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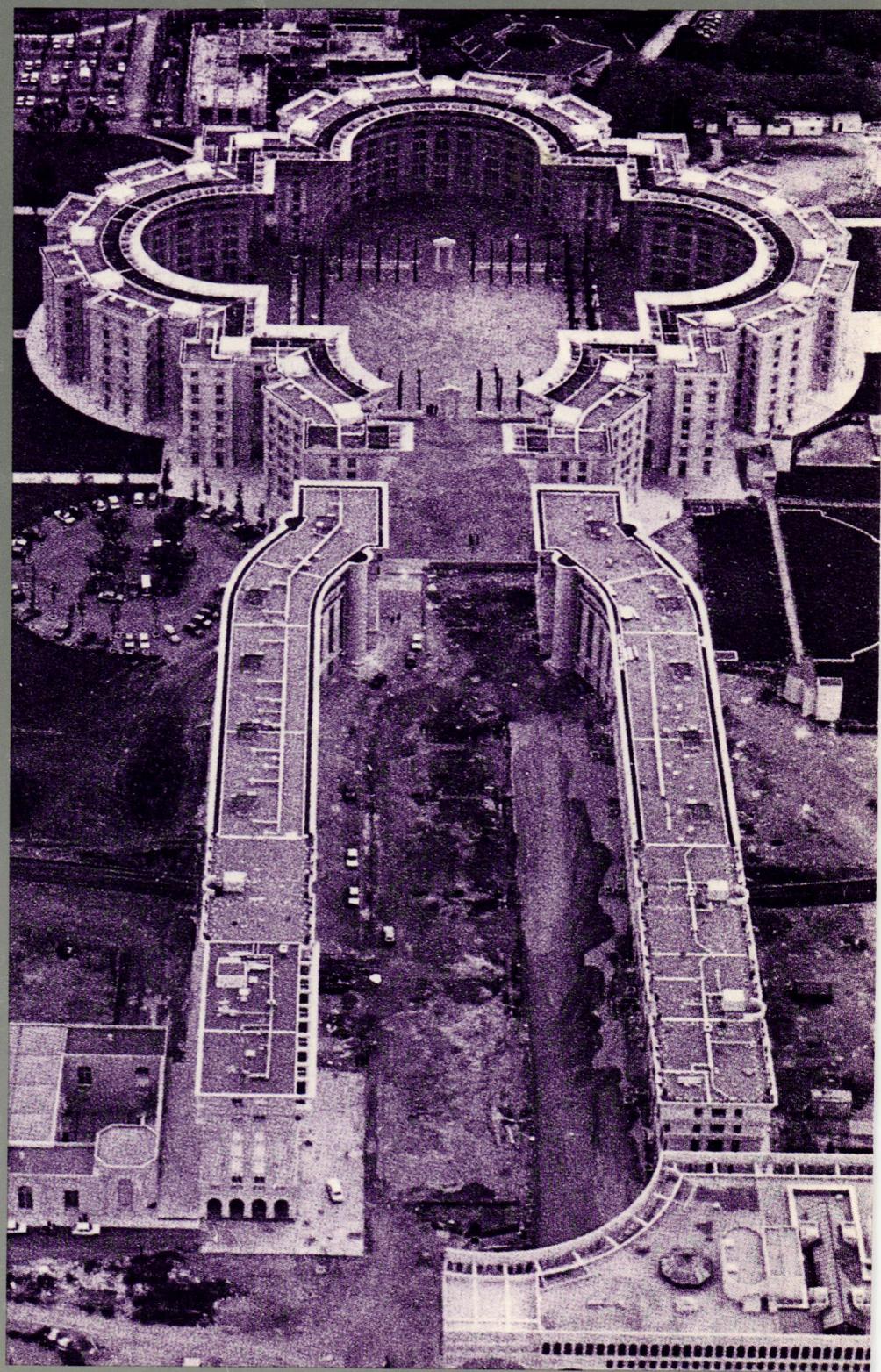
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POSTMODERN URBANISM

Issue 17 – Winter 1989

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In this issue of Design Book Review . . .

FRONT COVER: Aerial view of Antigone project, Ricardo Bofill (1979–). (Photo: O'Sughrue; courtesy Bofill/Taller de Arquitectura.)

BACK COVER: Parc de la Villette, Bernard Tschumi (1983–). (Photo: Bernard Tschumi.)

Postmodern Urbanism: People without Housing and Cities without People

Is it only coincidence that the exploded housing blocks of Pruitt-Igoe, the icons that have come to symbolize the end of modernism, were blown up in 1972, the same year that the neutron bomb was unveiled as America's ultimate strategic weapon? We regret to report that the answer to this conundrum will not be found in this issue of *DBR*. The question, however, shall serve as a starting point for the theme of Postmodern Urbanism.

The doomed housing project, condemned as antisocial architecture, and the projected instrument of doom, which could annihilate entire urban populations without harming the buildings, can be looked at as sources for two retrospective slogans for the postmodern age of abandoned utopias and listless nostalgia: "People without Houses" and "Cities without People." As evidence of the former we might turn to the tens of thousands of homeless people roaming the streets of all major cities in the United States, or the 120,000 people on the waiting list for public housing in New York City. As evidence of the latter, we might consider the great corporate plazas built in the past few years, such as Proctor & Gamble Square in Cincinnati, whose private police force ensures that it is a tidy composition meant to be looked at and not lived in.

The postmodern period saw the protection of historic districts, the revival of the street, the response to Jane Jacobs' and William Whyte's plea for "people places," but it also welcomed venal gentrification and spawned the ever disgregate "technoburb" (as Robert Fishman in *Bourgeois Utopias* defines it)—an urban order that has given substance to Frank Lloyd Wright's prophecy of the modern city being simultaneously "everywhere and nowhere." Architects of every persuasion dodge the housing question and the urban question by wearing their Teflon ideology of "contextualism." Contextualism in its broadest sense means fitting in with existing conditions; and while most would prefer that these be lovely historic structures, and many would opt for a pseudo-historic solution, what if the context is something like Pruitt-Igoe? Should we continue to bomb the postwar contexts that are, like-it-or-not, the majority of our contexts?

What follows in this issue of *DBR* are various positions and provocative illustrations: from Survival City (a simulated town built to be bombed) to Michael Sorkin's shrapnel-like *Model City*; from Colin Rowe ruminating on the artistic precedents and presaging the sentiments of many of the books reviewed (such as those by Michael Dennis, Roger Trancik, or Donald Olsen) to Rem Koolhaas seeking a creative detente with postwar concrete jungles, and Liane Lefaivre classifying the radical contextualists, rooted in the ugly modern city, as "dirty realists."
                                                    Richard Ingersoll

Media representatives observing a typical atomic blast, c. 1950s. (Courtesy Las Vegas News Bureau.)

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LETTERS

● To the Editors:

I enjoyed *DBR* 16 with John Parman's review of Sally Woodbridge's new edition of *Bay Area Houses*, and I was delighted to see the mention of the "Radical Regionalism" exhibition of 1987. As I understand it, the Bay Region Tradition was not so much a style or single set of forms and conditions as it was a flexible attitude toward building that attempted to derive design solutions from particular requirements of program and site. William Wurster certainly (and Joseph Esherick after him) was against style for its own sake. I think they would agree with Richard Fernau and Stanley Saitowitz, which makes me wonder what Fernau and Saitowitz mean when they speak of distancing themselves from "Bay Regionalism." Fernau likes to use the phrase "reluctant regionalism," which, in my view, is redundant.

In short, a good, thought-provoking review. I am eager to see if Jim Shay and Christopher Irion's book *New Architecture San Francisco* (Chronicle Books, November 1989) will broaden the debate.

—Daniel Gregory,
Associate Editor, *Sunset* Magazine

● To the Editors:

I am writing regarding the photo of the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art's proposed reconstruction of the conference room of Charles and Ray Eames, which was dated "c.1940s" (*DBR* 16).

This idea is a very nice tribute. But please be advised that the table and chairs shown were not designed or manufactured until the early to mid-1960s. They should either change the furniture or change the date.

—Tom Wolff,
formerly with Herman Miller, Inc.

■

This was an oversight on our part. Though the office was founded in the 1940s, the photograph is obviously of a later date.

Conference room, office of Charles and Ray Eames, Venice, California; to be reconstructed as a permanent installation at the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art. (Photo courtesy San Francisco Museum of Modern Art.)

and Monographs from RIZZOLI

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Introduction by Stanley Tigerman. An important monograph on the architect largely responsible for shaping Skidmore, Owings, and Merrill's sense of aesthetics by bringing a high refinement to the buildings of corporate America. Among the 27 works presented are the John Hancock Center, the Inland Steel Building, the Sears Tower and the Chicago Civic Center. 200 pages. 10″ × 10″. 305 illus., 105 in color. Hardcover: 1087-9. $45. Paper: 1088-7. $29.95

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GAETANO PESCE: Architecture, Design, Art

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HENRY VAN DE VELDE

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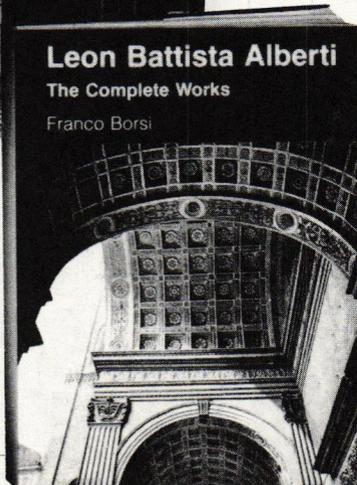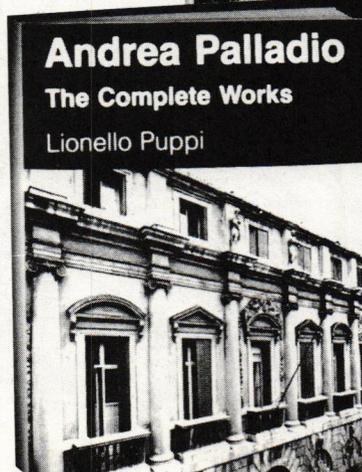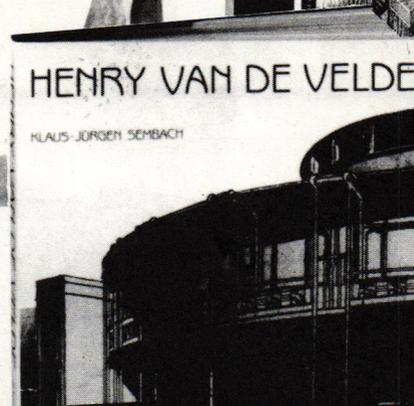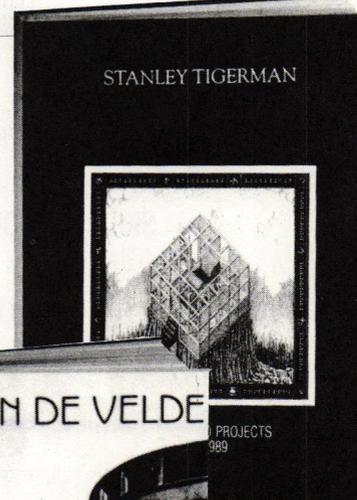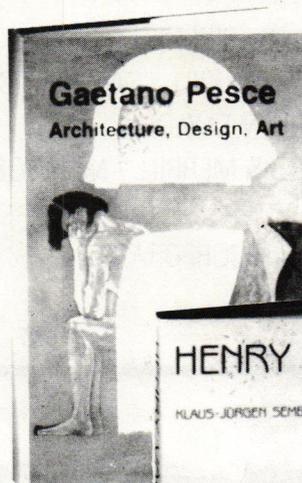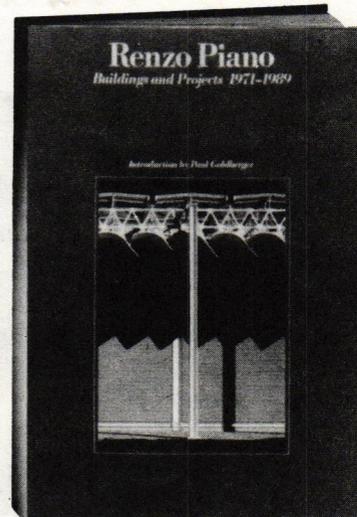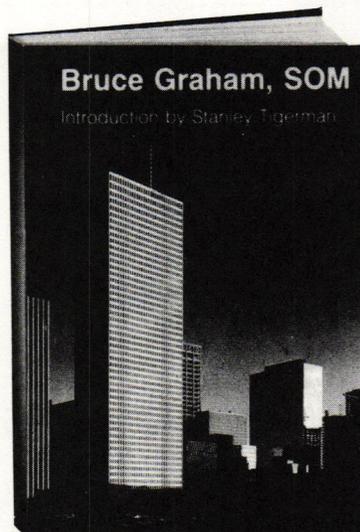
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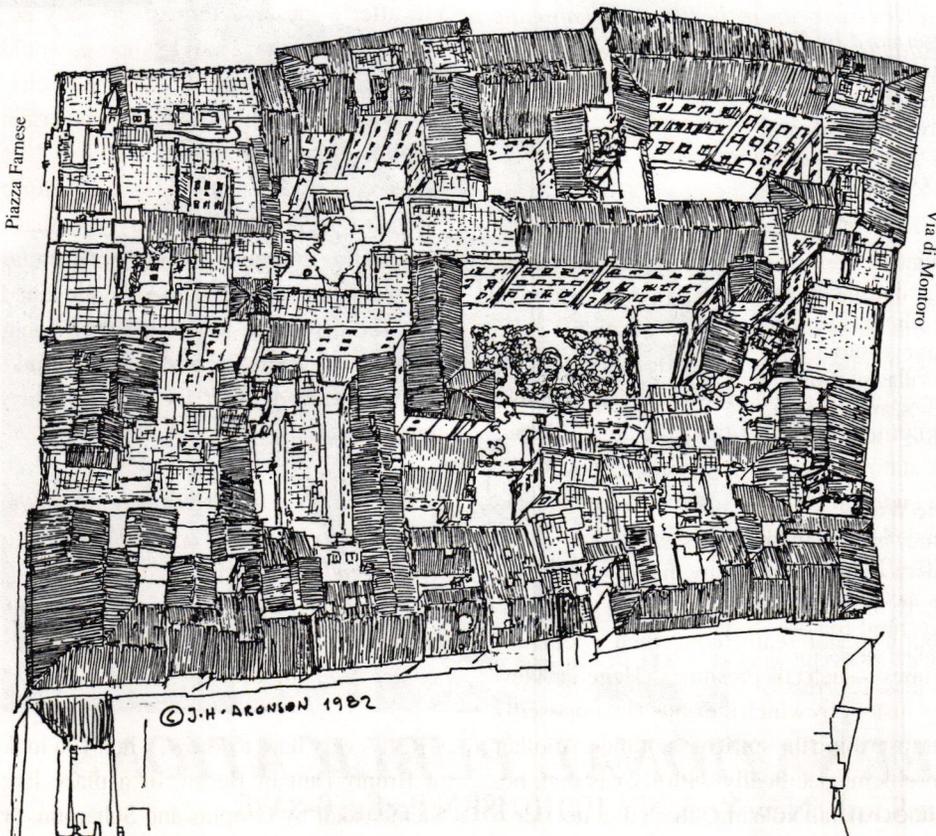
Detail study of Rome.
(Drawing by J.H. Aronson; courtesy of the artist.)

DIALOGUE:
COLIN ROWE

Few people have had as great an impact on the education of the postmodern generation of architects as Colin Rowe, yet no one would be as reluctant as he to admit this godfatherly vocation. Against the interdisciplinary mandates that have tried to find a new legitimacy for architecture as a social incubator or as a technological toy, Rowe has insisted on architecture as a formal construct, based on geometry and conventions of taste. His authority in this capacity was first recognized in America with his introduction to *Five Architects* (Wittenborn, 1972), a milestone in the return to formal concerns. Rowe's impressive connoisseurship of European art and architecture from the 15th century until the present derives from extensive travels and years of study at the Warburg Institute in London, where he completed a thesis in 1949 on Inigo Jones. Not content to confine his formal interests to history, he began teaching architecture in Liverpool, and migrated from Liverpool to Yale in 1951. To thicken his American experience, he spent three years at the University of Texas in Austin before returning to England to teach at the University of Cambridge until 1962. In 1962 he was offered a professorship at Cornell, where for 30 years he has dominated one of the strongest programs in urban design in the United States. His two books, *Mathematics of the Ideal Villa* (MIT, 1976) and *Collage City,* coauthored with Fred Koetter (MIT, 1978), have reached textbook status. He is currently completing a new book on Modernist architecture, with the working title *Good Intentions.* Since 1988 he has held a special research position with Cornell in Rome, where in June 1989 this interview took place.

DBR: During the past ten years a trend that could be called Postmodern Urbanism has been put into practice in many significant urban projects, both in the centers of existing cities and at their outskirts. As a revival or reinterpretation of traditional urban forms and a return to enclosed figural space, this trend emphatically rejects postwar models of freestanding towers and vast parking lots. Since the early 1960s you have argued eloquently against both the formal consequences and the utopian premises of modern architecture; are you satisfied with the postmodern alternative?

CR: With the designation postmodern I run into trouble right away, because it presumes an avant-garde movement and this psychologically belongs to the mental set that produced Modernist architecture itself. Like other avant-gardes it places an extremely high value on novelty. So Pomo is obviously different, but it nowhere approaches the quality of the social housing of the 1920s, such as that of Bruno Taut in Berlin.

DBR: Speaking of Berlin, you were involved as a critic in the IBA (Internationale Bauausstellung, 1981–87), a building exhibition that consciously tried to return architecture to traditional urban fabric. Did it make a difference?

CR: In the IBA in Berlin, the problem was that the sites were assigned block by block, so that no single architect could deal with both sides of the street. You didn't get a balanced street or complete square but instead always found a collection of signature buildings; as one critic complained, "here a Catalonian fort, there an *esquisse* by Rossi, a *quadrillage esoterique* by Eisenman, and a collection of Hanseatic warehouses from Ticino." You might say that this heterogeneity is an accurate portrayal of our times, but I'm not really concerned about *our* times—such talk presumes a Hegelian view of history by which the object is supposedly transcribing the spirit of our times. Another problem specifically with IBA is that, besides social housing, they did not have

money for the kind of things that a great city needs. In West Berlin there is simply no *place* anywhere (the so-called *kulturforum* included); it is a-spatial. The grand spaces and the cultural apparatus that go with them are all in East Berlin.

Take another project—Bofill's Antigone in Montpellier, and that huge plaza drawn in the shape of the plan of St. Peter's. A few years ago most people would have called that completely unjustified and I still think of myself as probably agreeing. My argument against Bofill's scheme is that there can never be a center until the surroundings put enough pressure on the space to make it central. Bofill attempts to make shapes, but there are too many gaps. And—you don't enter St. Peter's on the apse, do you? Antigone is actually based on the plan of Nancy, with the three linked squares, but they are not well stitched together. Compared to the 18th-century Promenade du Peyrou in the historic center, which has perfect proportions and is discreet, Bofill's work is grossly overscaled, and it's kitsch. Still, it aspires to make shapes like those you got in late 18th- and early 19th-century Edinburgh, a network that seemed arbitrary but after a lapse of time, everybody accepted as genuine. That, I suppose, would be true for the Disney World type of city: it's arbitrary and it's vague until a certain amount of time passes. (Of course I've never been to Disney World and I don't intend to go either!) All I'm saying is that a case such as Edinburgh proves that it's relatively easy to provoke what Coleridge called the "willing suspension of disbelief"—but for Modernists this was absolutely unthinkable, because of their ideas of equality, light, aspect, prospect and all that.

DBR: One of the major justifications of the postwar city is that it is functional for a mass society; it is well suited to the mobility-oriented technologies of our times. The postwar city looks bad but is modern architecture really at fault?

CR: It's very hard to know, when you look at Bruno Taut in Berlin, or a place like Siemenstadt by Gropius and Scharoun, or

Ernst May's beautifully planned public housing estates in Frankfurt, these are very distinguished layouts—you cannot say that modern architecture was all that bad if it produced things of this quality. One has to recognize that the period from the mid-1880s to about the mid-1930s possessed a high sense of order. This is evidenced in the United States by the Chicago Columbian Exposition of 1893 and the City Beautiful movement, and lots of American campuses. You could see it on Park Avenue after they removed the train tracks—but when they took away the "L" on 3rd Avenue in the 1950s, that produced nothing at all!

Why was it that after 1945, the street suddenly disappeared? You see it equally in the United States and in Europe. The continuous built-up street was abandoned even in Rome. It was not just the automobile. In Florence, via Buonvicino was bombed in World War II, and the difference between its late-19th-century continuous fabric and the completely disjointed pattern of the postwar buildings is quite clear—this was not the result of the automobile. You've got to attribute something to the object fixation which was endemic in modern architecture. Hilberseimer's scheme in the 1920s for Unter den Linden in Berlin, a dreadful series of *zeilenbaus* perpendicular to the great axis, was an attack on the line of Unter den Linden as a theater of bad memories. In these early Modernist schemes of the 1920s, the attack on the street predates the dissemination of the automobile.

Particularly after World War II the object building really took over. In terms of campus design, one suspects that it began at MIT around 1950, with the Aalto dorms and Saarinen's Kresge auditorium and chapel. After that every campus from coast to coast had to turn itself into an exhibition of unrelated works by supposedly prominent architects. This could not have happened earlier.

If one took all of the masterpieces of modern architecture—the Tugendhat
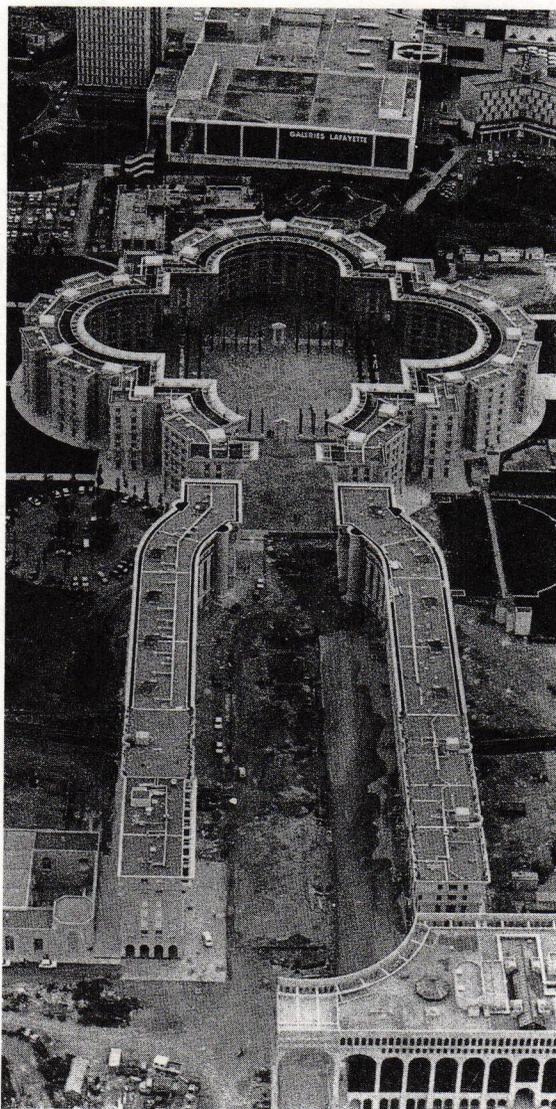
Aerial view of Antigone project, Ricardo Bofill (1979–). (Photo: O'Sughrue; courtesy Bofill/Taller de Arquitectura.)

House, Garches, the Schroeder House in Utrecht—and set them down on the usual American commercial strip, they wouldn't add up to anything; they'd be lost. Further, they would devalue each other by their proximity. They might have collective shock value but no individual shock value. If you've driven the *autostrada* outside of Milan, where Le Corbusier planned his building for Olivetti, you'll note that it is a continuous pile of junk; the Corbu project on that strip would look like a heap of junk like everything else. Liberal policy is to blame for all these strips—deliberate acts of policy, the dream of a linear city, from Florence to Los Angeles.

DBR: Often, in the enthusiasm for a return

to city fabric, the city is treated as if postindustrial times were postautomobile times. Isn't the problem of the automobile, even if it was not the origin of the formal solutions of Modernism, still central in a current urban scheme?

CR: Yes, of course. I think, however, that it will be perfectly easy to assume a little city which is jacked up above a parking lot, and on the next floor a big sort of pedestrian level and above that a city of housing. I would, for instance, love to live above a shopping mall in the United States; you can drive into it easily, and you need never leave the complex, you can just go below and buy things. The only really successful 20th-century urban project that I can think of, which helps me assume that the problem of the automobile can be solved, is Rockefeller Center. It's a miracle: the right size, you're not overwhelmed by height, and it's just at that moment when there's a Beaux-Arts residue in the details that adds quality.

I wasn't thinking of it as a model for historic centers, such as what occurred in London at the Barbicon Centre, but more along the lines of the outer suburbs of Washington, D.C., where you get all these terrible jumbles of garden apartments, overdesigned and without the sort of shopping and services that should go with them. You must get into your car and drive 20 minutes to the supermarket—but to live above the supermarket, then you'd have it all. Here in Rome there are times, in fact every day, when I would prefer to get into an automobile and go shopping in a supermarket than go shopping around in these little stores. The ideal thing would be to have a good American suburb adjacent to a very concentrated Italian town, then you'd have the best of both worlds.

It wouldn't be impossible to build a grand apartment scene above a shopping center, and have, instead of the usual jumble, something like the Vieux Carré in New Orleans, a regular little city built up there. The shopping mall doesn't need an exte-

ior, except perhaps a representational façade, and above it there is a fabulous ite for building which has et to be exploited.

DBR: If one proposes all inds of nice public spaces, onnected streets and gured piazze, will there till be an audience in a ighly technological soci- ty for their use? In other vords, is the return to tra- litional urban space a uarantee of a certain kind f social life?

CR: The steps of the Met- opolitan and the steps of Columbia University or hose of the New York Public Library were obvi- usly intended for walking p, and, though they make or a rather tedious climb, hey serve better for sitting and having unch on. They are spaces for socializing. Whether this is a social phenomenon that can only happen in dense cities such as New York and San Francisco, I don't know. Steps in Houston certainly wouldn't gener- ate this kind of activity. The United States inevitably suffers from lateral spread, but then again people like that, don't they?

Having spent three years in Texas, I often think of the small Texas town with the court house in the square. You never have churches in the square as far as I know— that's a private matter that fits with the United States Constitution and all. When the courthouse square disappears I don't see how the *res pubblica* can survive. If the court house were placed outside of town and surrounded by parking, then the idea of law supporting the institutions of society is no longer present.

I've always been impressed by the deco- rum of the small 19th-century American town, with its Main Street, which is a bit rough, and then all those tree-lined streets with white painted houses. I never get tired
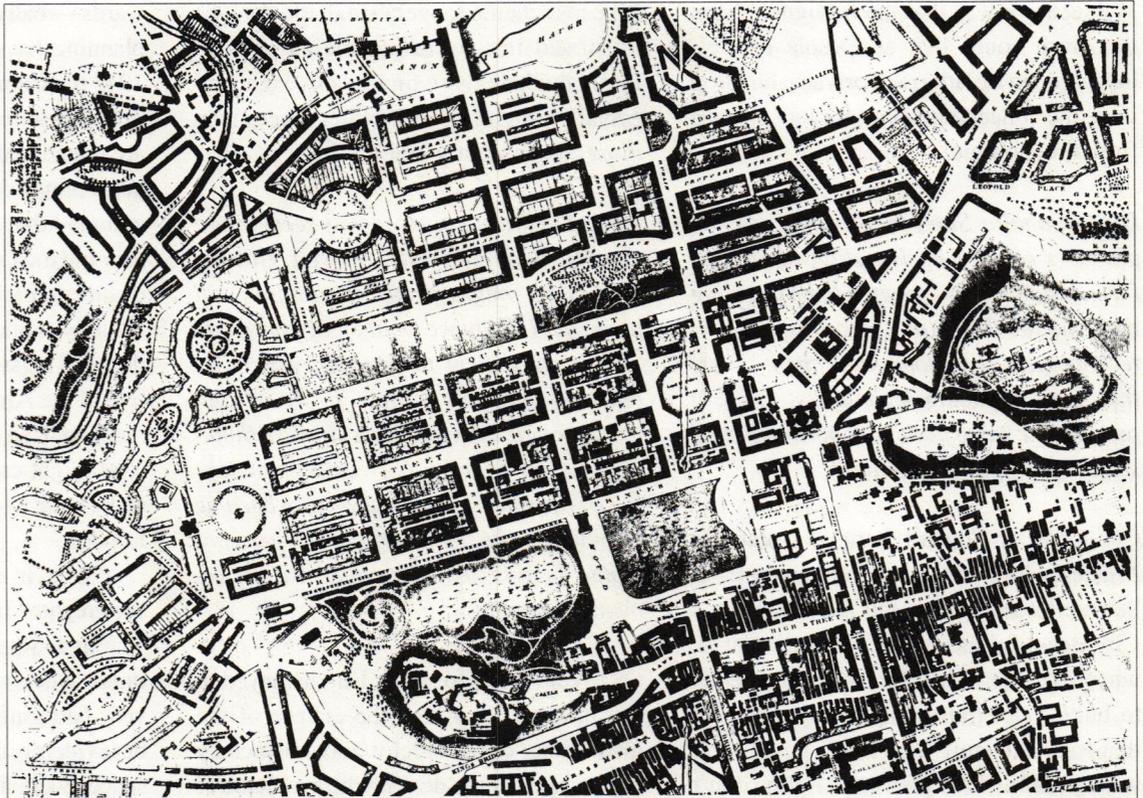
Plan of central Edinburgh, showing various phases of New Town development (c. 1827). (From A. J. Youngson: *The Making of Classical Edinburgh* [Edinburgh: University Press, 1966])

of looking at them. It's basically a grid with a matrix of trees to hold it together. About 1945 they stopped putting in the trees and the sidewalks and the isolation of each house became absolutely complete. The continuity was destroyed. One is now as- tonished to learn of the kind of polemic waged against the 19th-century city. In the 1930s—how wicked and inhumane they supposedly were—but they were obvi- ously highly successful, these 19th-century cities.

DBR: Do you think it is a valid point of departure to start with a formal vision? A vision such as Leon Krier's requires the social and economic order to adapt to the formal order.

CR: Some of the best areas of London, such as Belgravia, are formal visions that give quality to the city; a lot of other stuff can occur in the interstices of these pieces. In the case of Belgravia you had a patron who later became the Duke of Westminster, and Thomas Cubitt who developed the prop-

erty, but the idea that formal visions are contrary to the goals of diversity and popu- lar choice I think is an error.

Surely one must say that the classic American suburb, previous to 1945, is one of the great formal achievements—suburbs like Grosse Point Farms in Detroit, Lake Forest in Chicago, or Burlingame south of San Francisco. It is an outcropping of the English garden city suburb, which it ex- ceeds in quality, just as the American cemetery exceeds the quality of its English precedent. Both the English cemetery and the English suburb have little walls thrown around each individual plot, while the clas- sic American suburb depends on the con- tinuous lawn, with orderly planting of elms and so on. The objects placed in it were preferably of an eclectic choice, as were the objects in a good cemetery such as Belle Fontaine in St. Louis—little temples, chap- els, obelisks, and columns.

The romantic suburb belongs mostly to the English-speaking world and parts of Berlin. This model did not extend to Italy or France. The great charm of Florence in the

19th century was that the foreigners from the north could live at Fiesole or Bellosguardo in isolation and privacy, but drop in on the concentrated city for lunch or tea from time to time.

DBR: Camillo Sitte, Hegemann, and the planners of the City Beautiful offered us form, but often they seemed to be avoiding the "ineluctable" (as Corbu would say) technologies that dominated their times; they were resisting technology. Doesn't one find the same fault with postmodernist schemes, or with Krierstadt?

CR: Look at Edward Bennett's plan for Minneapolis of 1927, a lovely publication that merits a reissue. In this last phase of the City Beautiful the streets were articulated, whereas in the 1950s and 1960s they began to build inept traffic interchanges and all that spaghetti stuff. The 1960s got all of it wrong but this 1927 plan has it right; I don't think cars will go away either. I used to think Leon Krier's idea of a William Morris type society with architecture in the style of Ledoux was a little odd. But his idea for miniaturizing everything, walking to work, face-to-face confrontations, is a nice one.

Like his scheme for very small blocks—he illustrated this by taking me to parts of Pimlico where these tiny blocks exist, and actually provide more parking spaces than most contemporary cities.

DBR: But life in a mass society seems more complicated than this revived village; agreed we might prefer the Italian hill town, but I doubt we would find everybody else in agreement to live that way; who could realistically sustain it? It is even more utopian than Ebenezer Howard thinking that the Garden City could maintain itself when the prototypes quickly became dormitory suburbs. There are larger economic factors that determine the movements of people.

CR: Well, I hate to say it, I'm dismayed to say it, but I think that the eclipse of the institutions of monarchy and aristocracy had a great deal to do with the problems of the present day. Even in England, the survival of the monarchical institution in some ways influenced the London County Council (the precursor to the GLC), which was Socialist dominated, in the planning of a development like Kingsway of 1907 on-

wards—really the last great piece of urban planning that was achieved in London. After 1945 the Council was only concerned with *existenzminimum* for the masses, and if you are concerned with this you never can get great things done. The Modern Movement assumed that you could start with the bottom and then work up, because it was based on an egalitarian vision, but things seem to actually work in reverse order, and filter down. Kingsway was an important derivative of the American City Beautiful movement and an imitation of Regent Street. You might call Kingsway absolutely horrible, but it is still the last real street made in London.

Where, in a place like London, do people congregate? In a traditional square such as Trafalgar Square they come up to the unfortunate Buckingham Palace end, which is a very bad imitation of Nancy and Caserta, but evidently there's nowhere else; the open spaces were always private. This is where the world probably got its taste for privatization. In London you could go for a walk or a ride in the carriage (you didn't particularly want to get out of the carriage), come back to the house, go up to the drawing room, and look out on the square ... occasionally you sent the kids to play in the gardens. So urban space was not necessarily conceived or used as social space but was more to look at, of inherently aesthetic value.

But surely we must have reached the end of the road. An aerial view looking west from the Louvre up the Champs-Elysées compared to one looking east from La Défense toward L'Etoile should make the point. Isn't it the case of Humpty Dumpty sat on the wall, and one must ask with all good will in the world whether he can ever be put back together again. If he can, it will be in terms of the Louvre and the Tuileries gardens rather than La Défense.
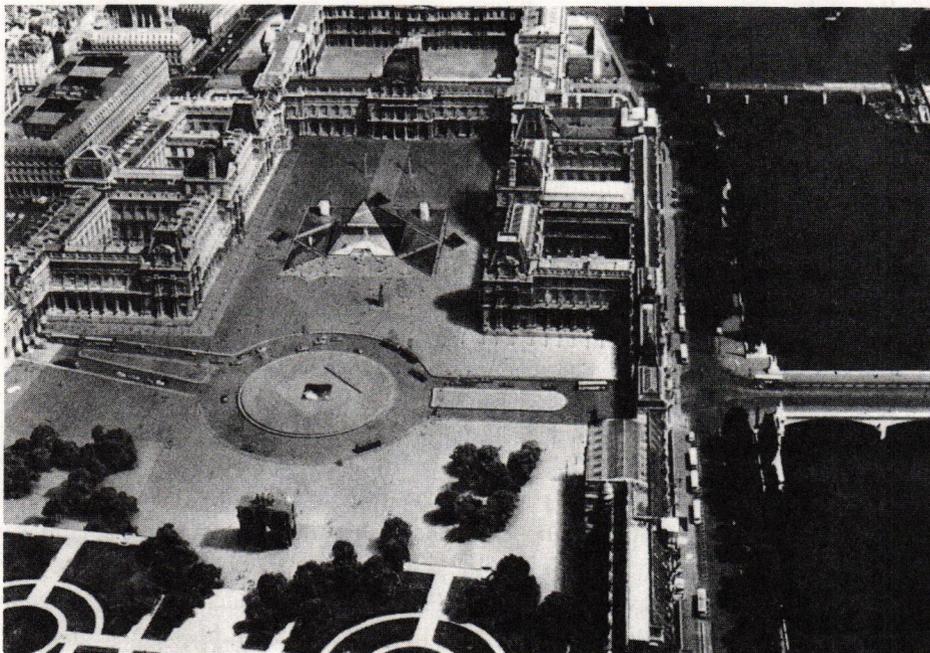
Aerial view photomontage of the Louvre, the Tuileries gardens, and I. M. Pei's pyramid in the Cour Napoléon (1987–). (From Sabine Fachard: *Paris 1979–1989* [New York: Rizzoli, 1988]; courtesy Dumage, studio Littré.)

Rem Koolhaas

Toward the Contemporary City

Dutch architect Rem Koolhaas stunned the architectural world with his frenetic appreciation of New York's urban process in *Delirious New York* (1978), deriving from it a "retroactive manifesto" based on the culture of congestion. In the ten years since the book's publication, the practice of his firm, Office of Metropolitan Architecture (OMA), has grown to include enormous reurbanization projects, such as the Bijlmermeer section of Amsterdam, the outskirts of Rotterdam, and most recently the edges of Lille, where the tunnel across the English Channel will connect. Contrary to most postmodern architects, who have focused their imaginations on the centers of cities, Koolhaas has turned to the periphery, and his studies of the surroundings of Atlanta, Seoul, and Tokyo will soon be published as *The Contemporary City*. To preview this para-modern alternative to Postmodern Urbanism, *DBR* has gathered some excerpts from an interview conducted by Bruno Fortier (published originally in the April 1989 issue of *L'Architecture d'Aujourd'hui*).

Bijlmermeer housing units, Holland (c. 1960s). (Photo courtesy *L'Architecture d'Aujourd'hui.*)

For me, the key moments of modernist composition come from Mies, certainly over Le Corbusier, and from Leonidov, much before Gropius. I could continue to make a list, but I doubt this would seem very original. Every time I flip through this series of modernist images, however, what strikes me is the extraordinary incongruity between the perfection and instant completeness in their architectural plans (take for instance Mies's Barcelona Pavilion or Terragni's Danteum) and the inflexible, nearly infantile, simplicity of their urban projects, imagined as if the complexity of daily life could be accommodated right away through the freedom offered by the free plan, or as if all the experience of fragmentation and what this meant to perspective could occur without disturbing the territory of the city. This is quite clear even in Otto Wagner's deceptive plans for the extension of Vienna. Thus, for me, the most visionary architect, the one who best understood the ineluctable disorder in which we live, remains Frank Lloyd Wright and his Broadacre City.

In the last ten years, the projects I have been working on have been situated in a territory that can no longer be called suburbia but must be referred to as the borders or limits of the periphery. It is here on the edge of the periphery that we should observe how things take shape. The contemporary city, the one composed of these peripheries, ought to yield a sort of manifesto, a premature homage to a form of modernity, which when compared to cities of the past might seem devoid of qualities, but in which we will one day recognize as many gains as losses. Leave Paris and Amsterdam—go look at Atlanta, quickly and without preconceptions: that's all I can say.

Excepting certain airports and a few patches of urban peripheries, the image of the modern city—at least as it was projected—has nowhere been realized. The city that we have to make do with today is more or less made of fragments of modernity—as if abstract formal or stylistic characteristics sometimes survived in their pure state, while the urban program didn't come off. But I wouldn't cry over this failure: the resulting strata of neo-modern, which literally negates the traditional city as much as it negates the original project of modernity, offers new themes to work with. In them one can confront the buildings of this period and the different types of space—something that was impermissible in the pure doctrine of modernism. One can also learn from them to play with a substrata, mixing the built with the ideal project. This is a situation comparable to one for which the 19th century was much criticized, when in Milan, Paris, or Naples the strategy of remodeling without destroying the preexisting city was applied.

In the last fifteen years there has been an

immense production of images for pieces of cities, which dense or not, have a power of attraction that cannot be denied. The problem is that they have been conceived in a sort of unconscious utopia, as if the powers that be, the decision mechanisms, and the means that are really available might be enchanted by the beauty or interest they portray. As if reality were going to latch onto these schemes and come to see how important it was to build them, which as far as I know is still not happening. Rather than count on this sort of fascination, or bet on the absolute authority of architecture, I think you have to ask yourself which way the forces that contribute to defining space are heading. Are they urban-oriented or the opposite? Do they ask for order or disorder? Do they play on the continuous or the discontinuous? Whatever the answer may be, there's a movement there and dynamics that you have to get to know, because they are the matter of the project.

Take for instance the IBA (Internationale Bauausstellung) in Berlin. In 1977, before the final programming of the exhibit, Oswald Ungers and I were the lone dissenting voices from Krier, Rossi, Kleihues, and the others, who had already decided to make Berlin a test-case city for the reconstruction of the European city. Ungers and I pleaded for a quite different route, one that put history first: the city was destroyed, torn apart, punctured, and *this* was its memory. Second was the economy: West Berlin was stagnating, losing population ever since the construction of the wall despite thousands of institutional and fiscal incentives, and thus one could not see how a sufficient turnaround would suddenly occur to economically justify a project of general reurbanization. These were strong enough reasons to suggest that the IBA should not have taken place. Instead one had the chance in Berlin to enhance reality, to adapt to what already existed. Above all, Berlin provided the occasion to make of the city a sort of territorial archipelago—a system of architectural islands surrounded by forests and lakes in which the infrastructures could play without causing damage. It could have been realized in an almost picturesque mode (like Peichl's stations) with a free periphery from which one slides into great vegetal interstices. In the long run, the historical accidents (Berlin destroyed by the war, and redestroyed by the 1950s) could have offered a metaphoric role very much the opposite of the one chosen by IBA.

Remembering the projects of Mies, of Taut, the twin towers of Leonidov, and the like, one must also remember that these projects were first great distributors of space, more spatial definers than mere objects. I admit that there was a utopia in this vision that was just as strong, and perhaps in symmetry to the current desire to densify, construct, and give at all costs an architectural dimension. Nowadays every empty space is prey to the frenzy to fill, to stop up. But in my opinion there are two reasons that make urban voids at least one of the principal lines of combat, if not the only line, for people interested in the city. The first is quite simple: it is now easier to control empty space than to play on full volumes and agglomerate shapes that, though no one can rightly say why, have become uncontrollable. The second is something I've noticed: emptiness, landscape, space—if you want to use them as a lever, if you want to include them in a scheme—can serve as a battlefield and can draw quite general support from everyone. This is no longer the case for an architectural work, which today is always suspect and inspires prior distrust.

One of the current projects of OMA is the reurbanization of Bijlmermeer, the largest of the modernist *grands ensembles* constructed in Holland in the 1960s—it's something like Le Corbusier without talent, but conceived according to impeccable doctrine. It is an immense territory—just one of its twelve sections equals the area of the historic center of Amsterdam. Today on this immense surface where twelve capital cities might have been built, nothing is happening. The apartments are empty, people live there only in hopes of moving somewhere else, and there were serious discussions to demolish the whole project. But when looking closer, it seemed to us that these negative elements were beyond removal. It turned out that a lot of people—singles, couples, divorcees, those dedicated to the arts, and all of them necessarily motorized—were quite attached to Bijlmermeer and preferred to stay there. They enjoyed the light and space, and the indissociable feeling of freedom and abandonment. Thus it wasn't the spaces and buildings that were insufferable but rather the system of aberrant streets and garage connections that radically cut off people from their dwellings. For twenty years neither public nor private initiative has proposed anything to improve this forgotten territory. Our decision was not to alter the housing units but rather to try to give a force or intensity to the open spaces, superimposing on the original project (a giant beehive structure filled with trees) a design where the highways, the parking garages, the schools, and the stadiums would be articulated on islands of greenery and relate to a central armature of new services, including laboratories, research centers, and movie studios. This would constitute an indispensable investment if one wants to start a national campaign to deal with what at the moment is a huge blight in the middle of Holland.

If my interest in the banal architecture of the 1950s and 1960s, the derivatives of Ernesto Rogers and Richard Neutra, seems a somewhat boring source, I can only answer that to die of boredom is not so bad. There were much worse architects than Neutra. But let's face it, I like that kind of architecture, and quite often it has been magnificently built. It has also at times reached a carefreeness and a freedom that interests me—not that I'm the only one to take an interest in it. But the question at stake is what Bruno Vayssière and Patrice Noviant have defined as "statistic architecture": power architecture whose power is easy, that has moved without transition from the isolated experience to the series, from the series to repetition, and so on until you get sick of it. I'm trying to live with it but also to detach myself from it. And since nostalgia disturbs me, I'm trying more and more not to be modern, but to be contemporary.
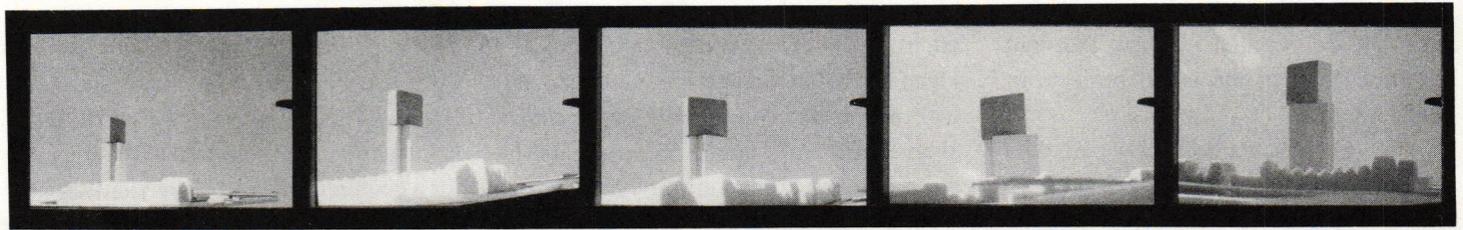
Design for a building to be seen from a car on the superhighway, Rem Koolhaas (1988). (Photo: OMA.)

Liane Lefaivre

Dirty Realism in European Architecture Today: Making the Stone *Stony*

The history of architecture and urbanism since World War II is generally felt to be a nightmare born of the technocratic dwelling place, the technocratic leisure place, the technocratic workplace. The images it tends to evoke are of asphalt deserts, mean streets, atomic graveyards of urvanity. Postwar architecture and urbanism have become synonymous with inhumanity, desolation, and devastation.

However, the architectural history of the past forty years is not only one of unrelenting horrors. There have been interruptions in the dismal march from fiasco to fiasco when architecture has stepped out of the mainstream and transformed itself into an eloquent means of poetic expression, cultural commentary, and critical confrontation.

One such break on the bleak horizon occurred in the 1960s, when Robert Venturi, Denise Scott Brown and Steven Izenour published *Learning from Las Vegas* and ignited what one might call a form of contextualism in the United States.[1] Their catch phrase, "Las Vegas is to the strip what Rome was to the Piazza," swept through the profession. Under this influence, architects, including Charles Moore and Venturi and Scott Brown themselves, incorporated elements from popular urban vernacular sources into their designs. Neon lights and bold commercial supergraphics provided new sources of inspiration. In Europe,

Archigram had been engaging in a similar anticonformist, ironic, and playful approach to architectural vocabulary since the early 1960s. Peter Cook incorporated oil refineries, camera stands, and pneumatic tubes in his design for the Montreal Tower Project of 1964; Ron Heron and Warren Chalk drew inspiration from plumbing fixtures for their City Interchange project of 1963. The new, madcap, zany forms owed as much to the comic strip as to the urban strip; their basic references were deeply rooted in pop culture.

Just four years before his postmodern about-face, Charles Jencks and Nathan Silver coauthored *Adhocism* (London: Secker and Warburg, 1972), a contextualist manifesto in a less polished vein than *Learning from Las Vegas*. The authors did not simply rehash the writings of the earlier contextualists. Inspired by the notion of an "urban reclamation of waste" and such precedents as "the ad-hoc barricades in the 1871 Paris Commune," Christo's Packed Fountain, the Eames House—which incorporated "industrial windows, open web steel joints, corrugated metal decking"—and Bruce Goff's Hopewell Baptist Church for oil-field workers in Oklahoma (topped by an "exterior frame of welded drill stem salvaged from the oil fields"), Jencks and Silver advocated the reuse of industrial packaging material and industrial buildings in the creation of a new urban environment.

These pop contextualist movements were not, contrary to general opinion, merely cosmetic. They were part of a worldwide cluster of critical, mainly populist movements, which included the self-help projects in the Third World (chiefly associated with John Turner), the participatory housing experiments in Holland, and the advocacy planning projects in the

United States.[2]

Both pop contextualist and populist projects owed their popular appeal to the deviant lyricism of their cultural and critical stance. They were critical in two senses: first, they used the language of architecture to challenge the stylistic and social bulldozing carried out by the dominant architectural trend of the time, postwar modernism; second, they challenged the values embodied in urban renewal schemes that rendered a few people richer but left the cities environmentally impoverished.

Who knows what might have happened if these movements had flourished? As it was, they barely outlived the early 1970s. The end came swiftly and suddenly. In the blink of an eye the 1960s were gone, the pop paraphernalia was swept to the sides of the architectural scene, and out tumbled the pastel-colored pediments, the columns, the grids. The players vanished into the wings, to return after a brief interlude, unrecognizable.

