

Cebrià de Montoliu (1873-1923)

Interpreter of modern urbanism

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Christiane Crasemann Collins va créixer a Viña del Mar (Xile) i va estudiar a la Universitat de Carleton, finalitzant els estudis a la Universitat de Columbia. Entre 1972 i 1983 va ser directora de la biblioteca Gimbel a la *Parsons School of Design*. Ha estat professora d'Història de l'Urbanisme i Història Contemporània a les Universitats de Cornell i Colúmbia i de la *Graduate School of Design* de la Universitat de Harvard. Ha presentat ponències en el *City Seminar* (Universitat de Columbia), la *Graduate School of Design* (Universitat de Harvard), la Universitat de Yale, el *Fritz Schumacher-Kolloquium* (Hamburg) o el Seminari Internacional *Camillo Sitte e i suoi Interpreti* (Venècia), on va pronunciar la conferència inaugural. Ha rebut els premis *Fulbrigh* i *RIBA Research Awards*, així com el premi Catalònia de 1996, per la tasca realitzada en l'estudi i la divulgació de l'arquitectura catalana dels segles XIX i XX, en particular, sobre Antoni Gaudí. És traductora a l'anglès, juntament amb el seu marit George R. Collins (1917-1993), de l'obra de Camillo Sitte *Der Städtebau nach seinen Künstlerische Grundsätzen* (*Camillo Site: the Birth of the Modern Urban Planning*). L'any 2005 va publicar *Werner Hegemann and the Search for Universal Urbanism*, un estudi sobre la posició crítica d'aquest urbanista alemany sobre el Moviment Modern.

Las Modernas Ciudades y sus Problemas

á la luz de la

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Exposición de Construcción Cívica

de

BERLIN

(1910)

con un Apéndice sobre otros Certámenes Análogos etc.

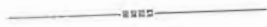
por

Cipriano Montoliu

Secretario de la «Sociedad Cívica, La Ciudad Jardín»

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Historians of city planning are broadening their interest beyond the morphology of cities and their political and cultural history to related theories and interpretations. This trend directs our attention to individuals like Patrick Geddes, Werner Hegemann, Ebenezer Howard, Lewis Mumford and Camillo Sitte. Their influence on modern architecture and planning was deep, but they left negligible, maybe, built examples. Cebrià de Montoliu might be included among these “invisible planners.”

Although not as prominent as other Catalan and Spanish urbanists, particularly Ildefons Cerdà and Arturo Soria, Montoliu has received recognition in his native city. Catalan scholars have discussed Montoliu with a unique knowledge of the cultural and political context of his time and on the basis of documentation available only in Barcelona.¹ An outsider has difficulties when duplicating their special insight, which would be presumptuous to attempt. However, Montoliu’s wide-ranging ideas and activities leave opportunities for an exploration of their international background.

This essay will not duplicate what already has been aptly presented. Rather it will pursue Montoliu’s exposure to modern urbanism in the light of the City Planning Exhibition of 1910 in Berlin, its sequence in Düsseldorf, and Werner Hegemann, who was the secretary general of these events. It will also trace Montoliu’s connections to America and his brief stay there prior to his early death.

At the beginning of the XXth century, emerging city planning benefited from a lively dissemination of ideas across national and linguistic borders.² In this challenging *torbellino*, the diffusion of concepts did not move just in one direction. Transfer and retro-transfer proceeded more often in a circular fashion, absorbing the characteristics of different locals, and perhaps ending up –transformed– at the place of origin. The prime example of this was the English Garden City, which got to Spain and the Americas (North and South) via France, Germany and Scandinavia, and then back to the UK.

