manipulating the same image. In the crowd on the right, there is a figure on a horse, likely a mounted police officer, at the edge of the gathering, suggesting the importance of control and order for large groups. The angular shape of the crowds and their well-defined edges continues this sense of orderliness. Further, most of the figures appear to be standing still or walking slowly because the swinging arms and legs associated with running are not readily visible. This stagnancy makes the crowds seem more controlled, as if they were waiting, rather than rushing.

Morgan also includes a crowd in *Hearst over the People* (fig. 6), an image in which the presence of the police officers and the journalist William Randolph Hearst suggests that the city, like the summer camp, is an environment built and run by adults. The crowd is the densest at the center of the photomontage and has a rectangular border that resembles that of the crowds in *Hullabaloo*. Beyond this tight grouping are scattered groups and individuals who appear to be walking, which adds motion and liveliness to the photomontage. Among these individuals are at least two uniformed police officers: one at far left, standing in an authoritative and official pose, and one at the lower edge of the image, mounted on a horse, as in *Hullabaloo*. The use of the horse both in *Hearst over the People* and *Hullabaloo* is an attempt to harness an animal, a part of nature, to help humans do work and maintain order. The attention of the police officers creates awareness of the potential behavior of the crowd. Their presence reminds the masses to remain orderly, although the crowd far outnumbers them and they would not be able to physically force the crowd into compliance. In this way, the crowd members become consenting and active participants in the structure of city life. Although contemporary viewers might have been outraged by Hearst, the crowd does not look up to acknowledge his form, which floats above
them like a sinister parade balloon. On one hand, the crowd’s complacency suggests obliviousness or apathy to the political workings of the city. On the other hand, it also conveys strength in numbers, a group dynamic that promotes courageousness. Gustave Le Bon reinforces the idea that crowds can be unafraid of threats, like the sinister Hearst, writing, “the power of the crowd is the only force that nothing menaces.”26 Thus, the ability of any one individual to influence or control a large group is limited. Taking everything into account, the details of the crowd in Hearst over the People reveal that crowd dynamics are complex and carefully balanced, requiring the group to self-regulate as a supplement to structure that authorities and spatial environments provide.

Morgan’s use of the octopus form connects Hearst to a history of controversial and even harmful actions by large companies. Hearst’s distorted head floats above the crowd in a many-tentacled form that resembles an octopus or an over-grown amoeba, creating a sinister tone and emphasizing his actions as a newspaper tycoon. His tentacles undulate over the crowd, threatening to strangle them like an octopus holding prey in its arms.27 Describing Hearst’s actions as a yellow journalist, biographer W.A. Swanberg writes, “He specializes in attack and in attack he was pitiless.”28 This description makes Hearst’s smile in Morgan’s photomontage seem

27 The association of the octopus with exploitative business practices also occurs in Frank Norris’s 1901 novel, The Octopus: A Story of California. Based on the Mussel Slough Tragedy, which resulted from a land rights dispute between settlers and the Pacific & Southwestern Railroad Company of California, the book’s characters have a “puppet-like existence,” at the mercy of “overwhelming forces that are complicit with the seemingly oppositional realms of nature and culture.” In this way, the novel underscores the oppressive and corrupt features of the octopus image. See Daniel Darvay, “The Naturalist Sublime in Frank Norris’s The Octopus,” Studies in the Novel 47, no. 1 (Spring 2015): 44-46, https://doi.org/10.1353/sdn.2015.0008.
even more menacing, as if he has come up with a scheme and is pleased with his plan, while the
people below him remain vulnerably unaware. Morgan’s decision to deform Hearst’s face also
relates to his manipulative operations: “Concerned as I was with Yellow Journalism as a
distortion of the 30s, I decided to visually distort the consummate Distorter: editor William
Randolph Hearst. So, I undulated the enlarger paper for portrait distortion, made an imaginary
octopus cut-out and interrelated the two images over a May Day crowd photograph I had shot
from a seventh story window in New York.”29 Rather than using a documentary style, Morgan
creates a warped and constructed image. By engaging in photographic manipulation, she uses
Hearst’s own trickery against him, exposing the duplicity of the press and the scandal of yellow
journalism that had forsaken the standards of documentary photography.

In *Hearst over the People*, Morgan deploys surrealist strategies to indicate that the city is
a complex environment involving both real, tangible forces as well as those that are felt or
imagined. The large scale of Hearst’s face and tentacled form dwarf the crowd, making him
dominant or even god-like. However, the tentacles are transparent, allowing for glimpses of the
crowd beneath and, along with his floating position, creating an ethereal quality that perhaps
suggests a psychological, rather than physical, presence. Morgan’s viewer hovers above even
Hearst, taking a position that geographer Yi-Fu Tuan argues is natural for the human
imagination. In *Space and Place: The Perspective of Experience*, he writes, “We more readily
assume a God-like position, looking at the earth from above, than from the perspective of

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another mortal living on the same level as ourselves.”

Through this type of perspective, Morgan encourages viewers to reflect upon the power dynamics of the city. This position is not only God-like, but also dream-like, offering a connection to surrealism. Patrick Waldberg suggests that surrealist art falls into two categories: fantastical scenes constructed without concern for accuracy or verisimilitude and unreal scenes composed of otherwise realistic elements. 

_Hearst over the People_ belongs to the first category, as Morgan misshapes Hearst’s head to match her negative perception of his character, rather than rendering him as he actually looks. In contrast, _Hullabaloo_ falls under Waldberg’s second category because the crowd, the dancer, and the children are all realistically rendered but combine together in an unexpected and strange scene. In both works, Morgan’s surrealist tendencies combine to exercise a critical engagement with cultural reality by stretching the conventions by which her viewers perceive it.