The reasons for the change were varied.[3] In the mid-1970s, the so-called "fiscal crisis of the State" brought about a crisis of the welfare state in Europe and the Great Society in the United States, along with the general spirit of populism that had animated them. In architecture, pop aesthetics became eminently expendable in the surging tide of yuppification and gentrification, and were soon superseded by the postmodern cult of the precious. The replacement of an industrial economy by a Reaganomic, Thatcherite, postindustrial, nonproductivist economy based broadly on real-estate speculation meant that low-yield populist urban experiments became unfeasible virtually overnight. Finally, the proliferation of guerilla wars, military dictatorships, and super-power rivalries put considerable

stress on the populist idealism that had nurtured many of the urban projects in South America.

After more than a decade, we are witnessing another break; the lyrical, cultural, critical potential of architecture is once again being called into play. In spite of deep differences, there are similarities in the concerns of the 1960s and those of some architects of the late 1980s. Like their predecessors, these architects are crashing the gates of accepted formal vocabulary by incorporating into their architectural designs unconventional references to the urban context. They are a new generation of contextualists.

But whereas the pop contextualists of the 1960s were "learning" from the vital popular culture, these architects of the late 1980s appear to be "learning" from the frayed, abandoned, once-thriving industrial edges of cities and from their ransacked centers: from the Docklands in London, La Biccoca in Milan, the Peripheriques in Paris and Lyon, Kreuzberg and Moabit in Berlin. Reality is sensed as harsher, and consequently the mood is on the whole confrontational.

Perhaps what most distinguishes the architects of the late 1980s is that they aim their criticisms at a larger target. The target now includes postmodernism, which is perceived as a fake, fabulistic tendency in architecture and a superficial, patch-up tendency in urban planning. The late 1980s seem to be rejecting the nostalgia for a past that never existed, the tendency to glitz-over and gussy-up, the stick-a-marshmallow-here-stick-a-marshmallow-there-and-maybe-things-won't-fall-apart approach to the city that has been identified with postmodernism. The whimsical insouciance emanating from "collage city" has been replaced by the hard-edged realities of "Industrial City."

These architects seem to share certain traits—the rejection of fabulism, the critical stance—with what *Granta* magazine editor Bill Buford calls the "dirty realist" school of writing.[4] Buford refers to such novelists as Raymond Carver, Jayne Anne Phillips, and Tobias Wolff; disenchanted with the escap-

ist, narcissistic, postmodern flight from realism that has dominated literature for over a decade in the work of William Gaddis, John Barth, and Thomas Pynchon, these writers are out to chart the dirty realities of what Buford calls the "under belly" of everyday life in the late 20th century.

As to what makes a literary work "critical," we should refer to the avant-gardist literary theoretician Victor Shklovsky, who in his famous 1917 study, identified the method of *ostranenie*, usually translated from the Russian as "defamiliarization," more rarely as "strangemaking." [5] This device resets familiar things in such a way that they require a perceptive effort in order to be recognized. Strangemaking, according to Shklovsky, "imparts the sensation of things as they are perceived and not as they are known." It "makes the stone *stony*." The idea is simple and goes back to Aristotle, who called it *xenikon* (strangeness) and considered it to add "distinction" to one's pronouncements. Shklovsky's innovation was to claim that defamiliarization or strangemaking is the essential device of a literary text. Literariness (*literaturenost*), in his view, is a function of the degree to which a work "de-automatized" or broke patterns of habitualized perception and thus "pricked the conscience" by making the reader aware of ordinary conditions in a new way. In other words, literature is by definition critical, it breaks the patterns of "habitualization" that devour work, clothes, furniture, one's wife, and the fear of war.

Architecture too can be used to make critical comments about reality. One way is to incorporate elements of the surroundings—chain-link fences, industrial-waste heaps, parking lots, garages, anonymous high rises—and engage the world to which they belong. The shock that sets off the critical judgment is sparked by the way in which dirty real architects, like dirty real novelists, slow down perception, jar conventions, and "save things from obviousness."

An element of dirty realism runs through the work of many architects today. We will examine the work of a few: Rem Koolhaas, Nigel Coates, Jean Nouvel, Bernard

Tschumi, Hans Kolhoff, Laurids Ortner, Carel Weeber, Cees Cristiaanse, and Zaha Hadid. (This selection is based on Rem Koolhaas's initial selection of participants for a conference called "Whether Europe" held April 15–16, 1988.) A more complete, less Eurocentric, discussion would include Frank Gehry, Lars Lerup, Craig Hodgetts, and Morphosis—all scavenger-poets who have introduced harsh aesthetics of urban blight into architectural lyricism. But the previous group of designers provides a basis from which to start to illustrate the more salient features of a general trend of dirty realism in architecture today.

Rem Koolhaas, in his recent project for a series of high rises along the freeway corridor linking Amsterdam, Utrecht, and Rotterdam, takes the most characterless kind of slab, so common on the peripheries of cities, and makes it architecturally self-conscious, semantically awake. Conceived to be seen from cars traveling at 250 kilometers per hour, they are held up as disturbing hyper-realist copies of the architectural debris on the rim of our cities, that ocean of architectural nowhereness. Koolhaas takes these hyper-realist simulacra and yanks their heads sideways, or splashes them with gold or silver paint. Because they have texture and form, because they have meaning, because they are mirrors with a cracked surface, these buildings are infractions of what he calls "degree zero" architecture and "degree zero" planning. They leer on vacuous skylines as if caught up in a slow, silent, slightly out-of-step pantomime, reproducing—but at the same time thwarting—the dance of urban death that has wound its way around and into our cities.

One cannot but agree with the young Nigel Coates when he ironically professes to be "making a good deal with what is on the sites" of his projects. What are these sites? The inner cities of England, sites that Coates and his office, NATO (Narrative Architecture Today), call urban "war zones" created by the postwar campaign against urbanity in the name of urban planning. The theme of his architectural and urban study for Surrey Docklands Redevelopment Area is a confrontation with the

very chaos that has devoured, then regurgitated, entire chunks of the area. By turning buildings into architectural equivalents of New Expressionist, Transavanguardia sculptures, the study captures the poetics at work in the urban environment, mangling, disfiguring, and severing urban settings. Coates's Restaurant Metropole in Tokyo, with its industrial, heavy-duty plastic-curtained façade, also manages to tap the special genius loci of the overcrowded, but somehow depopulated, refuse-infested setting, reflecting the image of suppressed violence that surrounds it, throwing it back where it came from but at the same time transforming it.

Jean Nouvel is two architects in one. The first is the neo-Claude Parent modernist of the Institut du Monde Arabe. The second, who complements the first, is a commentator on the "anomie" and "atopie" of the late-20th-century city. His Nemausis housing project along the periphery of Nîmes is in the same playful neo-functionalist vein as his Institut du Monde Arabe. In addition, by incorporating into the building elements from industrial buildings typical of any *périphérique*—metallic doors that swoosh open, rubberized window panes, industrial construction details—it makes a critical statement on the reduction of housing to human parking, human warehousing, in France today. As for the black box he submitted for the competition for the Tokyo Opera project, it just "plays the game" (in the words of his associate Myrto Vitart) of the characterless context of superhighways crisscrossing the center of Tokyo. On the inside, however, the rules of the game are broken, the sense of *plaisir* salvaged, and the piece of coal transmogrified into the gold of the walls, the floors, the staircases, the seats, the ceilings.

One possible reading of Bernard Tschumi's Parc de la Villette is a dirty realist one. Somewhere in the polysemantic layering of this park is an angry anti-Alice in a counter-wonderland, trying to make some sense of her insane surroundings. She contemplates an urban graveyard laid out on a beyond-the-looking-glass grid, as implacable as it is arbitrary, each intersection

marked by a *Folie* pavilion rising like a tombstone. This plan is a magnified and distorted mirror image of the graveyard of urbanity embodied in the residential periphery that surrounds Parc de la Villette. Tschumi's project is a theme park whose theme is its own empty context. As such it carries an invective on Alphaville-like surroundings, condensed in the form of the slaughterhouse that Tschumi has restored on the site and turned into a disturbing emblem. In this slaughterhouse, he pointedly remarks, animals were killed so cruelly and inefficiently that it had to be closed down. The fists are in the pockets, but only just.

Hans Kolhoff's Museum fur Volkerkunde, a project for Frankfurt, is a highly charged mixed architectural metaphor—part anvil, part ship, part axe. With its association of iron, of a cutting edge, of a sharp and powerful blow, of a sweeping movement plowing through obstacles—it stands in awesome counterpoint to its urban setting. This project in a way points to a danger inherent in the confrontational approach of all dirty realism: a repeat of the attack on urban fabric that characterized the modernist 1960s. In Kolhoff's Wohnbebauung am Luisenplatz in Berlin—a city where post-

war modernism had some of its greatest successes, from the Hansaviertel to Scharoun's concert hall—the references to the now traditional, modernist context serves to make the viewer painfully aware of how these principles were stifled with the postmodern exploits of the IBA.

Laurids Ortner's projects are a response to the sinister asphalt catacombs that many of our cities have become— "the cruel tabula rasa." He singles out Düsseldorf and Bremen, devastated first by the bombings during the war and then by postwar reconstruction policies. As he says, they have been razed to the point where they have "no quality, no history," where they are pure *hazlichkeit* (ugliness). The attempt of postmodernism to cover up or deny this urban reality is obscene, he says, like Brigitte Nielsen's plastic-injected oversized breasts, or Helmut Newton's portraits of narcissism. His own strategy, he explains, is the same as the *verismo* of the Italian neorealist movie directors. But Ortner's vision has no redeeming sense of tragedy, only the spectacle of horror. His projects for a complex of two churches and a kindergarten in South Austria and his housing project in Berlin reflecting the oppressive environ-
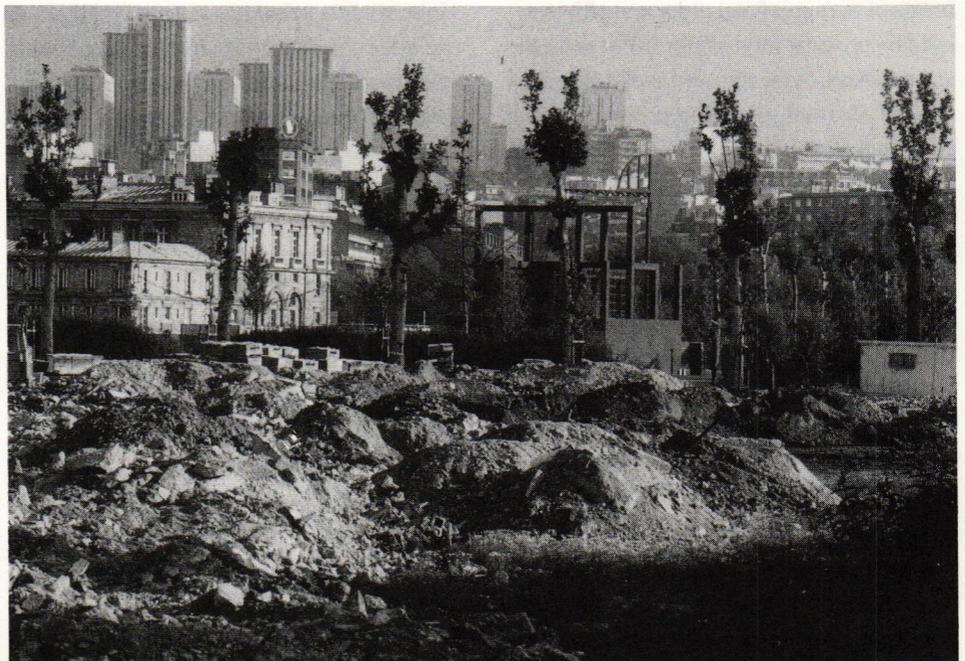
Parc de la Villette as it relates to the oppressive mass housing in the outlying area of Paris; Bernard Tschumi (1983–). (Photo: Bernard Tschumi.)

An architecture of confrontation, throwing the image of urban chaos back where it came from; Restaurant Metropole, Tokyo; Nigel Coates and NATO (1988). (Photo: Nigel Coates.)

ment of the postwar city are architectural *films noirs.*

Carel Weeber's Pullman Hotel and the urban plan for the Spuikwartier in The Hague can be seen as detached embodiments of the superficial order and efficiency used by postwar modernists to cover up the arbitrariness, cynicism, and social irresponsibility of urban planning policies. It is a continual simulation of social architecture built on leftover sites, on peripheries, on moonscapes bordered by tram lines and superhighways. The hotel, poised at the intersection of a superhighway and a major traffic artery, creates a non-gate to a non-square at the heart of an urban vacuum typical of our postwar urban planning heritage. As criticism it might be laudable, but as urbanism it presents a situation from which one wants only to flee, in search of a real urban square.

Cees Cristiaanse's planning scheme for the Social Housing Exhibition to be held in The Hague in 1990 and his own high-rise project, which is part of that scheme, are a more positive form of expression. At the same time, the scheme explicitly criticizes

postmodern architecture and urban design, particularly as embodied by the IBA in Berlin. The site is dominated by postwar modernist housing projects, a context echoed, rather than negated, by Cristiaanse's project. This is no mere façadist citationism, rather it is a return to the commitment to livability, quality of life, and a socially responsible architecture. The commitment translates into a concern for plan, for function, for orientation, for the creation of individual and communal place. The design method is combinatorial—take the Eames House plus the housing ideals of the Middle European Siedlung tradition plus a polder plus a Mondrian painting plus Aldo van Eyck, and then multiply these by some 1980s high rises, some urban villas, and a few single-family homes. This montage method is a favorite of young architects who, with snippets of prototypes and architectural fragments, have given new life to the constantly mutating modern tradition in architecture.

If Zaha Hadid is a dirty realist, she is a high-energy dirty realist. Her housing project for the IBA in Berlin is a deliberate rejection of what she refers to as the "cuteness" of most of the IBA projects (she singles out the projects by Eisenman and Hollein). Instead of masking the realities of the site, decorating its irregularities with fake nostalgic cultural gimickry, her response is contextualist to the point of confrontation. A high-rise postwar modernist hotel and a few other structures haphazardly occupy the site. They are so disjunct that they could be elements in a Zaha Hadid design—which is how she treats them. She emphasizes the existing disorder and then uses it to create a volatile suprematist framework, of which her own design is one polar element. Similarly, her commercial projects for Tokyo and Kurfürstendamm seem to capture, channel, and transform into tightly packed, dynamic compositions those forces gone awry on sites dominated by fast food, fast porn, and fast culture. The resulting image is like a nucleus of sheer energy about to set off a chain reaction against an old entrenched formula, something very much the opposite of cute.

Architecture is many things: sticks and stones, money, a vessel of social life. It is also language. As such, architecture partakes in a larger "language game" (to borrow Wittgenstein's expression). Like any other language game—

Making up a story,
play acting,
singing catches,
guessing riddles,
making a joke,
solving a problem in practical arithmetic,
translating from one language to another,
asking, thinking, cursing, speaking,
greeting, praying—[6]

architecture can be used to talk about the world, about its own place in the world, about us, about our relation to the world through it. At the moment, it seems to argue in favor of saving some parts of cities that have been battered almost beyond recognition. Europe has the richest urban heritage in the world. Will it be able to withstand the forces that are waiting to devastate this heritage? Time, and a little dirty realism, will tell.

1. The term "contextualism" was coined by T. Schumacher in "Contextualism," *Casabella,* no. 359–360, pp. 78–86. Schumacher's definition of "context" differs from Venturi and Scott Brown's.

2. See Alex Tzonis and Liane Lefaivre, "In the Name of the People," *Forum,* no. 3 (1975).

3. For a more detailed and critical account of the rise of postmodernism, see Liane Lefaivre and Alex Tzonis, "The Narcissist Phase in Architecture," *The Harvard Architectural Review* 1 (Spring 1980): 53-61.

4. See Bill Buford's introduction to *Granta* 8 (1983), devoted to "Dirty Realism: New Writing from America."

5. Victor Shklovsky, "Art as Technique," in L. T. Lemon and M. Reis, editors, *Russian Formalist Criticism (*Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1965), pp. 3–24.

6. Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations* (London: Macmillan, 1953) 12e, par. 23.

Richard Ingersoll

Postmodern Urbanism:
Forward into the Past

Once upon a time people built "traditional" cities with lovely streets and squares suited for public life. The myth of those happy days before trains, automobiles, and modernist architecture tore apart urban space has become indispensable to many current theories of urban design, yet is rarely given sufficient historical grounding to make it any more comprehensible than an airbrushed postcard. It is as if *urbs*, the bound city form of the past, could be considered without *civitas*, the social agreement to share that lost urban promised land. The charm of the medieval piazza and the drama of the Baroque axis have been triumphantly rediscovered by vacationing architects, who, armed with color slides, can demonstrate with precision the aesthetic merits of figured urban space. But whether this is sufficient knowledge to reconstitute a genuine city is another matter. During the past fifteen years, the disenchantment with the modern city of progress, expressed from such differing camps as those of Colin Rowe and Manfredo Tafuri, has coalesced into a mandate issued from the *illud tempus* of good city form to charge forward into the past. Such a nostalgic crusade for a human-based city, one that respects human scale and promises interesting social interaction, is anathema to the functionalist precepts of modernist urbanism. While the objective of walkable streets and harmonious surroundings might appear to be universal, at the heart of this postmodern alternative lies a troubling paradox that is rarely taken into account and indeed calls into doubt the wisdom of what are essentially formal solutions: preindustrial forms and spaces are not necessarily suited to postindustrial ways of life. To project a return to a "traditional" city and with it a future of "neo-villagers" may be more of a fantasy than any science-fiction vision of a society dominated by robots. If the urban process is confined to aesthetic criteria alone, the social conse-
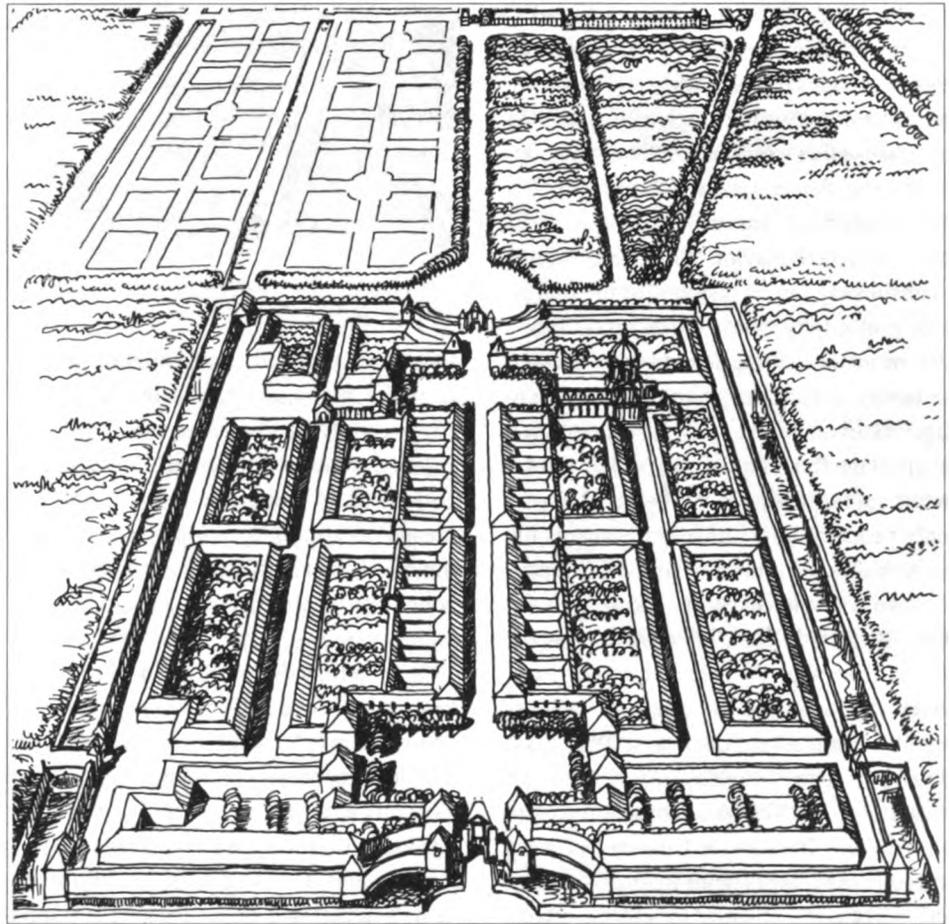
Chateau and town of Richelieu, France; drawing by Elbert Peets (1921). (From *American Vitruvius*.)

quences, such as the elimination of emancipatory demands from the urban program, may be as unpleasant as those wrought by the functionalist fallacies of the postwar period.

The tragic flaw of the Modern Movement, to which is generally attributed the paternity of the ugly modern city, was not its formal solutions per se, but its inability to accept the preexisting truth of the built environment in simultaneity with the utopian program it proposed. Two recent treatises, Roger Trancik's *Finding Lost Space* and Christopher Alexander and colleagues' *A New Theory of Urban Design* attempt to atone for this flaw by supplying a theoretical framework to restore urban equilibrium between parts. Though rhetorically quite divergent, both books advocate a similar goal of healing the modern city through incrementalism, contextualism, human scale, and architectural integration. A third book, Michael Dennis's *Court and Garden*,

offers a typological disquisition on the French *hôtel* as a historical analogue to be used in pursuit of the same palliative goal. Trancik and Dennis have both been heavily influenced by Colin Rowe and Leon Krier in their search for formal answers. Alexander, on the other hand, prefers an oracular position that eschews sources—unfortunately this revelatory tone detracts greatly from the credibility of the commonsense principles he advocates. The current cohort of post-modern urbanists might be tagged the great grandchildren of Viennese planner and architect Camillo Sitte, whose 1889 treatise, *City Planning According to Artistic Principles* (reedited by George and Christiane Collins, 1986, see *DBR* 14), established a paradigm for challenging the brutal eviscerations of the city by insensitive engineers. His method was to present formal descriptions and geometric analyses of urban spaces from the European past that for his taste were better than modern non-

spaces. Sitte, a contemporary of Freud's, sustained the superiority of enclosed figured spaces on psychological grounds, but did not survive to complete the sequel to his treatise that would scientifically demonstrate the deterministic relationship between pleasant surroundings and well-being or good behavior. While determinism is absolutely out of fashion for the pluralistic philosophy of postmodernism, Sitte's deterministic assumption has been allowed to tacitly govern the postmodern return to figured urban space, from the romantic visions of the Krier brothers to the more pragmatic approaches reviewed below. Alas, the only proof of Sitte's theorem remains the very arbitrary grounds of individual taste.

One of the earliest apologists for Camillo Sitte in the United States was the German urbanist Werner Hegemann. Princeton Architectural Press has recently issued a beautiful facsimile of his 1922 tract, *The American Vitruvius: An Architect's Handbook of Civic Art*, coauthored with Elbert Peets. If the key to harmonious urban space is familiarity with historic models, this profusely illustrated (1,203 plans, views, and photographs) and historically erudite work will be of much more value than any of the current offerings. To leave no doubts that this rediscovered treasure belongs to the sensibilities of postmodernism, it has a snappy preface by that palladin of pomo, Leon Krier. Noting the irony of the Nazi regime's consensus of Hegemann's ideas on civic art, even though Hegemann, an unrepentant socialist, was forced to flee Germany in 1933, Krier concludes with the homily: "As long as city building achieves the quality of Civic Art, it will transcend the often parochial purposes of its builders." This sort of sophism would indirectly justify the atrocities of history in the name of good architecture, and is precisely why more accurate knowledge of the historical processes of urban form is necessary. Alan Plattus, the book's editor, gives a more reasonable gloss on the text, explaining it as the epitaph of the City Beautiful Movement, a last-ditch effort to convince the rising profession of city planning to defend artistic quality in the face of
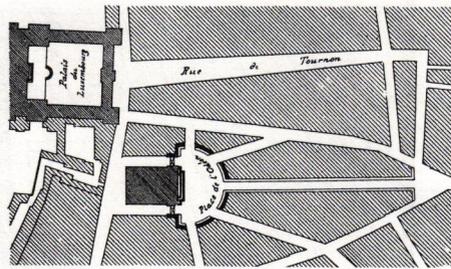
Plan of the Place de l'Odeon and Rue de Tournon, Paris. (From *American Vitruvius*.)

functional demands. Hegemann was perhaps the first European to recognize the American contribution to civic art "with her colonial art, university groups, worlds fairs, civic centers and garden cities" and her greater contributions yet to come "through the development of the skyscraper, of the zoned city, and of the park system." Hegemann, who organized the epoch-making 1910 Städtbau Ausstelung in Berlin, is a key figure in the history of city planning, comparable to Raymond Unwin or Patrick Geddes. The well-researched biographical essay by Christiane Collins is a valuable addition that investigates Hegemann's background as an economist, his many years as an off-and-on resident in the United States starting in 1909, and his practice with Elbert Peets in Milwaukee from 1916–1922, which is the source of this treatise. Peets, a landscape architect trained at Harvard, was responsible for much of the illustrating (Hegemann could not draw) and for much of the final chapter on Washington, D.C.

The variety and originality of the illustrations in *Civic Art* will no doubt be the greatest attraction of this reedition. It is not only the most complete single-volume survey of the canonical cases of urbanism from ancient Greco-Roman colonnades to the medieval spaces of Siena and Bruges, to the more formal squares such as Pienza or the French *Places Royales*, to Haussmann's Paris and Burnham's Chicago, but is also inclusive of a scintillating collection of uncommon and forgotten designs, such as Ludwigslust, Rastatt, or Carlshafen, bypassed cases, such as Madrid's Plaza de Oriente, Paris's Place de l'Odeon, or Zurich's civic center, and exceptional American examples, such as Ronada Court in

Berkeley, Roland Park in Baltimore, and Bertram Goodhue's American Pienza in Tyrone, New Mexico. Also thrilling are the photographs of pre-blitz European cities.

Yet it would be a shame to forgo Hegemann's text in pursuit of the pictures, because it is full of astute historical and formal observations. The message that he meant to impress on his engineer-minded peers would still burn true for the contextualists of today: "The fundamental unit of design … is not the separate building but the whole city." In the first chapter he makes a clever conversion of the medical metaphor, usually used by engineers to justify surgical-like demolitions, by asking, "Was there ever a more deadly plague than the ugliness of the modern city?" In his tribute to Sitte he reminds the reader that Sitte should not be considered a romantic connoisseur of irregular medieval spaces, because his real message was that space must be designed rather than left over. Hegemann often makes original use of familiar models, leading to conclusions that do not demand a simulation of the past. He shows Place de la Concorde, for instance, in various phases, and what is usually not noticed is that it originally achieved more closure when it was surrounded by moats, but under Napoleon III was opened to maximum exposure. "The American architect," adds Hegemann, "has of course the possibility of mastering such large plazas as Concorde or larger ones by use of skyscrapers to frame the plaza." Hegemann's knowledge of urbanism is less myth-bound than the current generation that speaks of the "traditional" city; on the medieval city, for instance, he notes, "wherever the medieval designer had an unhampered opportunity to lay out streets he used straight lines." The compendium is loosely organized as an "atlas of imaginary travelling" and presents essays on public squares, monumental groupings (such as campuses and fairs), the street as an artistic unit, lessons from garden design, and unified city plans. One glaring, perhaps willful, omission is any consideration of the automobile, the single most destructive factor for enclosed urban spaces, then or now. As if to rebut Krier's convenient de-ideolo-

gization of civic art, in the concluding chapter on America's contribution to Baroque planning in Washington, D.C., the authors admonish, "Too great an emphasis on the national scale, the impersonally monumental, is more likely to produce dullness than grandeur."

The beauty of Hegemann's *Civic Art* was ineffectual in dissuading either the popular enthusiasm for modern technology or the numerical crush of mass society from shredding the urban fabric in the postwar period. More complicit automobile-based visions, such as Norman Bel Geddes's GM Futurama at the 1939 World's Fair, were better geared to the impending consumerization of the environment. The ascendance of Bel Geddes's gratifications of technocracy over Hegemann's virtuous defense of the urban spaces of the past should be a lesson to current champions of the past: the demand for automobiles and the dependence on technology for the reproduction of everyday life show no signs of subsiding. This is not a rejoinder to submit to consumer reality, but rather a suggestion that viable alternatives in urban design will *only* come from a confrontation with this reality, not an avoidance of it. Roger Trancik's *Finding Lost Space*, for instance, is a well-intentioned defense of "traditional" urban space against the inhumane spaces of postwar architecture, but rather than seeking confrontational solutions to the technological and economic factors identified as the source of the ugly city, the author relies on a priori Sittesque conclusions.

"Lost space" is that unresolved no man's land between the freeways, garages, and high rises of the modern city. According to Trancik these uncomfortable gaps in the urban fabric have five causes: the automobile, the Modern Movement, urban renewal and zoning, the favoring of private over public interests, and the change of land use in the inner city. It would thus seem logical that the ensuing theory would try to reform this list of culprits. Instead his remedy for stitching up the lacerated city is incumbent on three compositional strategies misdefined as "theories": figure-ground (where buildings form space rather than
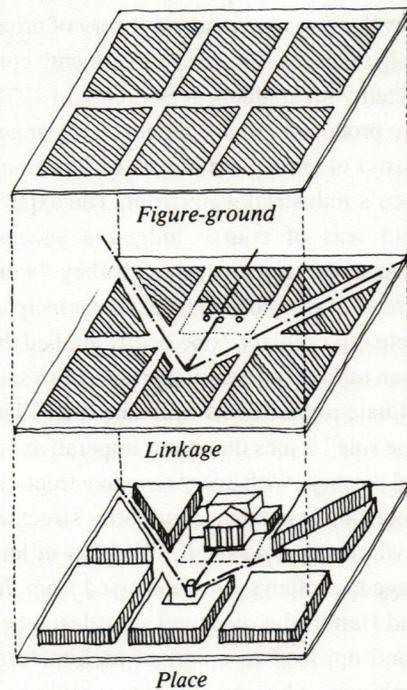
Diagram of urban design theories (from top to bottom: figure-ground theory, linkage theory, and place theory). (From *Finding Lost Space*.)

being surrounded by it), linkage (by which axes and forms connect spaces), and place (by which identity is created through style and details). To demonstrate their application he refers to four case studies of varying scale and social complexity in Boston, Washington, D.C., Göttenborg, Sweden, and Byker, England. What to do with the automobile or how to convert private interests to the public cause are only superficially stuck onto the design of "found" space. The illustrations and diagrams are at times more effective than the text, which is often specious or ill-informed—to rely on Tom Wolfe as the principal informant against the Modern Movement is frankly slothful. Trancik's method of investigation derives from Ed Bacon's *Design of Cities*, tempered with Kevin Lynch's categories of spatial analysis (paths, edges, districts, nodes, and landmarks—which are mislabeled in the illustration) and the Krier brothers' nostalgic style. The more complex social criteria of Lynch's "good city form," however, are not acknowledged; the occasional "people make the difference" statement is not sufficient to deal with issues of justice and

fitness. In the final chapter Trancik presents what might be termed a "mellow" manifesto for successful urban design. The ideals of contextualism, incrementalism, and integration can be achieved by making thorough analyses of the site, identifying areas of "lost space," and implementing design guidelines such as the following: (1) maintain continuity of the street wall, (2) respect the silhouette of buildings and landscape, (3) prevent building masses that are out of scale, (4) match and complement materials, (5) respect rhythms of façades, (6) enhance patterns of public-space usage. If private investment were guided by stronger public policy, if clients better educated, if design review boards implemented, then Trancik's concept of "traditional" space might be found. As theory, however, there are too many factors missing to really qualify as one. Figure-ground, linkage, and place nonetheless present formal codifications of didactic value, and the clear illustrations will be useful to pragmatic designers.

Trancik's goals of eliminating lost space are almost identical to those of Alexander and colleagues in *A New Theory of Urban Design*, but the means are nowhere as catholic or amenable. Alexander's theory is imagined like a game, a sort of jigsaw puzzle, in which built parts must satisfy several criteria to fit into an urban whole. The fascination is to install a system for city building that is as true and self-regulating as systems of growth in the natural environment. If modernists could be criticized for their totalitarian utopias, this postmodern utopia would put them to shame. As a sort of ayatollah of Berkeley, Alexander in his series of books beginning with *A Pattern Language* (1977), of which *A New Theory* is the sixth, has issued a set of commandments for the composition of buildings that requires more faith than reason to follow. The latest book is no exception, and amid the noble goals and commonsense suggestions one finds the most preposterous claims on logic since the virgin birth. Clearly in a world dominated by faith, history has no purpose, and thus, in this case, the normal apparatus of references

and consideration of the collective knowledge of the discipline can be dispensed with. Despite the well-documented existence of Hippodamus, Vitruvius, Alberti, Filarete, Laugier, Ebenezer Howard, Le Corbusier, and countless others, Alexander and company can confidently claim that there has never been a theory for an "organic" city plan. While this may be a semantic problem of how one defines "organic" (for instance, the grid can be extremely organic), it is more likely due to a method of working in a historical vacuum where knowledge is "discovered" (revealed) rather than transmitted and interpreted. Thus this parthenogenetic "new" theory can easily contain unacknowledged paraphrases of Sitte, such as, "Every building must create coherent and well-shaped public space next to it," and affirmations of Hegemann, such as, "The structure of the city comes from the individual building projects and the life they contain, rather than being imposed from above" in righteous insulation.

The greatest demand on the reader's faith comes early on when the key to the theory, the "centering process," is revealed, but its explanation is deferred to an unpublished text, "The Nature of Order." As in a mystery cult, one must accept the "center-

ing process" as deep truth without recourse to evaluation. Alexander's theory of urban design derives from an "experiment" conducted with students at Berkeley in 1978, who produced a scale model of a replanned district of six square blocks of San Francisco's industrial waterfront. The experiment was of course judged a success because the students, though they "were somewhat slow to understand the principles of creating centers," obediently applied the seven rules of the theory that are in turn subordinate to the "overriding one rule." The "one rule" issues the moral imperative "to heal the city" with every new construction, which "must create a continuous structure of wholes around itself." Written in language that often seems borrowed from the Mad Hatter, the rules and subrules, when added up, lead to a sort of architectural symbiosis, whereby students working on different sites are able to coordinate and create coherent ensembles without the benefit of an overall plan. The seven rules are: Piecemeal growth, Growth of larger wholes, Visions, Positive urban space, Layout of large buildings, Construction, and Formation of centers. If there is any doubt about the charismatic nature of this system of rules, the third rule for Visions makes it clear, as the designer is expected to respond

to the "inner shouting of the site" and receive an oneiric inspiration. Most of the illustrated designs for the resulting buildings, however, are awkward and eclectic and seem more the product of inner whimpering. Based on preindustrial models of courtyard buildings, a tight fabric of narrow streets (no scale is given, but many appear to be less than ten feet wide) is structured around a major street (still not as wide as an average San Francisco street) and a quaint Sittesque piazza. The "typical" Italian hill town is illustrated (without name) in the introduction as a sort of ideal of urban wholeness, and thus it is not surprising to find the resulting pattern reminiscent of this ideal, so much so that rather than going through all the cumbersome rules one might just as well copy the historical model and do as well or better. Alexander's vision falls into the category of apocalyptic utopianism, according to which the realities of everyday life must return to a smaller-scale, labor-intensive, community-oriented basis in order to produce an environment that is as "whole"some as cities of the ahistoric past. That there is much doubt that the pluralistic realities of postindustrial society are hospitable to the "one rule" is indicated in the concluding remarks, worthy of a prophet in the wilderness: "The process we have outlined is incompatible with present day city planning, zoning, urban real estate, urban economy, and urban law." One could also add it is not compatible with the underlying demands for mobility and privacy found in technocratic nations, which will not easily be traded for the aesthetic benefits of the new, "traditional" city.

The final book under review, Michael Dennis's *Court and Garden, From the French Hôtel to the City of Modern Architecture*, will certainly have a greater impact than either Trancik's or Alexander's, and in fact was already a significant source as a xeroxed reader before its first publication in 1986. Known colloquially as *The French Hôtel*, it is principally devoted to the formal analysis of the plans of Parisian *hôtels particuliers* from 1500 to 1800. The author insists that the appreciation of this aristocratic building type offers a vital lesson for
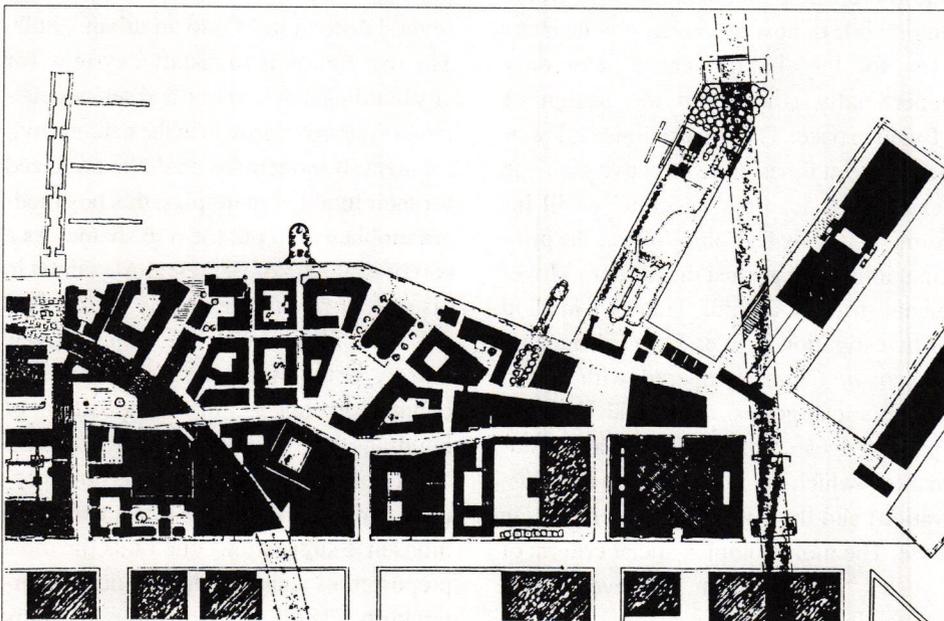
Experimental development scheme, San Francisco Bay Bridge area; map of completed project; Alexander et al. (From *A New Theory of Urban Design*.)

postmodern urbanism. "If anything is in a positive sense postmodern," says Dennis, "it might be the city rather than architecture," and his book is meant to serve the retreat into the past for sources. As such, the book has great appeal for its well-chosen selection of plans, its collection of maps of Paris from 1550 to 1808, and its clever juxtapositions of images, such as Le Corbusier's "City for Three Million Inhabitants" grafted onto the garden of Versailles. Sandwiched between an introduction and three concluding chapters that pick up the polemic against modernist urbanism is a conventional, at times boring, description and formal analysis of the most representative Parisian *hôtels* and their classification into strict categories of Baroque, Rococo, and Neo-Classical. In the early *hôtels* of the Baroque, such as the Hôtel de Beauvais, Dennis picks out that peculiar, recurrent trait of public symmetry for the elevations and forecourts and private asymmetry for the interiors. This strategy could be applied by analogy for the benefit of the modern streetscape. His evolutionary scheme of the French *hôtel* shows the progress of the Baroque balance of local symmetries within an irregular whole to the neoclassical pure volume, such as Ledoux's Hotel Guimard, freestanding in space. The reversal of the figure-ground, from the building surrounding space to the building surrounded by space, is singled out as the fatal and inarresable fault of rationalist culture. The change in private architecture is shown to have correspondences in public projects: from the closure of the early 16th-century Place Royale (now Place des Vosges) to the overexposed Place Louis XV (now Place de la Concorde). This evolutionary scheme is derived from the art historical methods of Woefflin and is an old-fashioned way of keeping score, but it often leads to fudging when things do not fit the formalist sequence. For instance, the neoclassical Place de l'Odeon (remembered by Hegemann), which was built around the theater in 1782 as a hemicycle, one of the best enclosed spaces in Paris, is conveniently overlooked because it might compromise the conclusion about the neoclassical erosion of pub-

lic space. Further error results in Dennis's thesis that due to the French neoclassical model, communicated mostly through Thomas Jefferson, "the United States inherited an architectural language that was fundamentally not urban, but suburban." Modern architecture, with its insistence on object buildings, was the descendant of this antiurban aesthetic. Such a thesis might hold if we were to believe that the process of urbanism was merely an aesthetic construct determined by architects, but realistically architects are dependent on more powerful institutions, such as politics, business, and real estate. In his clever conceit that America would seem to be the final Roman colony if it were not for the complete absence of the forum, Dennis forgoes his duty as a native Texan to recognize the urban attributes of the courthouse square, or to acknowledge the considerable tradition of public squares from Philadelphia, Savannah, New Orleans, and almost everywhere else! To see the villas of 18th-century French neo-classicism as the key to American urbanism would be unfair to the much stronger tradition of the Georgian row house, which continued in Philadelphia, New York, Baltimore, and elsewhere long after the Revolution. A much greater French influence was 19th-century Beaux Arts, which fostered the one truly grand movement for figured public space in the City Beautiful. Dennis's gripe is with the "rational determinism" of the CIAM's campaign against urban space, but his remedy does not seem any less free of determinism—in this case aesthetic: "if …the revival of public man is possible any form of rebirth must be accompanied by the reconstitution of the formal setting public life requires." The events of last May and June in Beijing's one-hundred-acre Tiananmen Square, one of the ugliest and most mercilessly unenclosed public spaces in the world, would seem to tragically prove the converse, that public life is more a product of social and political needs than a windfall of form. As a sourcebook for compositional strategies, Dennis's work is indispensable and inspirational. His sincere, plaintive appeal: "We want a city to be what it has
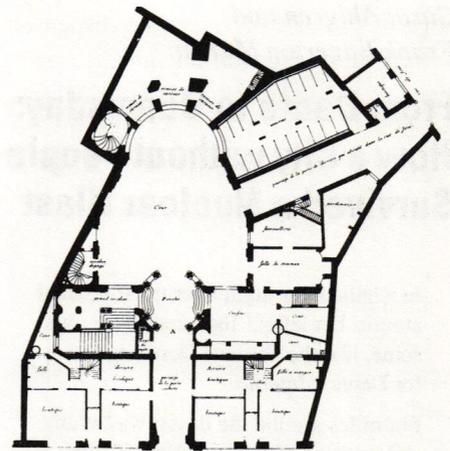
Ground floor plan, Hôtel de Beauvais; Antoine Le Pautre (1652–55). (From *Court and Garden*.)

always been, a combination of new and old, an accumulation," will no doubt be shared by many architects. But the underlying thesis about the desirability of past urban forms deserves much more debate: there is no guarantee that citizens who participate fully in the despatializing technologies of the postindustrial technoburb will have any other use for the new "traditional" postmodern spaces than for touristic purposes (the "piazza" of Las Colinas, Texas, or the vacation "village" of Seaside, Florida, could be used as evidence). To imagine that such a postcard world might generate genuine public life flagrantly evades the basic political and technological realities of the late 20th century, which will not be easily altered.

THE AMERICAN VITRUVIUS: AN ARCHITECT'S HANDBOOK OF CIVIC ART, Werner Hegemann & Elbert Peets (Alan Plattus, editor), Princeton Architectural Press, 1989 (first published 1922), 293 pp., illus., $60.00.

COURT AND GARDEN: FROM THE FRENCH HOTEL TO THE CITY OF MODERN ARCHITECTURE, Michael Dennis, MIT Press, 1986, 284 pp., illus., $50.00 cloth; $25.00 paper.

FINDING LOST SPACE: THEORIES OF URBAN DESIGN, Roger Trancik, Van Nostrand Reinhold, 1986, 246 pp., illus., $37.95 paper.

A NEW THEORY OF URBAN DESIGN, Christopher Alexander et al., Oxford University Press, 1987, 276 pp., illus., $39.95.

*Carol Ahlgren and
Frank Edgerton Martin*

From Dante to Doomsday: How a City without People Survived a Nuclear Blast

In a helicopter flight over the simulated atomic battlefield the scene was awesome, like the Gustave Doré engravings for Dante's *Inferno*.

For miles around the desert was aflame and smoking with the torches of hundreds of yucca and Joshua trees.

The dried bed called Yucca Lake shimmered mistily like real water but tanks churned great clouds of dust upon it and far in the distance the ruins of the test town were burning.

—*New York Times*, 6 May 1955

At 5:10 A.M. on May 5, 1955, almost ten years after the destruction of Hiroshima, the Atomic Energy Commission and the Federal Civilian Defense Administration detonated an atomic bomb on an apocalyptic American community, known alternately as "Survival City" or "Doomstown U.S.A.," at the Yucca Flats test site in Nevada. While government officials claimed that the purpose of the test was to determine the effects of an atomic blast in a "typical" American community, Survival City tells us far more

about the cultural context of the 1950s.

Survival City consisted of ten houses built of brick, cement block, and solid cement, a frame "rambler," and several prefab industrial buildings located from seven-eighths to three and one-half miles from the blast center. In the center, a 35-kiloton bomb was detonated atop a 500-foot tower. While the bomb that obliterated Hiroshima was intended to convince the Japanese that defeat was inevitable, the Survival City detonation was orchestrated to demonstrate the *survivability* of a nuclear war. The Survival City test was a brilliant example of how a "scientific experiment" could be packaged as a media spectacle to convince the American public that through correct preparation, architecture, and civil defense a nuclear war could not only be survived, but won. Its design was carefully managed to convey familiar and deeply held images of "home" and "community."

For the few weeks of its media-based existence, Survival City became a real place—with streets bearing names such as Doomsday Drive and homes filled with period furniture, mannequin families, dinnerware, and canned goods. As one United Press article described it,

More than 5,000 persons are participating in the test to determine how your community would withstand the atomic fury and to learn more about your chances of surviving... The homes are furnished much like your home. Substituting for people are mannikins, [*sic*] dressed like you and your family. Some are seated, some standing, some are in bed. Several are children and there are a few babies.

The validity of the Survival City test as a civil-defense experiment was grounded in the assumption that a collection of buildings and mannequins could actually represent the

conditions of an American town or city during a nuclear war. Many newspaper accounts echoed the official claims of the government, describing Survival City as though it were a real town that became "the first American community to be subjected to a full-scale atomic attack."

Associated Press and United Press International articles in newspapers across the country carried the dateline "SURVIVAL CITY, Nev." The "Today" show sent its host Dave Garroway to the site for one of the first live television broadcasts of an important news event. Possibly foreshadowing the close cooperation between NASA and the media during the rocket launches of the 1960s, the government organizers of the Survival City test maximized the event's public relations potential by creating a special press obser-vation area called "News Nob" or "Media Hill" eight miles from the blast center. About 450 press, radio, and newsreel reporters covered the story from this vantage point and the detonation was televised live on CBS and NBC. With the reporters were hundreds of civil-defense workers from across the country, television personalities (including John Cameron Swayze and Walter Cronkite), a special makeup crew, a "pretty girl" to interview the "survivors"—that is, the mannequins—before and after the blast, and representatives of companies whose products, ranging from dishes to metal buildings, were included in the test.

The Survival City bomb test was undoubtedly the most publicized of many such self-inflicted "shots" throughout the decade. Two years earlier, on March 17, 1953, Operation Doorstep had provided a dress rehearsal for Survival City and increased the public's awareness of the government's testing program. At a press briefing held shortly before the Survival City blast, an AEC official stated that Operation Doorstep had resulted from an AEC-sponsored survey that revealed public ignorance regarding "the basic facts of nuclear explosion effects." A survey taken after Operation Doorstep indicated that 70 percent of the surveyed public had become aware of the government's testing activity
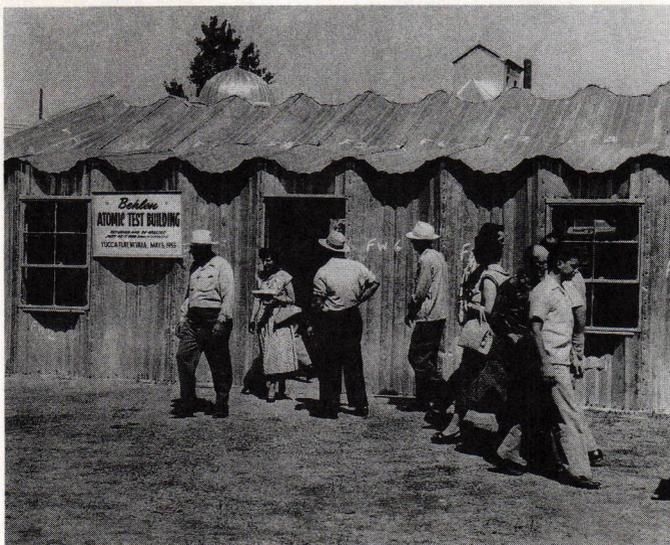
Behlen atomic test building at the Nebraska State Fair (1955). (Courtesy of Nebraska State Fair.)

as a result of the test. The 1953 test, like the Survival City test, relied on familiar images in its replication of a typical American house populated with mannequins at a silent dinner party—complete with dishes and party clothes—awaiting the blast.

One of the metal industrial buildings tested for nuclear blast endurance at Survival City was produced by Nebraska's Behlen Manufacturing Company. With a certain gruesome irony, the Behlen plant was located in Columbus, a community less than one hundred miles from the Strategic Air Command (SAC)—America's "Ground Zero." Walt Behlen, a self-taught engineer and entrepreneur, had invented a frameless, corrugated metal building whose deeply channeled walls could remain standing in a nuclear blast. Behlen, one of the many businesspeople who witnessed the Survival City blast, claimed that these deep curves increased the strength of steel panels by a factor of a thousand. [1]

On April 18, 1955, the *Columbus Daily Telegram* carried front-page coverage of Behlen's departure for the Yucca Flats test site; a parallel article announced Albert Einstein's death. In the years following Hiroshima, Einstein had warned of the danger of a nuclear weapons buildup. Ten years before the creation of Survival City, Einstein had called for courage in understanding the destructive potential of nuclear power while establishing safeguards against its abuse. To be clear in our hearts and minds, Einstein said, was essential, for "only then shall we find the courage to surmount the fear which haunts the world." [2] If there were fears about nuclear technology in the years following Hiroshima, Survival City was built to dispel them through its assuring integration of civilian defense with the idealized settings of American life—a town, main street, and families. In the case of the Behlen building that survived the blast, civil defense was literally brought home—home to the 1955 Nebraska State Fair where thousands of people toured the slightly dented but victorious test building.