International dialogue was stimulated by a cluster of city planning exhibitions that took place in Europe and the USA between 1909 and the outbreak of World War I. Several of them were accompanied by conferences. Experts gathered on these occasions and returned invigorated to their countries. The spread of information was facilitated by the appearance of new periodicals dedicated to a specialized audience of urbanists. Preceding and concurrent with exhibitions and publications

1. Notably the publications by Manuel Ribas i Piera, Francesc Roca and Manuel de Torres i Capell.

2. The author is particularly grateful to Manuel Ribas i Piera and Arturo Soria for their assistance with documentation not available in the USA.

was a widespread surge of “civic museums,” functioning as open universities on urban and social issues. They sprang up like mushrooms from the late nineteenth century on (Katscher 1904, p. 1-16; Collins 1998). Exhibitions and “civic museums” were instrumental in defining and structuring city planning as a comprehensive new science, and in advancing the perception of the modern city as a subject for intellectual inquiry. This endeavour was advocated by far-sighted individuals, truly pioneers. Emblematic for the emerging multi-disciplinary urbanism, their expertise ranged from architecture, economics, landscape planning, political science, sociology, and others. A deep change in the profession occurred with the realization that city planning and its implementation demanded the teamwork of experts from a variety of backgrounds.

Within this atmosphere, Cebrià de Montoliu (1873-1923) and Werner Hegemann (1881-1936) are comparable in several respects. Some of them are obvious. Both of them died prematurely after intensively travelling all their life, establishing international contacts and partaking of events related to their wide-ranging interests. The connecting link between them was the “*Allgemeine Städtebau-Ausstellung*” in Berlin (May/June 1910) and the “*Internationale Städtebau-Ausstellung*” in Düsseldorf (also in 1910), documented and expounded in two volumes by Werner Hegemann (Hegemann 1913).

Antecedents for the exhibitions date back to the initiatives for a Greater Berlin (Gross-Berlin) and the competition for a master plan for its realization. The competition programme, published in 1906, remains a remarkable document, which augurs a multiplex regional metropolis.

Hegemann, who had earlier studied in Philadelphia, returned to America in 1908. He reviewed the “Congestion Show” in New York (1909) for the periodical *Der Städtebau* (Berlin) and was involved in the “Boston 1915” movement and exhibition in that city.³ In November 1909, he was called to Berlin to take on the position of Secretary General for the exhibition, which had been evolving under the guidance of a committee of architects and planners.

It is intriguing to explore what Hegemann did in fact contribute to the exhibition, when he returned to that city barely five months prior to the opening. For certain, he added material from the other side of the Atlantic to a primarily European show, particularly American parks and park systems, and examples of the

3. Connections between the exhibitions in America and events in Berlin and Hegemann’s role are discussed in C. C. Collins 1998, and C. C. Collins, 1996, p. 1-21.

4. TORRES I CAPELL, Manuel de. *Urbanística, gestión y cultura: Barcelona, 1917. A Gestión Urbanística Europea 1920- 1940*. Madrid: Ayuntamiento de Madrid, 1986, p. 52.

university campus as a civic forum. Most likely it was his decision to organize the displays by topic, rather than by country. While emphasizing city planning as a global concern, demanding the engagement of minds, efforts and resources on a worldwide scale, that arrangement de-emphasized national aspects. His formative years in America had convinced Hegemann that exhibitions were of paramount importance for raising the awareness of the general public regarding urban problems and the urgency of civic participation in finding solutions. He has often been described as a “publicist”; in great part, the success of the Berlin show was due to his skillful handling of publicity. Explanatory texts on panels, guided tours, lectures and other “outreach” elements were available to the visitors.

Other important aspects of the *Allgemeine Städtebau-Ausstellung* cannot be directly attributed to Hegemann. The winning proposals for the Greater-Berlin Master Plan, which responded with a range of concepts to the requisites of the program, formed the core. According to urbanists, they were the most important attraction, because they exemplify the essence of modernity. The prize-winning competition entries and excerpts from others were displayed within a context of topics not previously acknowledged as integral components of city planning. Innovative, and of lasting significance, was the position assigned to housing. It was probably the first time that housing was represented as irrevocably linked to transportation, open space and zoning. Parks, playgrounds and sport facilities received serious concern as elements to be planned in anticipation of town expansion. Even more important than the status of separate elements was the regional scope and synthesis advanced as the ultimate aim of city planning –the metropolis as an organic totality of multiple functions.