Whereas _Hearst over the People_ expressed social tension, Morgan’s _Leaf Floating in City_ (fig. 5) juxtaposes organic and human-made forms to convey tension between nature and the built environment. This photomontage-photogram features an oversized leaf shape floating in front of a city building, suggesting the macrocosmic immensity of nature. Morgan crops her image to only the midsection of the building, with both the ground and the top of the building remaining out of view. This disorienting framing leaves viewers unsure about where their bodies are in space and how far away from the ground they are, a phenomenon to which the upward, diagonal perspective also contributes. Morgan’s leaf is semi-transparent, revealing glimpses of the building behind it and creating tension between presence and absence. The idea that the leaf is floating, as suggested by the image’s title, furthers the ideas of transience and ephemerality.

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30 Yi-Fu Tuan, _Space and Place: The Perspective of Experience_ (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1977), 28.

When compared to a building made of strong metals and concrete, a dead leaf, soon to decompose, is especially fragile. Further, the leaf’s rounded, imperfect shape contrasts the evenly measured grid of the building’s windows. This neat pattern echoes the straight sidewalks and streets that form city blocks, dictating that people move in an orderly fashion, rather than a random one. Indeed, square and rectangular forms dominate city life, appearing additionally in the shape of buildings and the rooms in them, providing an inescapable and rigid balance in the lives of city dwellers.

*Leaf Floating in City* is symbolically potent on a societal level by characterizing the interactions between humans and nature and suggesting Morgan’s personal beliefs about the interconnectedness of the universe. When compared to the rows of windows on the skyscraper, the leaf seems to be several stories tall, symbolizing the vastness of nature. Indeed, Morgan’s leaf begins a chain of associations leading viewers to think of a tree, a forest, and even the cosmos. In his chapter on “Intimate Immensity” in *The Poetics of Space*, Gaston Bachelard suggests that forests embody depth and limitlessness, even within their own boundaries. 32 This paradoxical relationship between boundaries and immensity relates to the complex relationship between the city and nature. While humans may attempt to transform nature with their buildings and infrastructure, it can never be totally suppressed. Further, the leaf holds personal significance in Morgan’s life. In the introduction to her book *Photomontage*, Morgan explains that when she was a small child her father showed her a leaf and said, “atoms are dancing inside it, and atoms are dancing in everything in the world!” 33 While atoms are microscopic, the smallest unit into which one can divide matter without the loss of its characteristic properties, they also evoke the

vastness of the universe in that everything that exists is made of atoms. In Morgan’s anecdote, her father further indicates that just as atoms move inside the leaf, ideas are active inside people.\textsuperscript{34} In this way, Morgan’s father links people with nature on a deep and personal level, suggesting that by thinking humans are engaging in a process similar to that which occurs within a leaf. On the whole, Morgan’s spectral leaf in Leaf Floating in City serves as a reminder that the city cannot completely overcome the immensity of nature due to the innate human connection to it.

\textit{City Shell} (fig. 7) illustrates that both nature and human-made buildings exist in the same space and impose structure on human lives, while also emphasizing tension between these competing systems. Combining a natural form with a skyscraper, this work developed as a momentary response to a gift from a friend, a shell that she placed on the sill of a window overlooking the Empire State Building.\textsuperscript{35} In this photomontage, the background is very dark and consists both of negative space and a city skyscraper, the Empire State Building, which is angled in a way that makes it appear to lean dramatically. The center of the image is occupied by a gleaming white seashell, creating a contrast between light and dark that puts the city and nature in opposition. The juxtaposition of the shell’s organic curves and the building’s straight lines heightens this contrast. Because Manhattan is an island, the shell’s symbolism is especially potent by harkening back to the island’s natural state prior to its development into a city and thereby suggesting that nature is the foundation of the city and the leaf a spectral reminder of its ongoing presence on the island. Morgan echoes this sentiment in her explanation of why she turned the Empire State Building “upside down,” stating, “I felt that the primitive Shell will

\textsuperscript{34} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{35} Ibid., n.p.
outlive our man-made Skyscrapers.” In this way, the enduringness of nature and the instability of the city are emphasized by juxtaposition. The central and upright position of the shell—stable and not listing—strengthens this dynamic, while its positioning with its sharp tip poised to bore into the skyscraper augments that dynamic. Morgan also explains her association of the shell with life force by writing, “I thought, ‘This Shell is also a Habitat!—the rhythmical creation of an anonymous architect!’” She reinforces this idea visually by adding five persons walking in a line across the surface of the shell. The final figures in the line appear small and faint, implying that the line may continue onto the other side of the shell. The line of people curves, following the shape of the shell, rather than the exactingly straight lines of the Empire State Building or city sidewalks. Thus, even in a space dominated by an iconic city building, a natural form retains the power to dictate the people’s movement, symbolizing nature’s power within the city.

Later in her career, in an image entitled *Ikons in Time-Stream* (fig. 8), Morgan again includes the Empire State Building in a photomontage to contrast the built, urban environment of the city with an enduring, ancient force. In this work, Morgan rotates the skyscraper so that it is upside down and on a diagonal. The lines of the building create an ascending and vertical energy, making the figurine appear to be caught in an updraft, an idea that resonates with the term *time-stream*. The building is semi-transparent and overlays a goddess figurine. The rotation of the building, as well as its fragmentation due to cropping, makes the city seem unstable, dynamic, and disorienting. In contrast, the figurine, which depicts the Mesopotamian goddess Ishtar, stands solid and vertical at the center of the image. Ishtar was a goddess of love and war, who

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36 Ibid.
37 Ibid.
also held power as a fertility figure.\textsuperscript{39} \textit{Ikons in Time-Stream} visually reinforces the fertility function of the figurine by leaving the pubic area unobscured by the building, although its phallically-pointed tower comes very close to piercing this area of the figurine. Ishtar’s juxtaposition of creation and the destruction of war reminds the viewer that New York is part of but one civilization out of the many shaped by shared human experiences.