Because this building was the only one of three competing metal structures to

Top: Mannequins in dining room waiting for the blast. Bottom: Effects of atomic blast on American dining scene. Operation Doorstep (March 17, 1953). (Courtesy of Nevada Historical Society.)

remain intact at 6,800 feet, Walt Behlen could be said to have invented an "atomic building," a structure that had actually withstood the conditions of a nuclear war. Shortly after the blast, *Popular Science* reported the test results and lauded the "strange-looking Behlen building" whose survival "amazed nearly everyone but its designers." Even more than ashtrays or lamps adorned with atoms and swirling electrons, this building with its aura of "actually having been there" represented the true Atomic Style. At least it did for Behlen, who fully recognized the publicity

value that his Survival City success held for his company. After its state fair debut, the building was painted fluorescent orange and displayed at the Behlen factory in Columbus.

Popular Science also described the blast effects on the utility systems and the different types of houses along Doomsday Drive. Those "who had seen fiery disaster strike Doom Town discovered to their surprise that the disaster was by no means total." A one-story frame rambler was a "shocking ruin" and a two-story house of brick and cinder block was "a heap of rubble." But two re-inforced concrete houses built to meet California earthquake regulations survived the blast intact. *Time* reported that a power substation was 95 percent operable after the blast and that seven of the ten houses in the town "could be made habitable for emergency occupation."

Blast observers on Media Hill were offered the choice of wearing dark goggles or turning their heads away from the flash. *Newsweek* described the people gathered there as resembling a "Displaced Person's camp having a masquerade." Among the celebrities on the hill, Winston Churchill's daughter was reported to be wearing blue ballet slippers when she arrived. The mushroom cloud, as featured on souvenir buttons, rose forty-three thousand feet into the air. Within hours after the blast, *Life* photographers, businesspeople such as Walt Behlen, and reporters descended into the town to analyze the effects on structures and mannequins. As might be expected, government investigators and the cooperative media corps concluded that the greatest danger to civilians lay not in radiation but in the initial blast effects such as sheer force winds, shattered glass, and collapsed buildings. Within the houses, special traps were placed to capture flying debris for later analysis. Such experiments led to the reported conclusion that the right kind of protective architecture could ensure survival:

> Evidence was everywhere that survival was possible outside that one-mile ring for families living in the right kind of

house with the right kind of shelters to duck into at the first alert of an enemy attack. [3]

In her book *Bombs in the Backyard* (1986), a comprehensive account of the atomic tests and their after-effects for the people of Nevada and Utah, A. Constandina Titus cites results from a nationwide Gallup poll: in February 1950, 68 percent of those surveyed believed that the Russians would use an H-bomb on the United States. This belief in the probability of nuclear war reinforced the urgency of military and civil-defense atomic testing in public opinion. In places such as Las Vegas, Titus describes how a fascination with the bomb grew into a kind of "atomic culture" that included songs, movies such as Mickey Rooney's *Atomic Kid*, place names such as the "Atomic Motel," and even a special "Atomic Cocktail" (equal parts vodka, brandy, and champagne, with a dash of sherry) that was served at Nevada parties after the predawn shots.

In the early 1950s, America was anxiously waiting for the bomb. With the knowledge gained from Survival City and other doom towns, we believed that we could be prepared. In Las Vegas, less than one hundred miles from the test site, the bomb had already become a part of daily life. One of the best-selling postcards of the period was "a color shot of 'Glitter Gulch' with Vegas Vic waving in the foreground and a mushroom cloud rising over the Union Pacific Railroad station in the background."[4] From mushroom cloud hairdos to the lunches packed by hotels for guests who went to view the blasts, Las Vegas embraced its atomic test-site neighbor with a glib, commercial humor that may have belied an unspoken anxiety.

The media coverage and fascination with a city of atomic annihilation says much about the culture that created it. In the late 1960s, another atomic doom town would briefly appear on nationwide television in Rod Serling's "The New People." [5] This fantasy drama involved 40 young Americans whose plane had crashed on a South Pacific atoll that contained an abandoned

U.S. atomic test town. Never destroyed, the vacant buildings and streets of this town became the setting for these young people's effort to create a "new" kind of society without the restrictions and prejudices of adults. Like the Survival City of 1955, this city without people served as the basis for an experiment that reflected the societal aspirations and concerns of its time. In the eerie first episode after the plane crash, the youths discover the town and infer its origins from several crates marked "AEC." Here, in a town bearing the iconic architectural features of the towns of their American childhoods, the viewer could sense the young people's fear that this place was once (or possibly still) slated for nuclear destruction. Even the pro-atomic Nebraskan, Walt Behlen, may have felt this frightening anticipation during the night before Survival City was destroyed when he returned with a companion to examine the doomed community for one last time:

> On this inspection tour, we arrived at the test site from our quarters at Mercury, Nevada, at about 10:00 P.M. We were the only two live individuals in this completely dark and ghostly city of largely doomed structures. More than once we opened a door to shine a flashlight fully into the face of a completely lifelike mannikin [*sic*] which was also waiting for the blast. [6]

1. Wesley S. Griswold, "Atomic Ruins Reveal Survival Secrets," *Popular Science* (July 1955), pp. 49–52, 216, 218.

2. Michael Amrine, "Peace for the Atomic Age," *The Progressive* 19, no. 6 (June 1955), pp. 14–16.

3. *Columbus Daily Telegram* May 6, 1955, p. 1.

4. A. Constandina Titus, *Bombs in the Backyard* (Reno: University of Nevada Press, 1986), p. 94.

5. Tim Brooks and Earle Marsh, *The Complete Directory to Prime Time Network TV Shows 1946–Present* (New York: Ballantine Books, 1979), p. 445.

6. William H. McDaniel, *Walt Behlen's Universe* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1973), p. 251.

Grahame Shane

Michael Sorkin's Model City

Michael Sorkin is primarily known in New York as an architectural critic, teacher, and correspondent for the *Village Voice*. He has become an important polemical player in the architectural culture of the city, chronicling the progressive transformations of this culture as the negative aspects of postmodern urbanism became clearer. Nothing in this activity of committed, campaigning journalism could prepare the visitor for Sorkin's exhibition, *Model City*, at the Artists Space Gallery (January 1989).
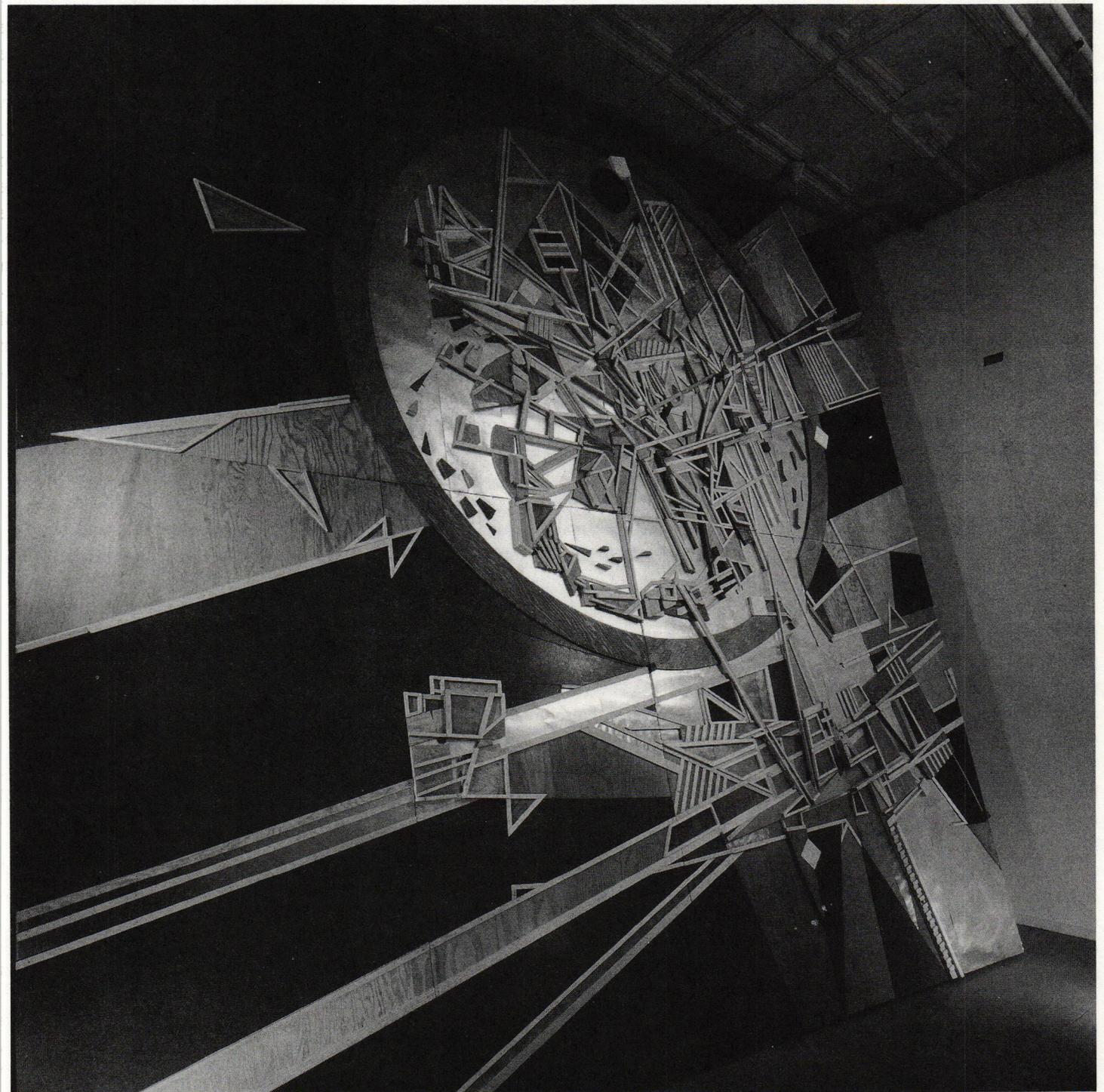
Model City, installation at Artists Space, New York City; Michael Sorkin (1988). (Photo: Peter McClennan.)

In a small room, perhaps 20 feet square and 15 feet high, *Model City* was mounted on a 16-foot square base and had to be displayed at an angle of 70 degrees to fit in the room. Behind the model, the enormous wooden support structure served as a coat-rack and private meeting space, while the thin sliver of space by the entry served for viewing, with spectators pressed against the wall in order to get some distance. This was an extraordinary and masterful installation, which confronted the viewer head-on with the surface of the boards as if he or she were a pilot of a jet plane, looping-the-loop over some strange midwestern American city built by a lake on a great flat plain.

This unusual and disorienting viewpoint placed the model in a strange limbo, accentuating its sculptural and abstract qualities. There appeared to be no overall order, a Mertzbau of small-dimensional lumber and triangular planes of plywood, sheets of metal or steel, with cross-hatched areas of diagonal striping and small piles of textured lumber forming apparently random concentrations or log jams. It was a composition of muted, soft pastel tones and wood grains, with the occasional bright red cube, clear geometric cross, or small black circle, perhaps referring to Russian Constructivism.

Within the model, the periphery of a plywood circle, reminiscent of Renaissance plans for ideal cities, appeared to form the edge of a lake or lagoon, and surrounded and contained most of the fragments, which perhaps must be on islands or above water. This unifying symbolic circular form was broken at one point by an equally symbolic form, a Constructivist wedge of silver deliberately punctuating the perfection of the circle and unleashing a set of forces within and without. It is clear from the notations at the center of Sorkin's city that the long bars of wood might well be remains of megastructural slabs, while the colored wedges below indicate a more fractured and folded approach of small-scale three-dimensional volumes, generated by a different grid, lower and closer to the water. *Model City* thus articulates two different systems in the area of its most intense activity.

The accompanying text related the *Model City's* random aspect to the "exquisite corpse who drank the new wine," the famous surrealist poem composed by a group of friends of Aragon who wrote one word, folded the page, and passed the paper on. Sorkin's metaphor sees the city boundary as the blank page, while the random contiguities of a private development produce surprising and perhaps delightful juxtapositions. In this respect Sorkin's *Model City* was philosophically akin to Rem Koolhaas's celebration of congestion in *Delirious New York*, with the random juxtapositions of forms and functions of urban life.

Sorkin's *Model City* was unique in raising the larger question of Deconstructivist urban design on virgin territory. It is curious that this issue has waited so long. In the seven years since Zaha Hadid won the Peak Competition and Bernard Tschumi was awarded La Villette, there has been no thought, until this exhibition, of the larger consequences of what is now known as Deconstructivism. Architects have been so busy returning to the poetics of the object, learning the new rules of combining typological elements, and digesting the lessons of the late 1970s that the city has remained the property of the postmodern practitioners and rationalists. A glance at last year's *Progressive Architecture* Urban Design Awards would show a picture of socially responsive and street-based architecture, with parks and promenades, studies of suburbs, as well as the usual clichés of super-scale corporate urban design for new towns. Only now that Studio Asyptote (Rashid, Couture, and Weinstein) has won the enormous West Coast Gateway Competition for an area over a freeway in downtown Los Angeles are the urban dimensions of the layered and gridded Deconstructivist approach becoming clearer. Studio Asyptote's gymnastic slabs over the freeway, like Liebeskind's in Berlin but at a far larger scale, spell out the return of megastructural thinking to the city.

Sorkin asked how it is possible to combine the desired fragmentation and decentering of collage with the unifying technological imperatives of the megastructural urge to exploit the new technologies? His solution, within the circle, was to deconstruct a megastructure, to fragment and decenter it, but to still retain its megastructural dimension above a city of newly created fragments. This double fragmentation appeared to be what was happening within the circular area of the lake of his *Model City*.

This solution needs further exploration, but it is a paradoxical and difficult proposition. The tension between the two systems of fragmentation, between detail and super scale, recalled the science-fiction cities of *Blade Runner*, which has sponsored a sub-genre of CyberPunk literature. In *Blade Runner* the earthbound city and its narrow streets are abandoned to the violence of the unfettered, small-scale free-market economy, much like some inner-city streets today. Overhead, huge monopolistic corporations compete in a life of calm and luxury, based on the wealth brought in from outer space and the manufacture of androids. Given Sorkin's record as an urban critic in the *Village Voice* on the proposed Johnson and Burgee towers of 42nd Street, New York, this social polarization and anarchy was clearly not the intention of *Model City*. There remained the question of the relationship of the megastructural, privileged, aerial or floating Deconstructivist slabs to the urban collage below.

The proposition of a double destructuring, at the surface and at the super scale above, at the polarized scales of Deconstructivist urbanism, pressed visitors, who were attempting to get some distance, back against the wall in face of the vertiginous installation of *Model City*. The aerial perspective of the installation gave the viewer a great sense of power and elevation. The middle ground of the Rationalists and Postmodernists dropped away beneath the clouds as a larger picture emerged. While the loss of this middle ground might be regretted, it was to Sorkin's great credit that he was able so effortlessly to raise us to this great height and to there delineate so precisely the central problems facing a Deconstructivist urbanism.

Alan J. Plattus

THE IDEA OF A TOWN

JOSEPH RYKWERT

"Thinking the city," as the French might put it, has never been a simple task. True, a great deal of what passes for architectural theory has tended to exaggerate the simplicity of both thinking and building, but recently we have made the former, at least, unnecessarily difficult. Even my formulation of the problem is a case in point, insofar as it invokes the sort of dualism—thought and action, word and deed—that has been endemic since the Renaissance and rampant since the Enlightenment.

Joseph Rykwert's study of Roman urbanism draws our attention to the fact that one of the most recalcitrant dualisms in the "theory and practice" of urbanism is of relatively recent origin. The opposition of technological and economic considerations on the one hand, and mythic and ritual considerations on the other, "could never have been the attitude of the ancients," Rykwert reminds us. Drawing upon a French tradition of classical anthropology, which generally remains too little noted in this context, he exposes the fallacy of our overly rationalistic reading of many ancient texts. Characteristically, Rykwert only hints that it is not just our understanding of antiquity at stake here. The opposition is recapitulated in modern bourgeois humanism, for while "myth and ritual" may now be read as "aesthetics and symbolism," or some variation on that theme, technology and economics or, more generally, science, still lie on the other side of the conceptual divide.

In the late 19th century, Camillo Sitte felt it necessary to promote "artistic principles," as opposed to those derived exclusively from engineering criteria, and of course modernist urbanism generally took the other side of that debate. Lurking behind Rykwert's discussion of the way in which the whole debate would have been a non-starter in the context of the ancient city is the suggestion that the problems of the modern city may be derived, not from the ascendancy of one side or the other of the
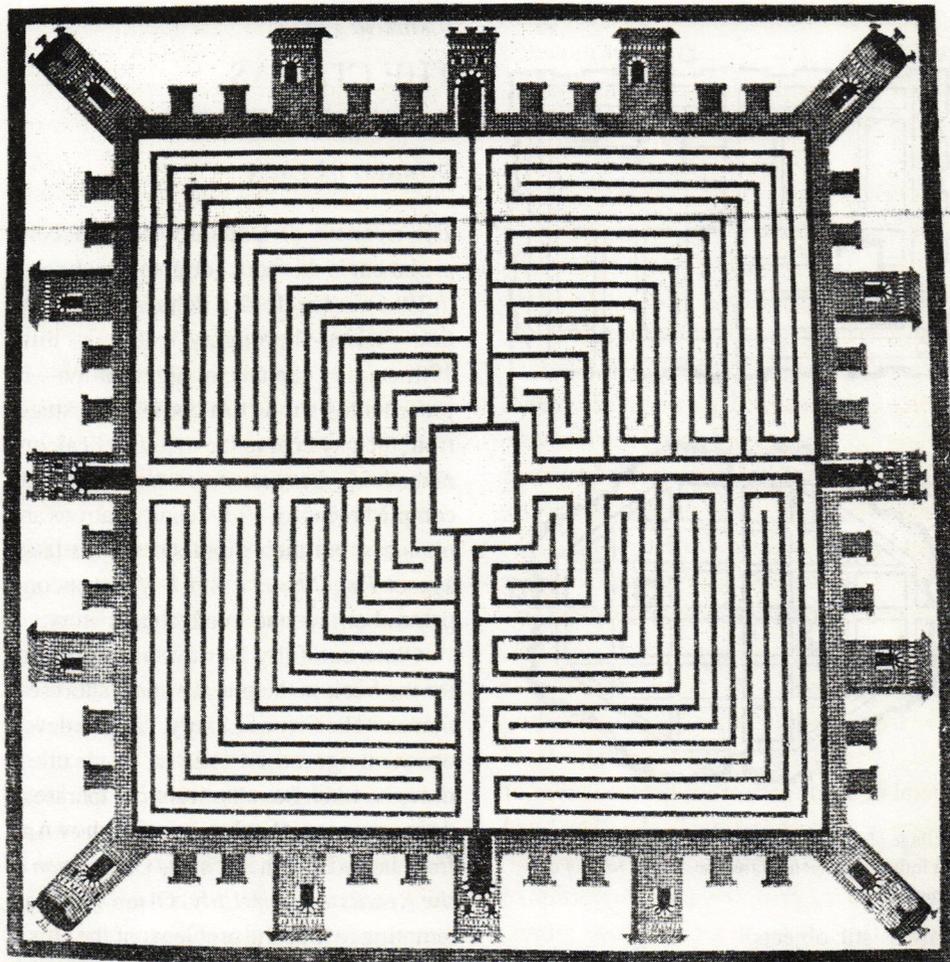
Roman floor mosaic showing a fortified labyrinth. (From *Idea of a Town*.)

question, but from our very inability to "think the city" outside such a dualistic framework. It is one of the pleasures of reading Rykwert, on this and other subjects, that he does not so much deconstruct such ingrained habits of mind, as bombards them with historical erudition that ends up demonstrating their thoroughly contingent status. In the process, the reader is instructed in all manner of fascinating lore that turns out to be marginal to one's architectural and urbanistic interests only if one believes, with Sigfried Giedion, that all history is divided into constituent and transitory facts.

Rykwert is, after all, the master, not only of relativizing the apparently constituent, but also of moving the apparently transitory to center stage at the appropriately dramatic moment. While his subject may be archetypal symbols and myths, he treats them historically, critically, and without undue

nostalgia. The tone, here and elsewhere in his work, is more that of a highly civilized and densely woven detective novel, and one occasionally and fondly imagines Rykwert as the Lord Peter Wimsey of architectural history.

The Idea of a Town is certainly one of his best "cases," and deserves this new edition in a more accessible paperback format, even if it is difficult to imagine the typical undergrad reading it cover to cover. This book is especially useful and poignant at a moment when, as Rykwert reminds us in his new preface, "in the seventies and eighties the unruly object is deforming and eroding" the city. Here, I take it, Rykwert has in mind not only those manifestations of a neo-avant-garde that currently occupy center stage, but also many aspects of a postmodernism that invoked the rhetoric of urbanism, context, and history, but continued to produce unruly and ultimately

Village plans described in the Manasara Silpasastra, an Indian architectural treatise. (From *Idea of a Town*.)

narcissistic objects.

One of the many ironies of recent architectural history is that Rykwert himself was so often invoked along with those subjects whose study he promoted. No wonder, then, that he never had much use for the products of mere flirtations or infatuations with history and the phenomenon of the city. From the outset, he called attention to the shallowness and false pretenses of many of these efforts, and while one did not always agree with particular indictments, one could (and can) not help but respect a commitment to the level at which the lived experience and collective memory of the city undermines both theoretical dualisms and the vagaries of stylistic fashion.

Franklin Toker

THE CITY AS A WORK OF ART

DONALD J. OLSEN

The richness of Donald Olsen's accomplishment in this book (originally published in 1986) is threefold: a richness of conception—Olsen thoroughly examines three 19th-century capitals; in organization—he presents his subject in convincing stages from the physical to the metaphysical; and of method—he reconstructs not only the accomplishments of 19th-century patrons and planners, but their mind-set. In this latter aspect *The City as a Work of Art* encompasses both art and intellectual history.

Olsen carefully lays out his objectives for the book in the preface and a short section on "The City as Luxury," and he develops them rigorously. The "art" in his title is not to be taken literally: it is a paraphrase of the section on "The State as a Work of Art" from Jacob Burckhardt's *The Civilization of the Renaissance in Italy*. Olsen is not attempting to hide the problems of the city in the 19th century, but he is interested in his selected capital cities mainly as expressions of national pride. Olsen promises (and delivers) a massive dose of information on the technological underpinning of the 19th-century capital city, but warns the reader that technology can produce an industrial Sheffield but not a multi-dimensional London: the former is (or was) a prosperous and productive city, but the latter is a work of art.

How, according to Olsen, did London, Paris, and Vienna achieve the status of works of art? These cities were consumers rather than producers of the Industrial Revolution; they underwent epochal transformations of their physical environments; and they so perfectly expressed the main traits of their national characters that they not only functioned as capitals but became the very embodiments of their nations.

The narrative core of Olsen's study, "The City as Monument," covers what is already well known to students of urban history: the reorganization of the physical environment of the three Roman-founded cities in question. Nonetheless, there is still a special panache to Olsen's retelling of John Nash's creation of Regent Street, Baron Haussmann's *percées* through Paris, and the conception of Vienna's Ringstrasse.

At this point, Olsen (a professor of history at Vassar College) moves his book decisively into the realm of social history. His next section, "The City as Home," evokes the mirror image of the physical city in the domestic architecture of London, Paris, and

The Kärtner Ring, Vienna. (From *The City as a Work of Art*; courtesy Museen der Stadt Wien.)

The Regent Street quadrant, curving toward the northwest, London. (From *The City as a Work of Art;* courtesy Guildhall Library.)

Vienna. Alberti had already stated, and Vitruvius had implied, that there was a symbiotic relationship between the home and the city. Nonetheless Olsen stakes out new territory when he seeks to establish how the evolution of the suburban houses of London, the flats of Paris, and the *palais* of Vienna shaped the development of the wider city.

"The City as Playground" investigates major changes in physical structure as expressions of the social structure of the three capitals: the domestic obsession of Victorian London, the public gregariousness of Second Empire Paris, the ritual theatricality of upper-bourgeois Vienna.

The book ends with a section on "The City as Document," in which Olsen raises a central issue of method: because, as he states, much of Victorian London was Georgian, and all of Edwardian London was Victorian, is it valid to assume we can "read" the city through its architecture and urbanism as we might read a historical document? Olsen assures us that we can, and for two reasons: first, the planners of all three capitals were explicit in their insistence on "representational" architecture; and second, because in a Hegelian age these planners could only understand the act of building as an act of historical (but *not* antiquarian) consciousness. History to them, Olsen argues, was not a mere attachment to

the past but a means and a language for coping with current problems. Olsen's last chapter, "The City as the Embodiment of History," should be required reading for all historians who venture into the 19th century.

One could argue whether the organization of the book—exemplary in every other way—best serves Olsen's purpose by placing his intellectual justification at the end rather than at the beginning. And some readers may feel shortchanged by the relatively slight emphasis on the actual mechanics of city planning. Olsen fails to mention, for example, that Baron Haussmann's genius was not just in calculating his urban *percées* but in expropriating enough land so that he controlled not only his famous boulevards but also the design guidelines on all the buildings that bordered them. Other readers may question Olsen's cursory discussion of crime, transportation, and what he calls the "social geography" of his three cities. But, overall, Olsen's book is a beguiling and brilliant work, whose organization, scope, and method are so good that one wonders why urban history has not been done at this level before.

THE CITY AS A WORK OF ART: LONDON, PARIS, VIENNA, Donald J. Olsen, Yale University Press, 1988 (first published 1986), 342 pp., illus., $19.95 paper.

Bruce Thomas
THE CITY OF BATH
BARRY CUNLIFFE

There is no shortage of books about Bath. Its Georgian terraces and genteel atmosphere have made the city a favorite of professional and amateur observers of urban form. Barry Cunliffe admits that *The City of Bath* is "pure self-indulgence," a work that allowed "the exquisite luxury of spending autumn evenings writing about the city I love."

Yet this book is more than just an appreciation of one of England's favorite tourist haunts. In a volume of less than two hundred pages, Cunliffe accompanies the reader on a complete tour of the city's history. All the usual stops are included, from the Roman encampment at the sacred springs to the 18th-century schemes of John Wood Senior and Junior. An account of the Saxon town in the interlude between Roman and Norman control—drawn from the author's other recent publications—is less familiar and illuminates a previously obscure chapter of the city's story. The text is well written and entertaining and appeals to the casual reader as well as the scholar. The brief essay on additional reading, the accompanying bibliography, and the index are complete and readily accessible to a variety of readers. The black-and-white illustrations, however, are less satisfying. Although maps are graphically excellent
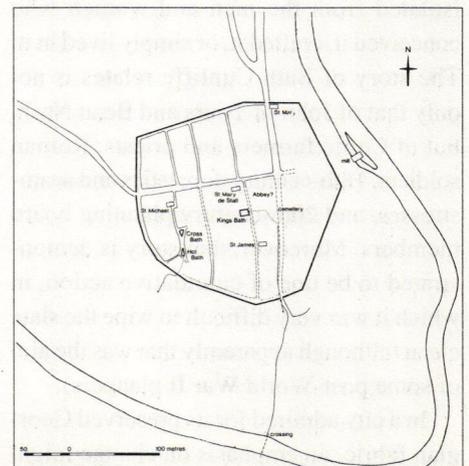
Bath, the Late Saxon town (c. 1100). (From *City of Bath.*)
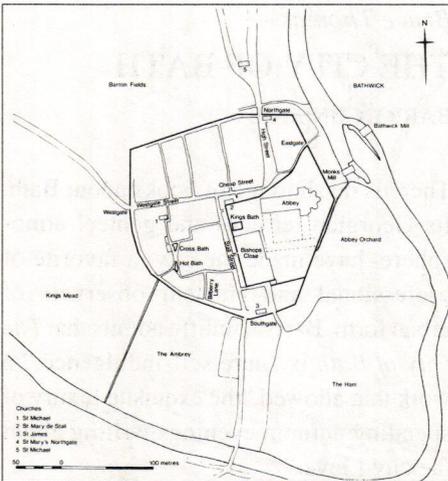
Bath, the Medieval town (c. 1300). (From *City of Bath*.)

and well placed, curious line drawings—of pots, for example—add little and occur apparently at random.

What elevates *The City of Bath* above a mere appreciation of a most-loved place is the recognition that Bath has been, and continues to be, an ever-changing landscape. To emphasize this fact Cunliffe is careful to address all facets of Bath's history in a balanced manner. The popular and largely extant Georgian city accounts for only about 20 percent of the book. Covering familiar ground, Cunliffe focuses on the physical fabric. There are no revelations of a hidden Bath here, as, for example, R. S. Neale's *Bath: A Social History 1680–1850* (1981) illuminated a dark underside of the city. Yet Cunliffe makes it clear that the physical reality of the city cannot stand isolated from the men and women who conceived it, crafted it, or simply lived in it. The story of Bath Cunliffe relates is not only that of John of Tours and Beau Nash, but of Celtic farmers and priests, Roman soldiers, 18th-century domestics and seamstresses, and 20th-century planning board members. Moreover, that story is demonstrated to be one of cumulative action, in which it was very difficult to wipe the slate clean (although apparently that was the aim of some post-World War II planners).

In a city admired for its preserved Georgian fabric, an emphasis on change might seem paradoxical. Cunliffe explains, however, that the terraces and crescents of the

familiar Bath are relatively recent developments in a city with a long and significant history. Consequently, it is encouraging to read that in 1966 Bath was one of four historic cities chosen to serve as case studies, "to discover how to reconcile our old towns within the twentieth century without actually knocking them down," in the words of the Minister of Housing and Local Government.

Occasionally awkward are the author's attempts to reconcile his obvious love for preserved Bath with the recognition that true urban life must be vital rather than mummified. Statements such as "one can long for the sheer tacky vulgarity of the bus station" do not quite ring true, but they are easily tolerated. The mere mention of such a plebeian structure as a bus station in a book about Bath is remarkable enough. Cunliffe's admiration for Bath does not

obstruct his realization of what vital urban life must entail, and how the physical fabric of a city is part of a real and changing world. Even in the story of Bath, perhaps to many readers a city frozen in time, Cunliffe demonstrates that change is the catalyst in urban life. His claim that "the fascination of a city lies in its variety and its contrasts … a city is not just a medium for living: it must be a stimulant for life" does ring true. Cunliffe emphasizes that a truly historical city continues to live, and if that city is to be more than a museum, change must structure its fabric. Even in Bath.

THE CITY OF BATH, Barry Cunliffe, Yale University Press, 1986, 186 pp., illus., $22.50.
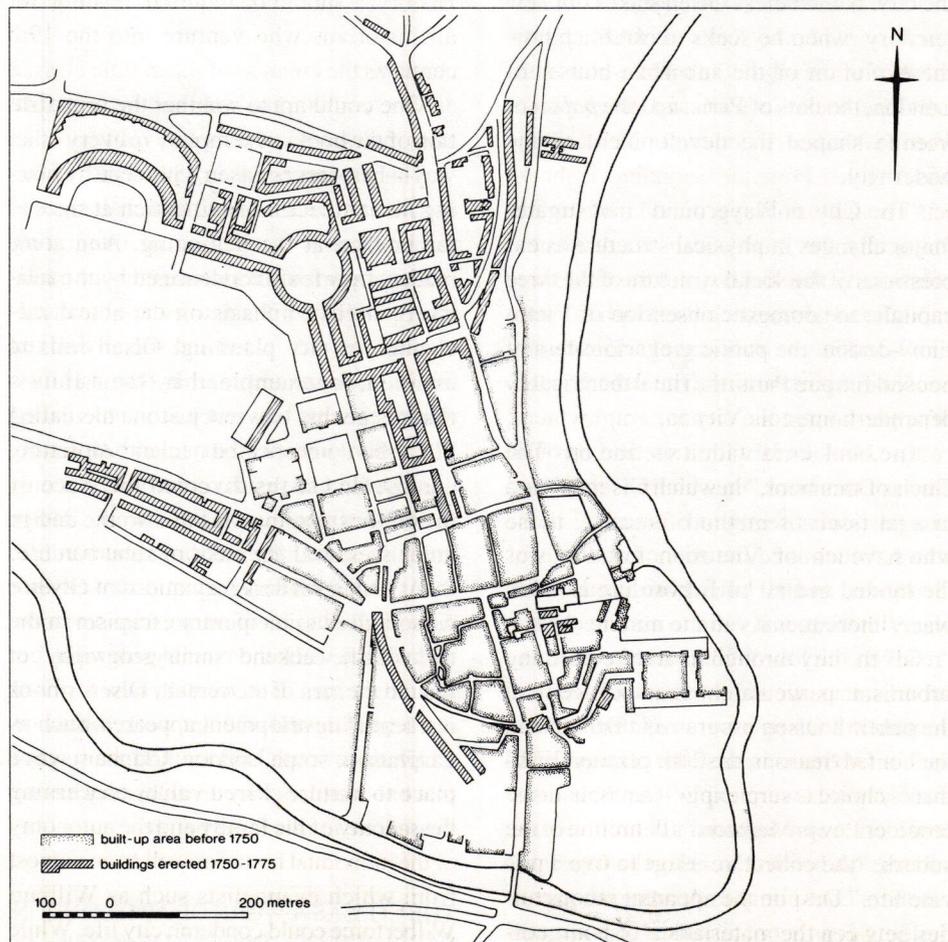
Bath, during the time of John Wood Junior (1750–75). (From *City of Bath*.)

Iain Borden

BOURGEOIS UTOPIAS

ROBERT FISHMAN

PLANNING THE CAPITALIST CITY

RICHARD E. FOGLESONG

Cities confuse us. The events and shifting forms of the urban environment may cause wonder and delight, but they also threaten to overwhelm us with feelings of bewilderment, loss, and alienation. Add the dimension of time and the historian's task of interpreting the city becomes daunting. In the face of this, both these books have simplified their subject matter, but in very different ways, varying not only their content, but also their historical method and intellectual purpose. As a result, we learn very different things.

Robert Fishman's *Bourgeois Utopias: The Rise and Fall of Suburbia* takes a physical slice of the city—the middle-class suburb—and traces its roots and development from 18th-century London to 20th-century Los Angeles. From the beginning, Fishman sets his sights on a specific type of suburb. Physically, the "true suburb" is a residential community that lies beyond the city, large enough and homogeneous enough to create a low-density environment of single-family houses in a park setting. The suburb is still dependent upon the city for employment, culture, and social facilities, and through much of this book, the suburb is restricted to a particular segment of society: those who have attained the economic status of the landed gentry but whose urban work places them socially in the middle class.

Given the low-income nature of many suburbs, in particular those associated with the public housing programs in Britain and the United States in the 20th century, Fishman's choice is surprising—that is, until we consider Lewis Mumford's definition of the suburb, "the collective effort to live a private life." Despite the apparent incongruities between the materialism of bourgeois society and the idealism of the utopian vision, Fishman conceives of the bourgeois
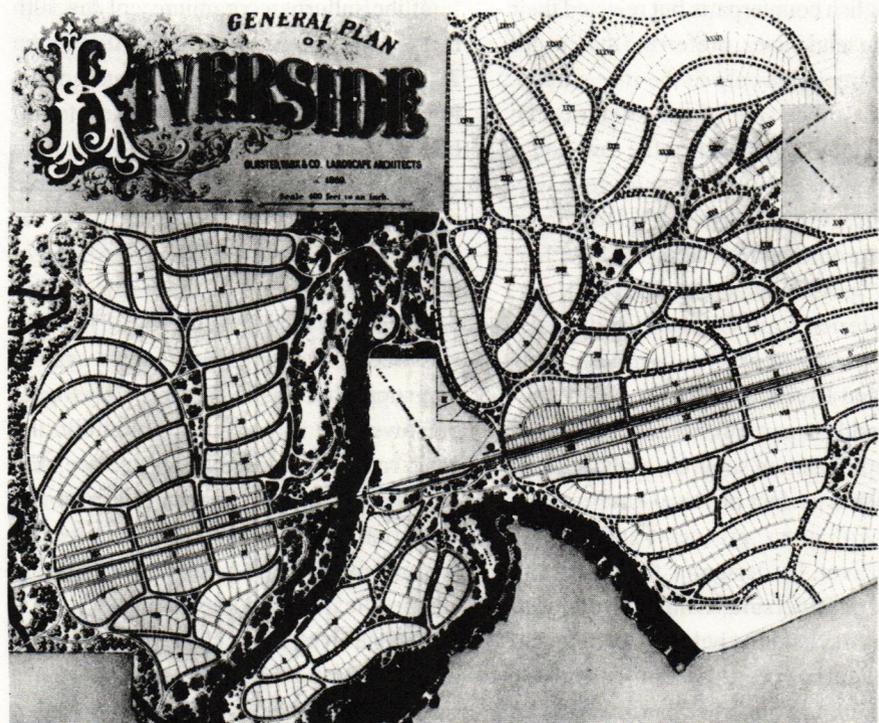
Plan of Riverside, Illinois; Olmstead, Vaux & Company (1869). (From *Bourgeois Utopias;* Courtesy of Frederick Law Olmstead National Historic Site, National Park Service.)

utopia as the creation of the middle class, a deliberate attempt to build and live out a life after their own interests and volition.

This process began in 18th-century London, in particular with the first challenges to the bourgeois convention of integrating places of work and residence into one building. Spurred by a desire to escape the disadvantages of a crowded and socially mixed urban environment, and by the family's change to what Lawrence Stone has called a "closed domesticated nuclear" structure, the middle classes divorced the place of residence from the place of work, and in doing so sowed the seeds of suburban life.

At first, such transformations of city life were limited to temporary escapism in the form of the weekend countryside villa, but around the turn of the century new forms of residential development appeared, such as Clapham in south London. Clapham was a place to nurture shared values concerning the sanctity of the family and the autonomy of the individual home, as well as an outpost from which evangelists such as William Wilberforce could condemn city life. While never a complete other world, Clapham was both perfect home and perfect garden, a

heaven on earth.

Subsequently, the suburb lost some of its ideological impetus and took on the face of economic and class imperative. Manchester, undergoing rapid industrialization and urbanization in the early decades of the 19th century, experienced the class segregation of Clapham and London all across the city. The core became an expensive and socially undesirable place to live, from which middle-class residents fled to cheaper, speculatively built dwellings nearby. At Victoria Park, begun in 1837, the architect Richard Lane designed Gothic houses according to the precedent of John Nash and the contemporary theories of J. C. Loudon. Here the residents could live out their middle-class values, especially those concerning the role of women and their exclusion from the workplace.

The concern for exclusion and seclusion from urban life is one of the fundamental characteristics of suburban life. Yet, as Fishman astutely points out, Parisian apartment living of the mid-19th century shows how the cultivation of the domestic does not necessarily lead to the suburb. The French bourgeoisie shared the domestic idealism of

their English counterparts but rejected their antiurban tendencies, preferring the theater and the street-side café to the rose garden.

On the other side of the Atlantic, the English pattern held firm, as the row-house suburbs of the early 19th century gave way to the picturesque marriage of town and country promoted by Catherine Beecher, Andrew Jackson Downing, Calvert Vaux, and Frederick Law Olmsted, and subsequently practiced at Llwellyn Park, New Jersey, and Riverside, Illinois.

Riverside in particular lends credence to the interpretation of suburbia as the attempt to provide a perfect physical environment replete with grass, greenery, and the Des Plaines River. By designing the homes and gardens of Riverside, Olmsted sought to maintain the balance between people and nature, and between the family and the community. On the other hand, Riverside was a speculative venture whose success depended upon Olmsted's ability to create a suitably attractive environment. Financially, Riverside was a failure, hindered by the slow sale of plots and a financial scandal in which one of the backers illegally transferred $500,000 from Chicago's city coffers.

By the closing years of the 19th century, the American suburb reached what Fishman calls its classic form: the railroad suburbs clustered in and around the great cities of the Eastern seaboard and Midwest, typified by those around Philadelphia. Developers and residents alike grasped the potential of the railroads to give access to land on the outskirts of the city. One might dispute the primacy of factors here—the expansion of the London Underground network in the 1930s provides at least one example of how a rail company itself responded to and even encouraged suburban development as a means of increasing its own revenues. But whatever the mutual dependencies, the relationship of rail to suburb undoubtedly gave rise to a series of communities strung out along the track, each reliant on the train for its communication and economic livelihood, and each centered within a 15-minute walk of the train station.

If the suburban community of the 19th century was based on the train, that of the 20th century was based on the automobile. In Los Angeles, the success of the automobile was so great that suburbs were no longer the exclusive preserve of the middle class but took over the whole city. The car threw open vast tracts of land and brought the suburban dream of the single-family house within reach of one and all. The same was true of the inventive finance system that supported this expansion: developers borrowed the venture capital to build the basic road and service infrastructure, and quickly sold the mortgages they gave to the lot buyers in order to pay off this capital. By this means, developers made large profits and people got what they wanted.

On one level, this is all good history. The geographic and temporal spread of material, and Fishman's concentration on a specific type of suburb precludes either the comprehensive analysis of the suburbanization of the United States we found in Kenneth T. Jackson's *Crabgrass Frontier* (Oxford University Press, 1985), or the extensive review of British suburban design provided by Arthur M. Edwards's *Design of Suburbia* (Pembridge Press, 1981). Instead, Fishman provides us with some interesting case studies of middle-class suburbia, and a great deal of historical explanation for those suburbs.

Yet one has a frustrating sense of a deeper, more illuminating history of the city just out of reach. More important, the interpretations and explanations in *Bourgeois Utopias* seem overly bound to their subject matter. This is particularly evident when Fishman considers the actual processes, as opposed to the middle-class desires, that created suburbia. According to Fishman, 18th-century London suburbia was improvised through trial-and-error methods similar to those of the Industrial Revolution. While it is true that these early suburbs were not all the product of a single architect, to state that they were simply improvised rather than designed seems to contradict the assumption that such suburbs were motivated by the collective desires and efforts of the middle classes. To move from desire to

realization requires intention and action, but, beyond the piecemeal actions of speculative developers, Fishman offers little clue as to how this might have been negotiated on an urban scale.

This is the bane of *Bourgeois Utopias*. Somewhat belatedly, in his final chapter Fishman does attempt to discover a deeper pattern, this time in what he calls the "technoburb." The residents of the technoburb share with their suburban predecessors a physical separation from the city proper, but also have access to places of work, commerce, and recreation via a multiplicity of freeways. The technoburb is autonomous and decentralized, a product of the postwar housing boom and changes in industrial location, and hence provides Fishman with a purposeful example of how the built environment is intimately related not only to the desires and aspirations of its residents, but also to the wider processes of production and capital. Fishman's most illuminating insights thus pertain not to the rise of the bourgeois utopia, but to its death.

By contrast, Richard Foglesong's *Planning the Capitalist City* undertakes a very different form of historical analysis. The subject matter here is not a fixed physical typology within the city, but a process of urban life: that of city planning. We learn not only of the nature of city planning and the forms of the city it produces, but also of the structural theory by which Foglesong mediates the interpretive gap between historian and evidence.

The whirlwind tour of the United States begins with the colonial towns of 17th-century New England, continues on through the early housing reformers, the parks and the parklands, the City Beautiful Movement, and culminates with the City Practical. As a factual introduction to the history of planning in America, the task is performed well enough; despite the somewhat abrupt ending of the story in the 1920s, the reader is left with a very real sense of "what happened." This includes some interesting diversions: for example, the history of the formative years of Manhattan Island shows that the early Dutch settlers at first tried to avoid planned urban development, while
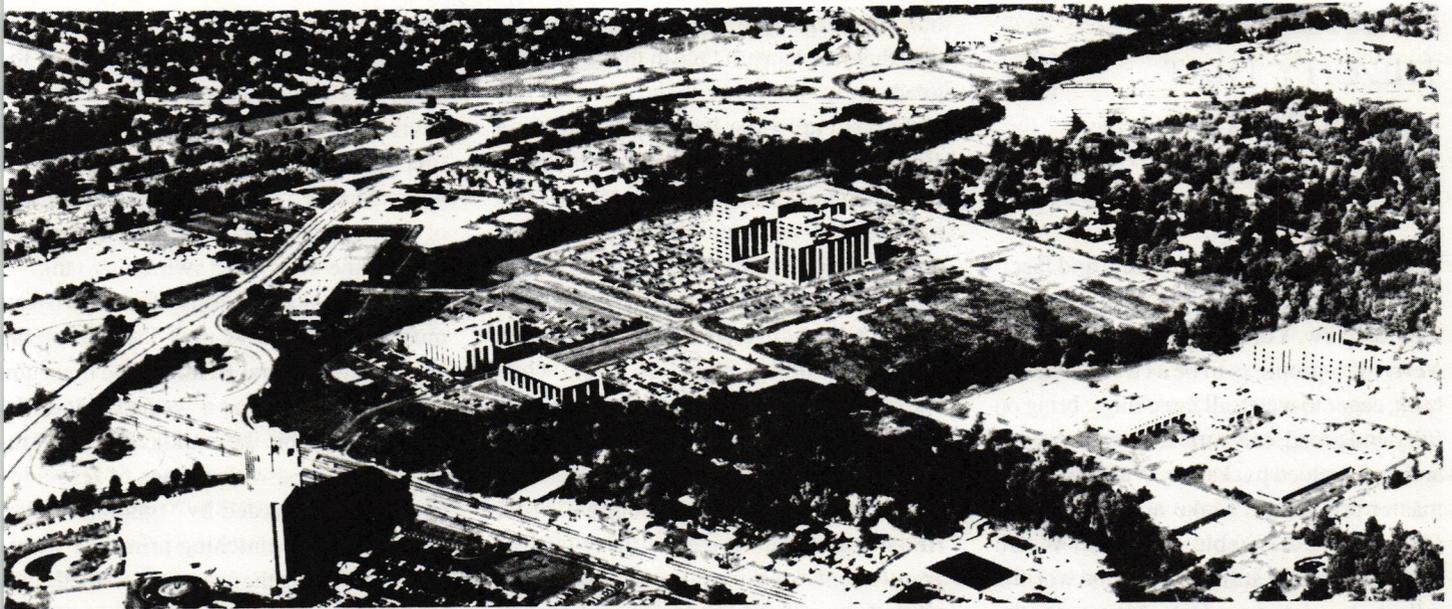
"Technoburb, USA"; Former residential suburbs of Philadelphia now show a complex mix of uses; organized along a network of highways, this region has become a new kind of decentralized city. (From *Bourgeois Utopias;* courtesy of Stephenson Air Photos and reproduced by permission of Seltzer Development Corporation.)

he section on "Roads Not Taken" includes an account of Lawrence Veiller's adaptation of the Garden City idea in the United States.

Yet, as any able-bodied historian should recognize, such factual concerns are neither the true method nor the true purpose of history, and so the course of *Planning the Capitalist City* is set not so much by geography or even by time, but rather by the single idea that planning in the capitalist city is both necessary and impossible, and that this paradox is in turn blown along by the twin contradictions of capitalism and property, capitalism and democracy.

The success of the book depends largely on the efficacy of this theory as an interpretive device in the writing of history. Foglesong sets out in the opening chapter a distillation of Marxist literature concerning the state, policy formulation, and urban politics. From this, he arrives at two contradictions, the two structural aspects of capitalism embedded in the history of planning practice in the United States.

First, there is the contradiction between the private ownership and control of land and property on the one hand, and the needs of both capital and labor that land and property must serve on the other. Planning emerges as an activity necessary for the production and reproduction of capitalism,

making sure that the needs of capital and labor are met. Second, there is the capitalist-democracy contradiction, in which the need to provide some form of collective control over the use of land for the purposes of maintaining capitalism carries with it the danger that this aim might be achieved too completely, that the democratic control of land might interfere with or even dominate the process of capital accumulation. Planning then develops as a technocratic process practiced by experts and which, at least notionally, lies outside of the everyday politics of capital and democracy.

If theory, rather than facts, delineates the telling of planning and city history, then the historical subject matter must in turn validate this theory. This explains why so much is left out. Working-class housing and the role of women are almost entirely ignored, as is the issue of design. The explanation of the neoclassical style of the 1893 World's Columbian Exposition at Chicago as an appropriate ideological image for contemporary business and class hegemony, as well as a product of the internal traditions of Beaux-Arts architectural training, is particularly effective. In the overall context of the book, however, it serves only to highlight the absence of such discussion elsewhere, as does the lack of any form of illustration.

In many ways, Foglesong is too quick to accept his sources at face value. The vast majority of these are secondary histories, and only rarely are the contemporary texts cited. Not everyone would be inclined to follow, as Foglesong has done, Tom Hines's assertion that the City Beautiful was the "the architectural and aesthetic arm" of the Progressive movement. Such a provocative statement deserves deeper attention.