Experts came from abroad in great numbers, often in groups, and the multi-lingual Hegemann personally arranged occasions for viewing prior to regular open-hours. For a brief six weeks in the spring of 1910, Berlin became a vortex resonant with ideas, a prelude to the vibrant 1920's. It does not exist any guestbook for attendance at the exhibition, so we have to reconstruct a list of notable visitors from published reviews, diaries and letters. Even this fragmentary list is impressive –a veritable “who-is-who” of Europeans and Americans– and by no means only city planners.

Montoliu came to Berlin for the *Städtebau-Ausstellung*, with the support of the *Instituto de Reformas Sociales* and, indirectly, the *Diputació de Barcelona*, which was intent on opening a window toward modern urbanism (Torres i Capell 1986, p 52).⁴ The impressions on Montoliu were profound, not only by the exhibitions –he went to Düsseldorf as well– but also by sharing mutual interests with others. He knew English and German, which were the dominant languages on this occa-

sion. Meeting Hegemann is probable, although he does not mention Montoliu's name. Neither does it appear in reviews and commentaries.

Next to Hegemann's volumes, Montoliu's book *Las modernas ciudades y sus problemas a la luz de la Exposición de Construcción Cívica de Berlín (1910)*, published in Barcelona by the Sociedad Cívica La Ciudad-Jardín in 1913, stands out as perceptive and farsighted among the vast literature generated by the City Planning Exhibitions. It is easy to consider it as a translation of excerpts from Hegemann's work, which it is not (Torres i Capell 1992, p. 220). In the prologue, Montoliu stated his aim for writing his book:

“Mi propósito (fue) hacer [...] una especie de compendio de la nueva disciplina cívica cuyos fecundos ensayos é investigaciones son, desde algún tiempo, objeto de un intenso cultivo por parte de los espíritus más selectos de la sociedad mundial contemporánea.

En tales circunstancias, la Exposición de Construcción Cívica de Berlín de 1910 fue una verdadera revelación, no sólo por la gran masa del público que aun no se había dado cuenta de la profunda revolución en tales materias operada a nuestra vista, si no también para gran número de activas mentes que hasta entonces sólo vagamente habían comprendido la extensión y transcendencia del movimiento en cuestión.”

He explained that his intention was to amplify beyond what was shown in Berlin, especially on the problem of housing.

In many ways, Montoliu and Hegemann's volumes are comparable. The illustrations were made available for the Catalan edition by the Wasmuth Verlag (Berlin), which had published *Der Städtebau* in 1911 and 1913. Hegemann had seized on the proposal to document the exhibitions to produce a treatise on city planning and urban history, interconnecting two innovative disciplines. The resulting work stands apart from the prescriptive textbooks by Reinhard Baumeister and Josef Stübben. Hegemann approached the City as a pivotal element of cultural development and object of intellectual inquiry. An intended third volume did not materialize, partly because he left for a lecture tour in the USA in March 1913 and remained abroad until 1921.

When Montoliu went to Berlin, he was well acquainted with Ebenezer Howard's and Patrick Geddes' ideas. He was active as a Secretary of the *Sociedad Cívica, La Ciudad-Jardín* (founded in 1912) and of the Hispano-American Garden Cities and Town Planning Association. Inspired by Geddes' "Outlook Tower" and the *Musée Sociale* in Paris, he established the *Museo Social* in Barcelona in 1909 and functioned as its Librarian and guiding spirit until 1919. With its publications, especially the periodical *Civitas*, lectures and exhibitions, it became a center for the dissemination of innovative urbanism, comparable to the *Musée Sociale* in Paris. Montoliu was committed to the importance of "social" or "civic" museums for similar reasons

to the purpose Hegemann attributed to exhibitions. Montoliu suggested that the city planning exhibitions in Berlin and Düsseldorf should be preserved as permanent social museums. This did not come about. Arguably, the two volumes *Der Städtebau* could be considered approximations with an even wider geographic reach. This reasoning may also have led Montoliu to publish *Las modernas ciudades y sus problemas a la luz de la Exposición de Construcción Cívica de Berlín (1910)*, which he did in Castilian, rather than in his native Catalan (Montoliu 1913).