In \textit{Ikons in Time-Stream}, Morgan uses distortions of scale to put the skyscraper and figurine in comparative dialogue, revealing that both goddesses and buildings have the power to shape human values and control societal actions. Expanding the scale of the figurine to match the scale of the skyscraper disorients the viewer and makes the city seem strange. Further, the similarity of scale suggests a parallelism between the figurine and the building, which carries over to their societal functions. Morgan’s use of the plural \textit{Ikons} in her title reinforces the idea that these items are objects of worship. John Taurnac writes that the Empire State Building connects to “the true heartbeat of a New Yorker” and “became an instant icon for the city and its age.”\textsuperscript{40} Whereas the ancient Mesopotamians worshipped a goddess to whom they related through the human experiences of love and war, New Yorkers and modern society idolized the technological innovation of the skyscraper, revealing their obsession with the built environment. Indeed, the goddess figurine takes on a human-like form, with curves that contrast the angularity of the building. On the whole, this comparison reveals that, while the specific characteristics of the objects that people worship and revere change throughout history, the universal power of icons remains a force that directs human lives.


As seen in *Ikons in Time-Stream*, Morgan’s work involves the creative juxtaposition of disparate iconic representations, which is epitomized in the interaction of diverse imagery in *Hullabaloo*. Such interaction makes it necessary to address not only the relationship of dance and city, but also the relationship of these entities to summer camp in order to understand organizational systems that continue regardless of geography. The New York photomontages function similarly to *Hullabaloo* in that they both show different facets of societal control and types of order intermingling. For instance, *Hullabaloo* addresses both crowd dynamics and the importance of spirituality and motion for collective order, themes that also appear in *Hearst over the People* and *Spring on Madison Square*. Throughout her city photomontages, Morgan illustrates competing social, natural, and architectural methods of organizing society, which reappear in her Camp Treetops images as children participate in activities such as gardening and square dancing in an environment that adults carefully prepared and controlled. Dancers serve as a connective thread throughout Morgan’s oeuvre, juxtaposing bodily control with both city and country life. In her *Summer’s Children* project, Morgan shows children dancing in a rural environment, continuing to address the relationship between individual bodily control and aggregate order, as well as the power of dance to deepen relationships between humans and the natural landscape.

Morgan’s photographs of Camp Treetops, many of which appear in her *Summer’s Children* book, provide an examination of the routines, culture, and environment of a children’s summer camp. Taken over a period of years, the images reinforce summer camp as an enduring, twentieth-century institution in American life and a force in shaping the values of young people. Through its analysis of human relationships, this work takes on broader implications by portraying summer camp as a small, well-functioning society during a time when world politics
were tense. Camp, too, has its own complexities because it is a built environment, a community of children engineered by a group of adults. Further, it is an environment where traditions and rituals are highly valued and provide structure for day-to-day routines, as well as periodically throughout the camp season. This ritualized order functions similarly to the religious and commercial systems suggested by the Ishtar figurine and the Empire State Building in *Ikons in Time-Stream* in that it directs both routines and communal values. Dancing by the lake, as portrayed in the image fragment in *Hullabaloo*, is one such recurring activity that illustrates the link between campers and the natural world, as well as the power of a shared activity to strengthen community ties.

In *Children Dancing by Lake* (fig. 9), a group of campers experiences unity with each other and connectivity with the landscape that surrounds them, reflecting an ordered harmony of body, nature, and environment. This photograph shows a group of several children, both boys and girls, but appears in *Hullabaloo* as a fragment with three girls leaping into the air. As presented in *Hullabaloo*, the angularity of the girls’ arms, bent at the elbows as they reach above their heads, is a dominant formal element because it mimics the line of the folded perforated strip, as well as the bent position of the male dancer’s arm below them. The square corners of the crowd formation at bottom echo the sharpness of a bent elbow, creating a sense of unity throughout the photomontage. Similarly, in the full version of *Children Dancing by Lake* the shapes of the children’s bodies harmonize with the landscape that surrounds them, suggesting that summer camp promotes a relationship between humans and nature. The outstretched arms of the campers, forming diagonal lines that direct energy upwards, echo the rise of the hills beyond the lake. The act of leaping, reaching toward the sky, also connects to the way that hills bring land closer to the heavens. In addition, the dancers coordinate with the lake, as one boy’s foot,
near the left side of the image, takes a flat position, appearing to skim the surface of the water.

Further, the relationship between the campers and their natural surroundings extends beyond the visual to the tactile in that the warm sun shines on the bare backs of the boys, while the wind blows wildly through the girls’ hair. Yet, the environment in which these campers are dancing in harmony with the landscape is not one of unmediated nature. The mown grass is closely cropped and neatly manicured in contrast to the irregularities of the shrubby brush closer to the lake, an attempt by humans to impose standardization on nature. Thus, despite the absence of buildings, it is clear that these campers are able to engage in their carefree dancing because adults have prepared an environment for them, one with soft, even grass rather than rough, wild plants that would hurt their bare feet.

In her photographs of Camp Treetops, Morgan presents imagery of children dancing as an expression of community and connectedness. Although *Children Dancing by Lake* does not appear in the *Summer’s Children* book itself, it is labeled as from Camp Treetops in Morgan’s archival notes and is included among *Summer’s Children* images in other books, including Morgan’s self-designed monograph. Additionally, an unpublished photograph of the identical group of children dancing in the same location is filed with a large collection of published and unpublished Camp Treetops photographs in Morgan’s archives. Thus, *Children Dancing by Lake* functions as a source of information about life at Camp Treetops, especially when considered alongside other images of children dancing by the lake. For instance, an untitled image of two young girls dancing by the lake appears in the *Summer’s Children* book (fig. 10).