The defense, of course, is that such considerations lie outside of the purpose of the book. If predicated on a complex analytical system, the macro-theory is elegantly simple, and the beauty of it all is that Foglesong neither attempts nor admits to anything more than this. As such, this attempt marks a significant step toward a new kind of historical venture, one in which history and theory are joined in a complex yet always lucid whole. For the moment, *Planning the Capitalist City* is a most welcome achievement.

BOURGEOIS UTOPIAS: THE RISE AND FALL OF SUBURBIA, Robert Fishman, Basic Books, 1987, 272 pp., illus., $19.95.

PLANNING THE CAPITALIST CITY: THE COLONIAL ERA TO THE 1920s, Richard E. Foglesong, Princeton University Press, 1986, 286 pp., $25.00.

Howard Mansfield

THE CITY THAT NEVER WAS

REBECCA READ SHANOR

"Two hundred years of fantastic and fascinating plans that might have changed the face of New York City"; *The City That Never Was* promises to be a circus. One sits back, eager to watch all three rings: bring on folly and greed, eccentrics, ignored genius, and over-valued hucksters. Watch the ringmaster proclaim: "Make no little plans." (The book's inevitable epigraph.) Watch robber barons on stilts vie to be the world's tallest, largest, grandest. Above on the highwire, bridge engineers spin impossible "rainbow" cantilever bridges, gargantuan suspension bridges. And all around dance a parade of clowns dressed as ludicrous monuments that the city has been spared.

Rebecca Read Shanor delivers the show with charm, and given the material, sobriety. Her criteria for inclusion in the book—that these plans were considered feasible and explain how New York took shape—

leaves out the alarming sideshow freaks. Still there is plenty of "pie in the skyline" to gawk at.

For example: the Broadway Temple, a 1920s ministry that included Sunday services with movies, celebrities, acrobats, bird-call imitators, and even the Reverend Christian Reisner's annual "Snow Sermon: which he conducted in mid-July from behind a hill of crushed ice trucked from a downtown cooling plant." In an era when one best-seller proclaimed Jesus as the most successful businessman ever, the Reverend Christian Reisner unabashedly advertised God. And no simple city vicarage would do. He envisioned a 40-story "sheer cliff of granite and limestone punctuated at its pinnacle by a 75 ft. high revolving cross that shot rays of red and orange light into the sky." The tower was to contain a flamboyant two thousand-seat sanctuary as well as a five-story basement with gymnasium, bowling alley, and swimming pool.

The $4 million Broadway Temple was financed by selling interest-bearing bonds ("an investment in your fellow man's salvation"). John D. Rockefeller, E. F. Hutton, D.W. Griffith, and other "headliners" in-

vested hundreds of thousands of dollars. The public joined in. Alas, along came the stock market crash, and today a modest church sits on a five-story-deep cellar. "A tour of the cathedral's basement today," writes Shanor, "reveals the ghastly remains of the poolside balconies and the concrete floor of the unfinished swimming tank."

Next consider the folly of a proposed art museum on what is now the site of the Museum of Natural History. The museum, proposed in 1868, was a "vaguely Moorish" endeavor, but, oh, the entrance—a subterranean cave lined with statues of ferocious animals and guarded by "Ignorance" and "Superstition," clutching primitive weapons and "barring the avenue to aesthetic culture." Once inside the dim cave, the art patron would be confronted with statues of snarling lions and beasts meant to "represent the difficulties to be overcome before the student enters into the real enjoyment and comprehension of the beautiful." The museum was not built; a lot of museums were shuffled around town and today all are entered by going up a flight of stairs.

Of course the book is filled with proposals to trash magnificent buildings. Carnegie Hall came within inches of being demolished in 1960 and replaced with a wonder of the age, a "garish" office building: "rising from thirty-foot pylons above a sunken plaza, a shoe box of a tower flaunted a screaming bright-red skin made of steel panels faced with porcelain enamel." (The red "was an attempt to relieve the sameness of the Manhattan skyline.") "Relentless rows of blank windows set on the diagonal, played off against the vermilion facade, suggesting a giant four-sided chess board." This was indeed a close call.

These stories make good conversation pieces—the kind you can use to entertain friends while in some interminable Manhattan line. "Right on this spot in 1842" is a come on New Yorkers love. They also particularly enjoy being told that for two hundred years New Yorkers have been complaining about gridlock and terrible subway service. The book is filled with stories of attempts to remedy these perennial complaints.
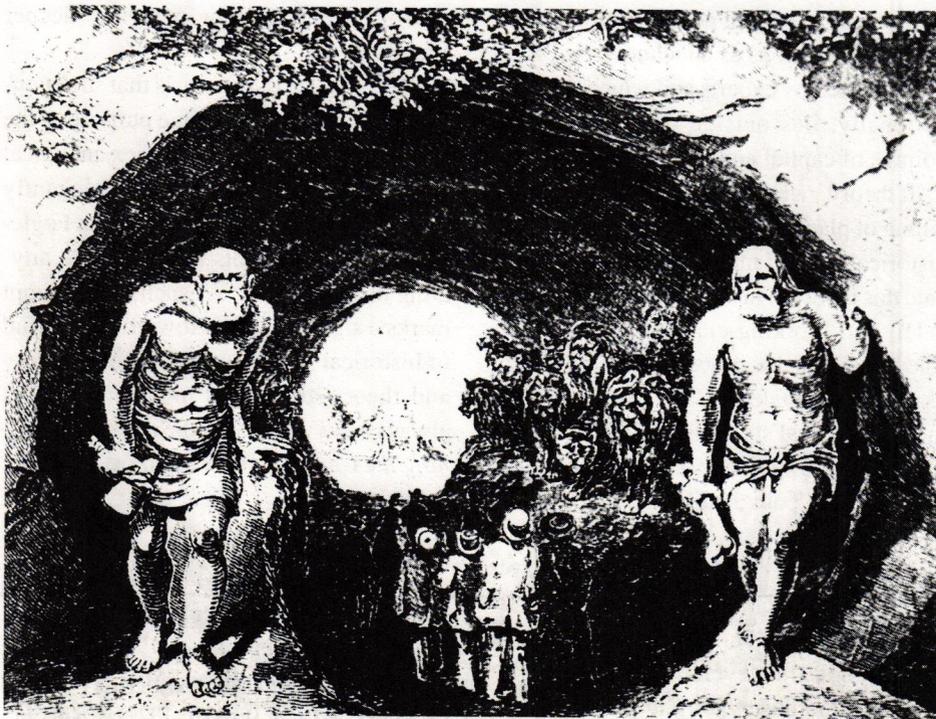
Detail of the main entrance to the proposed art museum, William Holbrook Beard (c. 1868). (From *The City that Never Was*.)
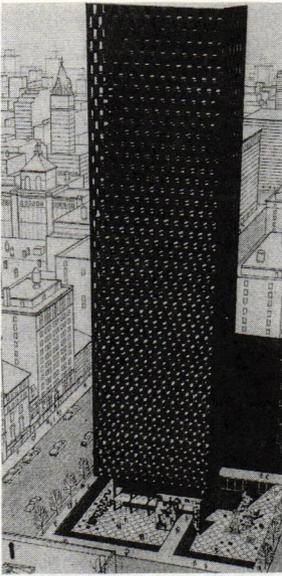
Office building proposed for the site of Carnegie Hall, Pomerance and Breines (1957). (From *The City that Never Was.*)

The problems remain the same, but the solutions change. Shanor is good at showing how a procession of plans will lead to the one that is finally built. Sometimes people of vision sacrifice themselves only to move the public understanding forward. Their initial subway proposal fails, but clears the way for another proposal five years later. Other times the technology is a little too strange, like the proposed elevated railway designed as a giant pneumatic tube, or the proposed Hudson River bridge with towers taller than the Woolworth Building (then the world's tallest).

"New York has been shaped to a large degree by false starts, failed experiments and lost battles," writes Shanor. Knowing that plans have long lives, Shanor has not included any from the 1970s or 1980s—their outcome is still uncertain. And some plans may never die. Take Broadway Temple. Now there's a church that may be sitting under some valuable air rights. St. Bart's would be jealous. Says the circus barker of the 1980s: Make no little deals.

THE CITY THAT NEVER WAS: TWO HUNDRED YEARS OF FANTASTIC AND FASCINATING PLANS THAT MIGHT HAVE CHANGED THE FACE OF NEW YORK CITY, Rebecca Read Shanor, Viking, 1988, 254 pp., illus., $35.00.

Margaretta J. Darnall

REBUILDING CENTRAL PARK

ELIZABETH BARLOW ROGERS

When Le Corbusier visited New York City in 1935, he was appalled by the lack of trees. "Nevertheless," he remarked,

Central Park has been saved, in the middle of Manhattan. . . . I am struck with admiration for the strength of character of the municipal authorities of New York who have preserved granite rocks and trees in the center of Manhattan. . . . The park is surrounded by fine buildings—apartment houses in tall blocks or in the form of skyscrapers—all with windows opening on this unexpected space, a fairylike situation unique in the city without trees. . . . To keep this immense treasure untouchable in the very center of Manhattan, I think that that shows a high civic attitude, an extraordinary attitude. It is the sign of a strong society.[1]

Yet by 1975 Central Park was in appalling condition after years of neglect and budget cutting. Fountains were dry; stonework was broken and defaced with graffiti; the Shakespeare Garden was a weed-choked ruin.

New York without Central Park is unthinkable. The original design was the winning entry by Frederick Law Olmsted and Calvert Vaux in the 1858 competition. Central Park was not America's first city park nor is it Olmsted's greatest design. The scale of the park (843 acres) was, however, unprecedented at the time, and it introduced a remarkably foresighted circulation plan separating different types of traffic in and through the park. Olmsted's balance of meadows, parklands, and water have also successfully endured into the late 20th century.

Rebuilding Central Park is an excellent distillation and summary of three years of study and planning by sociologists, planners, landscape architects, ecologists, and historians that went into a management and restoration plan. The specialists observed how the park was being used and inventoried the current status of the physical fabric of buildings, roads, decorative features, and plant materials. They reviewed how the current status related to the original design, and then outlined steps to help the aging park toward physical and social recovery.

This well-organized book begins with a

The reservoir in Central Park (photo c. 1960s). (From *Rebuilding Central Park.*)

section on methodology and the analysis and recommendations of sociologists, ecologists, and engineers follow. There is a short essay on the problems of park management, but the bulk of the book summarizes the restoration plan for 20 specific areas within the park. The book concludes with a few pages about the Central Park Conservancy, the powerful organization that has coordinated the private and public efforts to restore the park.

None of the methodology in *Rebuilding Central Park* is new or novel, however, and some of it is open to criticism. For example, the sociologists have described and quantified the uses of the park, but one of the most important "uses" of Central Park (or any urban park) that has escaped sociological categories is looking at it from the surrounding streets and buildings. The restoration portion of the book addresses the practical issues of how to restore individual areas such as the Mall, but there is very little explanation of Olmsted's intentions or alternative uses for different areas in the 1980s. Unfortunately, a single volume cannot cover all the issues of history and design involved in restoring such a large and complex park.

Central Park lies in the midst of one of the world's wealthiest neighborhoods, and the Central Park Conservancy has been able to raise the phenomenal amount of money required to begin the park restoration and undertake proper management and maintenance. The task of fund raising is usually the most difficult part of any landscape restoration job, but *Rebuilding Central Park* makes it sound easy to find magnanimous patrons and put together a workable funding plan. Despite minor shortcomings, this book is an outstanding case study and is highly recommended reading for civic-minded designers and patrons.

1. Le Corbusier, *When the Cathedrals Were White* (New York: Reynal and Hitchcock, 1947), pp. 71–72.

REBUILDING CENTRAL PARK: A MANAGEMENT AND RESTORATION PLAN, Elizabeth Barlow Rogers, MIT Press, 1987, 160 pp., illus., $27.50.

Diane Favro and Zeynep Celik

URBAN HISTORY IN THE 1980s: A REVIEW OF PERIODICALS

Urban history is currently a prolific topic among architectural historians. In the pages of this journal, Spiro Kostof called the present day "the best of times" for urban history (*DBR* 10, Fall 1986, p. 35). Marvin Trachtenberg, reviewing the dominant trends in recent architectural history in *The Art Bulletin*, referred to urbanism as one of the "most fertile and yet most challenging fields of architectural study" (*The Art Bulletin*, June 1988, p. 231). As these architectural historians demonstrate in their reviews of recent literature, it is not only the sheer number of books on cities published in the 1980s that is significant, but also their wide spectrum—both in focus and approach. The interest in urban history is no doubt enhanced by the contextual approach of many of today's architects. The expansion of the field of urban history is also evident in periodicals. While in the past many journals have examined the history of cities, today an increasing number deal also with the physical form—the primary concern of architects and architectural historians.

Various branches of the social sciences have produced their own books and articles on cities. Foremost is the broad academic field of history. Periodicals from this field contain articles by social, political, economic, and cultural historians (most of whom, incidentally, cross disciplines). Several history journals make their urban focus clear in their titles and include only articles dealing with some aspect of cities: *Journal of Urban History* (Beverly Hills, 1975–), *Urban History Yearbook* (Leicester, U.K., 1974–), *Urban History Review* (Winnipeg, Canada, 1972–), and *Die Alte Stadt* (formerly *Zeitschrift für Stadtgeschichte*; Stuttgart, Germany, 1974–1977). In addition, articles on urban history appear in almost every major history journal, including the *Journal of American History* (Bloomington, Indiana, 1914–), *American*

Historical Review (Washington, D.C. 1895–), *History Today* (London, 1951–) and the *Journal of Interdisciplinary History* (Cambridge, Massachussetts, 1970–). The editorial statement of *Journal of Urban History* demonstrates the diversity with which historians examine cities: the journal is receptive to "varied methodologies and [is] concerned about the history of cities and urban societies in all periods of human history and in all geographical areas of the world." Accordingly, the articles range from discussions of cities as systems, to analyses of urban communities, to examinations of policies, laws, regulations, and demography.

Geography and anthropology are the two other social sciences with a current interest in urban history. Two representative periodicals are *Geographical Review* (New York, 1916–) and *Urban Anthropology* (New York, 1972–). The first focuses on issues such as perception, urban morphologies, regionalism, and distribution, and the latter mostly analyzes urban rituals and everyday life. In addition, interdisciplinary journals in the social sciences and humanities frequently publish research on the history of cities. Examples include the period-specific *Journal of Medieval and Renaissance Studies* (Durham, North Carolina, 1971–) and the area-specific *International Journal of Middle Eastern Studies* (London, 1970–).

Urban history is a common topic in planners' journals. Aimed at the current practice of urban planning and urban design, the articles in these journals consider history merely as a reference point. The historian's perspective is presented with a general aim to support (and sometimes guide) contemporary practice. The agenda is particularly clear in the pages of the *Journal of the American Planning Association* (formerly the *Journal of the American Institute of Planners*, Washington, D.C., 1925–), *Environment and Planning B: Planning and Design* (London, 1974–), *Town Planning Review* (Liverpool, U.K., 1910–), *Ekistics* (Athens, 1955–), *Urbanisme* (formerly *La Vie Urbane*, Paris, 1919–), and *Urbanistica* (Turin, Italy, 1932–34, 1949–). Both *Ur-*

anisme and Urbanistica deal with urban preservation and, limiting themselves to France and Italy respectively, study historic centers to investigate possibilities for adaptive reuse. The oldest of the planning journals, *Town Planning Review*, has a unique significance for the study of urban history. Published since 1910, it serves as a valuable primary source on planning in the 20th century, especially in terms of the earlier debates on the Garden City movement, on the first international expositions of urban planning, and on new town developments in England.

Also geared to urban designers, though broader in scope, is *Space and Society/Spazio e Societá* (edited by Giancarlo de Carlo; Milan and Cambridge, Massachussetts, 1977–), whose pages include formal analyses of historic monuments, archaeological reports, anthropological investigations of vernacular building types, and reports on the political and ideological connotations of planning decisions.

Two planning journals stand out for their efforts to integrate different disciplines, with a special emphasis on bridging the gap between urban history and planning practice. *Urbanism Past and Present* (Milwaukee, 1975–), originally aimed at planners and those interested in public policy, added historians to its board in 1975–76. The mission statement establishes the journal's goals clearly: "to break down the barriers that separate the various academic disciplines which deal with urban development in order to create a more unified understanding of urban society." Urbanization, effects of industrialization on cities, and sociocultural aspects of urban settlements are the leading topics, followed by debates on theories and methods of urban history. A much younger journal (first published in 1986), *Planning Perspectives* (London, 1986–), also brings together different disciplines: "Subjects covered link the interests of those working in economic, social, and political history, historical geography and historical sociology with those in the applied fields of public health, housing, construction, architecture and town planning." The editors, Gordon Cherry and
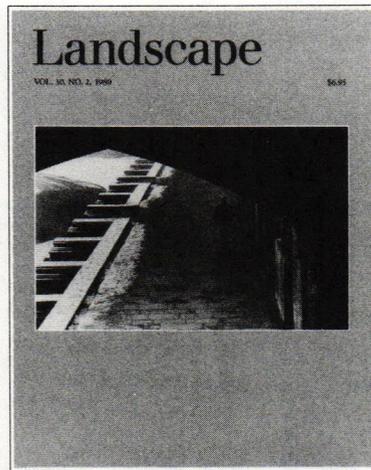
Anthony Sutcliffe, are familiar to students of urban history not only through their numerous publications on the topic, but also through their efforts to encourage interdisciplinary dialogue in urban history in edited volumes and conferences. [1]

Articles by architectural historians appear sporadically in the above-mentioned journals as well as in various architectural periodicals. In addition, a handful of architectural journals regularly publish articles by architectural historians on cities. Two such periodicals are Italian: *Storia Urbana* (Milan, 1977–) and *Storia della Cittá* (Rome, 1976–). Both focus on the physicality of cities, although they approach the subject from different perspectives. *Storia Urbana's* main themes are urban growth and development, building activities, housing, and population studies, while *Storia della Cittá* organizes its issues thematically, varying from general topics such as "Life in Cities," to place-specific documentations and analyses, and technological implications and applications. Both, but especially the latter publication, borrow methods and data from other disciplines such as sociology, anthropology, ethnography, economics, and literature.

The various approaches architectural historians use in urban history are perhaps best illustrated in the *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians* (Philadelphia, 1941–). This "official" journal of architectural history in the United States has welcomed a significant increase in the number of articles on cities in the past two decades.

Although there is a definite "architectural" (read "formal") dimension to their studies, architectural historians do not have one established way to study cities. First, the physical scope is extremely varied—from the study of an urban square or even a single monument in urban context to the study of the entire urban form. Second, the perspective from which the physical form is studied shifts dramatically, for example, economics, politics, sociocultural issues, anthropological analyses, perception studies, and studies of processes. Often, more than one approach is used. Meanwhile, the more traditional formal analysis is still largely practiced.

Two periodicals outside the established academic categories present evocative examinations of historical urban environments. The essays in *Landscape* (Berkeley, 1951–) explore topics often ignored in other publications, including analyses of popular urban architecture, building typologies, and urban imagery. *Places*, jointly published by UC Berkeley and MIT (Berkeley, and Cambridge, Massachussetts, 1983–), is concerned with understanding "the sense of place." Contributors explore the inherent content and meaning of urban environments. [2]

An analysis of the vocabulary employed in different disciplines, especially as represented in the above-mentioned journals, helps summarize the survey of topics and approaches. Certain buzzwords occur regularly in journals of the same discipline. However, other terms repeatedly cross boundaries and point to the communality of some themes: industrialization, urban growth, urbanization, and migration. Although less studied by architectural historians, industrialization and its consequences constitute a popular topic in other academic disciplines. Historians share with anthropologists a vocabulary loaded with terms associated with the study of societies: class, social problems, ethnicity, communities, as well as urban change and urban culture. This vocabulary frequently penetrates the writings of architectural historians, illustrating a cross-fertilization of methods and knowledge from the social sciences. Plan-

ners' catchwords display their pragmatic tendencies: policy, forecasting, speculation, revitalization, rehabilitation. Architectural historians' vocabulary echoes their long-term concern with forms and individual buildings: style, monument, scale, aesthetic, urban fabric.

The type of visual material used in periodicals is equally telling about the selected approaches. Publications dealing with planning naturally are filled with maps, graphs, and diagrams, some computer-generated. *Urbanistica*, among other planning journals, commissions valuable new maps and plans of historic environments. Architectural history periodicals rely heavily on plans and photographs of cities and buildings, too often devoid of human occupants. In contrast, journals with a social approach to urban history use illustrations not as primary documents integral to the text, but as side information; old photographs, engravings, and paintings are preferred over maps and plans. In journals of history illustrative materials are used less often than in journals of other disciplines. For example, the *Urban History Yearbook* has no illustrations.

The temporal framework binds the various disciplines. In accordance with the overall interest in industrialization and urban growth, the 19th and 20th centuries are the primary eras of examination. Within this framework, the industrialization period receives the most attention. This is true for architectural historians as well, although the study of Renaissance and Baroque urbanism still forms a great part of their repertoire. Notable by omission are articles on ancient urban settings. While modern cities are examined by scholars from a number of disciplines, cities of the distant past largely remain the province of archaeologists.

In the majority of periodicals dealing with urban history, the geographical focus is dominantly defined by the Western world, particularly the United States and Western Europe. Certain journals, for example, the *Canadian Urban History Review* and the Italian *Urbanistica*, are admittedly locale-specific. They include articles on other regions when the subject relates to
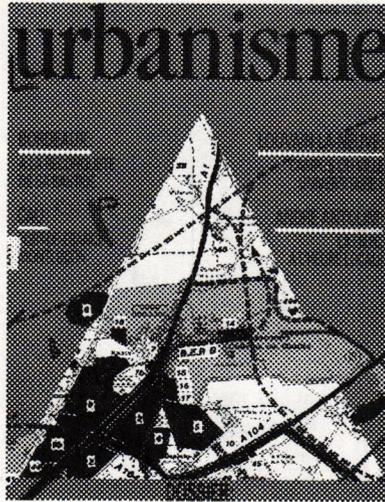
their local studies. Only a few periodicals, among them *Comparative Urban Research* (New York) and *Ekistics* (Athens), are committed to covering non-Western material. Others may occasionally publish articles on various aspects of non-Western cities, but the majority of articles deal with colonial cities of the 19th and 20th centuries and thus are studied in reference to the West.

This multidisciplinary coverage of urban history creates an obvious problem since the research by scholars in one field often remains unknown to those in other fields. Several periodicals attempt to remedy this problem. The *Journal of Urban History* takes an activist position, promoting debates and discussions. It features interviews with notable urban historians as well as roundtable discussions on important books. *Comparative Urban Research* is a "journal of new ideas devoted to the development and maintenance of a network of communication among scholars and others interested in the comparative study of urban areas throughout the world." To this end, the journal includes a lengthy section on conferences and meetings on urban topics, and frequently devotes entire issues to conference papers. Similarly, the *Urban History Yearbook* includes conference reports, reviews of periodical articles and recent theses. *Urbanism Past and Present* encourages contributors to debate theories of urban history in sections titled "Research and Methods" and "The Peripatetic Urbanist." In *Urbanisme*, a special section (begun

September 1983) reports on city planning abroad, especially as it affects historical urban environments.

The periodicals surveyed here support a simple premise: urban environments are multivalent. The innumerable factors determining urban form call for widely different approaches and, especially, for a wider exchange between disciplines. As part of their editorial policy, many journals advocate an interdisciplinary approach to the examination of cities. For example, a 1984 editorial in the *Journal of Urban History* stressed the importance of interdisciplinary work and encouraged dialogue with urban sociology and anthropology, urban economics, and urban geography. The *Journal of Historical Geography* (New York, 1975–) "welcomes articles on all aspects of historical geography and related topics on the borders of geography, history, archaeology, anthropology, economics, sociology, literature, art and architecture."

Despite this explicit advocacy, a confusion about the nature of "interdisciplinary work" pervades the scholarship. Does interdisciplinary research mean borrowing random information from other disciplines or relying on techniques and methods outside one's own field? Does it involve using interpretative works as sources or going to the "primary documents?" How does one evaluate the validity of the sources, the methods, and the interpretations in another field? Should we turn to teamwork carried out by people in different disciplines?

Perhaps because of these ambiguities, most methodological exchange is still tentative. Too often, authors borrow from other disciplines while maintaining established biases. Thus, "outsiders" acquire the weaknesses of the unfamiliar field as well as the strengths. For example, anthropologists and planners experimenting with historical methods tend to adopt the current temporal and geographic elitism of those fields. When proponents of one discipline borrow from another, they are likely to do so within closely complementary areas. Thus historians are more likely to adopt the data and methods of other social scientists. Though interested in the workings of cities, social

historians tend to minimize urban form, which remains a primary concern of architectural historians and planners interested in history. This latter group experiments with techniques and data from virtually every discipline to explain the built form.

Operating in the best of times, urban history today is full of life. The journals reviewed repeatedly and exuberantly express the great potential of urban history studies. Simultaneously, they express an underlying discomfort with the unbridled range of exploration. Urban historians have always jumped the barriers between disciplines, yet the frequency of such trespass in contemporary journals has created a sense of uneasiness. Many articles and statements of purpose call for the establishment of an identifiable interdisciplinary approach as a means to legitimize experimentation. A monolithic, clearly defined interdisciplinary method for urban history does not exist. In reality, the interdisciplinary nature of most periodicals is in the bringing together of articles with different perspectives. The broadening of approaches and the breakdown of territoriality, including the territoriality of interdisciplinism, will stimulate continued exploration. The challenge of urban history will be to build upon current theory, knowledge, and methodology while maintaining the liberating momentum of the past decade.

1. For example, see A. Sutcliffe, editor, *The Metropolis, 1890–1940* (London: Mansell, 1984) and *The Rise of Modern Urban Planning, 1800–1914* (New York: St. Martins Press, 1980), and G. Cherry, editor, *Shaping an Urban World* (New York: St. Martins Press, 1977).

2. The content of historical urban forms is increasingly explored by semioticians, both in periodicals associated with semiotics (for example, *Journal of Symbolic Anthropology* and *Semiotique de l'espace*) and in certain architectural journals such as *L'Architecture d'Aujourd'hui*.

Marta Gutman

PARIS 1979–1989

SABINE FACHARD

Paris 1979–1989 documents and describes the *grands projets*, nine major planning and architectural projects that François Mitterand's government has built in Paris over the past ten years. [1] Written in French and English and profusely illustrated with black-and-white and color photographs and drawings of the nine building projects, *Paris 1979–1989* serves both as a catalogue of the exhibition of the same name and as an independent publication. Disappointingly, the book disregards the government's significant achievements in the construction of housing and other infill buildings during the same period and lacks serious analytical discussion of the government's public building program. It simply promotes and publicizes the monumental *grands projets*.

Altogether, it will cost approximately $3 billion to design and build the *grands projets*. The French government is justifiably proud of the scale of this effort, commenting in publicity releases that the investment, "in the face of the current crises of industrial countries represents . . . the vitality of architecture and the skills of developers, engineers, and builders." Remarkably, their construction has survived France's hard economic times of the mid-1980s. During the 1986 election, Jacques Chirac, the first mayor of Paris since the Commune and leader of one of the conservative parties, threatened that if elected prime minister he would halt work on the new "people's opera" at the Place de la Bastille, the City of Music, and the Great Arch as an economy move. The threats proved empty. Even after his party won (producing the famed "cohabitation" period during which Mitterand and Chirac jointly ran the country), construction of all of the *grands projets* continued. These projects do indicate a commitment to culture on the part of the French government that outdistances efforts in other western European or American cities. However, the quality of the work, both at the level of urban and architectural design, is uneven, at best.

In Paris, at least in the historical center, broad vistas and boulevards, lined by anonymous infill buildings, visually and physically connect monumental buildings and public open spaces. This tradition of
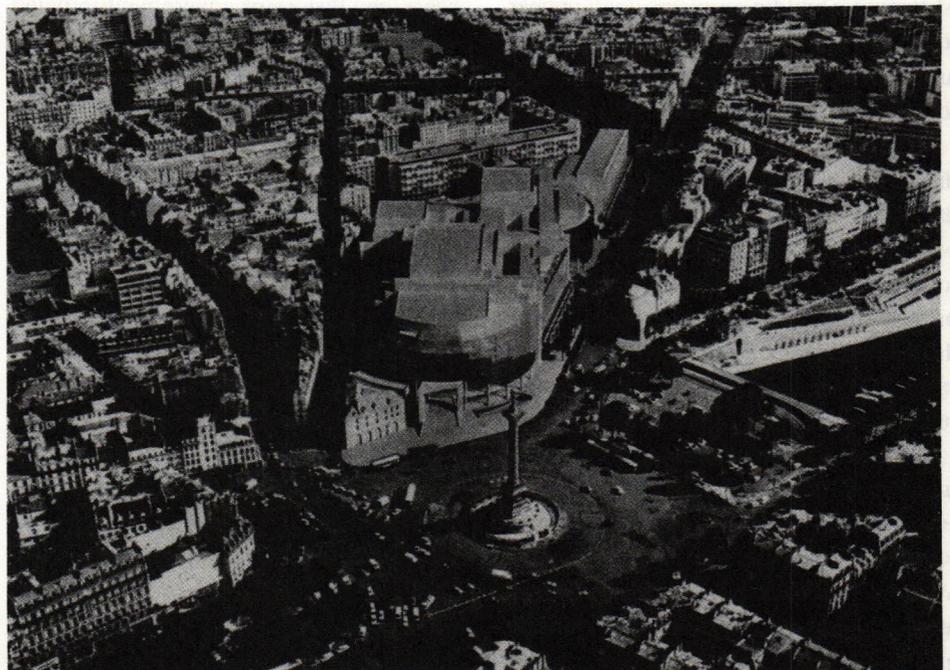
Photomontage of a model of the Bastille Opera and the Place de la Bastille; Bastille Opera, architect Carlos Ott (1976–). (From *Paris 1979–1989;* courtesy Dumage, studio Littré.)

making cities, for better or for worse, sporadically informs the positioning of the contemporary projects within Paris. The Great Arch at La Défense and the renovation of the Louvre articulate the great east-west axis that continues to form one of the city's two major spines. The shape of Jean Nouvel's Arab World Institute derives in part from the program and in part from several major urban conditions—a bend in the Seine, the location of the building next to the Science Faculty of the University of Paris, and the monuments on the nearby Ile de la Cité. The design of Bernard Tschumi's Parc de la Villette attempts to order a vast site at the northern edge of the city—albeit with a pattern that could not be more opposed to that of the historic city. The other *grands projets* are independent events at the urban scale, placed on available sites or within existing buildings. No larger-scale urban gestures, except for preexisting ones, serve to connect them with the city. As Luciana Miotto states in a recent article in *Space and Society*, "unlike the achievements of Haussmann in Paris, Mitterand's building projects don't appear to be the outcome of any plan of renewal or an urban strategy for the city. They are localized, uncoordinated developments."

At the exhibition, a large walk-in model displayed the nine new projects and located the buildings within the city. Intentionally or not, this model also showed just how independent of each other many of the projects are and how oblivious many are to the urban infrastructure in any but token and symbolic ways. One wishes that the book included reproductions of the model; instead a schematic map identifies the positions of the nine projects, and a very brief essay describes, but does not analyze, their impact on the urban scale.

As removed from the traditional aesthetics of French urbanism as the design of the *grands projets* may be, it makes sense that this large-scale construction program is now taking place in France. As Nathan
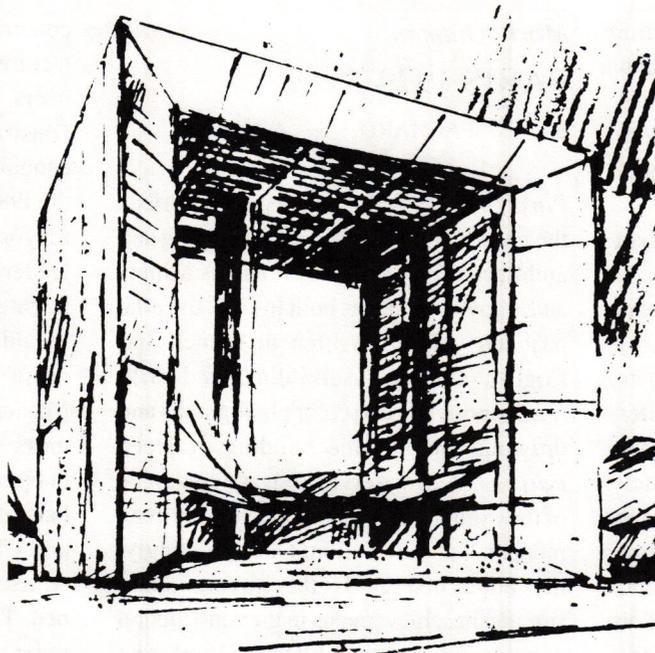
Competition sketch of the Great Arch at La Défense, Johan Otto von Spreckelsen (1983). (From *Paris 1979–1989*.)

Glaser and others have commented, French citizens tolerate, even demand, government sponsorship of cultural activity to a much greater extent than occurs in other western democracies. This is true with respect to supporting the construction of public buildings and parks as well as in patronage in the fine and performing arts. In addition, France has a long history of government-initiated building, especially in Paris and its environs; the public works of the Bourbon kings and Haussmann's rebuilding of Paris are examples. François Mitterand has played on both of these traditions as the socialist government has supported the construction of the *grands projets*, promoting them as his government's gift to the people of France. In reality, an earlier Gaullist government, under president Valérie Giscard d'Estaing, conceived of some of the buildings at La Villette and the Great Arch at La Défense. The Mitterand government completed these original proposals and initiated the balance on its own. [2]

The tradition of government sponsorship of public works in Paris produced a city where buildings are located for political reasons as much as for urbanistic ones, and this continues in the contemporary work. The government has placed many of the

new projects—including the Opera the Finance Ministry, and the Park at La Villette—in the eastern and outer districts of the city because major civic and cultural institutions and public places have not been built in these districts, historically the home of the city's working class. The socialist government seeking to democratize the experience of culture (and to strengthen its own political base), either proposed or supported the building of new civic and cultural institutions in these neighborhoods. Ironically, the siting of the new projects has been a double-edged sword. While it has decentralized public buildings and spaces, it has also encouraged gentrification to spread from the city center to the eastern and outer arrondissements, and overly ambitious programs have produced bulky buildings that demonstrate their cultural value through size rather than aesthetic quality. The government proclaims its commitment to culture, but it has demonstrated little interest in nurturing innovation or experimentation, with the exception of Bernard Tschumi's Parc de la Villette and Jean Nouvel's Arab World Institute. For the most part, the government has commissioned buildings whose aesthetics and programs fall comfortably within the range of projects normally sponsored by a corporate capitalist clientele.

The Bastille Opera exemplifies these problems. The design of Charles Garnier's Opera, a preeminent symbol of upper middle-class Parisian life, has been problematic from its inception. The Mitterand government decided to build a new and bigger theater, "the people's opera," ostensibly because a bigger hall with a larger, more efficiently organized backstage would lower per capita production costs, thus reducing ticket prices and making opera accessible to more people. In addition, its new site, along the eastern edge of the Place de la Bastille, the site of the fortress stormed during the French Revolution, would symbolize bringing opera closer to the people.

Historically, the adjacent faubourg St. Antoine was a working-class district and a main seat of left-wing activity in the city.

As much as cultural redistribution is a laudable goal, the siting of the building has only encouraged gentrification to spread in the faubourg St. Antoine, and the building's final design is one of the least successful of the *grands projets*. To some extent the design problems stem from the choice of the site. The Place de la Bastille is a difficult space, dominated by the large column at its center that commemorates the revolution of 1830, surrounded by widely varying architectural and urban conditions, and notorious for the amount of traffic that pours through it daily. Moreover, the massive new building, given a large, irregular footprint, was required to house three theaters—a new opera hall, a theater dedicated to the performance of experimental music, and a rehearsal hall—in a predetermined layout produced by specialists in efficient backstage design. In effect, the theater layout, coupled with zoning requirements, determined the building's form as a massive pile, leaving Carlos Ott the task of designing a thin layer of façades, public circulation, and interiors, including the decoration of the auditoriums. By first breaking the corner of building—to accommodate two undistinguished 18th-century buildings, as required by the competition program—Ott fragmented the building, apparently to reduce its massiveness. He then eroded the façades of the building into a series of layers that articulate the entry sequences into the main auditoriums. These cosmetic moves do not make a particularly beautiful building, nor do they ameliorate the spatial fragmentation and disintegration already existing at the Place de la Bastille. Ironically, the 18th-century buildings abutting the Opera site have been rebuilt in concrete, mimicking the design of the original buildings. Presumably the construction process of the large Opera complex undermined their structural integrity.

The chatty, acritical text about the Bastille Opera, much of which the architect wrote, characterizes the written material in the rest of *Paris 1979–1989*. No critical
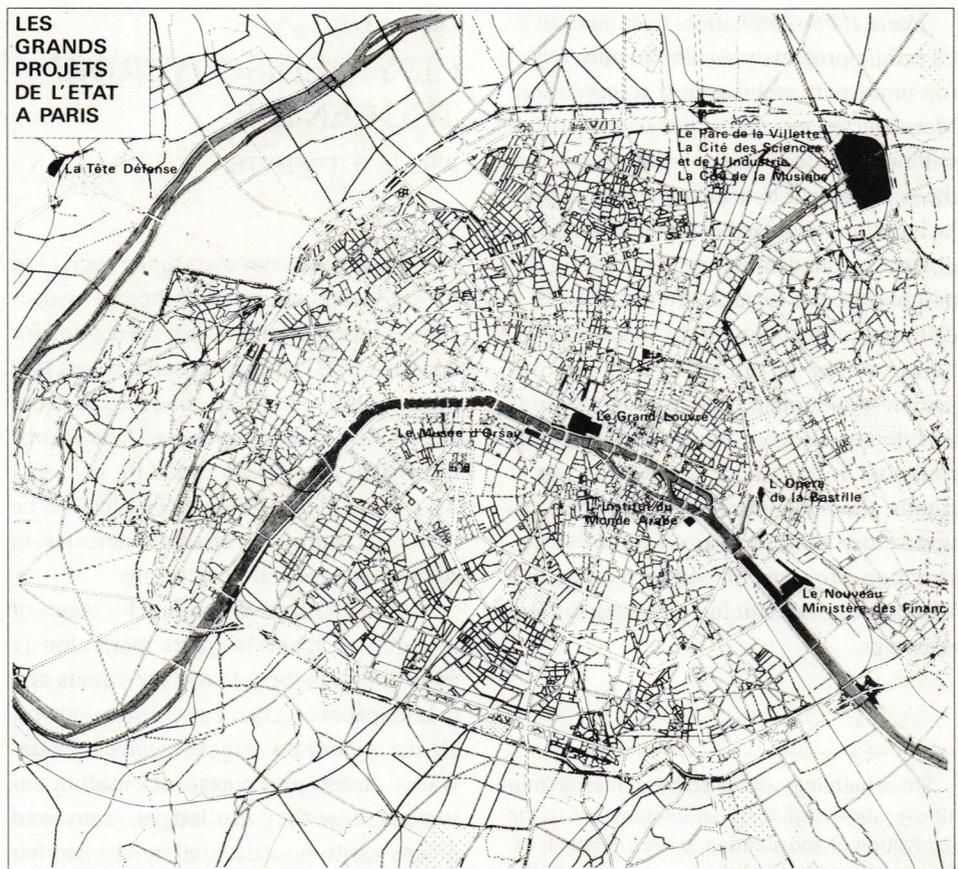
Location of the *grands projets* in Paris. (From *Paris 1979–1989*.)

essays, such as those written recently by François Chaslin, place the buildings in context or compare the French designs with similar work elsewhere, especially Japan and Germany. On the contrary, interviews, building descriptions, and general statements about design intentions from the architects prevail. The text also contains unfortunate typographical errors and mistranslations. At the end of the book are brief biographies of the designers, and useful charts identify each building's program, cost, size, construction systems, design and construction timetables, and engineers and other consultants.

The well-reproduced photographs and drawings dramatically present significant images of each of the *grands projets*. Yet it is still very difficult for the reader, especially the layperson, to compare the size, scale, and urban impact of the different works. Seemingly, the drawings and photographs were produced by each architectural firm for its clients; no new graphic work was commissioned for the book, making

consistent and uniform documentation of the projects impossible. As a consequence, visual material essential to the understanding of the different projects is missing; for example, the documentation for the Arab World Institute lacks a site plan.

Misleadingly titled *Paris 1979–1989*, the book does not present, or even indicate, the range of work constructed by the government in Paris during the past ten years. Unlike many other publications, it ignores all of the fabric building—moderate- and low-income housing, schools, community centers—that this government has constructed mostly in the eastern and outer arrondissements. Much of this work, designed by such architects as Antoine Grumbach, Jean-Pierre Buffi, and Edith Gerard, is excellent and as worthy of critical attention as the best of the new monumental public buildings. It is highly ironic that a government, intent on publicizing its attempts to democratize high culture, ignores its own significant achievements in smaller-scale building. [3]

Paris 1979–1989 infers that monumental public projects provide the only realm for important architectural intervention. Moreover, by presenting the *grands projets* without significant analysis and discussion, the book asks us to accept as fact that public buildings ought to be monumental urban objects isolated from and dominating the neighborhoods around them. This is a difficult philosophy to accept in Paris, whose center is full of exactly the opposite—monuments and public buildings architecturally coordinated with the surrounding fabric (and vice versa). As it stands, the book does little more than advertise the Mitterand government's construction program of public monuments with a group of enticing photographs and drawings.

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1. These buildings, designed by architects from all over the world, make an impressive list: the renovation of and addition to the Louvre (I. M. Pei and Partners) and the construction of the Bastille Opera (Carlos Ott), the Great Arch at La Défense (Johan Otto von Spreckelsen), the Ministry of Finances (Paul Chemetov and Borja Huidobro), the City of Music (Christian de Portzamparc), the Orsay Museum (Gae Aulenti and ACT Architecture), the Arab World Institute (Jean Nouvel and Architecture Studio), La Villette Park (Bernard Tschumi), and the Center for Science and Industry (Adrien Fainsilber). The book also describes, in far less detail, similar proposals in other French provincial cities, such as Roland Castro's proposal for the National Center for the Comic Strip and Image in Angoulême and Mario Botta's proposal for the Center for Book, Image, and Sound in Ville-urbanne.

2. See Julia Trilling, "Architecture as Politics," *The Atlantic* 252 (October 1983), pp. 131-35, and Jane Kramer, "Letter from Europe," *The New Yorker* 64 (April 25, 1988) pp. 74-82.

3. *Progressive Architecture* devoted its entire July 1987 issue to discussing housing, innovative small-scale commercial work, and the *grands projets*. *Archithèse* did a similar issue in April 1988. Several articles that analyze the new Parisian housing have also appeared in *Lotus* (no. 41 and no. 51).

PARIS: 1979–1989, Sabine Fachard, Rizzoli, 1988, 192 pp., illus., $37.50 paper.

Daniel Gregory

CITY: REDISCOVERING THE CENTER

WILLIAM H. WHYTE

This book opens our eyes to the social life of American cities and washes away decades of misconceptions about designing for downtown. By going beyond housing and the neighborhood to examine the life of the street itself, it takes up where Jane Jacobs left off in *The Death and Life of Great American Cities*. This book should be required reading for anyone interested in social behavior and civic beauty.

Author William Whyte and his teams of researchers spent 16 years meticulously recording how people use the streets and public spaces of American cities and towns. He describes how people behave on sidewalks, streets and plazas, at building entrances; how they use ledges, steps, and greenswards; how they talk to one another and maneuver through a seeming maelstrom during rush hour; why they avoid certain open spaces and are attracted to others. With time-lapse photography and motion pictures, Whyte has studied the most crowded street corners in New York and elsewhere. The result is a window into our own urban behavior and a new understanding of why some urban spaces function more successfully than others. The lessons are manifold for city planners, architects, landscape architects, developers, merchants, and the general public.

Reading Whyte is a little like reading Dickens or Dostoevski: he reveals a panorama whose subject is humanity, with vivid street scenes at its heart. You meet the characters that animate our sidewalks: entertainers, vendors, "noontime schmoozers," beggars, the "Mr. Magoos," "the familiar strangers," to name only a few in the metropolitan cast. You see the familiar in a new way or as if for the first time. Whyte is the J. B. Jackson of urban design.

The questions he asks are so obvious no one bothered to ask them before. Whyte not only asks the questions, he takes the time to
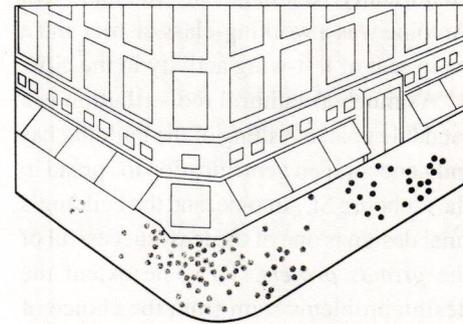
Location of street conversations lasting two minutes or more at Saks Fifth Avenue and Fiftieth Street; note main concentration at corner. (From *City*.)

uncover answers. For example, how do people use the sidewalk? Pedestrians, says Whyte, tend to stop and converse in the center of the foot-traffic stream. They do not move to the side as one might expect, and yet the stoppage does not slow the traffic. Other pedestrians allow for it. Or, what makes plazas successful? People. What draws people? People. How do you draw people? With seating, food, and activity. Or try this provocative statement: "It is a well-known 'fact' that small cities are friendlier than big ones. Our research indicates that the reverse is more likely to be the case."

In addition: "People in big cities walk faster than people in small cities." "Walls are put up in the mistaken notion that they will make a space feel safer. They make it feel isolated and gloomy." "A sign of a great place is triangulation. This is the process by which some external stimulus provides a linkage between people and prompts strangers to talk to each other as if they were not."

To explore cities with William Whyte is to rediscover our own common sense. Think of this book as a sort of flip side to Tom Wolfe's *Bonfire of the Vanities*: call it "Fountain of the Civic Virtues." As we search for ways to improve the function and civility of our public spaces we can do no better than to start with this book. Don't leave home without it.

CITY: REDISCOVERING THE CENTER, William H. Whyte, Doubleday, 1988, 386 pp., illus., $24.95.

Peter Bosselmann

SOMETHING HAPPENS, BECAUSE SOMETHING HAPPENS, BECAUSE SOMETHING HAPPENS

Through the center of Copenhagen runs a one-mile-long public way—not one street, but a string of streets, running more or less east-west from town hall square to the harbor. The Danes call it *Strøget*. In the fall of 1962, the city turned Strøget into a pedestrian way, the first of its kind in Scandinavia. The critics were not optimistic; after all, "Danes are not Italians: Danes would not stand idly conversing with fellow townsmen and women in the middle of a square." Five years later, Jan Gehl's 1968 study of Strøget demonstrated that his fellow Danes know exactly how to use public spaces. There were earlier signs of success: in 1965, the Copenhagen police department demanded that an extra coarse layer of asphalt be laid onto the street; they could no longer police the many sidewalk painters who "chalked" along Strøget. In 1967, to celebrate Copenhagen's 800th birthday, the townspeople set up the "World's Longest Table" right down the middle of the street. Finally, by 1968 city administrators were convinced the pedestrians were there to stay. They ordered new tiles laid from one side of the street to the other along the one-mile stretch. Nothing much else was done, no "designed" street furniture was constructed, just a unified level pavement.

Since then, the city has added more pedestrian ways leading away from the main route, connecting through-passages to squares and bus stops along the periphery. The amount of space given to pedestrians has tripled since 1962, and so has the number of people using these streets. Copenhagen's population has actually declined, but tourists have come in steady numbers throughout these eighteen years. On a warm summer day, sixty-six thousand people walk down Strøget.

Jan Gehl's *Life Between Buildings* is not specifically about Strøget, although his research provided the rationale for the pedestrianization of the Copenhagen City Center. Neither is the book about planning residential areas in Denmark in general, although good and bad examples are discussed. Gehl's message reaches beyond specific projects: the book is about what we need to know and how to design the physical qualities of the public realm.

The Swedish architect Ralph Eskine writes in his introduction, "Gehl's message has been developed with an increased concentration and here achieves the characteristic of timeless truth." He admits that Gehl's book has inspired him in his work, as it has many other Scandinavian architects and town planners. Reedited and translated into English, *Life Between Buildings* has been a Northern European classic for more than ten years. Its subject is the entire spectrum of activities that make communal space in cities and residential areas meaningful and attractive; its central argument, that public space should be designed to allow people to come together:

> To see and hear each other, to meet, is in itself a form of contact, a social activity. This connection is important in relation to physical planning. Although the physical framework does not have a direct influence on the quality, content and intensity of social contacts, architects and planners can affect the possibilities for meeting, seeing and hearing people—possibilities that take on a quality of their own and become important as background and starting points for other forms of contact.

In other words, people attract people: "something happens, because something happens, because something happens."