Montoliu's book, as it has been mentioned, is not a literal or condensed version of Hegemann's volumes. It is valuable to examine how Montoliu transformed the German compendium and utilized the impressions he had gathered from the exhibitions. The result was a treatise divested of Hegemann's discourse on urban history as well as relevant to contemporary developments in the Iberian region and South America. He counselled: "*Será bueno tomar nota de las experiencias ajenas que puedan servirnos de guía*" (Montoliu 1913, p. 103) and proceeded to emphasize that the city—the *Ciudad millonaria*—must not be abandoned, but adapted to progress.

The experience in Berlin seemed to have clarified and broadened a range of his previously held convictions. It reinforced his zeal to convert urbanism into a *ciencia cívica*—a civic science, not "civic art". According to Montoliu, *Cívica* was the equivalent of the English "Civics". This innovative *ciencia cívica* was a comprehensive *Wissenschaft*, based on surveys, investigation, and analysis. We detect traces of Geddes, Hegemann, Charles Gide and others connected with the *Musée Sociale* in Paris. Montoliu stressed convincingly one of the leading tenets of emerging urbanism. He regarded the city as an agent (*instrumento*) that promotes a range of issues, such as economics, traffic, housing (*habitación común*), and also serves a cultural function as the monumental symbol of a collective/communal spirit (*espíritu colectivo*). Hegemann expressed himself in a similar way in his publications. For both of them, the term "civic" connotes active citizen participation in urban decision-making. Echoing Hegemann's convictions, which were shaped by his stays in America, Montoliu writes: "*El desarrollo contemporáneo de las exposiciones representa un nuevo paso en el camino de la democratización de la ciencia cívica*" (Montoliu 1913, p. 30; Collins 1996).

In his quest for an adequate terminology describing aspects of the new *ciencia cívica*, Montoliu uses the term "organic" (*orgánico*). The expression turns up frequently in his publications, primarily, but not exclusively, in conjunction with planning—"organic planning". As such others did not use it, while "organic architecture" was and is well-known. To Montoliu, "organic" as a modifying adjective connoted a cohesive synthesis comparable to that of a living, evolving organism. Understanding Montoliu's ideal "organic planning" is not easy. Perhaps, a lead can

be found in Françoise Choay's explanation about the cultural model of urbanism represented by Camillo Sitte and Patrick Geddes, that incorporates the complex values of the real world as opposed to an abstract theoretical approach. The exhibitions in Berlin/Düsseldorf and Hegemann's *Der Städtebau* made a valiant attempt to integrate these contrasting strategies of town planning –the cultural/evolutionary and the scientific/rational. Both Hegemann and Montoliu respected Sitte and Geddes' ideas, while reckoning with the economic and political forces of the modern metropolis. Montoliu's "organic planning" strives for a theoretical and practical synthesis of inter-related processes. He approaches an explanation in the conclusion of his book:

"La concepción orgánica de la ciudad, como un todo complejo y completo [...] al impulso de las nuevas corrientes (de ese nuevo pensamiento orgánico) observamos como los campos de la teoría y la práctica van reduciendo poco a poco sus distancias" (Montoliu 1913, p. 102-103 *passim*).

Commenting on rectilinear versus curved street layouts, Montoliu favors Sitte's *articulación orgánica* (Montoliu 1913, p. 40-44 *passim*).⁵ He also refers to the "organic system" of Chicago's public parks.