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41 *Barbara Morgan Photographs*, chart, note C-51, Barbara Morgan Collection, UCLA Library Special Collections; and Barbara Morgan, *Barbara Morgan* (Hastings-on-Hudson, N.Y.: Morgan & Morgan, Inc. in Cooperation with the Amon Carter Museum of Western Art, 1972), 81.

42 Another version of this image, titled *Girls Dancing by Lake* (1945) appears in Morgan, *Barbara Morgan* (1972), 79. Its cropping is significantly different from the image that appears in
years later than *Children Dancing by Lake*, the image of the two girls reinforces dancing by the lake as an activity that recurs throughout time at Camp Treetops, especially because the two photographs share many similarities. For instance, in the image of the two girls, the sun shines on the back and legs of the girl on the left, while the girl on the right has hair that blows in the wind. The gently sloping horizontal line of the girl’s braid echoes the line of the land meeting the water. A sense of community and togetherness emerges from these images. The two young girls are drawn so close to each other in their movement that they look like they are embracing. While the campers in *Children Dancing by Lake* do not share as much physical contact, they do jump in near unison, suggesting a shared energy. No child is alone in these images of dancing; they all play together. In this way, children at camp learn values that prepare them for adulthood, practicing ways of being together and sharing experiences that they can use to ward off isolation and loneliness in the future.

Just as the May Day crowd in *Hearst over the People* seems unaware of the yellow journalist who manipulates the workings of their city, children who attend summer camp may not be aware that it is an environment carefully constructed and prepared by adults. Clues like the manicured grass and communal activities in *Children Dancing by Lake* reveal that Camp Treetops is a carefully designed and maintained environment for the advancement of various skills and social abilities, a theme that continues throughout the *Summer’s Children* book. While camp counselors and directors were more well-meaning than Hearst, they nonetheless manipulate the camp environment to accomplish certain goals, even while seeming to provide children with freedom and choice. Indeed, Helen Haskell, the director of Camp Treetops, *Summer’s Children* in that the girls are larger and more of the hills behind them are visible. In the *Summer’s Children* image, the girls are less evenly centered and the expanse of grass surrounding them is wider.
explains that even the children’s participation in decision-making is encouraged: “Many devices are used to assure camper-participation in planning. There may be bulletin boards for suggestions from staff and youngsters. There may be unit representatives from tent or cabin groups who meet in conference with department heads.” Haskell’s language is significant because the use of passive voice in “devices are used” and the tentativeness of “may be” create ambiguity and mysteriousness about the source of these manipulations. Other camp directors, such as Laura Mattoon of Camp Kehonka, in New Hampshire, shared similar sentiments about the environments they constructed. Mattoon’s writings describe camps as places designed to motivate campers and ensure that they enjoyed good physical health, positive attitudes toward labor, and sensible recreation. She also emphasized that, through planning on the part of camp staff, campers should develop an appetite for natural beauty as well as a deep respect for it. Mattoon was a leader in the National Association of Directors of Girls’ Camps and, later, the Camp Directors Association, which suggests that her ideas about a carefully designed and highly constructed environment for campers were an industry standard. In this way, rather than a vehicle for a truly freeform experience with nature, summer camp emerges as a built environment, not unlike a city. Indeed, with spaces for living and dining, as well as onsite medical staff, a summer camp functions as a thriving community, much like a miniature city in a rural environment.

In Summer’s Children dance emerges strongly as a means for unity and connection, as well as a way to strengthen community bonds and train children to follow the customs of society.

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45 Ibid.
Although Martha Graham Dance Company members do not appear in the images of Camp Treetops as they do in the city photomontages, the campers’ movements do resemble those of the professional dancers, but in a way that reveals that they are still learning bodily control. As discussed above, the campers in Children Dancing by Lake attempt to jump in unison. Although the timing of their movements is not entirely synchronized, the way they hold their arms above their heads is similar. Thus, they are engaged in a group activity, dancing collectively rather than as individuals. Similarly, in an image depicting Graham’s “Celebration” (fig. 11), three female dancers jump in unison, with outstretched arms. These dancers look very much alike, each approximately the same height, with the same hairstyle and matching, flowing dresses. These dresses offer an additional connection to the camp image in that their twisting skirts mirror the lively ruffles of the swim suit worn by the camper at center. However, the motion in the adults’ skirts is more pronounced due to their longer length, suggesting that the adults are a more complete manifestation of impulses begun in the image of the children. Just as the adult dancers look almost like triplets, their movements are exactly in sync, with their pointed feet each equidistant from the floor. Such perfect unison on the part of the adults results from both personal and collective control. Each dancer must ensure that her body is in an exact space at a precise moment in time, while also working together with the other dancers to move as a group. In this way, the adult dancers have mastered the movements that the children are exploring.