Gehl also illustrates the need for good transition spaces between people's homes and the public street. Such spaces should not only facilitate access between inside and outside, they should also provide areas for lingering directly next to the entrance, and space for other activities to take place there. For Gehl, good transition spaces are a design principle; he calls them "soft edges," a physical, functional, psychological, and symbolic transition between public
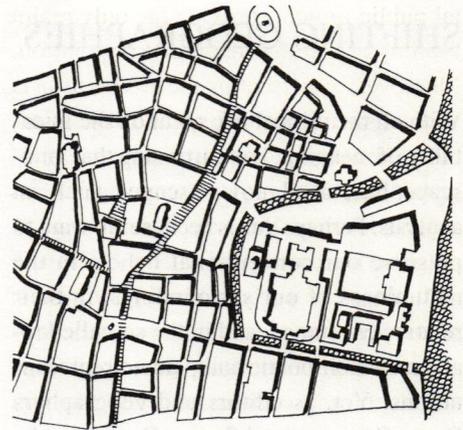
Inner-city area of Copenhagen. (From *Life Between Buildings*.)

and private. In the inner cities and in commercial areas, he rejects strongly the notion of drawing people into areas that are not truly public:

> Recent years have seen a marked tendency to create seemingly public spaces inside private buildings, shopping areas, and so on. Private shipping arcades crossing urban blocks, underground and above ground street systems, and huge indoor "squares" in hotels are examples. This trend, seen from a developer's point of view, may create very interesting perspectives, but seen from the point of view of the city, the result will almost always be a dispersal of people, and an effective closing in of people and activities, emptying the public spaces of human beings and interesting attractions. The city becomes depopulated, duller and more dangerous.

Of the 200 pages in this book, half contain excellent photographs by the author. Filled with good humor and imagination, this book reminds us that "life between buildings is both more relevant and more interesting to look at in the long run than any combination of colored concrete and staggered building forms." Now that Gehl's observations are available to architects and planners in this country, one hopes only to see them applied.

LIFE BETWEEN BUILDINGS: USING PUBLIC SPACE, Jan Gehl, Van Nostrand Reinhold, 1987 (first published in Danish: 1980), 202 pp., illus., $22.95 paper.

Andrea Kahn

SHIFTING GEOGRAPHIES

With all the critical ink spent on the instability of meaning, it is surprising that landscape has, until now, escaped such an analysis. Perhaps this is because we want to preserve our conventional beliefs in the naturalness of our surroundings, in their relative constancy, and in the so-called realism of their poetic and painted representations. Yet, as editors and geographers Denis Cosgrove and Steven Daniels make clear in *The Iconography of Landscape,* landscapes are neither natural nor real and even state parks are constructed images presenting the appearance of naturalness while projecting a system of symbols embodying political as well as ideological values.

Gathering scholars from various disciplines, this 14-essay collection explores landscape as symbolic interpretation and promotes a "deep" reading of its representation. The editors' introduction draws upon Erwin Panofsky's notion of iconology (rather than iconography, as the title suggests), an art historical method to ascertain those underlying principles in a work of art "which reveal the basic attitude of a nation, a period, a class, a religious or philosophical persuasion."[1] Interpreting images as symbolical values, Panofsky described iconology as the discovery and interpretation of these values, often unknown to the artist and at times emphatically different from what he or she consciously intended to express. Outlining their critical position, Cosgrove and Daniels supplement Panofsky's views with contemporary art criticism and literary theory, characterizing landscape as a "flickering" and "unstable" text whose meaning is created through its various interpretations.

In an effort to trace explicit as well as intrinsic landscape symbolism, the collection explores how representations of nature inform and are a product of their broader cultural context. Ruskin, Foucault, Barthes, and Baxandall are among its many theoretical and critical sources. Many of the essays question conventional conceptions of landscape and their range of content makes the book itself an eclectic landscape of ideas.

At first glance the collection divides into two sections: the natural and the built environment. It is further orchestrated into paired pieces marked by thematic intersections, methodological overlaps, or congruent subject matter. Peter Fuller's "The Geography of Mother Nature"—a call to rekindle the connection between aesthetic values and our response to nature—is immediately followed by Douglas Davies's catalogue of religious tree symbolism—recalling a dependence upon natural phenomenon as a source of symbolic imagery. Together they signal a pattern of critical adjacencies.

Two essays consider the picturesque. Stephen Daniels's discussion of the political iconography of woodlands in Georgian England provides a fine introduction to John Lucas's close reading of the poetry of Wordsworth and Clare. With Daniels's description of the twofold values of the picturesque as both "a critical sensibility that actively engages political and social issues, indeed articulates them comprehensively in landscape terms" and "a complacent sensibility which regards landscape as something separate from and opposed to human society [deploying] its imagery to obscure social and economic issues," Lucas's interpretation of Clare's poetry as an anti-picturesque and political critique of the Enclosure acts is clearly put into context.

The extent to which landscape representation records or suppresses overt changes in the natural environment also links Hugh Prince's "Art and Agrarian Change, 1710–1815" to David Fraser's analysis of Joseph Wright's paintings of late 18th-century industrial scenes. Tying landscape painting to national identity, Trevor Pringle's "The Privation of History" shows how Queen Victoria's patronage enabled Sir Edwin Landseer to paint images of royalty happily romping in the Scottish highlands. These paintings mythified that landscape and supported England's interests to restrain Scottish nationalist sentiment and repress its social and political tensions. In light of Pringle's argument, one wonders what myths lurk behind the Canadian landscape paintings read by David Osborne as crucial to the

Contrasting improved and unimproved landscapes; Benjamin Pouncey after Thomas Hearne, from Richard Payne Knight, *The Landscape: A Didactic Poem* (1794). (From *Iconography of Landscape*.)

development of that country's national identity, or whether the rhetorical conventions analyzed by G. Malcolm Lewis in his study of 19th-century promotional brochures—extolling the virtues of the American Midwest—were perhaps more than a simple commercial masking of the specifics of geography.

Of the three essays extending the concept of landscape to cover the built environment, Eric Grant's overview of Egyptian revival architecture in Scotland suggests that the adoption of ancient symbolic motifs was an attempt "to throw off [Scotland's] isolation and jacobite history," further elaborating on the theme of national identity and landscape. Drawing on the notion of "city as stage," Mark Harrison contends that rituals of crowd formation in 19th-century English towns reinforced the importance of certain urban spaces while revaluing others not consciously designed to have symbolic impact. Harrison's interest in the "revisionist" powers of public gathering patterns obliquely connects to Penelope Woolfe's revisionist history of the Paris Opera. For Woolfe, landscape denotes a sociocultural environment as well as a physical one.

The two concluding essays consider mathematical and graphic conventions in landscape representation. Denis Cosgrove provides a comprehensively researched study of geometrical principles in the physical reclamation and painted representation of the Renaissance Veneto. His discussion of Chrisotopho Sorte—cartographer, surveyor, and painter—reveals correlations between technical, perceptual, and aesthetic understandings of Renaissance landscape. The harmony of these relationships is less politicized than the complicity between knowledge and representation presented in J. B. Harley's "Maps, Knowledge and Power" (the title alone bespeaks the influence of Michel Foucault). Harley posits cartography as a form of knowledge, describing maps as the "currency of political bargains" and "the graphic inventory and codification of ownership." He also discusses deliberate and unconscious distortions, cartographic "silences" which

support particular visions and historical claims. "Like the historian," Harley concludes, "the mapmaker has always played a rhetorical role in defining the configuration of power in society as well as recording their manifestations in the visible landscape. Any cartographic history which ignores the political significance of representation relegates itself to an 'ahistorical' history."

So concludes a "linear" reading of the *Iconography of Landscape*, disclosing careful editorial decisions; but collections also allow one to trace a more haphazard movement across the field of writing. With Harley's reminder that the representation of any territory will necessarily have political significance, gazing back over the collection in search of its politics leads to interpretations that, as Panofsky noted of iconology, disclose intrinsic meanings which may be unconscious on the part of the editors and authors. Of fourteen essays, only three escape the boundaries of the late British Empire. American landscape is given some attention but non-Western traditions are nowhere represented, and neither is contemporary landscape. Given the editor's broad conception of the field, the exclusion of garden, park, or cemetery design (traditional landscape architecture) is hard to overlook, as is the exclusion of designers or artists from a list of authors that includes geographers, art critics, theologians, and literary and dramatic scholars.

Omissions noted, Cosgrove and Daniels have nevertheless compiled an enlightening, interdisciplinary book that fulfills and perhaps even exceeds their aims. Not only does the *Iconography of Landscape* offer a "deep" reading of landscape images, in the end it also suggests that the definition of landscape may be as "flickering" and "unstable" as its interpretations.

1. Erwin Panofsky, "The History of Art as a Humanistic Discipline," introduction to *Meaning in the Visual Arts* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1955), p. 31.

THE ICONOGRAPHY OF LANDSCAPE, Denis Cosgrove and Steven Daniels, editors, Cambridge University Press, 1988, 318 pp., illus., $49.50.

*Christophe Girot*
AQUATECTURE
ANTHONY WYLSON

The domestication and commodification of water has in part led to its desecration in the modern environment. To use Ivan Illich's expression, water as commodity has become a mere "cleansing fluid" devoid of symbolism and respect. To write about water, particularly the world of built water, requires a significant amount of historical, technical, and philosophical accuracy. Leonardo da Vinci addressed the subject of water by postulating a method of observation and organization that looked at different scales and uses—from the smallest bead of water to the largest canals. Without a similar means of organization, the subject of water can become quite overwhelming and confusing to the reader.

Water is one of the most fundamental, yet least documented subjects in architectural design. It is usually viewed as a superfluous frill, when in fact water is an essential ingredient of the architecture of a city. From the title, Anthony Wylson's *Aquatecture* sounds like an invitation to a reverie on the architecture of water. Unfortunately, the book is deprived of such poetry, and is unlikely to meet the expectations of architects, designers, or historians seeking to learn more about architecture and water. The book is neither didactic nor scholarly, lacking both footnotes and bibliography. The text is an unorthodox mix of history and planning jargon that reads as a jumbled compilation of short essays on vaguely related topics concerning water environments.

Wylson confuses the architecture of water with waterfront planning. His main interests are clearly in the history and evolution of water recreation spaces and commercial leisure environments, with an emphasis on marinas, miniparks, and waterfront promenades. He would have done better to stick to that subject rather than try to take an encyclopedic approach to water.

The organization and balance of the
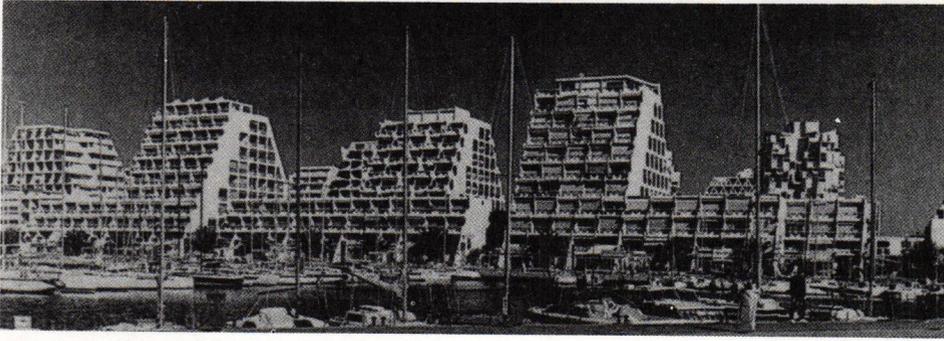
View across the marina to the pyramidic structures of La Grande Motte, Jean Balladur (1963). (From *Aquatecture*.)

book is incongruous. Besides being eclectically arranged, the chapters lack topical unity. In one chapter, for example, Wylson presents a relatively complete and useful inventory of important water gardens around the world. From a discussion of the gardens of Le Nôtre, he suddenly shifts to the water features of the Montreal and Osaka World expos. The transition is awkward and splits the chapter in two. Elsewhere, he neglects some important precedents for water architecture. For example, he begins the chapter on "Water Context" with a brief historical survey of how different civilizations approached water, yet fails to mention the extraordinary water systems of Java, Sri Lanka, Morocco, and Meso-America. He then goes on to describe examples of "water context" that have no relation to the historical trends mentioned earlier in the chapter. It is difficult to find "contextual" congruence between the history of built water and such rubrics as "visual and literary images" or "marine life and ecology." Similarly, the chapter on "Water Environment: Water Features" barely mentions the historical importance of Greek, Roman, and Islamic fountains and baths, on which our own architecture of water is primarily based.

There are serious historical misconceptions. On the Persian garden, Wylson writes: "Whereas the Persian garden used water for irrigation, the Islamic view of paradise [the word being a transliteration of "Pairidaeza" or walled garden] included a garden of delight, complete with cool spring and fountains." It is commonly accepted that the Persian garden existed long before the founding of Islam, and that the

use of water in these gardens was symbolic and religious, and not merely agricultural. The remains of King Cyrus's garden in Pasargadae, built over twenty-five hundred years ago, demonstrates a clear distinction between water used ornamentally and symbolically and water used for agricultural purposes. With respect to the Persian tradition, Wylson also confuses the role of the stone rill with that of the furrow.

Most of the text makes little reference to the sacred and domestic character of water in various cultures. Although Wylson mentions a few enchanting places such as the sacred cities of the Ganges, the gardens of Shalimar, and the Alhambra, the text in general tends to confuse ceremonial and sacred spaces with the concept of leisure spaces. Wylson does not identify any of the rites or beliefs pertaining to water, nor does he attempt to reveal the influence of such beliefs on the design of specific water

spaces.

In the chapter on "Water Environment: Resorts," Wylson encourages an international standardization of water leisure activity without regard to the commercial and cultural desecration of coastlines and other water environments. His praise of Club Med resorts as "imaginative holiday complexes" reveals a deep sociocultural and ethnocentric bias that runs throughout the text. Club Meds have all but obliterated any trace of local or regional sensitivity to the architecture of water. Another example of this bias is his unabashed admiration for the prefabricated concrete slab town of La Grande Motte, one of the most insensitive and vacuous examples of French seaside resort planning of the late 1960s. Although Wylson states that "The 'pyramidic' form of the buildings is particularly well related to the water square and coast line," this project cannot be considered "sensitive" either from a regional or an environmental standpoint. Similarly disheartening is Wylson's respect for Port Grimaud, a mock Provençal fishing village whose stagnant marina waters and numerous boutiques are worthy of Disneyland.

In other parts of the book, Wylson ignores the changes in cultural perception and attitude that have developed with the widespread commercialization of water. In describing the Wet 'n Wild water recreation center in Florida, Wylson asserts: "Water

Aerial view showing flume rides, water playground, wave pool, and Kamikaze speedslide at Wet 'n Wild, George Millay (1970). (From *Aquatecture*.)

fun parks have recaptured the simple enjoyment of the seaside, with the added interest of water rides and water play equipment in the character of family amusement parks." Yet in looking at the elaborate technical delights of a controlled water leisure environment, it is hard to imagine how such a place could recapture the "simple enjoyment of the seaside." Dependency on a framework of commercial leisure space to enjoy and explore water spells the death of the free-flowing imagination found in wild and unbound waters. Unfortunately, Wylson's book lacks critical insight when it addresses the "Disneyfication" of water. The passage on the Wet 'n Wild simply reads like an unrelenting point by point advertisement of different water devices, without any particular comment on the overall mood of the place.

Although Wylson concludes that "a responsible appreciation of the water element is fundamental to ecological and environmental values," the book does not discuss water either from a technical or an environmental standpoint. How can a brief overview of recreational water parks and waterfront beautification make readers become more ecologically responsible? The industrial use of water, its handling and treatment in an urban context, or its use in transportation are seldom mentioned. In light of Wylson's conclusion, it would have made sense to devote an entire chapter to the ordinary waters of the city. The fusion of urban fabric and water represents real "aquatecture," unlike the marinas and promenades featured by Wylson. It is not the presence of water that matters, but rather the kind of water that is present. As a whole, *Aquatecture* reads as a poorly illustrated travel brochure and will probably be more useful to commercial recreational planners than to architects or designers.

Spencer Parsons

GREEN ARCHITECTURE AND THE AGRARIAN GARDEN

BARBARA STAUFFACHER SOLOMON

Seven years ago Barbara Stauffacher Solomon wrote a short essay, *Green Architecture: Notes on the Common Ground*, in conjunction with an exhibition of her drawings at the Walker Art Center in Minneapolis. Those fortunate enough to obtain a copy of the pamphlet were treated to a collection of remarkable colored drawings and texts that revealed a very large talent and a sensitive eye. Reflecting her background as architect, painter, and garden enthusiast, the pamphlet focused on eight European gardens of the 16th and 17th centuries, each seen and drawn as never before. Elevations of villas unfolded from plans, villa plans merged into gardens, and garden plans revealed miniature regional maps as the author crafted her detail into a single, evocative image that was dense and luminous and filled an entire page. Text and historical background were brief. Solomon depended principally upon these composite drawings and her choice of geometrically-ordered gardens to explore the common ground between architecture and landscape architecture.

Many of the themes and some of the illustrations that appeared previously can be found in Solomon's newest book, *Green Architecture and the Agrarian Garden*. In addition to the villas Lante, Giulia, Barbaro, and other formal landscapes, she has added a set of picturesque gardens from England, France, and America as well as a collection of working farmsteads and urban settlements from Italy and America. Along with many new drawings, Solomon has also included numerous photographs and an expanded text. The most valuable addition is the group of agrarian and urban landscapes; without these the book would inevitably stall in the all-too-familiar battleground of the classical versus the romantic garden. The appearance of the long-ignored farmstead—precursor of formal gardens and settlements—both enlarges and alters the conventional treatment of the topic. A more comprehensive and diverse selection, punctuated by examples such as the plowed fields of the Palazzo Rossi and the vineyards of the town of Sonoma, California, causes the reader to reassess the differences and similarities among already familiar examples. Seen in this light, the western garden—whether classical, picturesque, or agrarian—emerges as a cultural artifact rather than merely a formal convention.

The graphic quality of this book is stunning. Most images, both photographic and drawn, are in color. The richly colored, full-page drawings are more accessible than the postage-stamp-sized photographs, some of which unfortunately are too dark to decipher critical detail. With responsibility for the overall book design, as well as its contents, the author brings a rigorous graphic control to the presentation of her material without allowing order and consistency to decline into uniformity or into a loss of complexity and surprise. In the table of contents four thematic chapters—Patterns, Gardens, Views, and Green Architecture—are announced by four rows of miniature drawings that follow the conventional sequence from top to bottom of the page. Simultaneously, the three categories of gardens to be examined—Formal, Picturesque, and Agrarian—can be read across the page, as the use of a grid informs the reader graphically of the author's intention to review each garden type within each thematic chapter of the book.

It is soon apparent what this book is and is not about. The introductory statement tells us that the book is about gardens and their relation to buildings. It is not about horticulture or gardening; little information is offered about the plant materials used or the effects of the different soils and climates in the various locations visited. Instead, it is an interpretive essay that offers a point of view derived from the accumulated facts of history and from the author's personal explorations through drawing, travel, and extensive reading. It not only presents each garden in terms of its relation—or lack

thereof—to adjacent buildings, but also explores other built landscapes (such as small towns and large cities) and speculates on the garden as a form of paradise. In short, it is an opinionated, provocative, eclectic, and unabashedly subjective book that seeks to change the way we perceive gardens.

Considering Solomon's predilection for geometry, evidenced by the book design, her preference for those landscape types where design is clearly imposed comes as no surprise. It is first remarked in those ghosts on the drawings that represent the artist's first attempts to impose order to the page and reveal her admiration for those marks on the land that form a visual record of the evolution of a garden. It is further suggested by her terse but highly-charged descriptions of the different garden types that appear in chapter two. We are told that those arranged in formal patterns are "ceremonial and cerebral, grand and glorious, privileged and pretentious," and that those agrarian gardens, both rural and urban, "are eternal (if ignored as ignoble), constant and seasonal, utilitarian and splendid." By contrast, picturesque gardens are portrayed as scenographic illusions: "introspective and circuitous, melancholy and moral, narrative and romantic."

The unfortunate result of the opposition suggested between "eternal and splendid" gardens and "introspective and melancholy" gardens is hardly the display of preference, but the manner in which the words oversimplify the realities of each condition. We are relieved and surprised to find that the most lengthy and informative text in the first half of the book accompanies the picturesque gardens at Rousham, Ermonenville, and Castle Howard; and that the same attention is given to the evolution of the picturesque type described in the chapter titled "Views." The latter is filled with people, dates, events, and ideas that enlarge our understanding of the prevailing literary, social, and political forces that shaped the picturesque temperament. Paradoxically, the background surrounding the formal garden is more sketchy; and the chronological information offered with the Renaissance gardens at Ancy-le-Franc,

Marly, and Verneuil is, compared to their picturesque counterparts, disappointingly minimal.

Much is explained about the classical garden in the author's thorough record of the development of the picturesque sensibility. The elements of the Italian gardens to which the English referred—the private grottoes, marble gods and fauns, groomed groves, secret gardens, and idyllic wildernesses—are all noted by Solomon as appealing to the growing temper in England (circa 1720), and later in France, for fantasy, nostalgia, and illusion.

Her lack of enthusiasm for that momentous invention of the English stems not from its derivative character but from the fundamental sensibility that informed its arrangement. She is disturbed by the dissemblance involved and also, to a lesser degree, by the wholesale revision of the traditional role of the garden, an element of "planned order," that had mediated historically between the constructed world of the city and the untouched nature of the countryside. For, along with the suppression of the view that "proudly admits that landscapes, like buildings, are made by men," those alliances (functional, visual, metaphorical) sponsored by a common ground of "green architecture" also disappeared. In their place, an equally artificial construct of "planned disorder" was substituted, and all traces of its making were intentionally erased to allow the traditional garden to be subsumed within an infinite and idealized nature. It was intended to reflect a new sense of freedom and the triumph of the individual over the collective will. The pastoral images of painters like Lorrain, invoked by the landed gentry to serve as models for the new garden, required that reciprocities between house and garden be eliminated so that owners might escape the realities of the working world and create their own imagined reality. The result was a vision of Arcadia that required a landscape of dissimulation and isolation.

The power of the new invention proved irresistible. It was, according to Arthur Lovejoy, "to invade the intellectual life of Europe at all points," with the principal

victims being the many grand formal gardens on the continent that were accordingly redesigned to appear undesigned. Although the immediate aftermath seems of little concern to Solomon, who concentrates on the origins and qualities of the picturesque garden, she is disturbed by the persistence of the picturesque/romantic ethos into the late 20th century. While her discussion may suggest occasional sympathy for the virtuosities of the English garden—as she describes its artificial elements as "designed to amuse, to impress, to provoke and to edify"—she is dismayed by the loss of the straight line, the privatization of the landscape and the denial of a traditional ideology of space, and all that this portended for the future. She condenses her dismay by remarking how "from a few grottoes in Renaissance gardens and folies on pastoral farms, this persistent picture-making became the correct way to design parks and parkways, golf courses and gardens, cemeteries and public landscapes."

In examining how this condition came about, she blames modernist architecture, which consecrated the picturesque ideal among design professionals by adopting it as background for its stereometric buildings. The notion of monuments and relics distributed about a freely-ordered landscape presented a compelling strategy to those absorbed with designing objects intended to be seen in the round. Conveniently, the social benefits of modernism's technological artifacts, rational buildings, and new vision of urbanism, all "could be enjoyed, while their industrial evils were avoided, if they were surrounded by picturesque-English-garden-wilderness." Such was the prelude, at least in part, to such projects as Le Corbusier's Plan Voisin for Paris and the Garden City. We might add to these Berlin's Hansaviertal district and Detroit's Gratiot Park by Mies van der Rohe, as built examples of many similar later efforts to replace a historic urban fabric with picturesque scenery as the context for a new way of life. The purest expression, however, emerged in the form of the American suburb, which, according to Solomon, is modeled on the French *hameau*—a collec-

tion of detached and private rustic huts equipped with amenities, "neither farmstead nor community." Meanwhile, with the transfiguration of the formal garden complete, and the traditional city under siege by the Modern Movement, the impulse for planned disorder swept away all traces of the agrarian garden as well. Although we enshrined the American farmstead as part of our heritage, Solomon argues that we have

> systemically erased the agrarian elements of landscape from our ideas of beauty in the garden. The plowed fields, wind-rows and *allées* admired by travelers as beautiful entrances to Palladian villas and French estates have been ignored, or derided, by garden theorists. We have gone along with the view that the landscape should be arcadian scenery.

Solomon acknowledges that she is not alone in her views. Readers will recognize in this book a disenchantment with the achievements of modernism that began to be voiced in the early 1970s. Unlike others, however, Solomon has chosen a neutral position from which to view events: the garden, located between architecture and the city, between art and nature, whose capacity as *agent provocateur* to stimulate useful debate has largely gone unnoticed. From this unique position, she is able to assess the impact of the picturesque/romantic movement on the modern age, of which the "schism" between architecture as a matter of logic and landscape architecture as a matter of intuition is only the most conspicuous by-product. Her discussion titled "The Black Line," perhaps the most provocative segment in her book, confronts the degree to which the separation of house, garden, and city has become institutionalized and reflects both a mental habit and modus operandi in most areas of Western culture today. With respect to the design professions alone, she points out how they have come to allow

> a building, drawn by one person, or group, to receive a thick black line around it (probably with everything within the line eradicated) to be handed to another person, or group, to draw everything
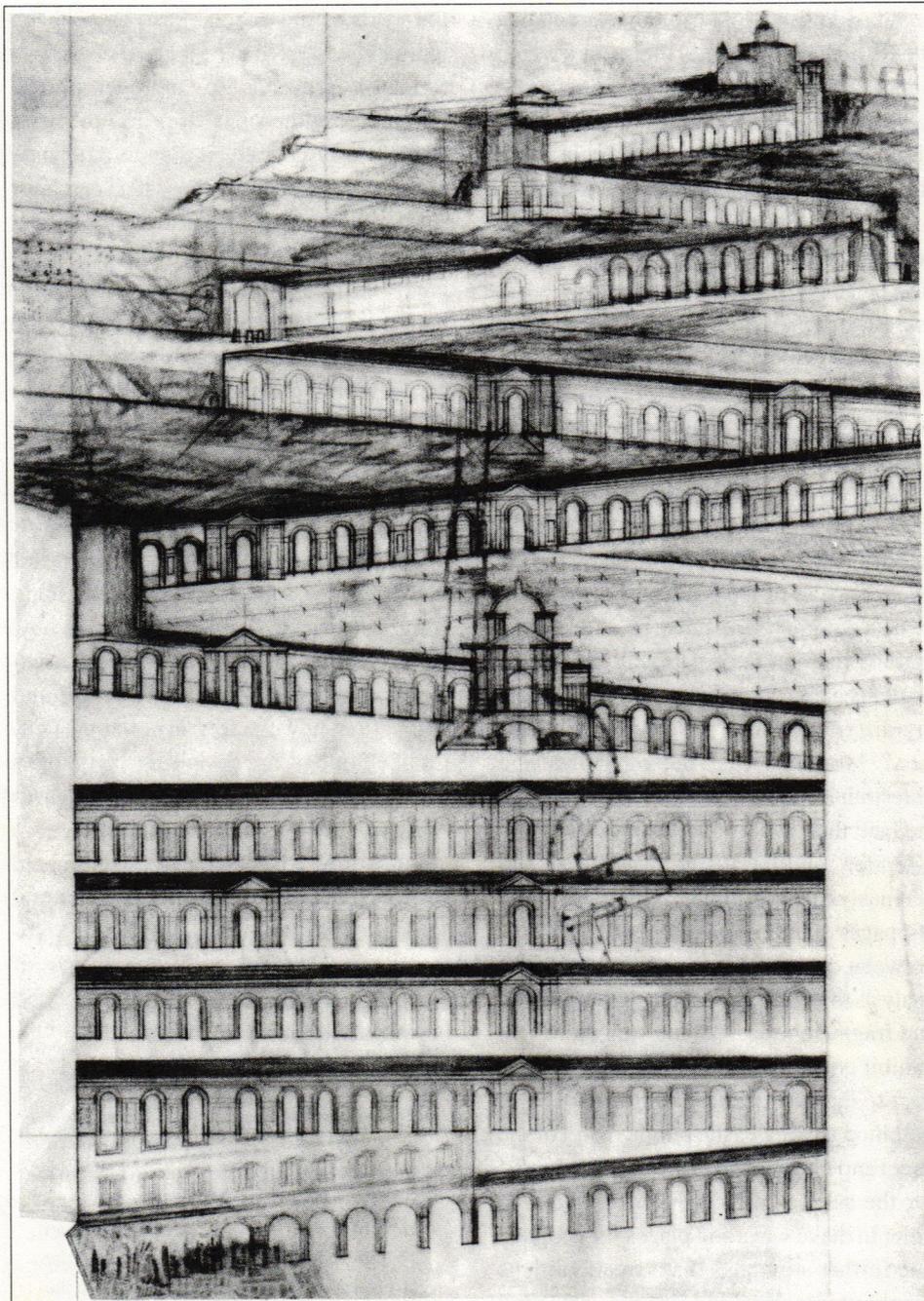
The Portico of San Luca, Bologna; drawing by Barbara Stauffacher Solomon. (From *Green Architecture*.)

outside the black line. The black line is a buffer. Supposedly it is only seen on the piece of paper, but it seems to have made its mark on the built and planted landscape.

In discussing the legacy of the picturesque view in the 20th century, Solomon's argument is weakened by her failure to acknowledge the influence of science, positive reason, and logic—also products of

the 18th century—on the current state of affairs. We also miss any reference to the late 19th-century literature of Europe and America (for example, Emerson, Thoreau, and Whitman), which did much to endow "nature in the wild" with mythic substance, and thereby helped to prepare the modern conscience for events in architecture and planning. But neither omission questions the authority of "the black line" in our modern age of either/or. We are still able to

recall Aldo van Eyck's admonishment that the distinctions between things (a fixation on articulating functional differences?) have become more important than their similarities. We remain acutely aware that the design of architecture, of the landscape, of interiors, and of the city, are indeed all seen today as separate and different activities; and that these divisions are fostered by our educational programs and by separate professional societies. And while each may be said to be poorer for having accepted its status of isolation, we must ask what alternatives, if any, exist at this point.

Solomon appears to stop short of offering a simple prescription for the dilemma raised—but we're not entirely sure. On the opening page of the book, she already reveals a contrary sensibility by announcing that her method for organizing the book's contents is "a convenient tactic for disclosing differences in order to view similarities." Moreover, her personal bias and unrestrained enthusiasm for those marks on the land that display "usability, clarity and splendor" and the many provocative and persuasive insights that accumulate in the last pages of the book cause the residual gap between prescription and impassioned analysis to close. Against places of isolation and fragmentation, she holds up those that exhibit coherence and continuity. In contrast to the privatization of the landscape, Solomon advocates the public realm of the street and plaza where trees are not planted for the sake of their symbolism, "but in order to make ways and places for people." She further stipulates that "small gardens should appear grand and left-over sites need to look intended. Wiggly-paths and a subjective scattering of 'shrubish' are not the way to attain usability, clarity and splendor." And among her drawings, we find the arcade of the Portico San Luca—"a landscape where the distinction between planted and built elements is eliminated. . . [that] does not define separate disciplines"—that climbs three-and-one-half kilometers up the hill from Bologna to a pilgrimage church.

If unwilling to directly confront a climate of opinion permeated with social and political issues—yet apparently aware that

the "will of the epoch" has always been ultimately revealed to be the will of a few—Solomon proceeds to approach things obliquely with what appears to be a thoughtfully-conceived plan to reeducate our eyes. And in the process, her search for similarities among a widely diverse collection of places—villas, gardens, parks, islands, farms, vineyards, and cities—is directed to an audience of enthusiasts and design professionals. She points to the architectural properties shared by these landmarks, such as the regularity of their organization and the clear relationships among their parts, illustrating how these are enforced by axes, hedgerows, and the gridded planning of streets or trees. To argue for these qualities, appeals are made to custom, convenience, and logic. She explains how the geometries of the land at agrarian farmsteads evolved from patterns of use and cultivation; how the formal patterns of cities like Sonoma are designed to promote a public life; and how the villas of the Veneto "that are farms, that are gardens, that are architecture" display the most animated reciprocities between building and natural setting. From arguments like these, Solomon is able to construct her notion of "green architecture," a common ground between building and landscape:

People move through trees and thresholds as easily as they see the two in the same glance. There is no line where landscape stops and architecture begins. The park leads to a building; the building makes a view of the park. Paths clarify rather than obscure. A rectangle of green in the ground rises at right angles to become the green wall of a building. A field of grass cut from the forest is a green theater. The green rectangle becomes a triangle to the eye. Permanent and impermanent elements merge in plan and as elevations of buildings, nonbuildings, buildings that are not quite buildings and trees that are almost buildings.

Relationships here are visual, fluid, and complex. Within her region of resemblance and resonance, we also discover temporal qualities embedded in its texture that acknowledge a rich history of occupation and use. Ambiguities and contradictions

abound: the edge of a city with its arcade of trees becomes a center of the world for those who use it. The composite quality of her common ground is exemplified in the city of San Francisco with its grid of streets (contradicted by diagonals and warped by topography), horizon of water, and the picturesque lyrics of Golden Gate Park; and in the Villa Giulia (vineyard, house, theater, museum, garden) that resists simple analysis. Is this a country house with a sequence of attached gardens—or is this a garden for popes and butterflies, bounded by walls that carry memories of Rome?

The very valuable contributions this book makes would never have been possible without Solomon's capacity to look very closely at things. This allows her to extract the multiplicity of character and meaning from the world around her, to search for the invisible, and to uncover the highly condensed and thus highly moving image, as when she observes that the island ("eye-land" and "landEscape") is an art object, best seen in isolation from afar, against a bare wall of sky. Drawing is her instrument of preference in making these discoveries. "A drawing is different from being there; a photograph is just as different. . . . A drawing represents what is, and analyzes what might have been and could be." The immediate result of her explorations is that they will change the way we see all the landscapes she has drawn when we visit them in person. We also expect that they may encourage a few landscape designers to step out from Capability Brown's long shadow. And quite possibly, this handsome book on gardens may even improve prospects for architecture and the city.

Marta Gutman

HOUSING AND HOMELESSNESS

> It shall be the duty of the commissioner of, or the superintendent of, any municipal lodging house acting under him, to provide for any applicants for shelter who, in his judgement, may be properly received, plain, and wholesome food and lodging for a night, free of charge, and also to cause such applicants to be bathed on admission and their clothing to be steamed and disinfected. [1]

The causes of homelessness are all too familiar: poverty, the lack of affordable housing, the deinstitutionalization of the mentally ill, and domestic violence. [2] This quartet has produced a vast population of people seeking nightly shelter in cities and towns across the country, something not seen in the United States since the Great Depression. [3] No matter how their circumstances differ, these people share one basic need: affordable housing where housing has become increasingly expensive.

The solution to homelessness would seem to be obvious: local, state, and federal housing authorities should build and maintain low-income housing and provide social services for those who need them. Yet social workers, architects, planners, lawyers, psychiatrists, and homeless people grapple with the question of how to house the homeless. Some see homelessness as primarily a question of housing, best solved by creating more low-income units. Others feel that the homeless are homeless because they suffer from problems such as mental illness, drug abuse, and alcoholism. Only when these problems are solved, they argue, can the homeless be housed successfully.

This debate has profound consequences for public policy and housing form. If one grants, for the sake of argument, that the second statement is true, what is the right kind of shelter for a Hispanic woman, addicted to crack, who with her three children has left an abusive husband? Should she be separated from her children and housed temporarily in a group-home providing drug treatment? Should she stay with her

children in transitional housing and be given job-training? Should she go to a shelter for battered women? What about a black, schizophrenic, elderly man? A jobless teenager? A white security guard burned out of his apartment? Does each require a special kind of housing with a special sort of social service program? What happens when their situations change? Where will they find permanent, affordable housing?

Several recent publications offer different answers to these questions, reflecting different ideologies and professional viewpoints. The essays in *Housing the Homeless,* edited by Jon Erickson and Charles Wilhelm, and *The Unsheltered Woman,* edited by Eugenie Ladner Birch, consider different points of view about who needs shelter, why the need exists, and the kinds of public policy that ought to be implemented to meet the need. *Housing the Homeless,* written primarily by social scientists of different ideological bents, examines these issues in relation to the many different kinds of poor people who need housing. *The Unsheltered Woman,* written by a broader range of professionals, is more narrowly focused. Its authors generally share the viewpoint that the housing market does not meet women's shelter needs, especially those of poor women. A third book, Nora Ritcher Greer's *The Search for Shelter,* begins with an analysis of homelessness and proceeds to document in a series of case studies the architecture of 35 homeless shelters across the United States.

Finally, *On Being Homeless: Historical Perspectives,* edited by Rick Beard, is an excellent set of essays published in conjunction with an exhibition of the same name at the Museum of the City of New York.

One of the more interesting articles in *Housing the Homeless* is John C. Schneider's "Skid Row as an Urban Neighborhood, 1880–1960," which analyzes changing social perceptions of urban space. This essay establishes the historical background for the book's major focus, which is homelessness in contemporary American society. Arguments range from Thomas Main's neo-conservatism in "Homeless of New York," where he states that the "homeless will always [be] with us"—a necessary consequence of capitalist political economy—to more liberal and radical interpretations that seek to reduce, if not eradicate, the problem.

The book clearly documents the disagreement among social service professionals about how best to do this. In "The Homeless Problem," Ellen L. Bassuk argues for providing "a spectrum of housing options and related health-care and social services for the mentally ill." [4] Because more and more homeless people have suffered from mental illness since the early 1970s, she concludes that a significant number of people are homeless because of "a lifelong series of crises and missed opportunities." In "The Politics of Displacement: Sinking into Homelessness," Marjorie Hope and James Young state that
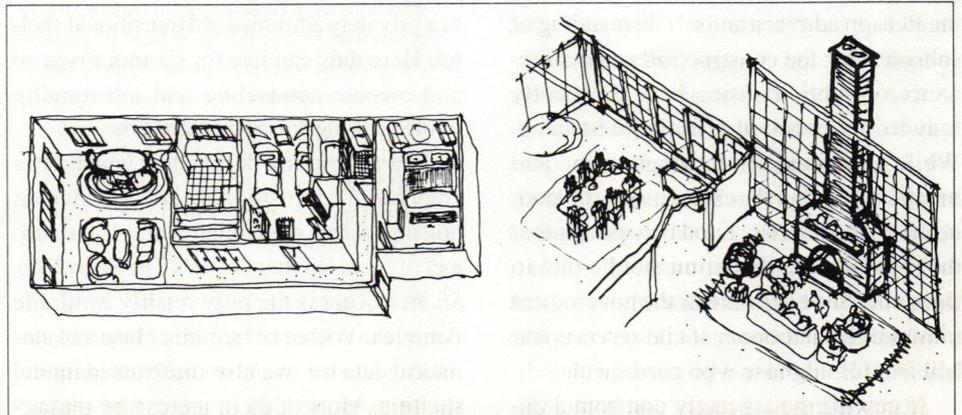
Proposal for conversion of apartment building into transitional housing for mothers and children: sketches of family unit and group family rooms; Minneapolis Search for Shelter Team (1988). (From *Creation of Shelter*.)
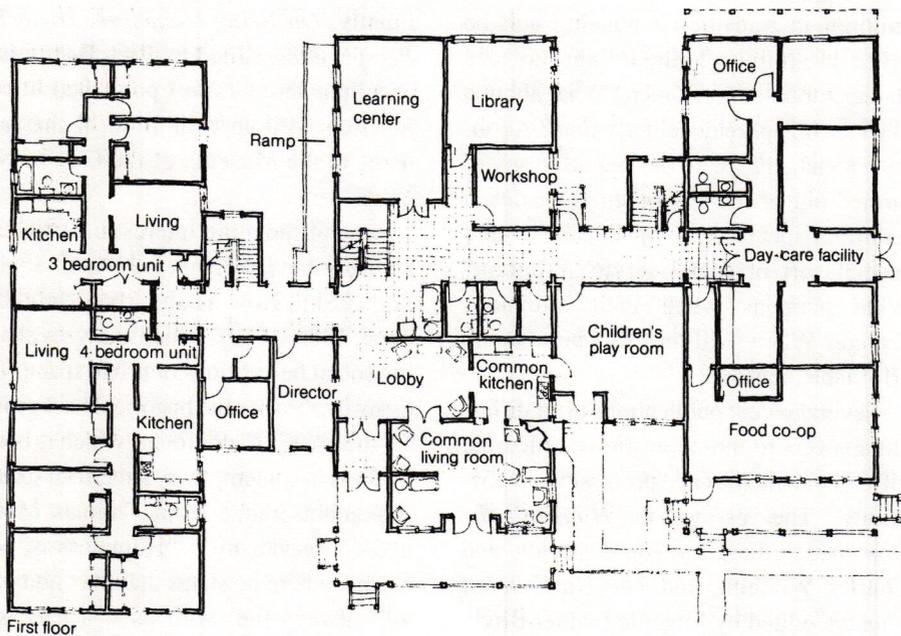
Proposal for transitional housing for families; Boston Search for Shelter Team (1988). (From *Creation of Shelter*.)

the problem is social inequity. While deinstitutionalization has produced homelessness, this only accounts for part of the problem. Poor people, many of whom are black or Hispanic, have suffered disproportionately from increasing unemployment, displacement, and the loss of social benefits, especially during the Reagan administration. Enlightened social policy similar to that found in western Europe—that guarantees work, medical care, food, and housing to all those in need—is the only way to prevent homelessness of all sorts, not simply that experienced by the mentally ill.

Nancy K. Kaufman (in "Homelessness: A Comprehensive Policy Approach") argues that gentrification, displacement, and the Reagan administration's dismantling of subsidies for the construction and maintenance of public housing have drastically reduced the stock of affordable housing. While drug addiction, alcoholism, and mental illness surely exist among the poor in the United States, Kaufman asserts that the provision of shelter cannot be tied to their cure. She believes that the government must provide necessary social services and housing for all those who need them.

Accepting the argument that homelessness is best solved by creating shelter, the question remains, what kind of shelter?

Kaufman, writing as deputy director of the Governor's Office of Human Resources in Massachusetts, argues that the best model to follow is "the continuum of services" approach, presently adopted in her state and elsewhere. In this approach, a person who needs housing moves from emergency to transitional to permanent housing in a three-phase (or "three-tier") system, receiving required counseling and help along the way. Jumping from tier to tier often involves moving to a new residence. For example, in New York City, the welfare bureaucracy usually assigns a homeless family, often consisting of a mother with two or three children, to emergency housing in a welfare hotel; if the family is lucky, they then move to a privately administered transitional shelter. Here they can live for six months or so and receive counseling and job-training while looking for permanent housing.

Examples of model shelters which offer emergency, transitional, and permanent housing across the United States is the subject of Nora Ritcher Greer's *The Search for Shelter*. This is the only readily available American source of building plans and statistical data for recently constructed model shelters. Most of them are run by philanthropic organizations and church groups, many of which receive at least partial pub-

lic support. [5] The book's documentation is invaluable, and one can only wish it included more examples—and more photos and drawings—of the shelters themselves.

To reduce building and maintenance costs, many shelters are designed for congregate living. Congregate shelters are cheaper to build and to run; their designs often simplify the social and physical control of their residents. The crudest of these, such as New York City's emergency shelter for men at the Fort Washington Armory, completely lack privacy. Up to fifteen hundred men sleep on cots on the drill floor each night during the winter months and share a single bathroom and cafeteria. This type of living is so degrading, substandard, and dangerous that many men prefer sleeping on the street to staying in the shelter. The inhabitants of many of the model emergency and transitional shelters discussed in *The Search for Shelter* live in other forms of congregate housing: small dormitories or private and semiprivate rooms with shared kitchens and/or bathrooms. The latter type, which resembles boarding houses and single-room-occupancy (SRO) hotels, has also been used for permanent housing. [6] The best congregate housing, usually run by philanthropic organizations, provides families and individuals with space for counseling, group meetings, socializing, and child care in addition to bedrooms, bathrooms, and a kitchen.

Congregate living draws on what Dolores Hayden identifies as the American tradition of "material feminism." Hayden's essay "Designs from the Past for the Future" is included in *The Unsheltered Woman* and draws on material published in her earlier book, *The Grand Domestic Revolution*. Hayden identifies various designs for cooperative living, housekeeping, and child care traditionally used by women in the United States. These, of course, differ enormously from the circumstances of contemporary homeless shelters because they were initiated for the most part by middle-class women who participated in them by choice. Hayden and other authors in *The Unsheltered Woman* nonetheless insist that aspects of this tradition can be

Marta Gutman

THE CREATION OF SHELTER

Nora Ritcher Greer's new book, *The Creation of Shelter*, complements her first book, *The Search for Shelter*. It begins with an illustrated selection of case-study examples presenting the outcome of the A.I.A.'s recent effort to draw architects' attention to homelessness. In 1988 the A.I.A. student group show and other planning and housing advocacy groups joined with the A.I.A. to form local "Search for Shelter" teams. Each of the 27 teams developed programs, selected sites, and proposed designs for emergency, transitional, and/or permanent housing in cities across the country.

The teams used students as designers, and their solutions range from the speculative to the pragmatic. Even though many of the projects are not developed past the sketch stage, they present optimistic answers to complex design and social issues. Students at Tulane University's School of Architecture, concerned that the provision of shelters may simply perpetuate substandard housing, designed portable shelters and a billboard depicting the homelessness problem. In Boston, the Search for Shelter team proposed transitional housing for single-parent families that can convert to permanent housing. Students at the City College Architectural Center in New York City, working with the Cooper Square Community Organization, designed a building renovation mixing SRO units with low-cost apartments. The team in Minneapolis-St. Paul developed proposals for transitional housing on several sites.

A series of essays closes *The Creation of Shelter*, pointedly describing the sources, the effects of, and possible solutions to the housing crisis in the United States. They include discussion of successful efforts by community development organizations, housing associations, self-help groups, and philanthropic groups to build affordable housing. Still, as Greer reports, the National Housing Institute stated in 1988 that "7.5 million new low-income housing units will be needed by the year 2000–at a cost of $300 billion." In 1989 the federal government allocated a mere $13.6 billion to the Department of Housing and Urban Development. At this rate, the young designers' proposals stand a meager chance of being constructed before the next century.

THE CREATION OF SHELTER, Nora Ritcher Greer, A.I.A. Press, 1988, 149 pp., illus., $15.00 paper ($13.50, A.I.A. members).

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incorporated in current housing for the poor and dispossessed. Jacqueline Leavitt, in "The Shelter Service Crisis," advocates congregate living in detached suburban housing for single parents of all income levels because it "may lead to creating an environment potentially supportive of each household's needs." In "A Single Room: Housing for the Low-Income Single Person," Michael Mostoller discusses the history of various forms of boarding houses in New York City; he supports their continued use for housing both elderly people and single women. Clara Fox, in "Shared Housing: Its Rationale, Forms and Challenges," advocates using the boarding house or single-room-occupancy hotel to provide economical housing for poor women. However, as Leavitt herself cautions, it is foolish to insist that a specific type of shelter house a specific type of family: "Single parents ... have been wary of calling attention to themselves and ... may resist living arrangements with other single parents. ... Middle and upper income women would reject housing projects (exclusively for single-parent families), associating them with people of a different class and color." Leavitt asserts that the point is to create a more pluralistic housing supply, one that creates, not limits, choice.

Overwhelmingly, and unsurprisingly, the authors of this book agree that the unsheltered woman, as Eugenie Ladner Birch writes in her essay, "is either a mother not yet 35 with minor children ... or an elderly single person. ... She is urban ... yet she has an equal chance of living either in central city or the suburbs. ... Above all she is poor." *The Unsheltered Woman* covers more than the housing problems faced by poor women; the seminar from which it evolved, "Women and Housing" (sponsored by the Ford Foundation and Hunter College) began by examining the design of women's physical environment and then extended its focus to include larger planning issues, such as employment, income, child welfare, etc. The essays range from actual design proposals by architects and planners to discussions of gender-related housing policy. As the preface points out, none of the housing issues the book identifies concern women "exclusively"; rather they are housing problems that affect women most "severely."

The traditions of material feminism and boarding- and rooming-house living undoubtedly offer models which can be successfully adapted for today's housing market. For economic and social reasons, many among the middle class, and even among the working poor, are choosing to reinvent (or participate) in this kind of living: one need only remember the growing popularity of apartment shares, group residences for the elderly, even college dormitories. However, just because congregate living can and does work for some people does not mean that it must work for all, especially for the homeless.

In housing for the homeless, proposals for congregate living are generated more often by external economic motives than by internally generated social ideals. Municipalities fund the construction of dormitory-style shelters, and even boarding-house and SRO-style shelters because the lower space standards reduce their cost. Though these shelters are cheaper to build than regular housing, they are not inexpensive, and it is unlikely that municipalities will abandon them once the homelessness crisis lessens. Consequently, they threaten to become the permanent low-income housing of the future. With this in mind, some shelters are now designed so that they can be converted to "normal" housing. Yet even this is not happening at a scale large enough to address the housing problem. If the govern-

ment does not subsidize new low-income housing, either through new construction or rehabilitation, there will be no new permanent housing of adequate standard that permits the poor to leave emergency and transitional shelters. They will have to remain in shelters that have been designed explicitly for short-term use and are substandard for long-term housing.[7]

Congregate housing at its worst isolates and separates its occupants from the rest of society; shelters mark their residents as a special class of people with special needs. This situation is not new. As David Rothman states in "The First Shelters," one of the best essays in *On Being Homeless,* institutions such as the almshouse, the workhouse, and the asylum historically hid the indigent poor, the insane, the disabled, the marginal, and their attendant problems from their fellow citizens. Rothman sees the current call for homeless shelters as nothing less than an attempt to "reinvent the asylum," an institution he rightfully condemns. He pleads for housing, jobs, and social services, solutions which treat homelessness primarily as a problem of poverty.