Most frequently, the term "organic" occurs in the extensive chapters on housing, which constitute half of his book. Montoliu begins his chapter "*El problema de la habitación*", stating: "*Tan íntimamente relacionado está éste con el de sus grandes ciudades, que casi puede decirse que forman ambos un sólo problema.*" This could have been said by a chorus of individuals, among them Hegemann, who was deeply pre-occupied about the so-called housing famine and the plight of urban slums like the *Mietskasernen* (rental barracks) of Berlin. At the City Planning exhibition the problem was graphically displayed in maps and photographs, accompanied by ample statistics. The section on Garden Cities attracted the greatest number of visitors and comments in the reviews. The Garden City was considered the ideal solution to the congestion of the inner city. It was also greatly admired because of its attractiveness and the blending open space with residential development. It is not a surprise that this English invention spread rapidly throughout Europe and the Americas, varying according to the localities. In Spain, and especially in Barcelona, Montoliu gained prominence as propagator of the Garden City. In 1912 he founded the *Societat Cívica Ciutat Jardí* and became the Secretary of the Hispano-American Garden Cities and Town Planning Association. His activities included

5. Emilio Canosa's Spanish translation of Camillo Sitte, *Der Städtebau nach seinen künstlerischen Grundsätzen* (Vienna, 1889), was published in Barcelona, 1926.

6. The book has gone through many editions, a fourth published just a year later.

lectures, exhibitions and publications. For instance, *La Ciudad-Jardín* (1912), which is based on a series of illustrated lectures that he gave to the *Ateneo Enciclopédico Popular in Barcelona*. To convince the audience of the real possibility of implementing this type of development, he called it an *utopía práctica*. He distinguished between the garden suburb and the typology of Garden City as a new town of limited (controlled) growth, a difference seldom noted by others in their enthusiasm for Howard's ideal: "*La Ciudad-Jardín debe ser un centro urbano establecido según un plan metódico formando un conjunto orgánico completo y autónomo o independiente de otros centros existentes*" (Montoliu 1912, p. 29). This is the most notable variance between the limited growth model and the open-ended *Ciudad lineal*—a difference much debated at that time and still today.

Montoliu was keenly aware that designing typologies and layouts could not solve the housing problem, because it was a land question above all. Since the late nineteenth century, land reform had been heatedly discussed. In his treatise, *Las modernas ciudades y sus problemas*, Montoliu devoted many pages to various strategies for confronting land speculation (*el agio en la propiedad urbana*), which he considered the primary obstacle to providing housing for the low or no income population. He was well acquainted with the work of others who were preoccupied with the housing question: Rudolf Eberstadt, Henry George, Charles Gide, Werner Hegemann, and Georges Benoit-Levy, the French proponent of the Garden City with whom he had frequent contacts. These aspects of Montoliu's life and work have been studied thoroughly by other scholars. It would be redundant to dwell on them here. Important for an investigation of his American sojourn is his interest in Henry George's single tax theory and its advocates.

Henry George (1830-1897) was an American economist, activist of social causes and the founder of the single tax movement. He gained international renown with his book, *Progress and poverty* (1879),⁶ which focused on the disturbing phenomena that an increase in national wealth was accompanied by an increase of poverty. He diagnosed this discrepancy as resulting from the unearned increase in land value that benefited only a small segment of the population, at the expense of those who made the land valuable. George saw in this the major cause for poverty and the escalation of housing costs for those who could least bear the burden. In order to combat speculation, he advocated the doctrine of a single tax or rent on land for the benefit of all citizens. He considered land to be a natural resource and public property, rather than private. The theory did not originate with Henry George alone, but has been associated with his name ever since. It was extensively cited by land-reformers. Adolf Damaschke, whose own book appeared in 1902 and in a revised seventh edition in 1912, devoted an entire chapter to Henry George

(Damaschke 1912, p. 313-362). He described the spread of the single tax idea throughout Europe, mentioning a conference in Glasgow, in September 1911, which drew 670 representatives of interested organizations. Damaschke also commented on the Spanish *Liga Española para el Impuesto Único*, as having been recently founded.