The idea of exploring and developing bodily control at summer camp continues in an image of square dancing (fig. 12), which interrelates physical and social experiences to foster community. In this photograph, a group of at least seven children join hands, forming a long, inter-connected snake. Nearly every child in the photograph wears some type of stripes, with some dressed in striped shirts and socks, and others with a single vertical stripe on the side of
their shorts or skirt. This variety within unity balances individual expression with uniformity and belonging. Square dancing is an activity that teaches children bodily control, as they follow specific directions from a caller, making movements that conform to the larger group. While a caller is not visible in Morgan’s photograph, the presence of one is implied by the caption: “‘Take your Lady by the wrist / ‘And ’round that Lady with a Grapevine Twist. / ‘Out in the center with a Wo-Ho-Gee / ‘And around that Gent from Tennessee.’”46 Not only do these directions tell the children how to dance, but because they specify actions for male and female dancers, they also teach gendered social norms, such as a man leading a woman. Supposing that the caller is an adult staff member, square dancing also functions as an instance of adults directing children’s experience. Morgan’s photograph of square dancing depicts a communal activity that allows children to participate together, with no one cast aside or left out. This sense of togetherness and inclusion fits within the history of square dancing, which originally accompanied community activities such as barn raisings and weddings in the rural south and included dancers of all ages.47 On the whole, Morgan’s image of the square dance reveals both the ability of dancing to build community ties and its ability to reinforce social norms. It illustrates the power of this bodily control to create a shared experience, one that more broadly connects people not only to each other, but also to nature and spirituality.

Where Morgan's photographs of square dancing offer portraits of groups in motion, a similar exercise of community-building appears in scenes of campers eating together, another act of social formation. Food and dining are parts of the city-like structure of the camp as well as means by which adults interact with and influence campers in a family-like way. In one image

46 Morgan, *Summer’s Children*, 129.
(fig. 13) from Summer’s Children, a group of children sit at a dining table with an adult man, presumably a camp staff member. He wears a jacket with a checked pattern that parallels the grille of the window behind him, marking him as a living, active agent of the constructed camp environment. Similarly, the stripes of the girl’s shirt echo the horizontal boards of the wall behind her, making her seem to fit within the space. The man serves food into the girl’s bowl, which they both hold simultaneously. This exchange emphasizes a power dynamic in which the adult is in control, providing food and controlling the amount of it. Further, the man gazes directly and intently at the girl, while she looks down demurely, furthering the idea that the man is in control. Yet, the girl’s hand on the bowl suggests that she retains some agency, rather than sitting entirely passively. According to historian Leslie Paris, camp staffers had a long history of regulating their charges’ dining habits, often giving special foods like malted milk, graham crackers, and eggnog to underweight children, or even seating them at a special table where portions were larger. Conversely, counselors and directors encouraged overweight children “to diet rigidly and to perform special exercises in order to lose weight.”48 Evidence for this practice at Camp Treetops comes from a marketing pamphlet targeted at parents of potential campers. Under a section on “Health,” the pamphlet states, “The weight and condition of every child are regularly checked.”49 The man serving the young girl’s food in Morgan’s image fulfills this agenda, as he selects a portion size that he feels is suitable for her. This particular dining room is set up to provide both physical and intellectual nourishment, thanks to the ample shelves of books and the poster identifying many species of birds, which hangs at a low height from which

49 Treetops: A Camp for Boys and Girls from Four through Thirteen, pamphlet, Barbara Morgan Collection, UCLA Library Special Collections.
children can easily see it. Thus, the dining space at Camp Treetops is a place designed for growth and exploration, but mediated by adults.

Images from *Summer's Children* illustrate a human-nature relationship, not unlike the organization of a city, in which humans attempt to order, maintain, and utilize natural resources for their own benefit. The images from Camp Treetops show the self-sufficiency that contributes to the idea of the summer camp as an independent, rural community, as campers care for farm animals like goats and pigs, work in a kitchen garden, and make jam.\(^{50}\) To convey the process of making jam, Morgan organizes four images into a one-page spread (fig. 14) that shows some of the camp’s youngest children picking blueberries and cooking them down into jam. An adult helps with some steps, like pouring sugar, while children appear to complete other tasks independently, include stirring the jam as it cooks. Children also participate in the maintenance of the camp, as witnessed in the image labeled *Bridge Repair Crew* (fig. 15).\(^{51}\) With no buildings visible in this image, a group of children and their adult leader seem to rise naturally out of the landscape as they reach the top of a hill. The second child from the viewer’s left carries his shovel across the back of his neck and shoulder. The shovel’s handle creates a gently sloping diagonal that parallels the rise of the land behind, furthering the idea that the group is connected to the land. This connection is paradoxical because shovels are tools that mar the land, changing it to suit human needs. Morgan also portrays the human-land relationship in an image (fig. 16) under the subheading “Garden Chores.” In this image, children work among long, evenly spaced rows of vegetation. These long lines evoke the tall columns of windows that run up city skyscrapers in images such as *Leaf Floating in City*, signaling an attempt by humans to make

\(^{50}\) Barbara Morgan, *Summer’s Children: A Photographic Cycle of Life at Camp* (Scarsdale, N.Y.: Morgan & Morgan, 1951), 42, 44, 104, 114.

\(^{51}\) Ibid., 45.
nature conform to mechanical precision. Peter Bunnell writes that Morgan understood nature as a social entity that could reveal key human values.\textsuperscript{52} While the garden in Morgan’s image contains neat rows of several different crops, the positioning of the children seems more disorderly because they are scattered, some stooping and others standing, throughout the plot. Because the children work communally, this image reveals not only the details of human-nature relationships, but also the nuances of community life. On the whole, these images from \textit{Summer’s Children} portray Camp Treetops as both a self-sufficient, city-like enterprise and a community that is connected to and dependent on nature and the land.

Although children constitute most of the citizens of a summer camp community, adults nonetheless retain control as they mold the campers into national citizens. In \textit{The Lonely Crowd}, David Riesman explains, “While children are the pioneers of the characterological frontiers of population, it is the adults who, even in a child-centered culture, run the engines, rig the signals, write the books and comics, and play politics and other grown-up games.”\textsuperscript{53} In this way, the relationship between the campers and their counselors is similar to that between the crowd and the newspaper magnate in \textit{Hearst over the People}. While the crowd and the campers are numerous, a few select authorities control culture. More broadly, summer camps and cities are similar because adults design and build environments and serve as authority figures. This role of adults as the drivers of culture and the writers of books is important when studying the history of summer camp because information about the camp experience often comes from adults rather than the children themselves. In his study of “‘The Ego Ideal of the Good Camper’ and the Nature of Summer Camp,” historian Michael B. Smith identifies as a limitation “my reliance on the

\textsuperscript{52} Bunnell, \textit{Inside the Photograph}, 88-89.
voices of the adults who theorized, created, and evaluated summer camp experiences for children.”