On Being Homeless offers historical perspectives but in general does not "pass judgment or offer solutions." An excellent and handsome book, its illustrated essays range from Kenneth L. Kusmer's examination of "The Underclass in Historical Perspective," which surely will become a classic, to Kenneth T. Jackson's discussion of "The Bowery" and Kim Hopper's informative analysis of "The Public Response to Homelessness in New York City." The book closes with a remarkable visual essay (put together by Rick Beard and Susan Marsden Kapsis from the companion exhibition) that documents the experience of being homeless in New York City from the late 18th century to the current day. The last portion of this essay, "The Current Dilemma: Continuity and Change," compares historical images of homeless people with people in similar situations today. It juxtaposes, for example, a photograph taken in 1916 of a woman and her children in a tenement dwelling with a photograph taken in 1987 of Ruby Baker and her children in

a New York City welfare hotel. Shockingly, not much has changed. As the essay concludes, "an appreciation of the many remedies posed during the past 350 years may not offer new solutions, but it will prevent a misguided reliance on answers that have already demonstrated their ineffectiveness."

Current policymakers would be well advised to digest this statement. At this point a variety of emergency and transitional shelters operate across the nation without their logical counterpart: an adequate supply of low- and moderate-income housing, necessarily constructed and maintained with public funding. One can certainly argue that some people need specialized housing; probably one can even argue that some kind of emergency shelter is also necessary. It is very difficult, however, to argue that these should replace—as they have started to do by default—public housing in the United States. Shelters ought to remain the exception; subsidizing the construction and maintenance of affordable housing ought, once again, to become the rule.

HOUSING THE HOMELESS, edited by Jon Erickson and Charles Wilhelm, Center for Urban Policy Research, 1986, 430 pp., $19.95 paper.

THE SEARCH FOR SHELTER, Nora Ritcher Greer, The American Institute of Architects, 1986, 131 pp., illus., $15.00 paper ($13.50, A.I.A. members).

THE UNSHELTERED WOMAN: WOMEN AND HOUSING IN THE EIGHTIES, edited by Eugenie Ladner Birch, Center for Urban Policy Research, 1985, 313 pp., illus., $14.95 paper.

ON BEING HOMELESS: HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVES, edited by Rick Beard, Museum of the City of New York, 1987, 176 pp., illus., $29.95 cloth, $19.95 paper.

1. The New York City Municipal Code as quoted in an essay by Kim Hopper and L. Stuart Cox, "Litigation in Advocacy for the Homeless: The Case of New York City," in *Housing the Homeless.*

2. Ellen Baxter and Kim Hopper, "Private Lives/ Public Spaces: Homeless Adults in New York City," a mimeographed article published by the Community Service Society (1981), as cited in an essay by Madeline R. Stoner, "The Plight of Homeless Women," in *Housing the Homeless.*

3. Estimates of the numbers of homeless people across the United States vary enormously: in the mid-1980s, the Department of Housing and Urban Development claimed between 250,000 and 350,000 people lacked shelter, while advocacy groups placed the number between 2.5 and 4 million. See Section III: The Importance of Numbers, and Ellen Bassuk, "The Homelessness Problem," in *Housing the Homeless;* see also *The Search for Shelter,* p. 11.

4. Bassuk, *Housing the Homeless,* pp. 254, 258. Another example: the psychiatrists who run a mental-health program at the Fort Washington Armory, an emergency shelter for homeless men in New York City, unequivocally state that the homeless lack homes because they are mentally ill; their mental illness must be cured before they find permanent housing and occupy it successfully (Dr. Jeffrey Grunberg, director of the Psychiatry Shelter Program, in a lecture given in October 1987 to students of the Graduate School of Architecture, Planning and Preservation, Columbia University.)

5. Victor Bach and Renee Steinhagen discuss the use of emergency assistance funds to provide transitional shelter for families in "Alternatives to the Welfare Hotel," a publication of the Community Service Society (New York, 1987).

6. Ellen Baxter's essay "The Heights: A Community Housing Strategy," published by the Community Service Society (New York, 1986), discusses permanent housing for homeless people based on a successful adaptation of the SRO model.

7. Paul Goldberger discusses designs for transitional family shelters by Alexander Cooper and Partners and Skidmore Owings and Merrill in "Designing a Decent Alternative for the Homeless," *New York Times,* March 27, 1988, pp. 39, 44 (Arts and Leisure section). These projects, which cost respectively $70 and $130 per square foot, are likely to remain in place for a long time. Neither of these firms are well known for their work in low-income housing, and Goldberger unfortunately does not discuss any of the smaller-scale and more humane projects designed by less famous architects.

Luis Fernández-Galiano

BOFILL SUPERSTAR

Ricardo Bofill's face and name have graced ads for American Express and Renault; with the Spanish Tower that Banco Bilbao Vizcaya is now promoting in Manhattan, it is *his* architecture that is to grace the transatlantic broadcast of the very image of Spain of 1992. One cannot call this a bad choice: as has been proven, Bofill sells.

If we consider here an architect who has designed cellars for Château Lafitte-Rothschild, a façade for Parfumes Rochas, and perfume bottles for Christian Dior, it should not be difficult to conjure up images that will seduce the Lladró and Loewe public of New York. Yet this Catalan architect has also planned housing projects (*nouvelles villes*) in France and farming villages in Algeria, a popular quarter in Baghdad, and a residential district in Beijing. That Bofill seduces goes without saying; but one must in addition acknowledge the versatility of his seduction. Not long ago, the architect obtained the commission for the Shepherd School of Music on the Rice University campus in Houston, where the likes of James Stirling and Cesar Pelli have also built. Bofill used his gift of persuasion on the academic authorities through an interpreter: a genuine tour de force in the competitive American market.

Bofill has fascinated politicians and financiers as much as poets and artists, who have frequently contributed to the work of his firm, Taller de Arquitectura. Valéry Giscard d'Estaing succumbed to his magic and launched him on to fame in 1975 by declaring him winner of the competition for Les Halles, and ten years later, the Museum of Modern Art in New York consecrated him for good with an anthological exhibition, shared with Leon Krier. And when the critic Charles Jencks proposed a series of documentaries for television pairing up architectural greats of recent history with contemporary architects, the pairs selected were Frank Lloyd Wright / Michael Graves for the United States, Charles Rennie Mackintosh / James Stirling for Great Britain, Otto

Wagner / Hans Hollein for Austria … and Antonio Gaudí / Ricardo Bofill for Spain. It comes as no surprise, therefore, that in more than one guidebook on the history of architecture, the Spanish 20th century is represented exclusively by these two names.

There is, however, a sector in which Bofill does not sell: among his Spanish colleagues. A Madrid daily recently conducted a survey among Spanish architecture's professional elite to establish an honor roll: Bofill did not even make it in the top ten.
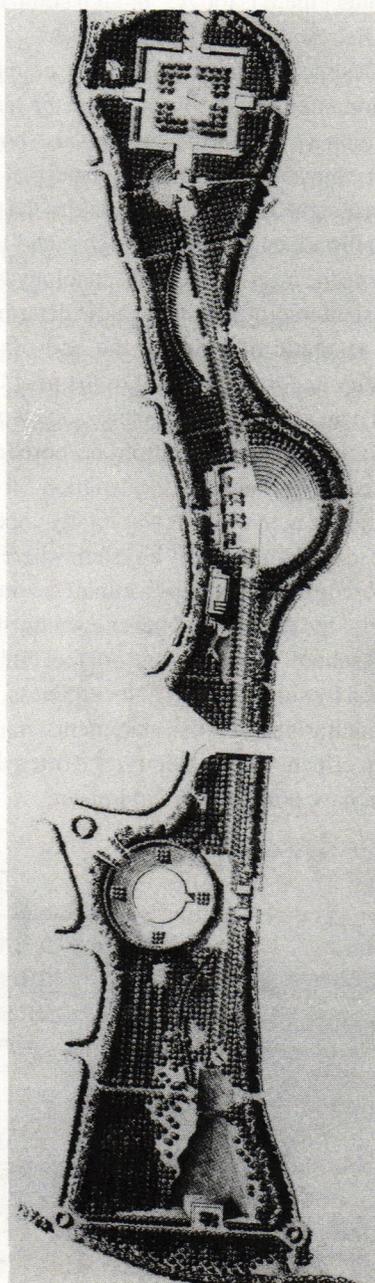
Site plan, Aigüera Park; Benidorm, Spain; Bofill (1984–85). (From *Bofill*.)

Slighted by his architect-compatriots and snubbed by the country's specialized magazines, Ricardo Bofill is still the one and only Spaniard to have a monograph at Rizzoli, a catalogue at the Museum of Modern Art, and buildings on four continents.

Envy as an explanation can be cast aside at the outstart. To be sure, hostility toward the work of Bofill transcends Spanish frontiers. For each eminent international critic willing to write favorably on the architect—such as Christian Norberg-Schulz—there are ten who either ignore or lambast him. The extra-architectural popularity of Bofill gives rise to a certain rejection on the part of the "select minorities" of the profession.

In my judgment, the reason behind all this disagreement in sizing up Bofill lies in the conflict between his flair for publicity and the apocalyptic mood that prevails among architects. The media-oriented genius of Taller de Arquitectura's leader irritates and confounds his colleagues, most of whom do not feel comfortable in the midst of the gigantic spectacle that culture is today. For the Catalan, however, no arena is more favorable than this enormous circus. Audacious, overwhelming, and megalomaniac, the trapeze performer and his pirouettes guarantee emotion under the spotlights; and while the crowd holds its breath in wonder, nobody can steal the show from Bofill.

The Rizzoli monograph *Ricardo Bofill/ Taller de Arquitectura: Buildings and Projects* is an excellent representation of the work of this Mediterranean and at the same time universal architect. Son of a Catalan father and a Jewish Venetian mother, educated in Calvinist Geneva and reeducated in 1968 Paris, commuting now between Barcelona and New York, Ricardo Bofill has, with his Taller de Arquitectura, a good twenty-five years of work to boot: a quarter-century's worth of buildings and projects, 44 of which are gathered in the *catalogue raîsonné* and commented on by his diverse collaborators.

Contrary to the general custom of condoning the "critical regionalism" of the earlier Bofill (the better to condemn the "postmodern classicism" of the later Bofill),
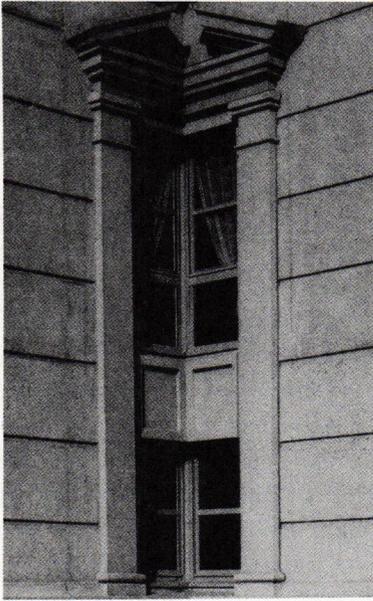
Exterior window detail, La Place du Nombre D'Or, Antigone; Bofill (1979–85). (From *Bofill*.)

the chronological presentation of Taller de Arquitectura's twenty-five years of work serves to shade the rather Manichean simplicity of such a dichotomy. Surprisingly, the impression one gets from the book is that of an unexpected coherence molded around the concepts of geometry and monumentality, and whose evident figurative evolution has come about by means of subtle displacements.

From the restrained forms, with a touch of expressionism, of his first Catalonian housing projects (dwelling complexes on Compositor Bach and Nicaragua streets in Barcelona, or the Gaudí quarter) to the controlled grandiloquence of his recent Levantine parks (the Turia River Gardens in Valencia or the Aigüera in Benidorm), Bofill's work develops on calculated stylistic glides which conceal the missing links of that seamless evolution that has brought him, as he affirms, from "utopian idealist" to "rationalist and Cartesian."

Between these two poles rise his most famous projects. The lyricism of Xanadu, the gracefully insane undulations of the Red Wall or Walden-7, and, above all, the classicism in concrete of the French housing complexes in the new towns (St. Quentin-en-Yvelines, Marne-la-Vallée, Cergy-Pontoise), in Paris or in Montpellier. The names given to these dwellings are as extravagant

as revealing: Les Arcades du Lac, Les Espaces d'Abraxas, Les Echelles du Baroque.

The architect himself discusses this creative trajectory in the monograph's introduction, and he offers his views on classicism and technology in an interview that closes the book. With extraordinary aplomb, Bofill summarizes the history of architecture in a few pages, securing in it a place for his Taller, claiming to be an "architect, and at the same time script writer of architecture," and finally declaring himself to be "the best architect there is today," though compared to Michelangelo, "so much worse."

Despite his motto "each construction is a monument, each plaza a theater, each building a temple," the architect also hopes to free himself of the classicist label that has been assigned him, and he sprinkles the text with flirtatious gestures to "high-tech," predicting the meeting of high technology with classical tradition, which shall "determine the aesthetic of cities at the end of our century and the beginning of the next."

To an academic readership, such words must provoke indignation or boredom. Take, for instance, his explanation for his antifascist activities: "It was totally unbearable to be dominated by a system where the hierarchy did not possess a minimal cultural level—the dictator had never even finished high school." How can one not feel embarrassed by such triteness? Nevertheless, the elementariness of his statements makes them effective for publicity, and often they even have some rhetorical impact.

The shapes of Ricardo Bofill are perhaps more shaded than his arguments, but it is not easy to separate buildings from words. Both are endowed with a quality that is indispensable in the world of media in which architects and their works are now players: the stark clarity without which there is neither message nor event nor spectacle, that is, the legibility without which there would be no architecture today.

For his exhibition at the Museum of Modern Art, Bofill was commissioned by the late Arthur Drexler (then in charge of the architecture section) to design a tower for Manhattan. The architect designed a svelte 67-story building articulated by gigantic orders and crowned with a classical temple, which he named Jefferson Tower. It is hard to say if the 50 stories accommodating the hotel, offices, and apartments of Banco Bilbao Vizcaya's Spanish Tower in New York will resemble this unexecuted project. What is sure is that the building will be an event transcending the limited scope of architecture.

The best verdict about Bofill might still be Oscar Tusquets's: "An authentic genius, though of what discipline it is not clear."

Translated by Gina Cariño.

Site plan, Antigone; Bofill (1979–). (Courtesy Warren A. James.)

Mark Cottle and Sabir Khan

SONNETS TO THE PORTUGUESE

Alvaro Siza did not make the "Top Thirty" list of today's best architects that Domino's Pizza Corporation distributed to visitors at the Center for the Study of Frank Lloyd Wright at Domino's Farms, a theme park in Ann Arbor, Michigan. The omission does not imply that Siza's work would compare unfavorably with the work of those who did make this particular corporate list—luminaries such as Michael Graves, Richard Meier, Hans Hollein, and E. Fay Jones—or even with the list's *architecte du jour*, the chic Parisian Jean Nouvel. But it merely suggests that Siza is not yet a hot market commodity.

The two books reviewed here, *Poetic Profession*, a monograph, and *Alvaro Siza: Figures and Configurations*, an exhibition catalogue present the work of an architect still relatively unknown in this country and rarely published in American journals. In the last few years, however, his work—or at least his name—has acquired a certain cachet among some of the perennially *au courant* designers. Motifs, especially from his more stylish bank buildings, have begun to appear in student work. Porto, where Siza practiced until recently, has been added to the architectural pilgrimage map of Europe. And in 1988 the Harvard University Graduate School of Design, in keeping with its self-appointed role as the doyenne of architectural fashion, stage-managed Siza's debut on the American architectural scene—he was invited to speak and teach a studio. In addition, the Graduate School of Design sponsored an exhibition and catalogue of his recent work and awarded him the Prince of Wales Prize in Urban Design.

Whether the GSD's packaging and promotion of Siza will gain him brand-name recognition remains to be seen. But what appears to be the rather cynical appropriation of one more talented architect from the provinces carries with it an ironic undercurrent. Siza's work and his presentation of it could be said to employ strategies to resist,
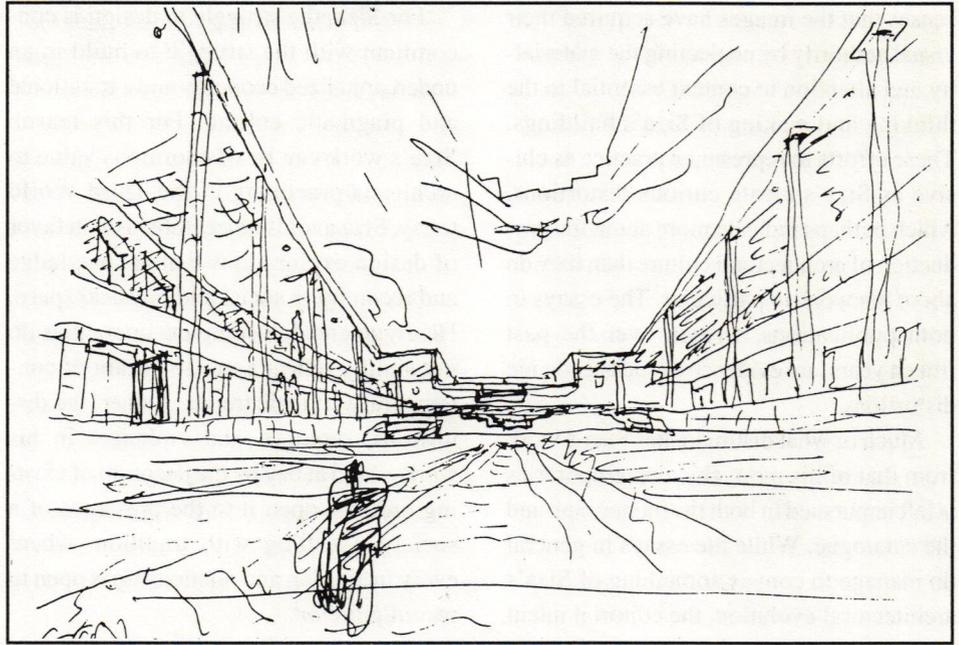
Conceptual sketch, Teachers' Training College, Setubal, Portugal; Siza (1986–). (From *Figures and Configurations*.)

or at least slow down, commodification. His designs have a leanness, a muteness that resists reduction to formulas. Each of his projects seems to have stronger links to specific social and physical contexts than to his other buildings. Siza does not deliver signature buildings.

On the rare occasion when he writes about his own work, Siza professes no ideology. His elliptical passages make no concessions to conventional or theoretical architectural discourse. Even his sketches and architectural drawings give little away. In fact, in his drawings he employs a uniform line, devoid of hierarchy or variation in weight, and delineates doors and windows as simple rectangles, free of detail, achieving a flat representation that is difficult to read. In contrast, his sketches, done in a tremulous hand, evoke singular moments. But their elegant, finished quality renders them uncommunicative about design process. In the reticence of his drawings, and in the apparent unwillingness of both his buildings and his writings to explain themselves, Siza's work recalls the strategies of Adolf Loos, whose drawings were equally enigmatic, and who boasted that no one could photograph his buildings—they must instead be visited to be experienced.

Finally, there is the matter of his being from Portugal—located somehow at the edge of both European and Mediterranean worlds. The land in which Siza's work is situated does not fit the received conception of a Mediterranean sensibility. Instead, it seems to refer to an oceanic horizon, its back to Europe but facing the immensity of the Atlantic. Moreover, Siza is rooted in the intensely regional culture of Porto, defined in opposition to the capital Lisbon.

Working in a veritable Framptonian "cultural seam," heavily influenced by both Alvar Aalto and Adolf Loos, Siza has produced a body of work difficult to categorize. In the attempt to locate, classify, and thereby appropriate his work, Siza's buildings have been variously described as expressionist, rationalist, critical regionalist. They have even suffered that most patronizing of terms—generally applied by sophisticates to the inexplicable charms of the provinces—poetical.

The photographs in these two publications present his buildings in tightly framed abstract compositions and aestheticized melancholy landscapes. But even amid the glamour projected onto the buildings by the photographic eye, they remain at a distance. While compositionally satisfying, one

senses that the images have acquired their visual authority by neglecting the materiality and attention to context essential to the thinking and making of Siza's buildings. These efforts to represent a practice as elusive as Siza's create curious distortions, which perhaps indicate more about the production of architectural culture than they do about his work in particular. The essays in both publications, written over the past fifteen years, are evidence of such academic distortions.

Much of what distinguishes Siza's work from that of his more chic contemporaries is left unpursued in both the monograph and the catalogue. While the essays in general do manage to convey something of Siza's architectural evolution, the editorial intent seems to have been closer to hagiography than criticism. Rather than exegesis one finds Siza swallowed whole and represented in tones similar to those reserved for architects in vogue. This seems to equate Siza's situation with theirs—thus suppressing rather than illuminating the differences between Siza and the high-flyers of the media circus.

The absence of a reductive or prescriptive theory in Siza's work, his anti-intellectual bent, and his intuitive design process are given an expressionist and poetical gloss. A number of essays choose to emphasize the aesthetic and literary qualities of the work, cloaking the design process in mystification. To quote from Wilfried Wang's introduction to the catalogue: "In the work of Alvaro Siza, the qualities of self-disqualification and renunciation occasionally join those of melancholy and resignation." And: "In Siza's case, the practice of 'patricide,' the 'murder' of one's own father (or more generally, of one's own teacher), gave way to the suppression of the ego."

This dank, theoretical world is an ocean away from the one in which Siza practices architecture as a "contingent activity," as a series of accommodations and provisional arrangements. "I am a conservative and traditionalist," he says, "I move amongst conflicts and compromises, hybrids and transformations."

For Siza, the struggle to design is concomitant with the struggle to build in an undercapitalized economy and a traditional and pragmatic culture. For this reason Siza's work can be of enormous value to architects practicing in the Third World today. Siza avoids object fetishism in favor of design explorations that acknowledge and reconfigure social and physical space. His fragmented, incomplete operations do not simply reflect a mutant strain of contemporary stylistic trends. Rather, the distortions, ruptures, and violences in his work—held at bay by the decorum of existing orders—open it to the pressures of a society wrestling with tradition, where every institution and relationship is open to reconfiguration.

> My works are not complete. But the fact that they are interrupted or modified has nothing to do with an aesthetic theory or a belief in the open-ended work. It has to do with the debilitating impossibility of concluding, with obstacles I cannot overcome.

Siza is, to paraphrase Loos, a bricoleur who has learned Latin. He espouses no dogma, spouts no linguistic models. The best essays in these two publications stay away from simple categorization and fancy constructions and analyze Siza and his work in situ. Some of the most perceptive essays are written by Siza's Portuguese colleagues.

Alexandre Alves Costa, in his catalogue article, "Alvaro Siza: Architect of Porto and of the World," sums up the agonic nature of the dialectic between building and site in Siza's work:

> Today Siza's work has acquired a complexity that confers to it a magical duality, one of being essential in the consolidation of the existing, while simultaneously asserting its dependence in order to confirm the autonomy of his architecture. Adapting to its surroundings, his work is served definitively by them.

POETIC PROFESSION, Alvaro Siza, Electa/Rizzoli, 1986, 188 pp., illus., $20.00 paper.
ALVARO SIZA: FIGURES AND CONFIGURATIONS, BUILDINGS AND PROJECTS 1986–1988, Wilfred Wang, editor, Rizzoli, 1988, 96 pp., illus., $20.00 paper.

Fritz Neumeyer

IRRITATED ABOUT A SHADOW: HILBERSEIMER AND MIES

Only two years after *Rassegna* dedicated a monographic issue to one of the almost forgotten apostles of modernism, Ludwig Hilberseimer (1885–1967), we are presented with a similarly structured book, a collection of essays on various aspects of the work and career of this architect and urban planner. The book labors under the somewhat misleading title *In the Shadow of Mies*, a title that unwittingly comments on a peculiar—and possibly symbolic—situation: although born a year after Mies, whose centennial was celebrated in Chicago in May 1986, Hilberseimer had to wait until September 1988 for such a commemoration of his accomplishment. As a result, the tardy centennial had to be entitled "Hilberseimer 100-Plus Symposium." It was Mies who took his comrade-in-arms and close friend Hilberseimer, along with Peter Peterhans, with him from Berlin to Chicago in 1938 when he was appointed to the Armour Institute (later the Illinois Institute of Technology). As Mies's colleague "Hilbs," as he was called by friends and students, taught urban planning until he retired in the late 1950s.

This image of the "shadow" which the book's title employs causes me certain irritation and uneasiness. One cannot quell the suspicion that the reference to Mies, whose very name has the power to attract publicity, works as a sales promotion for this not-so-well-established associate. In view of the publisher's statements that "an accurate assessment of Hilberseimer's place in twentieth-century architecture and planning was needed," and that it "was time to bring Hilberseimer *out* of the shadow of Mies," one expects the relation between the two heroes of modernism to be the main topic of this book. This is not, however, the case.

In fact, the interesting problem of how the "shadow" of Mies functions as a relevant or significant metaphoric suggestion is neither raised nor answered. Contrary to the

logic implied by the title, the authors attempt to establish an autonomous context for Hilberseimer as their frame of reference. The book contributes nothing to our knowledge of the mutuality between these two men who were in touch for more than thirty years. The only project where direct collaboration is documented, Lafayette Park, Detroit (1956), is treated in less than one page. Instead of a fuller treatment of their collaborative efforts, we get Kevin Harrington's essay on the Redevelopment Project for the South Side of Chicago (1951), which, as it turns out, was exclusively Hilbs's own project.

There was a working relationship, but it was neither the one-way street it might appear to be on first glance, nor can it simply be pushed to one side with the obvious argument that Hilberseimer was no architect, and Mies was no urban planner. The basis for their relationship becomes apparent when one turns to another important aspect of Hilberseimer's production: namely, his role as a critic and theoretician who, in the 1920s, published some one hundred articles for German literary publications as well as two books on modern building. The Rizzoli volume devotes virtually no space to the investigation of this highly important sideline of Hilberseimer's practice. By including "Critic" in their subtitle, the authors of this volume would perhaps have indeed brought Hilberseimer out of the "shadow" of Mies. Comparison of his texts from the early 1920s with Mies's manifestos of the same period reveals a different dynamic, this time with Mies in the "shadow" of Hilbs. From this initial moment in the early 1920s, the two architects' conceptions of urban architecture can be reconstructed to show that there was a turning point. David Spaeth argues that in 1927 Hilberseimer began to shift "away from architecture toward planning," and, as Richard Pommer observes, at about the same time Mies turned away from industrialization and toward the arts.

In the Shadow of Mies focuses instead on the rather un-Miesian topic of city planning and presents Hilberseimer the planner, in other words, Hilberseimer after the shift has
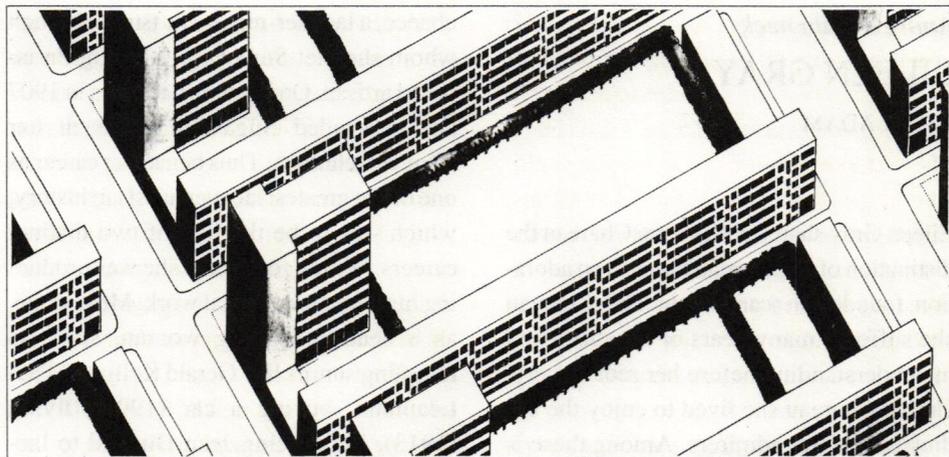
Project for a settlement in Berlin, Hilberseimer (1928). (From *Shadow of Mies*.)

taken place. Spaeth focuses on the development of the "Settlement Unit," and Harrington presents the plans for the Redevelopment of the South Side of Chicago, explaining the application of the "pattern-unit," which was intended to replace the city's entire urban fabric. This shift from urban architecture to the application of a diagram as the ultimate measure of modernity pinpoints the dilemma precisely, not only that of Hilbs but of modern planning in general. His diagrams as well as his ludicrous theory of urban decentralization ("…with the atomic weapon, the concentrated city becomes obsolete, … only decentralization can provide the necessary security") strike us with a bizarre sense of remoteness and remind us that certain aspects of modernism now belong entirely to history.

Richard Pommer's extremely rich and elaborate essay, "More a Necropolis than a Metropolis," draws its title from the surprisingly critical remark made by Hilbs in 1963 as he looked back on his Highrise City. It is this essay that suggests the necessary framework for a historical analysis. Pommer reconstructs the whole spectrum of theories about modern city planning for the epoch 1900–1930, and against this backdrop places Hilberseimer's ideas and projects in the context of German modernism. The essay makes rich use of unpublished archival sources and sets a new standard for future Hilberseimer scholarship.

Yet Pommer's Hilberseimer remains indistinct. Where he precisely outlines the shape of the career, he leaves the figure of

the man in the dark, especially when tracing Hilbs's extreme reductivist position to a similarly reductivist conclusion: "Hilberseimer hated the city—he spent a lifetime not so much thinking about it as trying to exorcise it. … Hating the city, Hilberseimer also hated modernity." One would like to know more about the forces that converted the protagonist of a conscious metropolitan architecture of the 1920s into a hater of the modern city. Hilberseimer's own position toward "Metropolis" is perhaps better understood as ambiguity, something Pommer suggests when he points out that Hilbs wanted his Highrise City to be "at once an homage to, and a critique of, Le Corbusier's City of Three Million." This can be seen as an expression of the "modern" condition, the simultaneous affection and revulsion most of us feel for the big city.

Despite its shortcomings, the Rizzoli publication makes a valuable contribution by its very existence. Moreover, the careful description of the contents of the Ludwig Karl Hilberseimer Papers housed at the Art Institute of Chicago (given in the appendix) provides an overview of a rich, but otherwise unpublished, archival source. But until the illuminating potential of these archives is more fully explored, the Hilberseimer who stood in Mies's shadow remains largely a shadow himself.

Andrew Rabeneck

EILEEN GRAY

PETER ADAM

Eileen Gray shares with Pierre Chareau the distinction of widespread fame, even adoration, founded on scant output. Like Chareau she suffered many years of obscurity and misunderstanding before her rediscovery. Unlike Chareau she lived to enjoy the enthusiasm of her admirers. Among these is Peter Adam, an English television writer and director (who produced the ten-part series *Architecture at the Crossroads*, yet to be seen in the United States). Adam met her in 1960 when she was already 82 and settling into her last house, near St.-Tropez. He has written an admiring, yet quite evenhanded biography that makes up in pace what it lacks in professional scholarship.

Before the famous 1972 sale of the contents of couturier Jacques Doucet's apartment, when an Eileen Gray lacquer screen fetched over $36,000, she had suffered forty years of indifference, and worse. The Doucet sale was timely. It kindled an interest, already sparked by Joseph Rykwert in a 1968 article in *Domus*, by Zeev Aram's reproduction of three of her pieces for sale, by her champion Andrée Putman (whom she never met), and by a modest show of her work at London's Heinz Gallery in 1972. Enthusiasm for her work continues, and rightly. Eileen Gray was a considerable artist.

Born in 1878 in Ireland, she was the unhappy youngest of five children in a well-to-do family. Lonely and diffident, she sought an independent life, enrolling at the Slade in 1901. The year before she had visited the Exposition Universelle in Paris, where the British exhibit took the form of a pastiche Elizabethan manor by Lutyens. By 1902 she was back in Paris to study art, joining the other cultural refugees and meeting many of them. She was thenceforth more French than Irish, and generally held a low view of Anglo-Saxon attitudes about modernism.

On a London visit in 1905 she met, by chance, a lacquer-repair craftsman through whom she met Sugawara, a young Paris-based artisan. On her return to Paris in 1907 she persuaded Sugawara to teach her lacquer technique. Thus began her career as one of the greatest lacquer artists in history, which was to be the first of two distinct careers. Within four years she was producing high-quality original work. Meanwhile, as a beautiful young woman, she was rebuffing suitors like Gerald Kelly and Paul Léautaud, buying a car (1908), flying (1913), introducing Jean Dunand to lacquer, and learning to fall in love with women, particularly Gaby Bloch, Loïe Fuller's manager. By 1913 her work began to sell; Jacques Doucet bought a screen and a table. She exhibited at the Salon des Artistes Décorateurs, and she became interested in woolen carpets. Although her work was in demand, she remained very shy. The novelty and quality of her work alone drew discerning patrons to her.

By the outbreak of World War I she was 35 years old and well known. In 1922 she opened her shop, Jean Désert (an invented name). Gray's lack of commercial instinct did not prevent those besotted by what the London *Daily Mail* sneeringly called the "cult of beauty" from patronizing the shop. They bought rugs and screens but paid late, exchanged goods, and generally behaved to ensure that the store would never be a commercial success during its ten-year life.
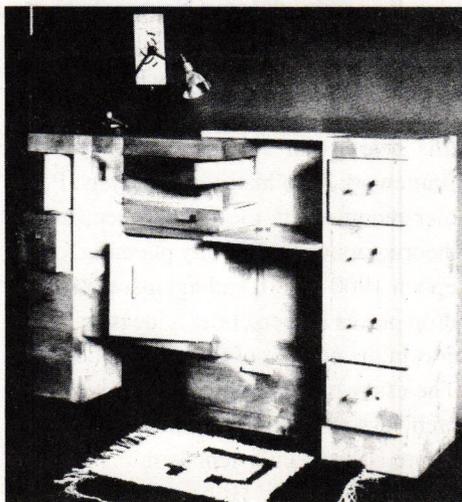
Architect's cabinet, sycamore with chrome handles, Gray (c. 1920s). (From *Eileen Gray*.)

Besides, Gray was preoccupied with her first interior design commission for Mme Matthieu-Lévy at Rue de Loti. This apartment, which predates by ten years Chareau's Maison de Verre, was Gray's truly remarkable first attempt to deal in three-dimensional space. The confidence and energy to do so, to recover from the exhaustion of lacquer production, came from a new lover, Damia, a sultry chanteuse. With her, Gray got around more in Paris, meeting many writers and poets who nourished her intellectual emergence from luxe to modernism. Her second and last attempt at a luxe setting was the 1923 "Monte Carlo" room at the XIV Salon des Artistes Décorateurs. This strange bedroom with its curious parchment lightshades and gleaming lacquer excited mixed responses though touchy Gray remembered only remarks such as, "It is the daughter of Caligari in all its horror." Yet reviewers were quite favorable, linking her name with Pierre Chareau, Francis Jourdain, and other top designers. In particular she was taken up by the de Stijl architects, hence the publication in 1924 of a special issue of *Wendingen* devoted to her work.

The shift from lacquer to the exciting cocktail of exotic woods and metal favored by Chareau, Jean-Michel Frank, Pierre Legrain, and others was not a commercial success at Jean Désert. But by then Gray had met Jean Badovici, her architectural alter ego and promoter through his magazine *L'Architecture Vivante*. It was Badovici who nurtured her timid architectural ambition and helped her to emerge from the world of luxe to the moderne. Her absence from the epoch-marking 1925 exhibition of Arts Décoratifs (probably due to ambiguity of nationality rather than neglect) seemed to mark her rebirth as a modern architect.

By 1929 she had completed with Badovici the house she called E.1027, a villa at Rocquebrune for which she is principally known as an architect. Conceived in the language of Le Corbusier, the house offers more. Its magic is to obey radical modernist doctrines in a sensual way, as exemplified in Gray's statement:

The poverty of modern architecture stems from the atrophy of sensuality. Everything is dominated by reason in order to create amazement without proper research. The art of the engineer is not enough if it is not guided by the primitive needs of men. Reason without instinct. We must mistrust merely pictorial elements if they are not assimilated by instinct.

She wanted to push modernist formulas to a point where they reestablish contact with life, where reality penetrates abstraction—a position of more than passing interest in the late 1980s. There is much in Eileen Gray's work to regenerate today's battered modernist sensibility, whether architecture, furniture, or decoration.

In 1934 she completed a second house, at Castellar above Menton, this time with little collaboration from Badovici. Built over existing water cisterns, this house, even more than E.1027, exemplifies her quest for the poetic in the ordinary. What Peter Adam calls the mechanical ballet of her furniture is even more pronounced. Everything is in constant flux; drawers slide out of cubes, chairs become stepladders, mirrors swivel, and ordinary industrial materials achieve an easy humanity that eluded so many of her peers (and so many of her present imitators).

It is this quality that keeps her work fresh today. It is also a quality that can be recaptured in reproduction, in a way that would be as impossible for Gray's lacquer work as for Ruhlmann's furniture. The new furniture was conceived as prototypical, as a gift to many, rather than as a unique work of art. We must thank Zeev Aram for persuading Gray to allow reproduction of the E.1027 table and the Transat chair so that we can continue to learn from her muse.

Peter Adam's book deals informatively with her later life, with the disparagement of the male-dominated Union des Artistes Modernes (despite her being a founding member), and with her dignified response to being rediscovered and lionized in the 1970s.

Throughout her life she remained an outsider despite her fervent desire to be acknowledged as an architect. The irony of
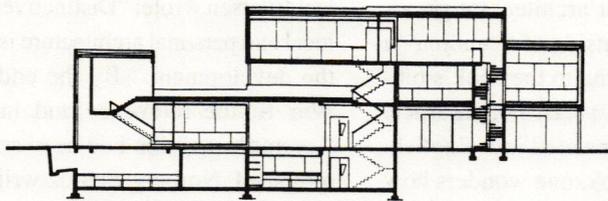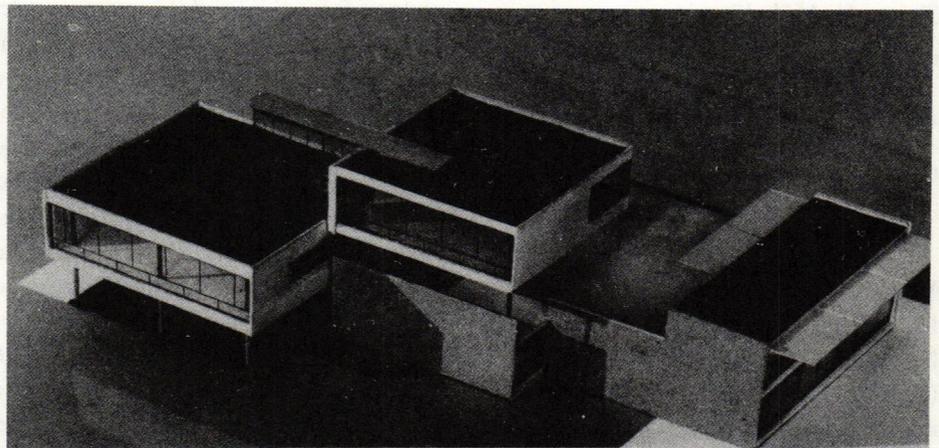
Model and elevations, Vacation Center Restaurant; Gray (1937). (From *Eileen Gray*.)

finding sympathetic admirers fifty years after she really needed them was not lost on her. Indeed her accomplishment is the greater because she always had to contend with male chauvinism and envy of her talent, an oblique and unsatisfactory acknowledgment. She was, for example, badly treated by Le Corbusier, first when he painted seven or eight murals at E.1027 for Badovici without seeking her permission, and then following Badovici's death in 1956 when Le Corbusier tricked Gray out of her house via a surrogate purchase (the title to E.1027 was in Badovici's name).

In the end all that matters is the work, as she would agree. However, an important virtue of Peter Adam's book is that it is not simply a professional biography. Adam treats with great sympathy her life as a woman, as an exile, and as an original. There is the tension in her life between the advantages and disadvantages of financial independence, her ambivalent sexuality (at times she seems to be Badovici's victim, at times, his succor). Above all these is her obsessive commitment to whatever she was doing: she offers a model of Pauline redemption, renouncing the unique and luxurious for the unknown of the ordinary,

seeking poetry in a modern vision of architecture. In this she differs from Chareau who, uniquely, remained true to both visions. She spoke in later life about the "sins of my youth." Peter Adam, though, does proper justice to those sins. Had she died in 1925, Eileen Gray's place in the history of decorative art would remain secure. Modernists would do well to revisit, or probably to visit for the first time, her lacquer work to see where a true sense of perfection can lead. This is not the crude "craft" sensibility of our time, which glorifies only individual creativity, but the profound obsession with disciplined quality of another era, a time of symbiosis between knowledgeable and adventurous patrons like Doucet and their artists.

What is unique about Eileen Gray is that although she transformed her style and her sources, she continued to offer the anonymous patron the same commitment that she offered Jacques Doucet and Mme. Matthieu-Lévy, seventy-five and sixty-five years ago respectively.

EILEEN GRAY, ARCHITECT/DESIGNER: A BIOGRAPHY, Peter Adam, Abrams, 1987, 400 pp., illus., $39.95.

Taisto H. Mäkelä

THE FUNCTIONALIST ARNE KORSMO

CHRISTIAN NORBERG-SCHULZ

With this brief bilingual Norwegian/English monograph on the life and work of the Norwegian architect Arne Korsmo (1900–1968), Christian Norberg-Schulz makes available for the first time to an English-reading audience a body of significant modernist architecture previously little known outside of Scandinavia and Finland. According to the book's bibliography, there has not been a single article on or by Korsmo translated into English. After reading the book, one wonders how such interesting work could have been ignored for so long. Norberg-Schulz tries to answer this question while attempting to establish the work of his former colleague Korsmo as a part of the modernist canon.

On his first major European study tour, Korsmo wrote: "I was fascinated by all this history, but I kept wondering if it would be possible to smuggle the same joy into the logic of our time." Here lay the roots of the problem with which he struggled throughout his career: How to humanize the relentless rationalization inherent in so much of the modernist agenda without resorting to figurative or historical reference. Korsmo's description of the "knife" from the 1938 "Vi kan" ("We can") exhibition epitomizes the bravura of his utopian modernism: "It gleams towards you, clear, dazzling—'*the knife*'—no golden angel of peace but the very essence of the desire for order—the symbol of standardized production—the symbol of everything which will surmount difficulties." The knife represented modernism severing itself from the constraining dogma of history, a history which was not required for Korsmo's brave new world. Korsmo, according to Norberg-Schulz, established a new relationship between man and nature concerned with "the elementary values inherent in form and colour, rhythm and structure. Thus, art became 'abstract,'

or 'non-figurative' and, for many people, difficult to understand." Modernists in general, and Korsmo in particular, believed in the legitimacy of an abstract language of forms and in the potential for those forms to engender meaning in and of themselves. The Dammann House of 1930–32 and the Stenersen House of 1937–39 attest to Korsmo's skill in turning this dictum into elegent modernist statements.

Such an attitude toward form, though prevalent in Europe, did not fare as well in Norway. As early as 1927 in an article titled "What is Modern Architecture?" the architect Ellefsen wrote: "Distinctively national, local and personal architecture is the goal of the development." By the end of World War II, the relevence and influence of Korsmo's position had been seriously diminished. Norberg-Schulz writes that "in many ways the war destroyed the faith in the new, which was replaced by an interest in local traditions. In 1945 it was not easy to continue the intentions of the 1930's." The confidence of achieving the brave new world of modernism was displaced by a concern for preserving a cultural identity threatened by five years of war. The influence of Aalto's "regionalism" also played a large role in turning attention to traditional forms and local materials. The Norwegians, like the Finns, felt it was important to create an architecture that was both national and modern. Was this in essence a rejuvenation of the nationalist question that at the end of the 19th century had dominated political life not only in Norway and Finland but in much of Europe? Evidently so. One could argue that the 19th-century nationalist goal of establishing and maintaining a distinct cultural identity had never been forgotten, but had simply been carried over as another important theme for modernism to engage.

After the war, Korsmo's stance appeared to be out of touch with the current architectural debate. Norberg-Schulz, however, argues that Korsmo was a "victim" of these conditions, someone simply too advanced to be appreciated by his contemporaries: "Even though he felt just as 'Norwegian' as his colleagues, his interpretation … did not

provide immediate satisfaction to those seeking security in the familiar. Therefore the Korsmo school was pushed aside by the 'prevailing taste'." Norberg-Schulz further derides the "prevailing taste" episode as an unfortunate lacuna in the evolution of modernism: "Today, however, we realize that it is Korsmo's work that forms part of the true development of modern architecture." Thus Norberg-Schulz, through a revisionist interpretation, attempts to restore Korsmo to his proper place in the modernist pantheon.

This leaves us with one last point to consider: How is Korsmo's work reconciled with the larger Heideggerian interpretive project of Norberg-Schulz? For Korsmo, according to Norberg-Schulz, "the point of departure was the site with its properties of space, form, material, colour and light, everything man must come to terms with in order to be able to *dwell* in the true sense of the word. For this was Korsmo's ultimate goal: to help people really dwell." The language is unabashedly borrowed from Heidegger, upon whose thinking on art and architecture Norberg-Schulz's methodology depends. As such, it provides a consistent thread informing all of Norberg-Schulz's writing on architecture, writing in which he is always framing the understanding of architecture in Heideggerian terms. Such a narrow and dogged dedication to one philosophical stance seems problematic: Why not use other philosophies as well? Whatever the debate surrounding the validity of Norberg-Schulz's interpretive strategy, he should nonetheless be commended for introducing a wider audience to the work of Arne Korsmo, "the modern 'functionalist' who was going to teach us to live in a new age."

Barry Bergdoll

PIONEERS OF POSTMODERN DESIGN

There was a time when historians of 19th-century architecture gathered in amateur societies devoted to a delightfully arcane and unpopular cause—the rediscovery and study of the monuments of what were then called "the revivals," a movement pioneered in England by the founding of the Victorian Society. With time they gained respectability and university posts as the study began to form part of a larger cultural analysis of historical culture in the 19th-century and as the architectural profession began to doubt its own commitment to the architectural doctrines of the Modern Movement. Now that architecture has become a booming subsidiary of the fashion market, historians of the 19th century are increasingly eager for their share of the glory that now shines upon even the most obscure corners of the architectural professions.

Professor J. Mordaunt Crook, a longtime stalwart of the Victorian Society in Britain and author of pioneering studies on the English Greek Revival and model monographs on such Victorian masters as William Burges, has sought in his most recent work to evolve with this trend. *The Dilemma of Style* began as the prestigious Slade Lectures at Oxford in 1979–80, and was later delivered to students at London's Architectural Association. Now with little change in tone from those popular slide lectures, Crook presents this material as a brisk history of the past two hundred years of stylistic indecision in English architecture, meant to reveal a new line of the ancestry of current architectural practice, predictably enough shown to have good British roots.

"The twentieth century," Crook writes in his preface, has had to rediscover what the 19th century learned so painfully: "eclecticism is the vernacular of sophisticated societies; architecture begins where function ends." Wait before chuckling. Such a connection merits serious study as the parallel

between 19th-century eclecticism and the pluralism of contemporary "postmodern" architecture has been frequently enough evoked to make historicism once again a household word. As clear as it is that the cultural conditions of the last century and the present are radically different, a serious analysis of the evolution of architectural culture in the modern period in relation to historical ideology and beliefs would no doubt yield new insights into both the development and the political content of 20th-century architecture. But laugh one must, even if not always with the author. Crook has spared no efforts to be entertaining—unfortunately often at the expense of his material. Too frequently he offers only more of the type of vulgar and ultimately meaningless hyperbolic statements quoted above. Such a sweeping and totally unsubstantiated generalization, as well as its complement; "Total styles are the product of simple societies or totalitarian regimes," characterizes the glib and flippant style of all eight chapters as the author gallops through the anecdotal history of English architecture from the associationist aesthetics of the picturesque garden to Stirling's recent landscapes at Stuttgart and on the Thames Embankment. Was Perpendicular Gothic the expression of a simplistic moment in English social history? Or are we entitled to conclude that the eclecticism sponsored as state doctrine by the regimes of Hitler and Mussolini represents sophisticated societies, while the Modern Movement's faith in the possibility of a new universal language of architectural form was the pipedream of a totalitarian regime? Such facile generalizations, which might be entertaining during a lively lecture, render the overarching arguments of *The Dilemma of Style* maddening, if not simply absurd. No serious attempt is made to integrate an


The Palace of Architecture, entrance incorporating all styles; George Wightwick (1840). (From *Dilemma of Style*.)

analysis of architecture with its cultural situation, nor does the author relate attitudes toward the past in architectural design to contemporary movements in history or to other manifestations of the changing role of historical discourse and imagery in culture as a whole.

But many is the unconvincing or poorly argued lecture which nonetheless has taught a great deal or has offered an illuminating analysis or description of a particular person, building, or movement along the way. Regrettably even on that score Professor Crook fails to nourish his audience, serving up clichéd and oversimplified summaries that seriously misrepresent such key figures as Pugin (who Crook claims supplanted associative and visual values for ethical ones), the Ecclesiologists, Ruskin (analyzed as a capitalist), Quatremère de Quincy (misunderstood in an aside!), and G. F. Bodley (credited with having "solved the dilemma of style simply by ignoring it"), not to mention the masters of the Modern Movement (berated once again for being mere functionalists).