It is not certain when Montoliu acquired his respect for Henry George's theories. The events of 1910 and Damaschke's publication, which was widely discussed, may have reinforced his interest in the single tax theory. In the remarkable Bibliography appended to *Las modernas ciudades y sus problemas*, Montoliu included the books by Damaschke and Rudolf Eberstadt in the category "*El Problema de la Habitación: Ciudades-Jardines*", but not Henry George's *Progress and poverty*. In the last section of the chapter "Ensayos para la solución del problema de la habitación," under the heading *Acción pública, (del Municipio y del Estado)*, Montoliu noted that land-reformers were convinced that: "*No hay para las corporaciones públicas política social posible si no se basa en su más absoluto control del comercio de terrenos, mediante una serie de reformas fiscales que, siguiendo los principios de Henry George, van por gradación insensible de los diversos impuestos sobre el valor o el plus-valor hasta la completa socialización de la propiedad inmueble*" (Montoliu 1913, p. 73 *passim*). How Montoliu's *política territorial* affected or fared within the debate in Barcelona has been analyzed by Francesc Roca (Roca 1976) and Manuel de Torres i Capell (Torres i Capell 1992, p. 211-233).

Disappointment regarding the socialization of land in Barcelona probably influenced Montoliu's leaving to America in 1919 (?). His departure from

7. I am grateful to the staff of the Frances Loeb Library for their assistance. The Fairhope Public Library, Mr. George Gilmore of the Fairhope Single Tax Corporation, and Mary Lois Adshead, Director of the Marietta Johnson Museum, all in Fairhope, Alabama, have been enthusiastically helpful, for which I am most grateful.

8. *Who was Who in America*. Vol.1, 1897-1942. Chicago: The A. N. Marquis Co., 1943-

9. *The Fairhope Courier: A Progressive Paper for Progressive People*, Jan.13,1922. A copy of this paper in the Loeb Library, Harvard GSD, bears the note "Gift of C. Montoliu to the School of Landscape Architecture, Jan.26,1922" The School of Landscape Architecture at Harvard was the precursor of the Department of City Planning. The name (banner) of the newspaper is framed by two mottoes, that describe succinctly the *raison-d'être* of Fairhope Courier: "(It) advocates deriving public revenue by taxation of land values created by the public, exempting values created by individual effort; public ownership of public utilities, a real democracy through the initiative, referendum and recall;" and "A weekly record of the effort at Fairhope to apply correct principles of human association now for the benefit of its people and an example to all other. Believes in Fairhope, and in Baldwin County, as the 'land of opportunity.'"

Barcelona has been described as a self-imposed exile and a decision tinged with despair. It could be seen in a more positive light, as it provided him with the possibility of designing a town according to single tax principles and representing his ideas of organic planning. How he came to know about single tax utopian enclaves in the democracy across the Atlantic remains to be completely clarified.

Documentation in the Loeb Library at Harvard University's Graduate School of Design (GSD) and assistance from institutions in Fairhope (Alabama) have provided some information on what brought him to this small town near Mobile (Alabama), on the Gulf coast of the USA.⁷ The town of Fairhope was started by a small group of people from the Midwest. It was incorporated under the laws of Alabama in 1904 under the name of "Fairhope Single Tax Corporation". The enclave owned the land, water works, light and power plant, telephone, railway line, wharf and public library. Members built upon the land, paying rent for its use to the Corporation, but no tax to the government.

Two individuals had main roles in bringing Montoliu to Fairhope. One was Fiske Warren (1862-1938), a wealthy paper manufacturer from Waltham (Massachusetts) and a world-traveller. He was an enthusiastic supporter of the single tax movement and helped launch communities based on this system, several of them in Massachusetts. In 1920 he established the Georgian Trust for the promotion of the single tax. He is said to have founded, in 1918, a single tax enclave in the Republic of Andorra, near Santa Coloma, called Sant Jordi after Henry George.⁸

Perhaps, Montoliu met Fiske Warren on that occasion and was encouraged to visit single tax communities in America. The Catalan urbanist may have stimulated Warren's interest in the connections between economic theory and town planning. Montoliu maybe joined him in Boston and sought out Harvard University, where Warren had been a student. Traces of contacts with Harvard are copies of the periodical *Civitas* and other publications by Montoliu in the collection of the Loeb Library, noted as "gift of C. Montoliu".