Similarly, Paris writes, “Because children have not had the same relation to power or public life as their adult counterparts, their voices can be difficult to recuperate.”

Although Summer’s Children may seem like yet another instance of an adult describing or recording children’s experiences, the photographic medium complicates this notion. The children themselves do not take the photographs and may not even realize when a photograph is being taken, just as the crowd in Hearst over the People does not acknowledge the tentacled form looming above them. The children often appear so absorbed in what they are doing that they seem not to notice the camera and contrive a specific pose before Morgan took a photograph. Because they provide direct access to facial expressions and body language, these photographs convey children’s emotions, including excitement and thoughtfulness, more strongly than accounts written by adults. Whereas, in her photomontages of the city Morgan used a style that involved overt manipulation and creative juxtaposition of images, she used a more documentary style in Summer’s Children, limiting manipulation to cropping, occasionally using irregular shapes. The multifaceted construction of the photomontages reveals the complexity of city of life, while straightforward photographs of Camp Treetops reveal a less manipulated view of the camp experience. This documentary style also allows the viewer to assume the role of an outside observer at a summer camp, highlighting the important distinction that Morgan was not a member of staff at Camp Treetops. In this way, while Summer’s Children still uses an adult to convey children’s experiences, it moves beyond accounts written by camp directors and counselors to create a more balanced record.

An image (fig. 17) under the “Wrestling” sub-heading in *Summer’s Children* illustrates both Morgan’s position as an outsider as well as the capacity of campers to form a crowd that is, in this instance, chaotic and volatile. In this photograph, children rush together in a disorderly mass, as a wrestling match has apparently turned into a brawl. The fighting appears most active in the dense group at the center of the photograph, while other children edge in closer to watch and join in. None of these children look directly at Morgan because they are all absorbed in the fight at hand. The diagonal lines of arms and legs in the dense group of children convey the dynamism and intense energy of the moment in a way that is likely more effective than words. This image is part of a two-page spread that shows other, more orderly wrestling contests. Thus, it illustrates a loss of control, an event that camp directors would likely not include in their promotional writings.

The loss of control in this photograph is a bodily one, suggesting the power of physical activities like wrestling to unsettle crowds, changing order to disorganization. LeBon suggests that instinct contributes to a loss of control in crowds and explains that small groups gathered by a shared purpose can be more crowd-like than much larger groups brought together by chance.\(^{56}\) Thus, although the children in the wrestling image are not as numerous as the New York masses, their shared interest and investment in the wrestling match encourages them to take on characteristics of crowds. In another image (fig. 18) from Morgan’s “Wrestling” spread, two boys participate in a more regulated match, choreographed, not unlike a dance, by the man who crouches behind them providing instructions, as indicated by a caption: “‘Keep driving till he’s down. Keep moving. Stay in close.’”\(^{57}\) In this way, the ability to maintain physical control is important to maintaining order because the brawl does not have the same degree of structure as

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57 Morgan, *Summer’s Children*, 53.
the wrestling match. As with the choreographer of a dance, the role of the adult is key to establishing this structure, and he is notably absent in the image of skirmish. In the same way that the photograph shows a man coaching the wrestling match, many of Morgan’s city crowds include mounted police officers, who function as peace-keepers and direction-givers. Whereas the city adults know how to behave in an orderly fashion in large groups, especially with the regulation of the police, the children are still learning this skill. Their social disintegration is also evident in that one girl stands alone, in the foreground, watching the skirmish rather than participating. On the whole, the wrestling images show that control and order cannot be produced entirely by a prepared environment, but require the consent and participation of the inhabitants.

Morgan’s photographs of Camp Treetops date to an era when large suburban developments emerged, a connection that reveals a societal interest in orderly, built, community environments, especially in terms of children. Writing about Levittown, New Jersey, one in a series of prototypical suburbs built by the development firm Levitt & Sons, Herbert Gans claims that the locality was composed of “primarily young families who come to the new community to raise their children.” This motivation for relocation also played out in Morgan’s own life. She explains that she relocated her family to the suburbs outside of New York City because she wanted her children to “have fresh air, trees, animals to care for and a smaller community to have roots in.” The developers featured this family orientation in their designs, which in Levittown, New York included facilities for youth sports, such as ten baseball

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58 There were Levittowns in New Jersey, New York, and Pennsylvania (figs. 19-20). See: Dianna Harris, Second Suburb: Levittown, Pennsylvania (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2010), vii.
diamonds and nine pools, as well as a striking sixty playgrounds.\textsuperscript{61} This idea of a child-centered environment also extends to family life, but with class-based nuances. Gans suggests that, in the upper middle class, “while family life is child-centered, it is also adult-directed.”\textsuperscript{62} Thus, the dynamics of adult-child relationships in suburbs and at Camp Treetops are similar. For example, the man serving the girl’s food in Morgan’s photograph focuses on the child, while directing her consumption. The structuring role of the adult complements the idea that Levittown is a built environment, about which Gans writes, “Of all the decisions and factors that made a community out of the strangers who purchased Levitt houses, the most important were, of course, the builder’s.”\textsuperscript{63} Thus, both Levittown and Camp Treetops were environments designed, not by the primary residents but by developers, to engender specific types of communities. Not only is Levittown a built environment, but it is also a highly homogenized one. This orderliness comes across especially well in landscaping, which according to Richard Wagner and Amy Duckett Wagner, “was standardized; each lot was given the same allocation of shade trees, fruit trees, evergreen, perennials, and shrubs.”\textsuperscript{64} This orderly and balanced organization of natural elements evokes the neat garden rows at Camp Treetops, as pictured in Summer’s Children. However, this comparison also suggests a tension between the individual and the communal because, while the campers and staff shared a garden, these suburban plants are parceled out for individual families. Nevertheless, despite these nuances in communal life, suburbs and summer camps are built environments created out of similar motivations regarding the perceived benefit of children.