Equally irritating is Crook's desire to elevate the level of the discussion with the fashionable lingo of contemporary architectural debate. References to semiotics and structuralism are peppered throughout, although their relevance is never explicated nor their methods of analysis employed.
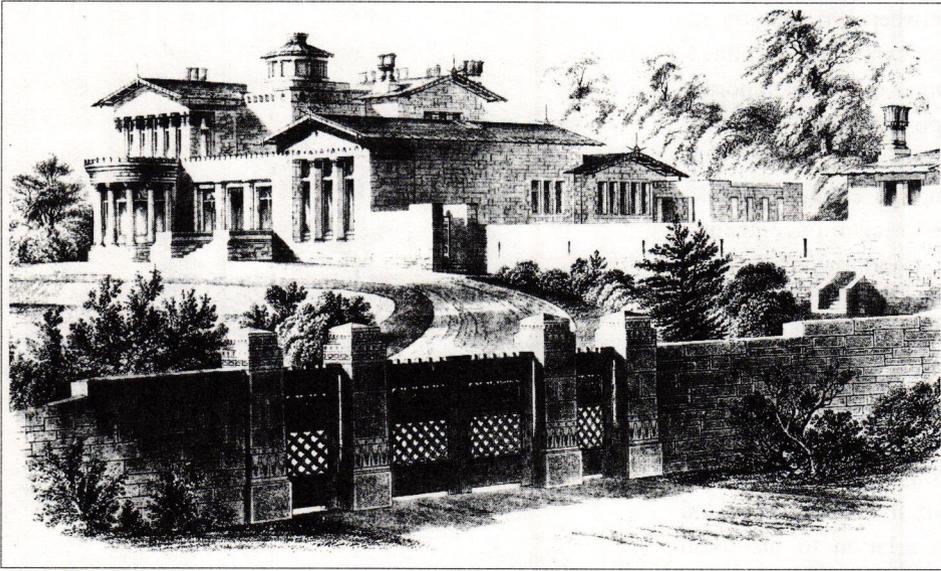
"Holmwood" in the "Modern Greek" style, Cathcart, Glasgow; Alexander Thomson (1856–58). (From *Dilemma of Style*.)

Crook tells us that the Glaswegian architect Alexander "Greek" Thomson "understood above all the communicating role of metaphor. Hence his long-term significance for Postmodernism." Yet it is never explained what in Thomson's work functions metaphorically, nor of what his architecture might be a metaphor. Crook does not even mention that Thomson's highly original treatment of classical forms consisted primarily of rendering them in a rigorous and repetitive constructive system of architecture, one which Pevsner long ago celebrated for its rationality as proto-modernist. The author, in all fairness, seems to have his own doubts. "Alas," he notes, "the Victorians were not yet ready for semiotics." Perhaps their eclectic approaches might be illuminated by an examination of Victorian linguistics?

Throughout the book, style remains a dilemma for Crook. He never offers a satisfactory definition of this issue central to the story he wishes to relate and instead relies on parenthetical remarks which provide a series of not wholly compatible working definitions as the book precedes. "Style in architecture is a way of building codified in imagistic form," is offered on page 12, although on the following page the phrase is modified to read "style in architecture is simply a way of building codified by time." Distinctions between style as a conscious category of 19th-century designers and as a category of art historical analysis are neither clarified nor respected. Crook often blurs his own voice and those of the countless authors he quotes, suggesting at once a lack of distance and a contempt for his material. In the late 1890s, the Gothic Revival had finally been rejected by the leaders of the profession in favor of a profusion of styles from eclectic classical revivals to the fashionable Queen Anne. Crook concludes that "the search for universal style had failed. … But there was still plenty of opportunity for style, style as tectonic preference, style as personality, style as a visual flavor, style as the working out of an idea, style as excellence of form." He then precedes, for good measure, to misconstrue one of the most famous formulations of L. B. Alberti's *Ten Books on Architecture* by paraphrasing his definition of beauty as one of style: "In its perfection, as Alberti pointed out, style—regardless of specific form—aspires to that harmony from which nothing can be subtracted, and to which nothing can be added, without destroying its very essence." It is hard to say whose dilemma is the most vexing here.

THE DILEMMA OF STYLE: ARCHITECTURAL IDEAS FROM THE PICTURESQUE TO THE POST-MODERN, J. Mordaunt Crook, University of Chicago Press, 1987, 348 pp., illus., $45.00.

Alan J. Plattus

THE HISTORY OF POSTMODERN ARCHITECTURE

HEINRICH KLOTZ

The History of Postmodern Architecture is an ambitious survey of recent architecture that rests upon shaky premises. Heinrich Klotz, professor at the University of Marburg and director of the Deutsches Architekturmuseum, has been one of the most assiduous students and cataloguers of architectural postmodernism, and is well situated to guide us in an exploration of its nooks and crannies. He almost convinces us that postmodernism has what it so desperately sought to construct for itself, namely a "history." But history is different from mere chronicle. It is, in a way that would surely interest Klotz, a form of fiction, but at that characteristically postmodern level of narrative or plot, his particular story is less than convincing.

In the first place, the story, if indeed there is one, begins much earlier than Klotz suggests. And while an author is not obliged to begin at the beginning, in this case different starting points entail very different approaches to the issues in question. Klotz, like so many others, would both account for and characterize postmodernism in terms of a reaction against certain aspects of the Modern Movement. Modernism, however, should by now be understood as a more complex and historically rooted set of events than has been suggested, in both its own polemics and the caricatures provided by its detractors. The various modern movements—and in particular those modernist orthodoxies and dogmas against which postmodernism has been presumed to react—could, and perhaps should, be understood in relation to successive attempts to reestablish an authoritative and nonarbitrary basis for architectural theory and practice in the wake of the erosion of traditional sources of cultural and political order and authority since the late 18th century.

Contrary to Klotz's version, such an
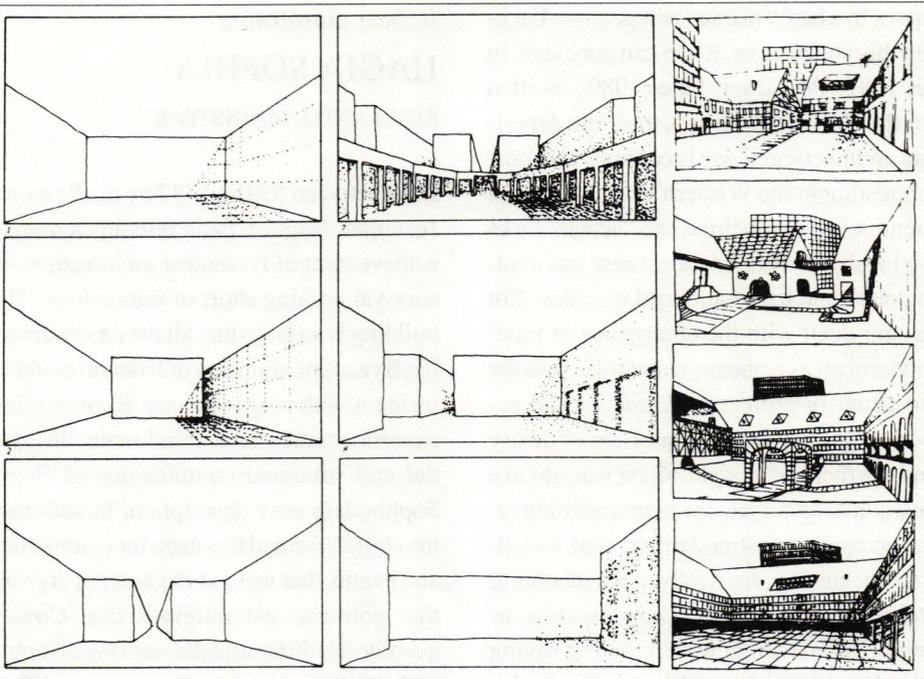
Typology of plazas, Rob Krier (1975). (From *History of Postmodern Architecture*.)

account of modernism would point to its continuity with the history of art and architecture since the Renaissance, a continuity understood in terms of fundamental issues and underlying social and economic forces, rather than stylistic or formal criteria. This historiographic approach has been proposed most frequently by Italian critics and historians, and more recently by Anglo-American scholars such as Kenneth Frampton. Admittedly, the picture may look different from a German perspective. In the case of architectural postmodernism, however, one is speaking about a phenomenon whose roots, although different, are deep in Italian and American soil, and fertilized by a sprinkling of French theory.

In this context, postmodernism may be cast, in some of its manifestations, as a new round of efforts to reground architectural theory and practice in the wake of the ultimate inability of the Modern Movement to do just that: to succeed where the 18th and 19th century, by their own accounts, had failed. Postmodernism has not only recapitulated many of the theoretical strategies of the 18th and 19th century, from typology to eclecticism to outright revivalism, it has also had recourse to some of the same

strategies invoked by modernism in its quest for a stable source of order and authority that would transcend the vagaries of style, taste, and the increasingly voracious art market. Neo-traditionalism and neo-modernism thus appear as more or less superficially different responses to the same problem. More recent efforts to escape the crisis of authority by accepting—and, in some cases, celebrating—its apparently radical consequences are heavily indebted, both formally and intellectually, to the experiments and polemics of the early 20th-century avant-gardes.

This latter approach would appear to endorse the attempt by the French philosopher Jean-François Lyotard to identify "the postmodern condition" with the end of the great "master-narratives" which legitimized Western culture and politics and helped sustain their hegemony. The recognition that such grand narratives, indeed any narratives, are fundamentally "fictitious" would initially seem to confirm Klotz's formulaic description of postmodernism as promoting "fiction as well as function." It might even, in a somewhat cynical way, suggest an excuse for the absence of plot or hierarchy in any history of the recent past.

The problem, however, is not simply that Klotz would appear to believe, if not in hierarchy, then certainly in plot, but rather that he fails to make the crucial distinction between protagonist architects. Michael Graves, for example, clearly believes and expects to attract belief in the archetypal fictions his work invokes. Robert Venturi, on the other hand, will never forget or let his audience forget the ultimately provisional, and even arbitrary, status of architectural "fictions." While both architects may be in some vague sense postmodern, only Venturi is post-Romantic, and I would suggest that this distinction is much more interesting and important than the more familiar pairing of these two in opposition to the Modern Movement.

Klotz certainly provides some interesting accounts of some very interesting architects and artists, including some, such as Walter Pichler, who are not well enough known in this country. Yet the depth of his overall account is not sufficient to sustain interest in the entire project as a history. A publication on this scale about recent architecture is either another coffee-table book—and this book, despite its many excellent illustrations, has higher ambitions—or else it must go beyond the conventional treatment of contemporary architecture in terms of name-brand architects and projects and gross-grained dualisms and begin to deliver the "history" that is promised. Rather than rehash the opposition of abstraction and representation, for example, it is time for an architectural historian to trace in the wider context of postwar culture the way in which representation and its critique have moved to the top of the agenda for a number of disciplines and discourses.

Klotz, while not a member of the know-nothing school of architectural history, is still not a very persistent intellectual historian. He makes "fiction," "narrative," and "representation" (very different concepts not clearly distinguished in this book) central to his account of postmodernism, but does not give the reader much of an idea of the importance of literary and linguistic theory in both the introduction and continu-

ing development of these concepts in architectural theory and criticism. Nor does he deal with the influence of recent philosophy on architectural discussions, such as the impact of the phenomenological investigations of Heidegger or Merleau-Ponty, which can be direct, in the case of theorists like Norberg-Schulz and Frampton and architects like Graves, and indirect, in the case of broad issues such as that of "place," which is also featured in Klotz's account.

Klotz is better, but still inconsistent, in dealing with what might be called the internal intellectual history of postmodernism. While he, quite correctly, I believe, identifies the critique of functionalism as crucial to the theoretical articulation of various postmodern positions, from Venturi to Rossi, he fails to mention Alan Colquhoun's seminal article, "Typology and Design Method." And surprisingly, his discussion of contextualism never makes explicit the extent to which the attack on zoning by Rossi, Krier, and others is an attack on functionalism as applied to urbanism. Along those lines, a history of postmodern architecture that mentions Colin Rowe only as the source of the "New York Five's" interest in the early work of Le Corbusier risks the accusation so often leveled against the worst aspects of postmodernism: the elevation of image over idea and substance. Indeed, for a book by an eminent historian and critic, this one is altogether too timid about the role of intellectuals in the teaching, practice, and promotion of postmodernism. If Rowe only gets credit for the whiteness of the "Whites," Vincent Scully is noted only as the author of the preface to Venturi's Complexity and Contradiction, and Manfredo Tafuri, even less auspiciously, as the source of a quotation about Louis Kahn.

But dropping these names, even in passing, reminds us that history, both intellectual and material, must finally be rooted in the political, social, and economic circumstances of the entire built environment. If this too is ultimately a fiction, then it was one that was not only very persuasive in the 1960s, as postmodernism emerged, but also seems once again to put recent develop-

ments in a badly needed perspective. Lacking this perspective, Klotz can conclude, in his 1987 "Postscript: Since 1980," written for this American edition, that "the American architectural scene is certainly the most interesting in the Western world," without mentioning that behind the "scene" lurks the harsh reality of homelessness and a ruling class that has abandoned its cities. Not having dealt with the emergence of postmodernism as a phenomenon related to the structures of professional practice and patronage, as well as the dialectics of theory and the rhetoric of style, Klotz was not in a position to anticipate the overwhelming reaction against postmodernism that was already beginning, especially in the schools of architecture. This book is not, therefore, as helpful as one might wish it to be in saving what Klotz himself would surely recognize as the positive and substantive contributions of the developments he documents.

THE HISTORY OF POSTMODERN ARCHITECTURE, Heinrich Klotz, Radja Donnell, translator, MIT Press, 1988, 462 pp., illus., $60.00.
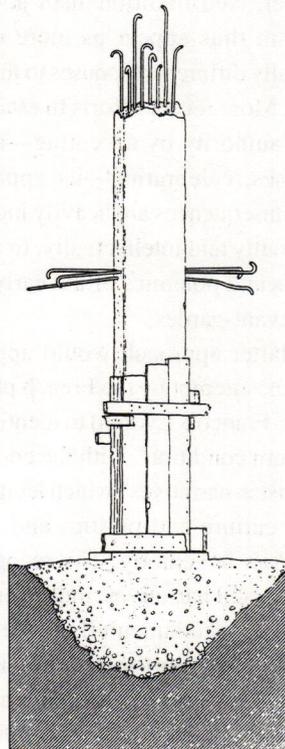
The Sixth Order of Columns, or The End of Architecture, Leon Krier (1977). (From *History of Postmodern Architecture.*)

Robert Ousterhout

HAGIA SOPHIA

ROWLAND J. MAINSTONE

Built between 532 and 537 by the Emperor Justinian, Hagia Sophia remains a unique achievement of Byzantine architecture, its survival nothing short of miraculous. The building is so large that all the other surviving Byzantine churches of Istanbul could fit inside it with room to spare. Representing experimentation on a grand scale, the spatial and structural complexities of Hagia Sophia defy easy description. In addition, the church formed the stage for ceremonies and events that were at the heart of Byzantine political and religious life. Consequently, it is difficult to discuss Hagia Sophia without digressing into Byzantine politics, religion, art, and architectural history, not to mention structural theory. Thus Rowland Mainstone's task—to write a general book on Hagia Sophia—may be as overwhelming as his subject.

The author assumes a discursive approach. Rather than presenting the reader with an array of facts and figures, he begins as a visitor might experience Hagia Sophia, describing his impressions from a distance and as if walking casually through its interior, accompanying his description for the most part by 35-mm photographs that frame and focus each view. A similarly general description of the construction materials and structural systems follows. The reader is thus introduced to a complex work of architecture and its problems only gradually, although the rambling organization allows for frequent repetitions. The history of the building is examined in reverse chronological order, working back to the sixth century. Then, after a discussion of the pre-Justinian church, Justinian's church is analyzed in detail. The several chapters on its design and structure form the core of the book. Finally there are short discussions of liturgical furnishings and the architectural influence of Hagia Sophia. Interspersed in the later chapters are a brief history of the founding of Byzantium and of the political and religious climate at the

time of Justinian, as well as discussions of Byzantine architecture before and after Justinian, and a good measure of structural theory.

The analysis is often annoyingly superficial. As a frequent visitor to Hagia Sophia, I found myself itching for Mainstone to tell me something I did not already know. Moreover, the discussions frequently lack dates and measurements. For example, numerous post-Justinianic mosaics are illustrated, but none are dated. On the other hand, the discussions of structure—both theory and specific problems in the building—often tend toward the opposite extreme. For example, thrusts are presented in units of MN (1 meganewton = 100 tons), a measurement probably unfamiliar to most readers.

The greatest strength of the book is the discussion of the building's structural system and its implications, which, combined with the clarification of later additions and repairs, provides a fascinating picture of Hagia Sophia's structural life. Mainstone's analysis of the construction history of the main buttresses and buttress piers is particularly illuminating. Without archaeological examination and scientific tests, much of the discussion must remain speculative and is certainly open to interpretation. Frequently Mainstone presents several hypotheses, but wisely leaves the solution open. Nonetheless, it is instructive to have the problems rehearsed by someone with Mainstone's experience in historic structures.

In the analysis of the design of Hagia Sophia, Mainstone tends to limit his discussion to a two-dimensional "drawing-board mentality," beginning with the basilican plan. For a building as emphatically spatial in concept as Hagia Sophia, I suspect that the initial idea was a three-dimensional form. Architects often think in three dimensions, relying on the drawing board only for codification and the coordination of parts. With backgrounds in geometry, the architects of Hagia Sophia must have envisioned their creation with its space-defining potential. Thus rather than investigating vaulting possibilities for a basilica—in this instance

a groin vault over the nave makes no sense at all—it would seem most likely that Anthemius and Isidorus *began* with the idea of a dome as the central feature and subsequently addressed the problems of coordinating this element within a traditional, longitudinal plan.

Mainstone also makes the intriguing suggestion that the plan of the gallery was originally meant to replicate that of the ground floor—that is, the columns were intended to be vertically aligned as they are in the church of Saints Sergius and Bacchus. Reasons for the change are not entirely clear, although suggestions are proposed that the builders found the project too ambitious, and that additional large columns were not available. This may be ques-

Mosaic over the inner door of the southwest porch ("Justinian presenting the church to the Virgin and Child"). (From *Hagia Sophia*.)

tioned. When discussing the "floating impression" of the interior, the author notes that "everything seems to be done to hide the structure. ... The impression everywhere is not of solid structure but of continuously flowing surfaces interrupted only by seemingly insubstantial open screens." The basket capitals and heavily undercut decoration reinforce this, appearing like pieces of lace rather than marble. But the lack of vertical alignment in the colonnades also contributes significantly to this weightless effect, denying the structural role of inherently structural elements, thereby reducing them to decorative screens. The impression fits so well with the aesthetic sensibilities expressed elsewhere in the interior that I suspect it was intended from the beginning.

Mainstone's discussion of the influence of Hagia Sophia on subsequent architectural developments perhaps overstates the case. While the dome became a major element in Byzantine design, the scale and complexity of Justinian's church were never again attempted. In fact, after the sixth century Hagia Sophia became something of a white elephant, too large for daily use and difficult to maintain. Its limited impact on Byzantine architecture reflects the unique nature of a church designed to be unlike any other building. As such, it is almost a purely architectural creation—that is, design, geometry, and aesthetics were of primary concern to the architects, while function and liturgical planning were minor. It was not intended to simply house events, but to magnify them and to place them in a different sphere.

In the final analysis, we may ask what Hagia Sophia meant to its creators. Mainstone would like to place it against the backdrop of Justinian's attempts to unify the feuding factions within the Orthodox church. It is perhaps easier to view the building as a work of political propaganda, constructed after the suppression of the most serious threat to Justinian's rule, the Nike Rebellion, and to outdo the slightly earlier architectural achievement of his politically well-connected rival, Juliana Anicia. But unintentionally the church has become a symbol for the overreaching
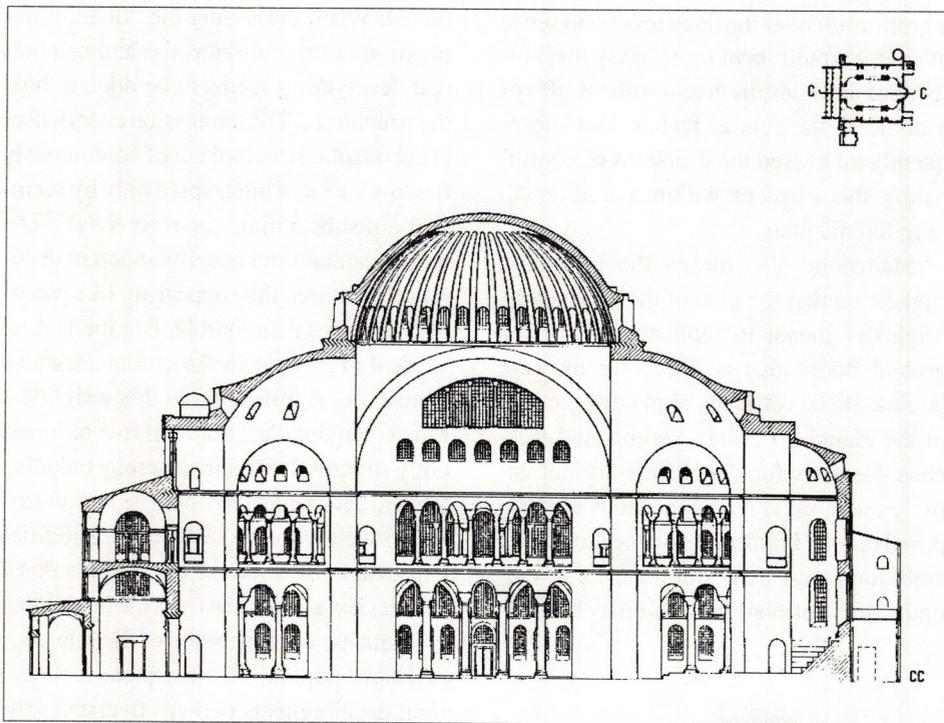
Cross section midway through dome of Hagia Sophia. (From *Hagia Sophia*.)

ambitions of Justinian. In his architecture as well as in his military campaigns, Justinian attempted to recapture the glory of ancient Rome. But the political boundaries were pushed far beyond what the Byzantine empire could effectively maintain, and within a few decades the hard-won territories were lost forever. Similarly Anthemius and Isidorus pushed building technology to its limits, and the improperly buttressed first dome collapsed in Justinian's lifetime.

As a footnote, it is intriguing that throughout its history Hagia Sophia has been viewed as a political symbol. When the Ottoman Turks captured Constantinople in 1453, the first official act of Mehmet the Conqueror was to pray in Hagia Sophia. It was the first Christian church converted to a mosque, a symbol of the Islamic Ottoman victory. Subsequently for the Greeks, Hagia Sophia became a symbol of their lost heritage, the equivalent of the Wailing Wall, replete with folktales and legends. The 1935 secularization of the building by Kemal Atatürk, the founder of modern Turkey, paralleled his secularization of the government and attempts to break the associations with Turkey's Ottoman past.

In more recent times Hagia Sophia has

again been appealed to as a symbol. During the 1979–80 period of economic collapse and political disarray in Turkey, a movement was afoot to reopen Hagia Sophia as a mosque. The movement almost succeeded, but was stopped with the military coup in 1980. On the surface, the increase in Islamic fundamentalism was partly responsible, but I suspect it was the symbolic potential of the building that proved so attractive: faced with such political and economic difficulties, the Turks looked to their past for a symbol of Turkish greatness—and found it in Hagia Sophia with its multitude of historic associations.

While Mainstone's book will not be the final word on Hagia Sophia, it does provide a convenient, no-nonsense, amply illustrated source of information for any reader interested in the building. It will be useful in the classroom and—one hopes—will inspire scholars to readdress the numerous critical problems this magnificent building poses.

HAGIA SOPHIA: ARCHITECTURE, STRUCTURE AND LITURGY OF JUSTINIAN'S GREAT CHURCH, Rowland J. Mainstone, Thames and Hudson, 1988, 288 pp., illus., $50.00.

Caroline Bruzelius

THE ROYAL ABBEY OF SAINT-DENIS

SUMNER McKNIGHT CROSBY

The Royal Abbey of Saint-Denis is the product of fifty years of research, excavation, and reflection on an ancient and venerable abbey. Sumner McKnight Crosby became interested in this monument as a first-year graduate student at Yale University in 1932; he submitted the manuscript for this book to Yale University Press only four months before his death in 1982. Pamela Z. Blum subsequently edited the manuscript with a gentle and benevolent hand, completing the parts of the book Crosby left unfinished, adding to the bibliography and some of the notes, but leaving his ideas and conclusions untouched. Given the breadth of this volume, that was no simple task.

This is a very personal book. Crosby's lifelong involvement with Saint-Denis led him into a deep and complex relationship with the monument. His first excavations were conducted in 1939, interrupted by the war, and resumed in 1946. The French had believed that after the restorations of Debret and Viollet-le-Duc in the 19th century, nothing of interest remained to be discovered at Saint-Denis, but in his first archaeological campaign Crosby discovered important vestiges of the Carolingian church, the point of the departure for the new plan he offered in his first book of 1942, and now again in this new volume. Additional discoveries in 1947, including the beautiful "Crosby relief" decorated with figures of the twelve apostles, were finally too much for some French citizens to bear, and after 1949 Crosby no longer received permission to excavate. The architect Jules Formigé took over the excavations at Saint-Denis, and Crosby was excluded from participation or even consultation. Formigé's conclusions were published in *L'Abbaye royale de Saint-Denis: Recherches nouvelles*, published in Paris in 1960. Both Formigé's archaeological techniques and his restorations were unscientific and careless (for

example, he seems to have moved certain architectural remains of the earlier structures from one place to another). The debate that Formigé's work generated is an integral part of Crosby's book, for Formigé's mistakes and distortions of the evidence are referred to throughout the text, though always in the most gentlemanly manner. The book thus revives a controversy that began in the early 1950s, and though both protagonists are deceased, Crosby has managed to have the last word.

It is not surprising that Crosby's discoveries at the abbey church should have provoked nationalistic feelings. Saint-Denis is not just any building. One of the oldest monasteries in France, it held the tomb of Saint Denis, first Bishop of Paris and the so-called "Apostle of the Franks," as well as the relics of his apparently fictional companions, Saints Rusticus and Eleutherius. The first simple church over the tomb of Saint Denis was built at the instigation of Saint Geneviève in the late fifth century. It became a favorite burial place of the Merovingian kings, a monarchical tradition that continued with few exceptions until the French Revolution. The monks of Saint-Denis were the official historians of the realm. Kings were often educated in the abbey's school, and the regalia stored there when not in use at coronations. Before battle, the medieval kings of France would come to Saint-Denis to invoke the aid and protection of their patron saint and repossess the great battle flag, the Oriflamme, which led the French armies to war to the battle cry of "Monjoie Saint-Denis!"

Saint Denis was the patron saint of the kings of France, and the abbey itself was a symbol of the power of the monarchy from the 12th century onwards. Its architecture was as distinguished as its history. Although we know little about Saint Geneviève's first church, enlarged and embellished by King Dagobert in the seventh century, Crosby's excavations have revealed a great deal about its Carolingian successor, consecrated in 775. The plan of the second church was a revival of the plan types associated with Constantinian architecture of the fourth century A.D., when
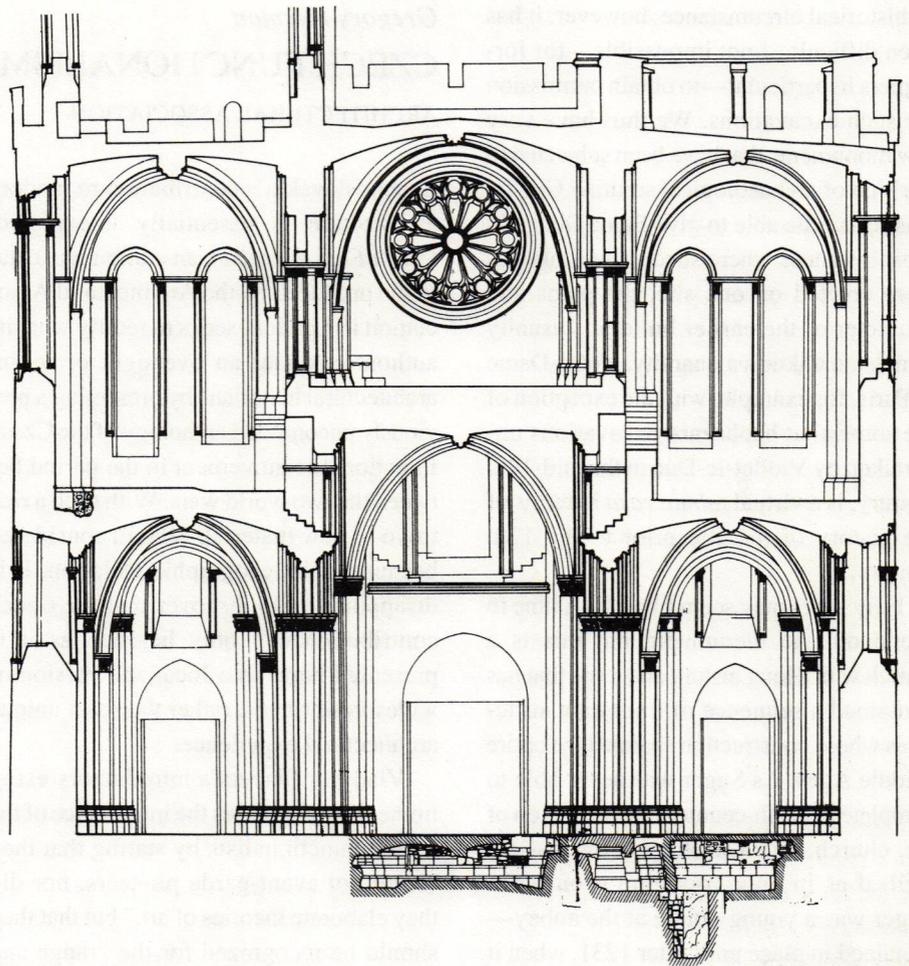
Section looking west through the western bays, including the excavated bases of the 12th century. (From *Saint Denis*.)

Christianity had been suddenly endowed with legitimacy and the immense prestige of Constantine's imperial conversion. The importance of Crosby's reconstruction of the Carolingian plan cannot be overestimated, for it proves that the Carolingian Renaissance was as consciously and as highly developed in architecture as it was in literature, manuscript illumination, and the other arts.

Saint-Denis is best known for the church Abbot Suger began in the 1130s, considered to be the first monument in the Gothic style. Crosby's thorough analysis of the parts of the church built by Suger (the west façade and the choir), his thoughtful use of the modern technology of photogrammatry, and his meticulously drawn plans reveal a great deal about that energetic abbot's remarkable structures. The process of setting out the plans for the new work,

the highly sensitive accommodation of the new building to the older structures, and the construction campaigns themselves come alive in Crosby's evocative and descriptive prose.

The book is largely archaeological in character and supplies an unusually complete picture of the way the Gothic church related to the previous structures on the site. This is an especially important consideration in church design, but one which is often neglected. While such extensive archaeological explorations are not unique to Crosby's work, the difficulties in obtaining permission to conduct them are often daunting. The archaeological material in Charles Seymour's justly famous *Notre Dame of Noyon in the Twelfth Century* (1939) was only made possible by the need to repair the monument after its devastating bombardment in World War I. Aside from this kind

of historical circumstance, however, it has been difficult, if not impossible—for foreigners in particular—to obtain permission for such excavations. We thus have very few monuments that have been subjected to the kind of archaeological scrutiny Crosby was for a time able to give Saint-Denis. In most instances where successive churches were erected on one site, the plans and character of the earlier buildings usually remain an unknown quantity. Notre-Dame in Paris, for example, with the exception of the somewhat haphazard excavations undertaken by Viollet-le-Duc in the mid-19th century, is a virtual *tabula rasa* in terms of the history of the site prior to the 12th century.

Fifty years may seem like a long time to spend on one monument, but this is a church with a long history and a site that has contained a sequence of important structures whose construction spanned the entire Middle Ages. As Suger was never able to complete his 12th-century reconstruction of the church, the Carolingian nave—described as in poor condition even when Suger was a young oblate at the abbey—remained in place until after 1231, when it was finally replaced with a new church in the fashionable Rayonnant style. (I have argued in my own book on Saint-Denis, *The Thirteenth-Century Church at Saint-Denis* (1985), that this latter church was as radical a departure for the "new" Gothic of the 13th century as Abbot Suger's had been for the 12th, but that is another story.)

If any reproach can be made of Crosby's book, it is only that the abbey church is approached in a certain isolation, separate from the larger story of the development of architecture at the time. That would have doubled the length of an already long volume, however, and perhaps required another fifty years of labor. For the abbey of Saint-Denis, as for Rome, a single lifetime is simply not time enough.

THE ROYAL ABBEY OF SAINT-DENIS FROM ITS BEGINNINGS TO THE DEATH OF SUGER, 475–1151, Sumner McKnight Crosby, edited and completed by Pamela Z. Blum, Yale University Press, 1987, 525 pp., illus., $55.00.

Gregory Herman
CZECH FUNCTIONALISM
ARCHITECTURAL ASSOCIATION

Czechoslovakia's contribution to modern architecture is essentially unexplored. *Czech Functionalism,* an exhibit and catalogue produced by the Architectural Association in London, seeks to rectify what its authors consider an oversight of recent architectural historians by presenting a previously uncompiled anthology of the Czech Functionalist movement in the period between the two world wars. With such a rich trove of new material, seldom considered because of its geographic isolation, it is disappointing to discover that the Czech contribution can only be seen as it is presented here: as a localized version of widespread trends, rather than as a unique architectural experience.

Vladimir Slapeta's introductory essay immediately qualifies the importance of the Czech Functionalists by stating that they "were not avant-garde pioneers, nor did they elaborate theories of art," but that they should be recognized for the "range and quality of their work." His essay intelligently traces the origins of Czech Functionalism to its roots in the Viennese Secession,

Bata Department Store, Prague; Ludvik Kysela (1928–29). (From *Czech Functionalism*.)

and elaborates the parade of personalities that constituted the movement's framework and greater contribution. We learn that the acknowledged "founder" of modernism in Czechoslovakia, Jan Kotera, mobilized an entire generation of self-conscious artists and architects seeking to emerge from their provincial status by urging them to "catch and overtake Europe." This competitive attitude provided the momentum for a series of parallel Czech design factions, which did in fact seize and explore the doctrines of modernism that had been established elsewhere in Europe. Their efforts, carried out in the interest of unifying the new architecture with the Czech vernacular, generated buildings employing plastic manipulations of mass while retaining a fairly conventional overall solution.

The architectural climate in Czechoslovakia prior to World War I is notable almost exclusively for its explorations of a romantic artistic expression devoid of functional or typological invention. Modernism only blossomed after the unification of Czechoslovakia in 1918. The new aesthetic, stripped of its historical memory and identity, was deemed appropriate for the newly reorganized country for much the same reason it was adopted by other avant-garde groups across Europe: its idiom was in no way reminiscent of previous regimes or social organizations. As Slapeta writes, "it was primarily the young Czech intelligentsia and middle-class who promoted the new style ... and in this, Czech architecture differed from the new architecture of other countries, particularly that of Germany, where it appeared mostly in areas strongly influenced by social democracy." Guided primarily by the theoretical espousals of Karel Teige and his vague but catchy battle cry of "What is useful is beautiful," this faction of architects left purely artistic pursuits behind in the name of social and cultural advancement, and embraced aspects of the by-then common *Neue Sachlichkeit* as it had emerged and developed in Germany. During this phase Le Corbusier's considerable impact was felt. Teige, the influential editor of the architectural magazine *Stavba*, first met Le Corbusier while on

a visit to Paris in 1922, and through their subsequent dialogue established a direct, permanent connection between Czech architects and the European avant-garde. In 1929, Teige would provoke Le Corbusier to take a "useful is *not* beautiful" position in the latter's famous "Défense de l'architecture."

Czech Functionalism is an attempt, primarily through illustration, to celebrate the achievements of a creative group that has been allowed to fall through history's cracks. Although Slapeta correctly portrays the Czechoslovakian movement as a literate and legitimate attempt to liberate a traditional and conservative architecture, the book, in its textual brevity, fails to convince the reader that the Czech contribution was either truly unique or significant. His prologue creates an anticipation for something that is never quite delivered—most of the work illustrated appears to be derivative of the work of more generally recognized modernists. A more plausible basis for investigation might have been the development of certain functional typologies, a topic only barely noted in the text.

One instance of such a contribution is Ludvik Kysela's Bata Department Store (1928–29) in Prague. Here the spandrels have adapted integral backlighting for advertising the building's commercial contents—a hallmark of Functionalism and perhaps an antecedent of Erich Mendelsohn's brand of *Reklamearchitektur*. But such a satisfying revelation is too seldom seen in this book. Many of the projects are blatant knockoffs of Corbusian massing or Mies-inspired elements. The familiar slogans of well-known European modernists (such as an obsession with hygienic dwelling spaces and the mechanistic analogy) were restated by the Czechs with deadpan delivery. "Look," they seem to say, "we can be modern, too!"

The book's strange, austere graphics and layout attempt to elevate banality to a high level of sophistication. Period photographs, entirely in black and white, are presented in a most straightforward, not to say Functionalist manner, reminiscent of the architectural albums Artur Korn compiled in the
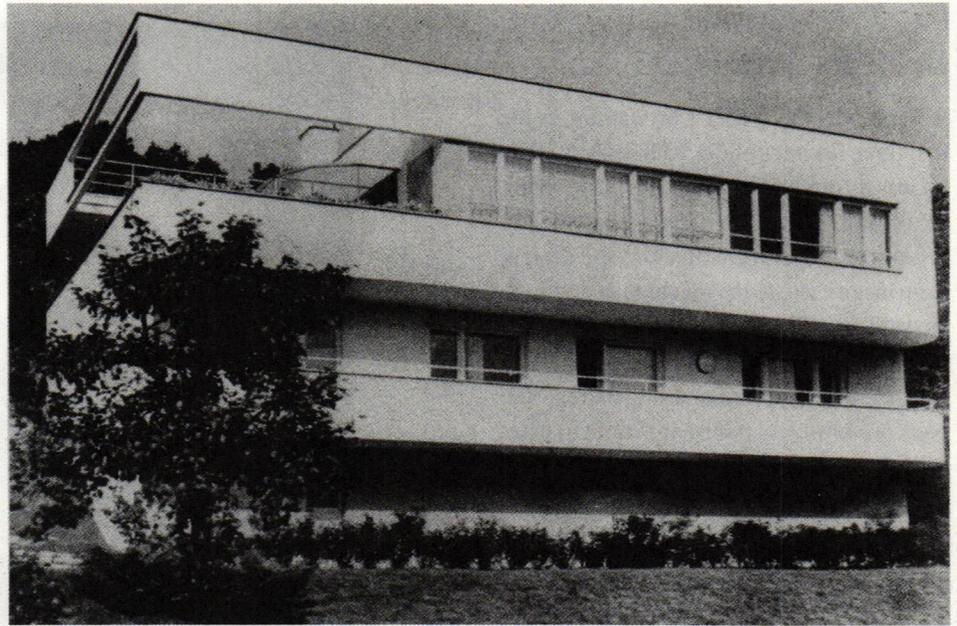
Villa Fric, Prague; Ladislav Zak (1934–35). (From *Czech Functionalism*.)

early 1930s. The photos depict a sampling of Czechoslovakian buildings, with each set keyed to a contemporaneous example of the allied arts and to relevant quotes from the designer. Thus, a housing block may be exhibited on the same page as an automobile, a chair, an army helmet, or a set of dishes. The quotes contribute to a synthesis of time, form, and doctrine, and unfortunately seem to indicate that the best and perhaps most original thoughts of the Czech group were mere rehashings of Modernist canons that were certainly better stated by their originators.

More satisfying is a short (two pages, six photos) presentation of work by "Foreign Architects in Czechoslovakia." These fairly familiar examples, such as Adolf Loos's Muller House (1928-30) in Prague, when viewed in the isolated context of Czechoslovakia, acquire a fresh frame of reference. They make us realize that Erich Mendelsohn's 1932 Bachner Department Store in Ostrava, anomalous within his own oeuvre, actually responds to developments in Czech department store typology; or make us appreciate the inevitable cultural dialogue that must have been sparked by Mies's Tugendhat House in Brno in 1930.

An undated manifesto included in the epilogue, originally reprinted in the Czech

journal *Stavitel* and signed by 57 artists and architects, including Sigfried Giedion, Walter Gropius, Kurt Schwitters, and Karel Teige, includes the passage, "Let us create new working and living conditions, free from everything that is useless, with the sole purpose of facilitating concentration for work and rest, and contributing to a pleasant and creative way of life." The unity sought through the diverse authorization of such a broad program may ultimately be the most significant message of Czech Functionalism. It makes us aware of a Czechoslovakian contribution to what may otherwise be perceived as an exclusively German or French period in architecture. While they lacked originality, the Czechs were thoroughly competent modernists, whose use of materials was consistently elegant, whose details were searingly sophisticated, and whose facilities were both humane and suited to their intentions. The shortcomings of the book are perhaps a metaphor for the Czech Functionalists generally: unsure, but talented, with a promise that was never realized.

CZECH FUNCTIONALISM 1918–1938, Architectural Association (foreword by Gustav Peichl, introductory essay by Vladimir Slapeta), Architectural Association, 1987, 176 pp., illus., £21.00 paper.

Hans R. Morgenthaler

BERLIN 1900–1933

If Paris was the world's art capital in the first three decades of the 20th century, Berlin was its production plant, the place where the setting for modern life was shaped. The evolution of Berlin architecture and design, from historicism to the machine aesthetic, is the subject of *Berlin 1900–1933: Architecture and Design*.

Edited by Tilmann Buddensieg, the book is a bilingual (German-English) catalogue that accompanied an exhibition of the same title at the Cooper-Hewitt Museum in New York. Lavishly illustrated, the book includes Buddensieg's introduction and four essays on various aspects of architectural and industrial design.

Buddensieg establishes the biographical, political, and cultural background of the period, during which Berlin became one of the most important arenas for the formulation of a modern industrial style. He emphasizes the main characteristics of this development, specifically the design of rational, integrated interiors to achieve classless living—a development that occurred outside the artistic and cultural milieu of the German empire.

Fritz Neumeyer's essay outlines the main architectural events in Berlin in this period. By considering the work of Peter Behrens, Bruno Taut, and Mies van der Rohe, Neumeyer traces this development from a timid reaction against historicist forms in early 20th-century factory buildings through the anti-industrial revolt of Expressionism to the Bauhaus's sober, utilitarian designs. Neumeyer sees Behrens's buildings for the Allgemeine Elektricitaets-Gesellschaft (AEG) as the first steps toward the new industrial style. Although Behrens adhered to classicism, he acknowledged the new requirements of these factories. His merit lies in his metaphorical use of classical forms to establish analogies between past cultures and the new industrial age. Neumeyer rightly interprets this emphasis on meaning as Behrens's major contribution to his younger followers.

Neumeyer then discusses post–World

Main staircase and lamp, Administration Building of the metalworkers union, Erich Mendelsohn (1929–30). (From *Berlin 1900–1933*; Photo: Dr. Franz Stoedtner, Photo Marburg.)

War I Expressionism as a reaction against industry, in particular its horrible results during the war. Because he focuses only on Expressionism's social intentions and its romantic interest in medieval production, Neumeyer misses the continuity of Expressionist architecture in the prewar and postwar periods. Erich Mendelsohn's and Hans Scharoun's ship- and machine-like designs, for example—fantastic elaborations on industrial themes—are continuations of prewar experiments in industrial architecture. Neumeyer includes Bruno Taut's Glass Pavilion among prewar industrial buildings, which ignores its more dominant expressive quality. Many Expressionist designers were quite interested in the content and meaning of their projects.

Neumeyer's treatment of the Weimar Republic era focuses on the victory of the functional, machine-aesthetic International Style. Mies van der Rohe's designs, with their linking of structure and form, and the

large communal housing schemes envisioned as testing grounds for a mass-produced architecture are seen as representative, although this ignores the work of architects like Scharoun, Mendelsohn, and the Luckhardt brothers, which has a more organic sense of design.

In a second essay, Buddensieg amends some of Neumeyer's shortcomings. The essay concentrates on the designs of architects working within the established cultural channels, including the prewar designs of Alfred Messel for department stores, communal housing, and office buildings—projects that helped bring about the modern style after the war. Buddensieg succinctly establishes Messel's innovations in planning and the use of stylistic elements, and how these were picked up by younger architects after the war. Factory buildings, the fourth of the new building types forming the backbone of architectural innovation in Germany in this period, were influenced by

Behrens's AEG Turbine Factory. In this regard, Buddensieg emphasizes that Behrens used the same structural principles and construction techniques for his industrial and nonindustrial projects.

Angela Schönberger's essay deals with interior design in the Weimar Republic. Her essay provides the best account of the social ramifications of International Style design and the stylistic revolution that characterized the Weimar period. Schönberger uses the exhibitions of contemporary interiors in Berlin department stores after 1900, the importance of the *Deutscher Werkbund*, and the Bauhaus's tubular steel furniture to illustrate how interior design evolved over these three decades.

Michael Esser provides a brief discussion of set design for German films of the 1920s—for the most part, an assembly of set descriptions with commentary by important set designers. Esser asserts that film set design was the art form that best expressed the inflationary period in Germany during the early 1920s—an interesting observation that may contain a grain of truth about the social importance of modern design in Germany and the attitude of its progenitors.

Esser's essay on film set design ends the book. One would have liked to find a fifth essay dealing with public interiors, especially cabarets, office buildings, and movie houses.

The importance of this catalog lies in its comprehensive approach to Weimar design. By considering developments in all areas of design, it succeeds in making the period understandable. There are many color and black-and-white illustrations, generally grouped according to subject matter and not tied very closely to the text. They are distributed chronologically, however, so that leafing through the catalog gives the reader a convincing pictorial history of the progress in German design from 1900 to 1933.

BERLIN 1900–1933: ARCHITECTURE AND DESIGN, Tilmann Buddensieg, editor, Cooper-Hewitt Museum, 1987, 188 pp., illus., $22.50 paper.

Jill Stoner

IMAGINING THE PENITENTIARY

JOHN BENDER

You won't find John Bender's *Imagining the Penitentiary* under "Architecture" in the bookstore. This ambitious and convincing argument for the "tacit affinities" between the novel as genre and the prison as architectural form belongs most definitely to literary criticism; yet the book deserves the attention of designers for it reveals the imaginative potential of architecture as a reflection of literary and cultural motifs. Bender's itinerary through 18th-century fiction, pictorial narrative, and social reform is a rocky one. As designers along for the ride, we must suspend our obsession with the practical, engage a body of literature we might consider irrelevant, and accept the penitentiary as an *idea* rather than as a building type.

Following Foucault, Bender maintains that man as the self-conscious subject was born during the Enlightenment. At the same time, architecture ceased to be simply the built reflection of moral purpose and became involved in questions of demographics, social discipline, and urbanism. Bender's thesis is that the penitentiary evolved as a synthesis of both these cultural events.

The self-conscious subject is capable not only of narrating his own story; he can also be instrumental in the ascent toward moral salvation. As Bender demonstrates in the first chapters, the characters in the novels of Defoe and Swift reacted *against* the material institution of the old-style "liminal" prisons, where happenstance was the order and an ironic assemblage of classes the image. In contrast, the new penitentiary engages both spectator, in a powerful façade such as that of Dance's New Newgate, and prisoner, in a highly ordered hierarchical plan such as Blackburn's Liverpool Gaol, in the act of self-conscious moral reflection and penitence. In the words of Moll Flanders (Defoe's heroine and the subject of Bender's second chapter): "He
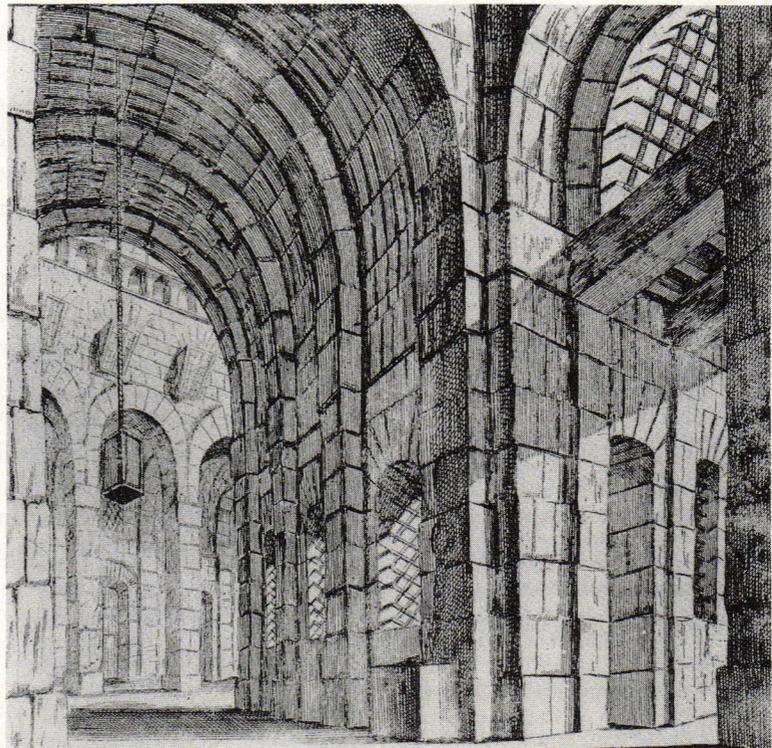
Interior of a Prison, etching from a design by Ferdinando Galli Bibiena (1657–1743). (From *Imagining the Penitentiary*.)

that is restor'd to his power of thinking is restor'd to himself." The prisoner in the new penitentiary becomes subject rather than object, manipulator of circumstance rather than instrument in a larger moral argument.