The front page of *The Fairhope Courier: A Progressive Paper for Progressive People*, January 13, 1922, features an article on a "Round Table with Mr. Fiske Warren".⁹ Several visits by Warren to Fairhope apparently took place. On this occasion: "He explained his plans for extension of the enclaves in number and area" and suggested several ways for financing the purchase of land with long-term, low-interest loans to be paid from the rent charge on the land. It was implied, that Warren might provide this loan. It is not known if he financed Montoliu's proposal for the "Organic City;" although he is not mentioned among those taking part in the round-table, he was probably present. On another page of the same newspaper it is noted that "Prof. Montoliu's Plan for an Organic City" will be published as a supplement, giving his

suggestions for a “Garden City” or “Organic City” of Fairhope; and further on, “The subject of Town Planning is one to which Prof. Montoliu has given much study and investigation on two continents. During his several months stay here, he made an intimate study of local conditions at Fairhope.”

The two-page illustrated supplement has dropped “Garden City” from the title. It reads: “Fairhope, ALA, –on Mobile Bay; a Town Planning Scheme for its Development into an ‘Organic City’. Submitted to the Fairhope Single Tax Corporation by C. Montoliu.” The “Foreword” to the detailed description of his project called attention to the great importance of the School of Organic Education to the progressive environment of Fairhope. Marietta L. Johnson (1885-1938) founded the School in 1907. This educator and her experimental approach to education may have attracted Montoliu to Fairhope. Marietta Johnson was well known in her own country and abroad, after having gained international recognition. Her educational philosophy, akin to that of Jean-Jacques Rousseau, Maria Montessori and Friedrich Froebel, emphasized the natural development of the child as the basis for successful teaching. Education equalled growth to her. At the School of Organic Education, her ideas were put into practice in an idyllic environment, where children were given freedom to explore the world around them. The experimental school was frequently visited by educators and others interested in progressive thinking. Marietta Johnson published books, and lectured widely.

Montoliu maybe heard Marietta Johnson speak on one of her European travels. He could have learned about her from a publication by John Dewey, the American philosopher of education. His book *Schools of tomorrow* includes a long chapter, “Education as natural development,” on Johnson and her School of Organic Education (Dewey & Dewey 1962, p. 14-31). Dewey’s book first appeared in 1915 and was published in many languages within a few years. A Spanish edition came out in Madrid in 1918.

When asked why she chose the term “organic” for her school, Johnson is reported to have replied that she could not think of another word. In Dewey we read: “She

10. MONTOLIU, Cebrià de. *L'obra d'en Montoliu a Amèrica: urbanització de Fairhope per al seu desenvolupament com a Ciutat Orgànica, Civitas: Butlletí de la Societat Cívica la Ciutat Jardí*, Època II, no. 6, octubre 1921. p. 5-8.

11. MONTOLIU, Cebrià de. *Fairhope – A Town-Planning Scheme for its Development into an Organic City*, *The American City*, New York, vol. 24, no. 4, April 1921, p. 355-359.

12. MONTOLIU, Cebrià de. *Fairhope – A Town-Planning Scheme for its Development into an Organic City*, *The American City*, New York, vol. 24, no. 4, April 1921, p. 355. A similar comment appears in the *Civitas* article.

calls her methods of education as ‘organic’, because they follow the natural growth of the pupil. The school aims to provide for the child the occupations and activities necessary at each stage of development for his unfolding at that stage” (Dewey & Dewey 1962, p. 18). Initially, Montoliu’s attention was perhaps drawn to her institution by its name. Visiting the campus of the school and observing the symbiotic interaction of the educational curriculum with the natural environment would have empathized with his ideas. Johnson used an outdoor field for the children’s “gym,” and taught mathematics and nature studies in the scenic gully (*barranco*). There are photographs of children constructing additional buildings for the school, dancing and performing theatre plays.