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\textsuperscript{62} Gans, The Levittowners, 40.
\textsuperscript{63} Ibid., 80.
The purpose of the built environment was not only directed toward positive outcomes for children, but to make clear the contrast to Communist models of social organization. Influencing the culture and decision-making processes of suburbs and summer camps, anti-Communist sentiments were a powerful socio-political force during the post-war period. Levitt, when involved in a conflict about rent hikes, used “inflammatory, anti-Communist tactics.”65 Similarly, anti-Communism was also part of the institutional culture of summer camps. Smith states, “In the years following the war, many camping leaders continued to believe the worries of the atomic age . . . could be kept at bay in the world of camp.”66 At Camp Treetops this comes across in an emphasis on democratic, group decision making and can be seen in the dialogues and photographs in the “Before Council” and “Morning Council” sections of Summer’s Children, which depict the children negotiating solutions to community issues.67 One image (fig. 21) shows children sitting in semi-circular rows, facing two leaders, a seating arrangement similar to that used in Congress. Further, the children seem genuinely engaged in the meeting, leaning towards the center of the group. A triptych of images (fig. 22) shows a young girl raising her hand to participate in the meeting. Such active body language suggests that the children are full, committed participants in the council meeting, rather than subordinates listening to orders from a leader. In the center image of the triptych, a woman, presumably a counselor, sits behind the girl and smiles at her, welcoming her participation. Further, it is significant that the woman sits on the ground with the camper, as equal members of the community who both have a voice in the discussion. Thus, these images portray democracy in action, especially as it pertains to community decision-making.

65 Baxandall and Ewen, Picture Windows, 145.
67 Morgan, Summer’s Children, 28, 30-33.
Summer’s Children also played a role in promoting Americanism and democracy on the international stage due to the distribution of its images by the Carnegie Foundation in Russia and the United States State Department in Asia, which worked to shape global political values. Summer’s Children was chosen by the Carnegie Foundation to be among 350 books representing American life at a book fair in Moscow. Further, the Department of State ran a story in their Free World magazine, distributed in Asia, featuring images from Summer’s Children. Both the selection of images included in the magazine story and Morgan’s correspondence with persons at the State Department reveal the motivations behind the article as a propagandistic promotion of democracy. Out of the thirteen images published in Free World, two depict council meetings: the photograph of the morning council meeting discussed above and another photograph (fig. 23) that appears in the book under the sub-heading “Dinner Council,” which in her invoice to the State Department, Morgan titles “Children Voting Vociferously.” In this image, children and staff sit, facing the same direction, at cafeteria tables that are mostly empty, except for a few mugs. The children have opened their mouths wide to vote loudly and enthusiastically, as suggested by the caption, “‘All those in favor say—’ ‘AYE!’” Many of the children look gleeful in their voting, while the boy in a white t-shirt at the front of the group seems more aggressive. This pairing suggests to the readers of Free World that Americans are pleased with their democracy and are confident and assertive about their politics and culture. In her letters to officials at the Department of State, Morgan expresses approval and support of their captions and approach, noting only that she would like the children’s role in planning their own activities to

68 Chronology from Aperture Monograph, document packet, 1964, Barbara Morgan Collection, UCLA Library Special Collections.
69 Invoice from Morgan & Morgan, Publishers to U.S. Department of State, August 27, 1951, Barbara Morgan Collection, UCLA Library Special Collections.
70 Ibid.
71 Morgan, Summer’s Children, 57.
be clearer, writing, “That, it seems to me, is the crux of democracy.” Further, in a letter to Bruce Downs at *Popular Photography*, Morgan speaks with pride of the *Free World* publication, stating, “our kids will travel far.” Thus, a recreational environment for children is not immune to political concerns, as the subjects in *Summer’s Children* become diplomatic representatives for their country and its political values. Indeed, the children’s summer becomes a propagandistic statement, an attempt by the American government to influence the values of other nations and shape global culture.

While Morgan’s *Summer’s Children* images offer camp as an environment planned and directed by adults to train children as future citizens who have strong American values, *Hullabaloo* describes American values more broadly, from the self-discipline and bodily control of the dancer, to the city crowd’s order within a boundaried space, and the connectivity and democracy of Camp Treetops. In this way, *Hullabaloo* functions as a miniature of Morgan’s oeuvre because it unifies disparate images to illustrate the delicate balance between control and chaos that permeates society, a product of multiple, imperfect systems of control rather than one unshakable and universal one. In *Hullabaloo* each element is organized in a patchwork format, rather than blending. The work is dynamic due to the leaping figures and the motion of the viewer’s eye following the perforated strips throughout. Additionally, the participation in a collective experience is a unifying factor. Even though Erick Hawkins appears alone at the center of the image, he participates in a performance with other dancers and represents a character who experiences broader spiritual forces. Yet, each fragment typifies a different source of control: community ties in the camp fragment, religious influence in the *El Penitente* image, and the

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72 Letter from Barbara Morgan to Frances Means at the U.S. Department of State, August 25, 1951, Barbara Morgan Collection, UCLA Library Special Collections.
73 Letter from Barbara Morgan to Bruce Downs at *Popular Photography*, September 26, 1951, Barbara Morgan Collection, UCLA Library Special Collections.
structure of the urban environment in the scene of the crowd. Morgan dates the original images of Hawkins and the camp children to the same year: 1940. While the city crowd fragment is undated, it is reasonable to believe that it was from around the same time because Morgan produced much of her city imagery involving crowds in the late 1930s and early 1940s. Thus, for Morgan to revisit and combine these photographs nineteen years later seems more than a coincidence.