Bender's chronology of fictions—written, drafted, and sung—moves from an emphasis on image to one on form. The chapters on Fielding, with the notion of the omniscient warden (Dr. Harrison in *Amelia*), pave the way for the climax of Bender's story: the paradox of transparency as an instrument of both penitence and deterrence. Transparency in the novel is a style of narration which allows the reader immediate access to the character. In the ideal penitentiary, exemplified by Jeremy Bentham's Panopticon, transparency is an instrument of isolation, trapping the prisoner not within walls of stone but between planes of light, exposed to the warden's watchful eye.

This shift from the image of the prison in Defoe's fiction and Hogarth's ironic juxtapositions in *A Rake's Progress* to the more formal order of Fielding and the Panopticon is one of the more persuasive aspects of Bender's reasoning. Content and form are split in narrative fiction as in architecture, and the penitentiary idea effects the synthesis of the two. Finally, history renders both image and form obsolete. The description of Joseph Wright of Derby's painting *The Prisoner* engages us in the final paradox of isolation and empathy: "The almost dazzling window, in one aspect, draws the eye forward; but it also, and much more powerfully I think, impels the spectator backward."

The quality of the book's illustrations bears out Bender's lyrical description. The image as an "absorptive tableau" goes beyond the visual: neither omniscient nor objective, we become absolutely engaged in the pathos of a situation: actors in the drama of the penitentiary idea.

Because the comprehension of the images in this final chapter is informed by empathy rather than analysis, we are brought finally to the question of relevance. What, if anything, does such a work have to

do with our time, and more pointedly (we return, of course, to the desire for usefulness) with the architecture of our time? In fact, quite a lot. If we accept Bender's thesis that the relationship between art and culture resides in a subtlety of textures and attitudes, then 20th-century fiction may prefigure the logical conclusion of the penitentiary.

The image of the prison pervades fiction in the 20th century—just as it did in the 18th century. What predominates in the works of Kafka, Robbe-Grillet, Borges, and even the old TV show "The Prisoner," is the prison without walls, an entrapment that has neither accountability nor specific punishment, but only indeterminacy as its fundamental order. Identified by Octavio Paz as "the labyrinth of solitude," a metaphor for the modern condition of loneliness, which Hannah Arendt calls a "common ground for terror," this contemporary version of the penitentiary returns us to the pre-Enlightenment idea of a prison with neither visual identity nor formal order, but this time unsupported by a higher moral purpose. In an ironic inversion of Bender's metaphor of the 18th-century prison-as-city, the city itself becomes the architectural form and instance of the modern prison.

The final chapter grants a respite from the history of fiction and social reform, and as a "Postscript" allows us to construct and construe the general meaning from the extremely specific example of the 18th-century penitentiary idea. Bender's broad but implicit assertion that narrative fiction is a major part of the symbolic process that shapes our culture contains an even more implicit critique of our preoccupation as designers with order and image. Engagement, he tells us—absorption in the tableau—is a more eloquent statement of program and a more authentic generator of form than either plan or façade. In the end, an original lesson in architecture from an unassuming scholar of literature.

IMAGING THE PENITENTIARY: FICTION AND THE ARCHITECTURE OF MIND IN EIGHTEENTH CENTURY ENGLAND, John Bender, University of Chicago Press, 1987, 338 pp., illus., $29.95.

John Michael Vlach

NATIVE AMERICAN ARCHITECTURE

PETER NABOKOV

AND

ROBERT EASTON

Native American architecture in the late 20th century is but a soft, fading shadow of a built presence that was once monumental in scale, rich in diversity, and prudent in execution. To speak of one Native American tradition is almost impossible, given the wide variety of peoples and cultures cloaked by that label. However, to attempt to summarize what is extant in one large volume is reasonable. Nabokov and Easton have given us a scrapbook, preserving and ordering disjointed memories in the hope of inspiring both those who would search for their lost past and those who would help them find it.

In nine regionally oriented chapters, *Native American Architecture* makes a great zigzag tour of North America. The authors commence with the northeastern woodlands, drop down to the Gulf Coast, and swing back up across the plains and mountains to the Arctic fringe before moving south again along the Pacific Rim, ending in the deserts and mountains of the Southwest. In each chapter a historical reconstruction based on the earliest written accounts is buttressed with more recent anthropological or archaeological data, then contrasted with evidence derived from the authors' recent fieldwork.

Given the uneven experience of contact with literate explorers, our historical records of some tribes, for example, the Narragansetts of Massachusetts or the Pueblos of New Mexico, begin in the 16th century, while others, such as the Kwakiutl of the Northwest, did not have their houses well described until late in the 19th century. Where the written record is thin, Nabokov and Easton compensate with evidence from archaeological excavations, which also helps them trace the age of particular building traditions. The design of the Eskimo

Mythical animals and beings painted on façade of Kwakiutl house. (From *Native American Architecture*.)

winter house, for example, is shown to be twenty-five thousand years old. The treatment of buildings also varies with the amount of scholarly attention an ethnic tradition may have already received. For example, the chapters on the plank houses of the Northwest and the multistory houses of the Pueblo Indians of the Southwest are extremely detailed, due no doubt to the intense examination of the peoples in these regions by the first generation of American anthropologists and by their students. It is unfortunate that other Native American groups were not equally investigated.

The book's photographs, generally archival or historical, are one of its most impressive features. At least one photograph or drawing appears on every other page; these images compensate in part for the absence of a complete historical narrative— a record destroyed by warfare, relocation, reservation policy, and despair. Dating mainly from the late 19th and early 20th centuries, the photographs show Native Americans in a captive but still unbowed state, and allow us at least to glimpse them as they once were.

The authors' contemporary observations of Native American architecture could serve as the basis for a specialized study on the nature and consequences of native architectural adaptation in a modern industrial nation. On the one hand, for example, the Kickapoo of Oklahoma gamely pursue their most ancient and conservative building traditions. On the other hand, the earth lodges of Plains tribes are gone, replaced by

modern meeting halls constructed in the Anglo-American mode. In such contexts, some aspects of the native traditions are kept alive, but without the appropriate spatial and physical surroundings, ritual life must suffer. Eskimos, in their modern rectangular cinder-block houses, construct platforms to create familiar symbolic spatial arrangements; the items that relate to the harsh, dark world of nature are kept on the floor, while the domestic goods indicative of the nurturing, bright world of the home are placed on wooden platforms above the natural domain. The same practice is observed among Eskimos living in igloos, tents, and pit houses. Here we see a sane compromise between Western and native cultures; a compromise of the sort rarely endorsed in the history of Native American and Anglo contact.

The authors of *Native American Architecture* intended to produce a broad, general description. They have accomplished their task well, with a fast-paced survey that effectively captures what is known of Native American building. Now that they have set the stage for the study of Native American building custom at the continental level, one eagerly awaits for the local stories to unfold.

NATIVE AMERICAN ARCHITECTURE, Peter Nabokov and Robert Easton, Oxford University Press, 1989, 432 pp., illus., $50.00.

Grace Gary

KEEPING TIME
WILLIAM J. MURTAGH

THE AMERICAN MOSAIC
ROBERT E. STIPE AND
ANTOINETTE J. LEE, EDITORS

The American preservation movement has grown substantially since the passage of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966. Encouraged by a program of federal tax credits, nearly $10 billion of private money was invested in certified historic rehabilitation projects from 1976–1986; approximately two thousand communities have locally zoned historic districts; and there are more than thirty-five hundred nonprofit preservation organizations scattered across the country. At least forty colleges and universities now offer degrees in historic preservation.

Until the publication of *Keeping Time* and *The American Mosaic*, however, no introductory text existed. One reason there was no text may be the nature of the subject. Preservation, for all of its increased professionalism and academic recognition, is not so much a single discipline as a compound of disciplines. Its practitioners must combine architecture, history, law, planning, and politics. *Keeping Time* and *The American Mosaic,* while quite different in organization, blend information from all of these fields and provide useful, general overviews of an increasingly complex field.

Of the two, *Keeping Time* is most clearly structured for use as a textbook. William J. Murtagh, former Keeper of the National Register of Historic Places (the federal list of architecturally and historically significant properties) and once a vice-president at the National Trust for Historic Preservation, traces the preservation movement from its beginnings in the 19th century as a sentimental WASP aesthetic movement, through the environmental controversies of the 1960s and 1970s, to its emergence today as a recognized planning tool.

The first half of *Keeping Time* chronologically details the history of American

A façade preservation project in Washington, D.C.: the front section of a row of townhouses was preserved and separated from the new high-rise office structure to the rear by an atrium. (From *American Mosaic;* courtesy George Washington University.)

preservation and puts it into context with concurrent European developments. Through separate discussions of private and governmental activities, Murtagh's book describes early efforts such as the first restoration of Independence Hall, creation of preservation organizations, passage of the Antiquities Act of 1906, establishment of the Historic American Buildings Survey, and the beginnings of the National Register. Murtagh ascribes much of the impetus for these early efforts to a combination of patriotism and history pedagogy. In the introduction, he quotes a reason given in 1856 for saving Andrew Jackson's home, the Hermitage: "It is good policy in a republican government to inculcate sentiments of veneration for those departed heroes who have rendered services to their country in times of danger."

The second half of the book is devoted to topical essays on outdoor museums, historic districts, and areas of specialization within preservation such as landscape preservation and archaeology. Each chapter is organized chronologically, and they combine to illustrate changes in the movement described in the first half. The most important issue discussed in these chapters is the question of context. Murtagh correctly states that preservation is now driven by environmental and developmental issues involving not single, landmark buildings, but instead, neighborhoods, landscapes, and "the sense of place."

Keeping Time is intended as a primer for laypersons and students; it is not a manual

for action, nor does it propose to examine the philosophy of the movement too closely. It succeeds as a teaching tool because it is general; Murtagh, an active and leading preservationist for more than twenty-five years, has produced a good guide to understanding how the pieces of the preservation world came into being and how they fit together.

The American Mosaic also provides an overview of the history of American preservation. Prepared for the Eighth General Assembly of the International Council of Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS) held in Washington in 1986, *The American Mosaic* is a collection of essays that explains the how, what, and why of preservation, in that order.

Edited by Robert E. Stipe and Antoinette J. Lee, both prominent and respected preservationists, the book is divided into three sections: "The System and How It Works," "What We Preserve and Why," and "A New Mosaic," which offers proposals for future directions. Each chapter consists of an essay written by a professional currently working in the area he or she describes. The essays in Part I, the section that describes the existing system, are factual descriptions of programs and process. In contrast, the essays in Parts II and III are more personal and represent individual perspectives.

Individually, the chapters are predominantly chronological, and *The American Mosaic*, like *Keeping Time*, is divided into descriptions of public-sector and private-sector preservation efforts. Its more philo-

sophical approach allows the authors to discuss issues such as "Who Owns the Past?," "New Ways to Teach History," and "Vandalism and Relations with Amateurs." Where *Keeping Time* ends with an epilogue that questions future directions, all of *The American Mosaic* implicitly does so, even though it is explicit only in the final chapter.

Some of the essays in *The American Mosaic* repeat material from other chapters, and some contradict other essays. Instead of a liability, however, these are strengths of the book in that they combine to create a true mosaic of complementary and contrasting elements. As good as *The American Mosaic* is, however, tighter editing could have improved it. No book intended for a general audience should have to include directions on "How to Read This Book" specifying that some chapters can be skipped and others read out of sequence. And greater control might have produced less disparity in individual styles.

These books cover much the same information and are each intended to provide an overview of a complicated subject. *The American Mosaic* is aimed at a slightly more knowledgeable reader than *Keeping Time*. Individually, each book comes close to providing a basic textbook in preservation; together they succeed.

KEEPING TIME: THE HISTORY AND THEORY OF PRESERVATION IN AMERICA, William J. Murtagh, Main Street Press, 1988, 237 pp., illus., $25.00.

THE AMERICAN MOSAIC: PRESERVING A NATION'S HERITAGE, Robert E. Stipe and Antoinette J. Lee, editors, Preservation Press, 1987, 292 pp., illus., $19.95 paper.
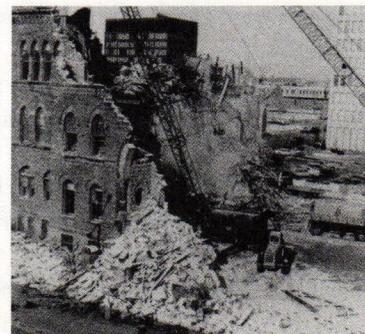
(From *American Mosaic;* courtesy National Trust for Historic Preservation.)

Alan Hess

AMERICAN STYLE

RICHARD SEXTON

FIFTIES STYLE

RICHARD HORN

Taste used to be so easy. There was good, and there was bad. Everyone knew which side of the fence someone else was on.

It isn't so easy anymore. These two books demonstrate the difficulty today in defining an era via a list of its objects. What was good then? What is bad now? The fences keep shifting.

Fifties Style: Then and Now takes a closer look at American design in the 1950s and confronts its messy contradictions and controversial revisionisms. *American Style: Classic Product Design from Airstream to Zippo* tries to encapsulate the essence of more than a century of American design, but it best represents a slice of eighties taste.

In the 1950s, the forces of modernism and history, high art and popular art, minimalism and maximalism, mass media and museums battled for control of the nation's taste communities and academies.

Today, Elvis impersonators, Marilyn Monroe wannabes and tailfin fetishists are not the only ones caught up in the legacy of that decade. We still try to sort out the bewildering spectrum of tastes that first gained mass exposure then.

Few books published in the 1950s would have included such an eclectic range of architects and designers as *Fifties Style*. Critics crafted imaginative and elaborate rhetorical walls to separate Mies from Goff and Eames from Earl. But with a historical perspective, Richard Horn compiles a cross-section of the fifties which resembles the pluralist landscape that actually existed. While not exhaustive, he touches on product and graphic design, furniture and fashion, and architecture and interior design to convey the texture of the times.

More importantly, he reports on an adventurous range of designers, famous and anonymous, responsible for both common and significant artifacts in each field. By placing the Seagram's Building next to the Fontainebleau, and Saarinen chairs next to Philco radios, the common trajectories of

fifties design become more apparent.

But Horn is also keenly aware of the differences in this work. Often it was not so much philosophical as cultural: each designer, sensitive to his or her audiences, spoke in a different voice. Sometimes that meant the cool, authoritarian office lobbies on which Skidmore Owings & Merrill and Knoll International collaborated. In other cases, as the author finds, it was the lush metallic colors and synthetic textures in Dorothy Liebes's weavings for drapery in "the irrepressible high spirits that (also) characterized American roadside architecture."

That latter, endearing gaudiness of American design is absent from *American Style*. Author and photographer Richard Sexton covers a wider time period but a narrower range of tastes in his selections. No-nonsense functionalism is his primary text, but there's a subtext of tasty slickness, communicated by the vivid, tactile advertising photo style with which he illustrates all his selections.

The major role of functionality in American design is well argued by the mailboxes, lunch boxes, thermoses, tools, and padlocks included. But the equally significant role of cultural pluralism is avoided. It takes a strong stomach to examine a 1954 Prell shampoo tube, but someone has to do it.

Many of the objects selected give *American Style* the flavor of a Greatest Hits issue of some ultimate yuppie catalog: cameras and audio equipment, Head tennis rackets and Cherokee jeeps, Abolite RLM industrial light fixtures so successful that they are now found next to the hanging ferns in most Burger Kings.

The few really garish pieces included in *American Style* have already had their edges rubbed off. Trendiness sanctions a few
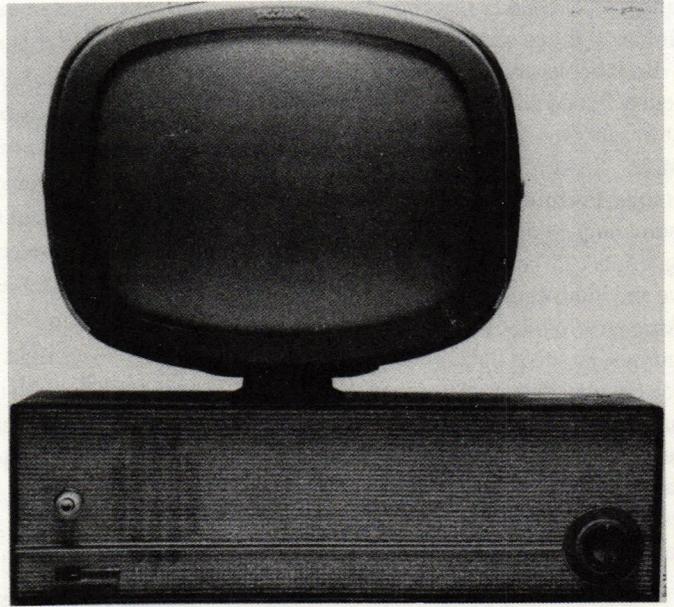
The table model of Philco's Predicta television sets featured a swiveling screen (1958). (From *Architectural Practice*.)

kooky items for humor, nostalgia, or shock value. Here, the 1958 Philco Predicta television fills that role. Sexton offers the Predicta as a forerunner of modular television components—as if that functional rationale could excuse its truly wacky design. The Predicta is surreal art, nothing less: its overblown eyeball of a picture tube stares us down out of the corner of the room. Blink—it's Ralph Kramden! Blink—there's Joe McCarthy! Blink—it's "Seahunt"! Dali could not have done it better. The Predicta was never a wide success or even a trendsetter, but it is important for another reason today. By taking the fifties obsessions with function and originality to such an extreme, it created an image that summed up the entire era. Only a 1959 Cadillac fin has the same iconographic power.

Fifties Style relies primarily on original manufacturer's promotional photos for its illustrations. Their colors, lighting, graphics, and composition tell us as much about the object as the text does. For example, the even light bathing Knoll and Herman Miller furniture, in eerily horizonless settings, conveys the rational and progressive underpinnings of the designs of Saarinen, Eames, and Nelson. *American Style*, on the other hand, presents all its objects in a current advertising style. Each is enshrined equally in a design pantheon divorced from the culture and time that produced them, giving every-

thing from a Quaker Oats box to a 1957 T-Bird an eighties glow.

Both books are written for a general audience, but do contain some items of interest to scholars of popular culture. For example, Sexton has discovered that the famous Formica pattern of overlapping boomerangs (known as "Skylark") was designed in 1950 by the successful automotive and industrial designer Brooks Stevens Associates. While Horn is not academically rigorous, he sheds light on why these things look the way they do. His journalistic style analyzes the aesthetic he encounters and presents a necessary challenge to the complacency that would allow any of these designs to disappear without a second thought.

AMERICAN STYLE: CLASSIC PRODUCT DESIGN FROM AIRSTREAM TO ZIPPO, Richard Sexton, Chronicle Books, 1987, 144 pp., illus, $16.95.

FIFTIES STYLE: THEN AND NOW, Richard Horn, Running Press, 1988, 176 pp., illus., $14.98.

Virginia Smith

THE THAMES AND HUDSON MANUAL OF TYPOGRAPHY

RUARI McLEAN

THIRTY CENTURIES OF GRAPHIC DESIGN

JAMES CRAIG AND BRUCE BARTON

Currently books on graphic design can take two opposite directions: the survey, which includes everything even remotely connected to the subject, and the specific, which examines a narrow area of the field. It is as if writers had a choice of using either a microscope or a telescope; looking through a microscope enlarges the tail of the Bodoni lowercase "g" for dissection; looking through a telescope encompasses a whole world of stars, some comets, a few disasters and collisions, and an occasional black hole. The two books reviewed here

are examples of each of these approaches.

Ruari McLean's *The Thames and Hudson Manual of Typography* is the latest in a series of textbooks written by practicing designer-teachers and published by Thames and Hudson. What is immediately impressive about this book (the kind that uses the microscope) is the incisiveness with which McLean summarizes the historical origins of typography. After 24 pages he gets right to the practical parts that make this book so useful to a contemporary designer: the chapters on book design.

McLean, a British designer and typographer, is also an authority on book design. His previous books include *Modern Book Design* (1958) and *Victorian Book Design* (1972). In his most recent effort he gives specific examples such as his own instruction sheet to the book's printer. He clearly explains how to cast-off a manuscript; how to do a book layout, and which pencil is best to use. He explains how to mark up copy for typesetting, showing on facing pages his marked-up typescript and the typeset page, and suggests variations on page designs and shows grids, margins, the golden section, and page proportions. One extremely informative section recapitulates the Vox system of classification of typefaces, which discards terms such as "old face" in favor of a new terminology based on form: Garald, Didone, Lineale, etc., with examples of a typical letter in each class. Although I doubt that American designers will adopt this system, it is a logical approach, and here is a place to study it. In the chapter on "The Parts of the Book," McLean gives information exact enough to enable anyone to design a book, a beautiful example of the professional who truly wishes to communicate the knowledge of his craft to others.

Whereas McLean uses the microscopic approach, the other approach—the telescopic—is used by the authors of *Thirty Centuries of Graphic Design*. As the title implies, the aim here is to include everything that can be called "visual communication" from prehistoric times to the present. This vast material is organized to permit the reader to "dip into" various sec-

tions, rather than to read a narrative. First there is an overview of each period, then a look at fine art and graphic art, and then a chronological listing of prominent people in the arts and in politics. Virtually every influential or original contributor to the field of graphic design is included, so this compendium will be indispensable to anyone wishing to place a particular "star" into context. It is somewhat disconcerting, however, to read of the year 1963 that "ITC commissioned new designs from some of the world's leading typeface designers, including Hermann Zapf and Matthew Carter … President Kennedy assassinated … Barbie doll introduced." The inclusion of all levels of activity is perhaps appropriate to the authors' acknowledgment of the image and information explosion: perhaps it is genuinely postmodern to be bombarded and confused by trillions of facts.

As graphic designers begin to believe in the reality of making theirs a profession equal to others—architecture, in particular, is the closest discipline—there appears to be a need to establish a history of the field. So there will continue to be books on the history of graphic design, as well as manuals to instruct the student. Perhaps it is time to think of a "taxonomy" of the field: how is the writing about it to be classified? Certainly there will be biographies; we already have them. We have textbooks, and how-to books, as well as books on individual designers, with catalogs of their work. The interview with the living master of the craft is here. So there are plenty of books with personalities and pictures. But we do not yet have much analytical writing about periods, styles, or issues in graphic design. The question remains: does graphic design contain enough inherent meaning to stimulate the critical analysis that adheres to other design professions?

THE THAMES AND HUDSON MANUAL OF TYPOGRAPHY, Ruari McLean, Thames and Hudson, 1988, 216 pp., illus., $11.95 paper.

THIRTY CENTURIES OF GRAPHIC DESIGN: AN ILLUSTRATED SURVEY, James Craig and Bruce Barton, Watson Guptill, 1987, 224 pp., illus., $24.95 paper.

Albert Pope

THE PROFESSION, THE ACADEMY, AND THE SOCIAL CONTRACT

The men who founded Princeton were pastors, not ecclesiastics. Their ideal was the service of congregations and communities, not the service of a church.

—*Woodrow Wilson* (from a lecture, "Princeton in the Nation's Service," delivered 21 October 1896)

Over the past decade, architecture schools have become increasingly preoccupied with issues internal to the discipline of architecture. The establishment of an autonomous architectural discourse—of what can be called the "church" of architecture—has been a necessary and invigorating moment to a discipline all but gutted by marketplace prerogatives. As the potency of that moment recedes, leaving us stranded in the hyperbole of a neo-avant-garde, the relation between the architecture of the academy and the architecture of the profession may well resurface as the subject for critical debate. As a positive step in that direction

we can welcome Robert Gutman's new book, *Architectural Practice: A Critical View.*

Any fresh debate on the relation between the academy and the profession must account for the rise of autonomous discourse and the current divorce between academic and professional goals. Following the overthrow of the Beaux-Arts curriculum and the victory of modernism following World War II, an unprecedented bond was forged between the architectural academy and the profession. As the ethos of the "organization man" settled on the postwar university, architecture defined for itself a new kind of professionalism, based on the tenets of the Modern Movement. The ideology forged by the Bauhaus masters at IIT and Harvard was converted into an architectural professionalism based on the corporate model. Corporate firms built landmark buildings (such as the Lever House), and great teaching offices like Saarinen's emerged, all suggesting a nearly seamless continuity between academic and professional ideals.

This continuity proved short-lived. Perhaps Charles Jencks was correct in citing the supposed National AIA Award given to Pruitt-Igoe, less than ten years prior to its demolition, as the symbol of a crisis in pro-

fessionalism which occurred at the end of the 1960s. The undeniable failure, not so much of modernism as of a modernist professionalism, occasioned a break with an academy no longer willing to support its glaring deficiency, its inhumane production, and its naive collusion in the rampant destruction of the prewar city. At the time it was suggested that what is essential to architecture does not lend itself to the corporate mode of organization.

Hindsight shows that much of the impetus for postmodernism came not from a disenchantment with modernism, but from a spurious professionalism formed out of its legacy. It has rarely been emphasized, at least in this country, that postmodernism gained real momentum as a radical critique of a bankrupt profession that would not or could not sustain any sort of social or architectural ideal. Yet the literature of the late 1960s reveals at least as much discontent with modernist professionalism as with the specific content of high modernism.

As stimulating as it was, this critique of the profession barely lasted into the 1970s. The academy needs the support of the professional world to fund its chairs, provide opportunities for its students, and legitimate its professional programs. Thus, after the radical anti-establishment agendas of the 1960s subsided, a rapprochement was pursued within the academy itself. The critique of modernist professionalism became an in-house critique of high modernism itself: that is, a social and political critique was turned into a relatively innocuous academic debate. Stripped of unfashionable political agendas, the new dispensation went something like this: the profession hasn't faltered; it only took
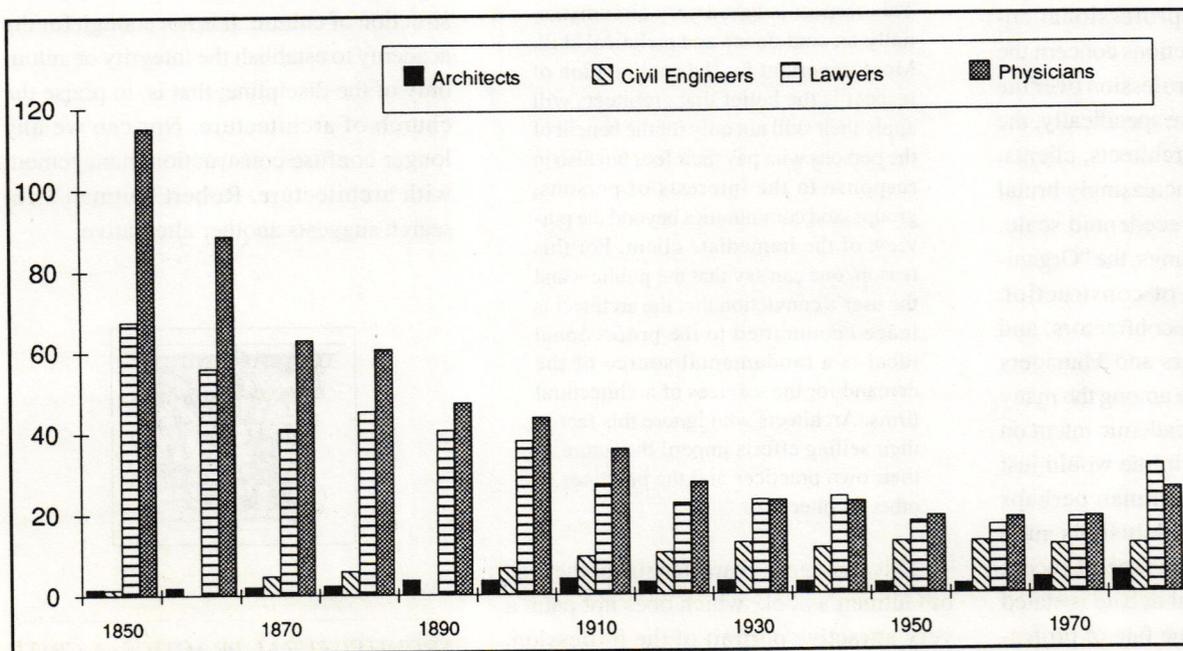
Ratio of professionals to urban population, 1850–1980 (ratio to 10,000 urban population). (From *Architectural Practice.*)

bad advice from a misguided and opportunistic avant-garde. One need only follow, once again, the sensible course of an academic agenda to get the profession back on track. The critical difference between high modernism and modern professionalism was obscured in pursuit of an academic scapegoat.

This strictly academic critique (it goes without saying) has in no way affected declining professional standards over the last decade. Indeed, awareness of this continuing decline has been suppressed by the rarified discourse concerning the relative autonomy of the discipline, and the attending "stylistic" debates. The quick success of postmodern styles has already shown up the similarity between modernistic and postmodernistic professionalism. As portrayed by Robert Gutman, the professional crisis has only escalated since the late 1960s, when the academic debates commenced. As the radical postmodern heroes of the 1960s have by now, sadly, gone corporate, the vital social force of their polemic has been extinguished. Another response from the academy is due.

Precisely at this juncture one can welcome the appearance of Gutman's book. It may reopen the academic debate, dormant over the past decades, concerning architecture and its relation to professional endeavor. The book's 12 sections concern the startling changes in the profession over the past several decades: more specifically, the change in the role that architects, clients, and builders play in an increasingly brutal economic arena of unprecedented scale. Bigger firms, bigger buildings, the "Organization client," the rise of construction managers and design subcontractors, and BOMA (Building Owners and Managers Association) standards are among the many disturbing signs that an academic intent on the autonomy of the discipline would just rather not think about. Gutman perhaps dwells too much on the delusions such academics entertain in the face of recent developments, yet the real debate is stated clearly enough: what is the fate of professional values—and the social well-being they alone can assure—operating in such a hostile arena?

It is important to distinguish Gutman's work from the many other banal "sociologies" of the profession. It is not a statistical report to occasion another AIA "action" committee. The book has a soul, which takes the form of quiet outrage at the near total lapse of professional ideals during the past several decades. The theme is stated early on in relation to the profession's uncritical and shortsighted adoption of programs marketing architectural services:

> Some in the profession fear the extent to which [marketing] activities, in effect, advertise the business side of their work to clients and the public. To many architects being known as a business person means that clients will imagine they place profitability and self-interest ahead of concern for building quality and the well-being of the client. The latter concerns are the hallmark of professionalism. …
>
> I believe architects ought to worry about the heavy emphasis the AIA and many firms now place on marketing programs. … Architects are perceived as people who are mainly interested in advancing … the economic interests of building owners and developers. … The public's trust in the fidelity of the profession is being undermined. The importance of this trust is the large part it plays in enforcing the client's respect for architects. This respect is based only circumstantially on confidence and technical skill. More important for the continuation of respect is the belief that architects will apply their skill not only for the benefit of the persons who pay their fees but also in response to the interests of persons, groups, and communities beyond the purview of the immediate client. For this reason, one can say that the public's and the user's conviction that the architect is indeed committed to the professional ideal is a fundamental source of the demand for the services of architectural firms. Architects who ignore this fact in their selling efforts imperil the future of their own practices and the practices of other architects.

This passage is characteristic of the tone of Gutman's book, which does not paint a very attractive portrait of the profession. The absorption of the architect into the developer's team, relegated to the role of the not even glorified construction manager, cut off from his true public (professional) constituency, is a profound professional crisis, not to be remedied by AIA marketing programs.

Some may choke on Gutman's sentiment, noting that the professional peril is long past, that the lapse in professional ideals is old and tiring news, and that one should simply get on with advanced marketing techniques and rarified academic discourse. But to accept the academy and the profession as two separate and nonintersecting worlds—that of the scholar and that of the construction manager—is to abandon both the discipline and the public well-being it now only pretends to represent. The challenge of Gutman's book is to reopen the debate, to put the ethical issues back on the table, and to initiate the search for that quite fragile area of social agreement that actually motivates the "professional ideal."

The "public trust" is a sentiment that, today, virtually dissolves in your mouth before striking a receptive ear. Yet to capture the public trust is the object, it is the only motive in the quest to merge the professional and the ideal that, by definition, establishes architecture's social contract, and motivates discourse toward the construction of culture. It is not enough for the academy to establish the integrity or autonomy of the discipline, that is, to praise the church of architecture. Nor can we any longer confuse construction management with architecture. Robert Gutman's research suggests another alternative.
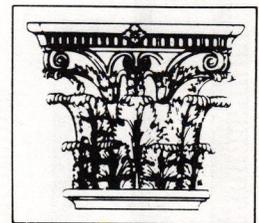
Stephen Ervin

THINKING ABOUT DESIGN

Ömer Akin's *Psychology of Architectural Design* and Peter Rowe's *Design Thinking* mark a quarter-century of that brand of introspection in architecture and urban design known variously as "design methodology" or "design theory and methods." This approach has risen and fallen in favor since its tentative beginnings in the early sixties, a flurry of work and multiple attitudes in the late sixties and early seventies, and occasional publications in the mid- to late-seventies. The last decade has been marked by a relative silence. (A search of the extensive bibliographies of these two books confirms, with a few notable exceptions, the lack of theoretical publications since 1978.) Did design methods, as some have suggested, become a nonissue? Or did the design methodologists go into the labs, whence they are about to reemerge?

In the meantime, we have witnessed the spread of the methods of cognitive science into numerous domains, including the implementation of that blend of cognitive and computer science known as artificial intelligence. We might suspect that both of these books on design thinking would be affected by these developments, and would address two questions that drive artificial intelligence research: one technical, "Is it possible to develop mechanical/computational models of human processes?" and the other social, "If it is possible, is it useful/informative/responsible to do so?"

The first book is directly about the first question, the second book is indirectly about the second, and together they illustrate the ends of the spectrum of possible responses to questions about computers and design. Mr. Akin is so deeply into a technical computer paradigm that he finds no place for questions about alternatives or purpose; Mr. Rowe is so concerned with questions of social purpose that he seems to suggest that computers and artificial intelligence are irrelevant to the topic of design thinking.

Both authors are academics currently working at universities with a rich heritage in architectural design and computer-related research activities (Rowe is currently at Harvard University with William Mitchell; Akin reports on ten years of work at Carnegie Mellon University with Charles Eastman et al.), but each has a different idea of what constitutes a research and action agenda for understanding design. Akin's book, the one with psychology in the title, is unabashedly about computers and the implementation of an information-processing model of design. Rowe's book, more broadranging in its scope, is in fact more about psychology—in the particular sense of human mental processes and social behavior.

Whereas Rowe considers and appears to reject the information-processing approach to design thinking (and goes on in the second half of his book to address questions of value and meaning in architectural design), Akin never even mentions these larger questions, and seems to presuppose an understanding of why architects are designing in the first place. Both present case studies (protocols) of designers at work, but each reaches rather different conclusions, which are not surprisingly related to their larger bias. Rowe's case studies are taken from real ongoing design projects; Akin's are contrived as experiments. Both rely on "protocol analysis" to reach generalizations about the design thinking they observed. Rowe seems less sanguine about the promise and premise of protocol analysis, noting that it is unusual for designers to describe aloud what they are doing as they do it. He therefore aims to "capture the broader contours of design," and his analysis of the case studies is accompanied by and largely based on reproductions of design diagrams and sketches. Conclusions from the data include the observations that design is episodic, is guided by initial "big ideas," involves backtracking, and represents a normative position about what is proper. Rowe uses his case studies not so much to analyze the details of the structure of the thinking of his designers, but to observe that the motivations and purposes of those methods are paramount considerations:

Contrary to some earlier accounts by so-called design methodologists, the kind of theory we need if we are to explain what is going on when we design must go beyond matters of procedure. We need to move directly into the realm of normative discourse about what constitutes architecture and urban design in order to clarify both the inherent nature of the enterprise and the direction in which procedures are inclined.

In contrast, Akin uses video-recorders to capture real-time design behavior in one-sixteenth of a second increments (following earlier research directions by Simon and Newell seeking to correlate response time with mental structures), and most of his analysis is based on line-by-line transcripts of designer-experimenter interaction. Far from wondering about the normative values of his designers, he is intent on discovering in their mental processes the five primitive operations that constitute his model of design: projection, acquisition, representation, confirmation of information, and regulation of flow of control. Based on these categories, Akin develops an argument about sequences of operations and the data structures needed to support these operations, which together constitute his model of design as an information-processing activity.

Both books discuss the topic of inference in designing, with respect to their case studies, but both leave important questions unasked and hence unanswered—for example, what are the relative merits and different functions of graphic and verbal information in inference making? "Visual thinking" is uniquely important to designers, yet neither of these books about design thinking really addresses the topic. This particular omission is indicative of what is disappointing about each of these books. While both proceed from the premise that design thinking is a distinct and discoverable kind of cognition that includes a strong component of inference, both fail to enrich their discussion with results and hypotheses from other research in artificial intelligence, and thus fail to mark out what, if anything, distinguishes architectural designing from other kinds of mental behavior.

Peter Rowe's *Design Thinking* is founded on the premise that design is inquiry, and is devoted to the motivation, rather than the mechanics, of that inquiry. The central question is "What do (should) architects think about?" not "How do (might) they think about it?" In the first half of his book, Rowe provides a comprehensive and comprehendible overview of the information-processing model of designing. He reviews and interprets much of the relevant early literature, but is eager to move beyond matters of procedure, and dismisses entirely the topic of computers in design with a one-sentence nod to "Negroponte, Mitchell and Eastman." The second half of the book is devoted to normative positions and questions of interpretation in architecture and urban design. Rowe concludes that the central problem in understanding design is

> the problem of recovering the social purpose of architecture beyond the often insightful but emasculated and reductive constructs from our logical-empirical interpretation of man and his world. It is also the problem of making the ennobling aspect and substance of architecture more accessible and a part of society.

Psychology of Architectural Design, by contrast, goes straight to the mechanics and provides an in-depth description of Akin's Architectural Inference Maker (AIM) computer program (based squarely on Information Processing Theory). A principal disappointment of Akin's book is that, despite the computer-implementation focus, the treatment of matters computational is spotty at best. He has one computational paradigm in mind, and is eager to push it:

> Productions and production systems are one of the most robust and generic of all control structures developed in information-processing research. Not only do they present an intuitive and powerful theoretical framework, but they have also been used numerous times to simulate problem solving successfully.

Productions and production systems are the computational core of most so-called "expert systems"—really just a set of IF-THEN rules—and indeed they have re-

ceived a lot of attention. However, Akin does not present us with any alternative control structures to compare, nor does he support the "intuitive and powerful" claim. Moreover, he has apparently ignored the last ten years of research in artificial intelligence labs seeking to overcome many of the inherent problems in simple production rule systems, such as accounting for probabilistic and non-monotonic reasoning. Sandwiched between his endorsement of production systems in general and the subsequent demonstration of his AIM at work, is a rather detailed explanation of "conceptual inferences," including the promising observation that "conceptual inferences are an ideal tool for the designer, where tentative and incomplete and even contradictory
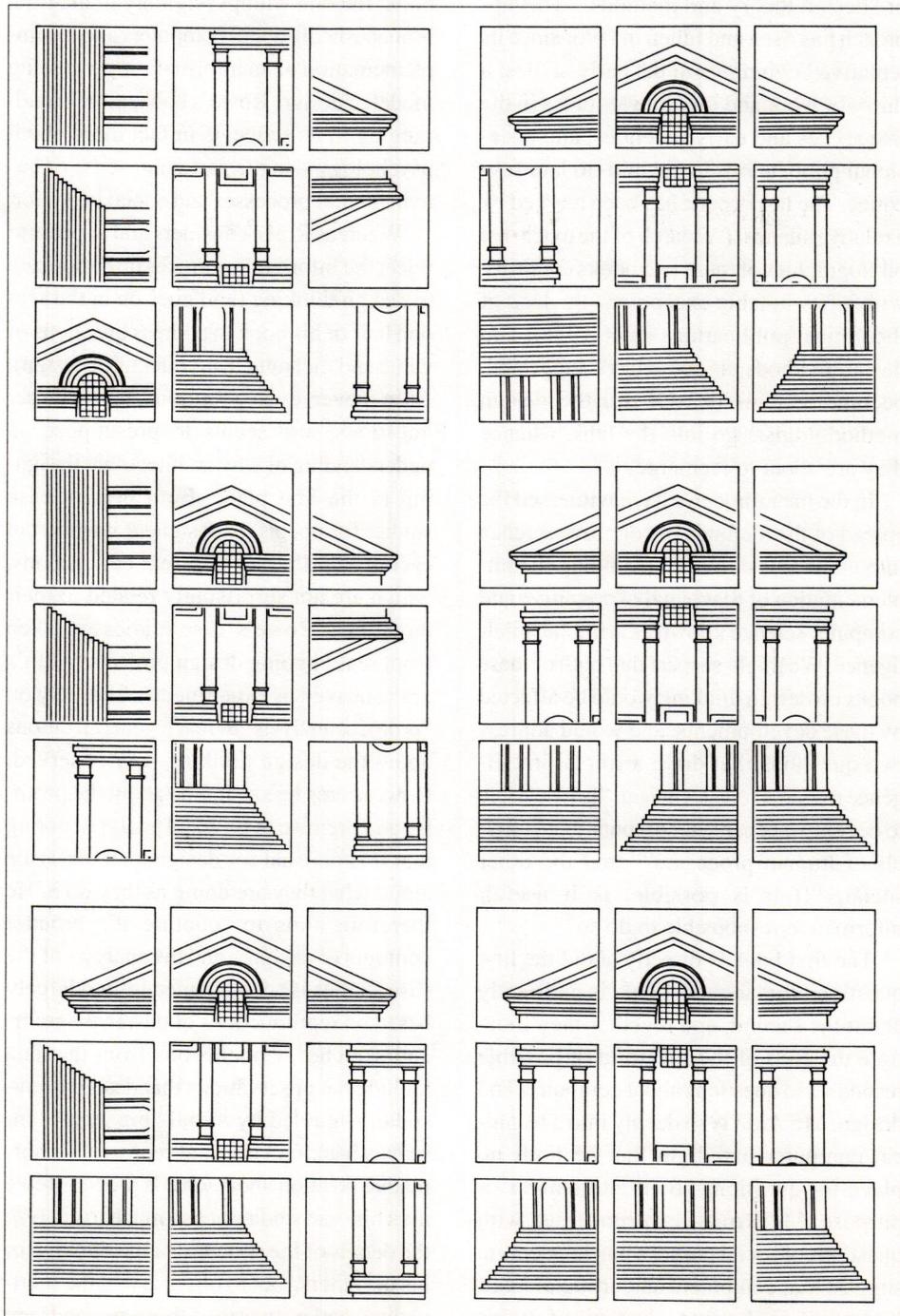
An example of the generate-and-test approach to a puzzle problem. (From *Design Thinking*.)

relationships must be accommodated."

Unfortunately, it's not at all clear from the examples given how incomplete and contradictory relationships are accommodated in AIM. Surely this is an important point, and deserves some attention if such a system can be implemented.

All of this is not to say that Akin's book or research are fundamentally flawed. His argument is well constructed as a narrative, proceeding from "Theory of Information Processing" to a "Summary: modelling the design process," with chapters on "Studying complex process," "Search in design," "Representation in design," and "Inductive reasoning in architecture." I share many of the author's convictions about the importance of information, representation, and reasoning in design, and applaud any effort to develop models of designers' cognitive processes. I too am concerned with the problem of "building successful interfaces between automated CAD systems and designers" (though from the examples presented, it's not clear that the AIM interface is a successful one). Despite my objections, Akin's work (which it seems to me has more to do with computing than with psychology) is important in moving toward a more explicit, powerful, parsimonious, and testable theory about design and designing, which can inform the development of better computer tools.

But what about Rowe's concern with the social meaning of architecture? Akin provides no thoughts on the subject. His epilogue, "A position on design," which might have been a place to address such larger issues, instead defends the Information Processing Theory (IPT) viewpoint, described as a middle-of-the-road position between the purely analytical view in which "creative processes can be accounted for through purely rational processes," and the purely intuitive view in which "synthetic processes are products of mysterious mental feats which cannot be rationally described." It would seem that in the IPT view, the social context in which designing takes place is irrelevant to understanding design thinking.

In the end, *Design Thinking* is not much

about design thinking, but is about designing as a social enterprise; *Psychology of Architectural Design* is not about psychology, but about designing as a particular kind of information-processing.

On the basis of these two books, what can we conclude about the present state of knowledge about design thinking? It would seem no major improvements have been made since 1972, when Herbert Simon and Allen Newell introduced the "Problem Space hypothesis" (and in some ways the whole of Information-Processing Theory) in their book *Human Problem Solving*. Simon, Newell, and subsequent researchers identified five important problem solving methods used by humans and now commonly incorporated in artificial intelligence computer programs: "generate-and-test," "pattern matching," "hill-climbing," "heuristic search" (means-end analysis), and "induction." While there is room to debate whether or not design is problem solving, neither of these books discusses these issues. Instead, both treat the list of five as gospel, although Rowe includes several other terms in his review ("top-down and bottom-up decomposition," "switching of rules and constraints," for example). Akin seeks to match his designers' observed behavior with this litany, and ends up with the conclusion that the most popular method used by designers is generate-and-test, accounting for 56.1 percent of the data, followed by induction at 31.7 percent (hill-climbing only accounts for 8.5 percent).

Similarly, no better term than Simon's (1969) "satisficing" appears to describe the kind of decision making designers do. Is this because it is a powerful idea? In its original context, and in contrast to optimizing and the analytical methods of operations-research, satisficing was a powerful idea. As a way of saying that design is about finding *a* solution, rather than *the* solution, it seems wishy-washy, and fails to distinguish between finding an excellent solution and finding an acceptable one—surely something that most designers would like to claim they do.

As for prescriptions for future research, Akin gives us more to chew on. One of his

stated goals is to describe a research agenda for IPT-inspired design research. This he does both with some specific suggestions in the latter half of his book, and also by implication: in making so strong a case for one hypothesis, he opens up the possibility of competing or modified hypotheses and models for further research. (See, for example, the recently published *Computability of Design*, Yehuda Kalay, editor, Wiley, 1988.)

Where Rowe would see us go is not so clear. His call for recovering social purpose and making accessible the ennobling aspects of architecture are sentiments, not prescriptions. Such calls seem empty without a plan—and surely such a plan would be ambitious in this case.

How the recovery of social purpose might affect design tools is an intriguing question, though. It suggests, for one thing, that democratization of design tools might be a goal, as would be de-technocratization. What constitutes a design system, whether computer-aided or pencil-aided, that is ennobling? Is information-processing of necessity emasculated?

Certainly a fusion of these two approaches to design thinking—the development of systematic, flexible, sometimes rational, always humanistic, richly associative, and pleasantly efficient design assistants (probably computers)—would be a nice state to be able to report on in another five to twenty-five years.

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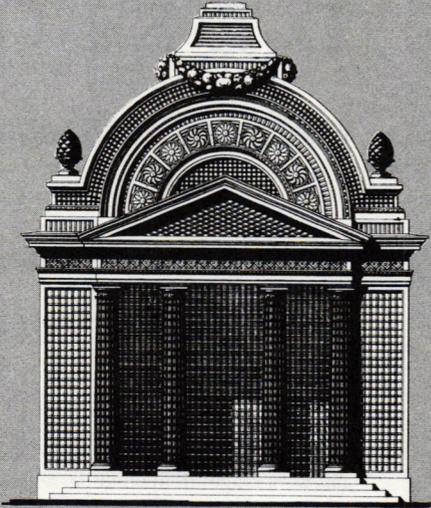
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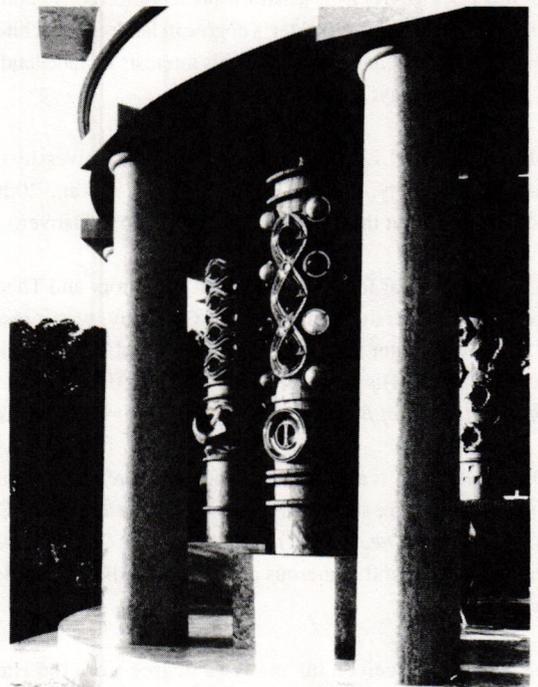
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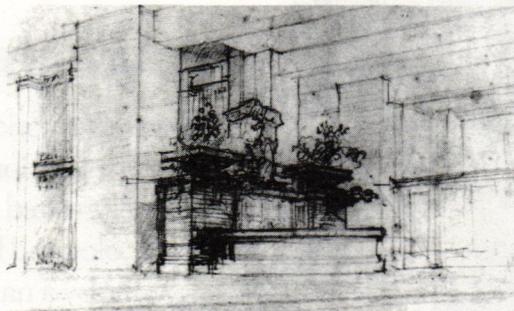
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