Montoliu’s plan for Fairhope’s development into an “Organic City” and his report were published in the Fairhope Chronicle (Jan.1922). An abbreviated version was included in *Civitas*, October 1921, under the title “*L’obra d’en Montoliu a Amèrica*.”¹⁰ A slightly different abbreviated version appeared in the periodical *The American City* (April 1921).¹¹ At the beginning of that article, Montoliu mentioned the School of Organic Education, founded by Marietta L. Johnson, and remarked: “Its remarkable achievements in the pedagogical field [...] have, in part, inspired this scheme for the building there of a model city founded on the same organic principles [...] The continuous growth and prosperity of Fairhope have emphasized the need of planning thoroughly for the future, while the nature of the community has made it an especially promising field for the development of the most modern ideas in the construction of better cities.”¹²

Montoliu’s Report and the two articles, all three featuring the plan, show that his proposal was for a sizable extension to the existing town of Fairhope, on adjacent empty land. It included some modifications to the older checkerboard plan. The original settlement had been laid out without regard for philosophical or aesthetic considerations; nevertheless, he respected what existed and related his new city to it. Montoliu’s proposal represents ideas worthy of study not only by historians. It remains of value to the contemporary –post-modern– and problematic “new urbanism”.

Adhering to the garden-city principle of limited growth, his project allowed for a population of 24.000, leaving a wide reservation of land for a permanent rural belt and future expansion. An existing transportation line, the “People’s Railway,” linking the center of town to the boat pier was extended. Zoning established commercial, industrial, residential districts and a “sylvan zone”. A park system surrounded and penetrated the urban nucleus of the town with a green girdle, incorporating the cemetery and a golf course. A park drive along the beach side of Mobile Bay provided scenic views and access to the passenger pier for the ferry service to the city of Mobile. Montoliu incorporated the two romantically rustic gullies, which

bisected the land into the open space zone and proposed an agricultural school in the park next to one of the gullies. He considered the existing streets wasteful, which were all of equal width, and the checkerboard layout dull. Thoroughfares or main traffic arteries, and “simply streets” in residential areas for greater quietness, were suggested. The streets in his proposal did not follow a Sittesque curvilinear pattern; so, they are straight and related to that of the older town in their layout. Apparently, Montoliu had acquired respect for the prevalent American grid plan. However, the parks improved upon the lack of public squares in the existing Fairhope did not amend the absence of a communal civic space. Indicative of his convictions, he stated emphatically: “By far, the most important feature of the present division and, in the deeper sense, the very marrow of our organic system, is the large open space provided in the center of the town as the site for an adequate organ of the civic spirit or the public life of the whole community.”¹³

He located a Civic Center, adjacent to Market Square, at the intersection of Fairhope Avenue the main commercial street and the academic forum, represented by the Organic School. A group of monumental public buildings (City Hall, Public Library, Post Office, Chamber of Commerce, etc.) and a Community Club would be provided with galleries or porticoes. The Community Club was to serve as the architectural and symbolic link joining the Civic Center and the campus of the School of Organic Education.

Since Montoliu submitted his plan for an Organic City to the Fairhope Single Tax Corporation in 1922, some of his recommendations have been implemented. Had he not died the following year, he might have ushered his scheme to completion. He might also have been asked to design other utopian single tax enclaves based on his unique organic planning concepts.

Fate destined Fairhope (Alabama) to stand alone in the North American continent as the unique Catalan contribution to emerging modern urbanism.

13. Montoliu, *Fairhope – A Town-Planning Scheme for its Development into an Organic City*, *The American City*, New York, vol. 24, no. 4, April 1921. p. 359.

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2. MONTOLIU, Cebrià de. *Las modernas ciudades y sus problemas a la luz de la Exposición de Construcción Cívica de Berlín (1910)*. Barcelona: Sociedad Cívica La Ciudad Jardín, 1913. Pàgina 374