The theme of the complexity and interrelatedness in the systems that control humans and organize the world in which they live appears not only in *Hullabaloo*, but also extends throughout Morgan’s career. Just as Morgan revisited the images from which she built *Hullabaloo* years after their creation, she once again began to make photomontages of New York after the publication of *Summer’s Children*, returning to a still relevant subject matter. In this way, Morgan shifts throughout her career between documentary and more experimental styles. Whereas photomontage reflects the constructedness and intricacy of city life, the documentary style of the Camp Treetops photographs shows how organizational systems are taught to children in settings with greater contact with nature. It makes sense that Morgan would consider both summer camp and the city in her work because “In 1934, in a New York Times article on camps, journalist Eunice Fuller Barnard reflected that ‘it is no coincidence that the skyscraper, for example, and the Summer camp are practically coeval’.”

Thus, Morgan investigates these related domains of society, revealing underlying structures that organize both.

All in all, *Hullabaloo* functions as a gateway to Morgan’s work by bringing together the city, dance, and summer camp into a single image. As *Hullabaloo* demonstrates, Morgan’s oeuvre shows unity despite its wide range of subject matters and styles. *Hullabaloo* asks the

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viewer to consider seemingly disparate themes in dialogue and reveals broader truths about how
given environments shape and structure human experience and exert or call for control. Both the
urban city and the rural summer camp seek to balance human-made structures with nature and
create cohesive and conforming communities, just as dance promotes connectivity and
cohesiveness through bodily control. In both Hullabaloo and her oeuvre, Morgan achieves unity
by exploring human activities that seek order, control, and connection in environments that range
from skyscrapers to Treetops.
Figures

Figure 1. Barbara Morgan, *Hullabaloo*, 1959. Photomontage-photogram, 19 3/8 x 15 in. Los Angeles, The Barbara and Willard Morgan Photographs and Papers, University of California, Los Angeles Library Special Collections.


Figure 5. Barbara Morgan, *Leaf Floating in City*, 1972. Gelatin silver print, photomontage-photogram. 12 ½ x 10 ½ in. Florida, Private collection.

Figure 7. Barbara Morgan, *City Shell*, 1938. Photomontage, 15 ½ x 12 ¼ in. Chicago, Museum of Contemporary Photography.

Figure 9. Barbara Morgan, *Children Dancing by Lake*, 1940. Gelatin silver print, 10.4 x 13.6 in. Sydney, Art Gallery of New South Wales.

Figure 10. Barbara Morgan, Untitled, from *Summer's Children*, published 1951, pg 127.

Figure 12. Barbara Morgan, Untitled, from *Summer’s Children*, published 1951, pg 129.
Figure 13. Barbara Morgan, Untitled, from *Summer’s Children*, published 1951, pg 27.

Figure 14. Barbara Morgan, *Blueberry Jam* series, from *Summer’s Children*, published 1951, pg 114.
Figure 15. Barbara Morgan, *Bridge Repair Crew*, from *Summer’s Children*, published 1951, pg 45.

Figure 16. Barbara Morgan, Untitled image from “Garden Chores” section, from *Summer’s Children*, published 1951, pg 42.
Figure 17. Barbara Morgan, Untitled image from “Wrestling” section, from *Summer’s Children*, published 1951, pg 52.

Figure 18. Barbara Morgan, Untitled image from “Wrestling” section, from *Summer’s Children*, published 1951, pg 53.
Figure 19. Undated aerial view of Levittown, PA including school, swimming pool, and baseball diamond. Levittown, PA, Levittown Regional Library.

Figure 20. Undated photograph of Jubilee model homes in Levittown, PA. Levittown, PA, Levittown Regional Library.
Figure 21. Barbara Morgan, *Morning Council*, from *Summer’s Children*, published 1951, pg 30-31.

“*If we finish the costumes can we give our puppet show?*”

Figure 22. Barbara Morgan, Untitled triptych, from *Summer’s Children*, published 1951, pg 33.
Figure 23. Barbara Morgan, *Dinner Council*, from *Summer’s Children*, published 1951, pg 56-57.
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**Vita**

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Barbara Morgan’s 1959 photomontage *Hullabaloo* presents an intriguing grouping of children, a dancer, and a city crowd. Rather than seeking to situate Morgan’s works more broadly within photographic history, this thesis will contextualize *Hullabaloo* within Morgan’s oeuvre to show that the various domains of Morgan’s photography, including her New York City photomontages, her Camp Treetops project, and her ongoing fascination with dance, are not discontinuous, but rather depict a shared attempt at societal order. Both in *Hullabaloo* and in Morgan’s overall body of work, control of society, control of nature, and personal bodily control appear as themes and also interact to show the complexity of humans’ methods for ordering their world. Both the city and the summer camp provide built frameworks to organize human lives and create cohesion, while dance promotes connectivity through a shared bodily experience. From garden rows to city blocks, humans seek to order their surroundings, including nature, while spectral, organic forms such as a leaf and a shell provide a counterpoint to this human-made rectangularity. In this light, the diverse imagery in *Hullabaloo* contributes to the unity of Morgan’s works from throughout her career by serving as a gateway work that interrelates themes of social connectivity and order.