OPPOSITIONS

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OPPOSITIONS

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1 (frontispiece) Capriccio-St. Paul's and a Venetian Canal, *W. Marlow, 1795.*

2 Turin, Italy. Figure-ground fragment.

3 Ville Contemporaine. Le Corbusier, 1922.
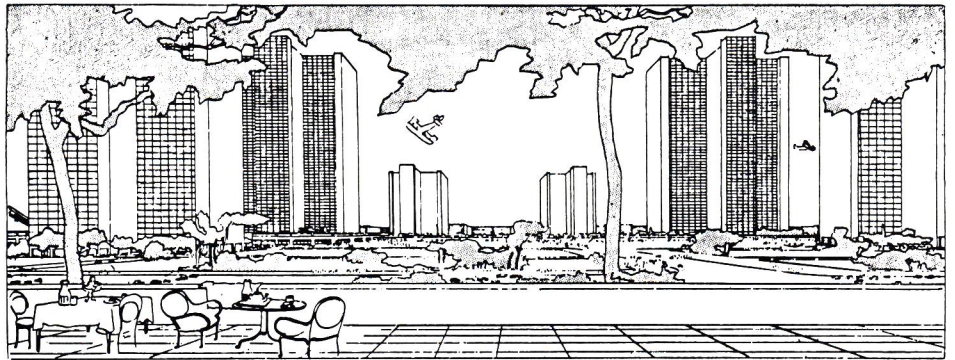
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Type and Context in Urbanism: Colin Rowe's Contextualism

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"The aspects of a society that humanism most exalts are justice and continuity. That is why humanism is always being presented with a contradiction. For when it speaks of justice it holds that the human condition is absolute; yet when it speaks of continuity it implies that society is not absolute but pragmatic and even anomalous. Its intelligence dictates the removal of all that is anomalous; yet its ideal of social continuity is validated by its perception that the effort to destroy anomaly out of hand will probably bring new and even worse anomalies, the nature of man being what it is. 'Let justice be done though the heavens fall' is balanced by awareness of the likelihood that after the heavens have fallen justice will not ever be done again. Hence the humanistic belief, often delusive, that society can change itself gradually by taking thought and revising sensibility. Hence too the humanistic valuation, possibly overvaluation, of discourse and letters.
"If we look for the reason of Arnold's continuing importance, we are not likely to find it in his talents alone, great as these are, but rather in the power of the tradition which he consciously undertook to continue and transmit. For our time, in England and America, Arnold is the great continuator and transmitter of the tradition of humanism."
Lionel Trilling, The Portable Matthew Arnold, *1949*.[1]

4 Mobile City, R. Herron, 1964.

Colin Rowe has been to present-day architecture what Matthew Arnold was to nineteenth-century English letters. For Arnold, literature and criticism were devices of humanistic discourse that attempted to mediate between the ideals of social perfection on the one hand and social continuity on the other. As a poet and critic, Arnold's goals were as political as his means were aesthetic: to prepare the middle class culturally for the world leadership that it was energetically seeking, but that was just as forcefully being thrust upon it.[2]

As an architect, historian, and critic, Rowe's aims are equally political; his tactics just as clearly aesthetic: to prepare the same middle class for the challenges of what he sees as political extremism, and for the economic, technological, and aesthetic simplicities which extremism carries with it, either from the right or from the left. In

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4 seeking this, he is not engaged in architectural determinism any more than Arnold was in poetic determinism. To the contrary, they simply both belong in that line of cultural humanism that imagines the arts to reflect, rather than to determine, the large contradictions and oppositions that characterize human existence.

Since World War II, and more specifically in the last fifteen years, aesthetic urbanism, dormant since Camillo Sitte, Patrick Geddes, and Daniel Burnham, has surfaced again as a prominent revisionist mode of urban study.[3] It is a reaction as much to the utopian visions of modern architecture as to the allied holistic, technological assumptions of the planners, both now seen to be simplistic and inhuman in their apocalyptic reformulations of the city. The new urbanists reflect a less utopian and less technologically aggressive view of the city. Among those who regard urbanism as subject to aesthetic as well as merely technological investigation, Colin Rowe has long been one of the most prominent figures.

Basically, Rowe diverted the argument from the ideological bias of science and progress characteristic of nineteenth- and early twentieth-century architectural thought, moving instead into architecture itself as a discipline. He conceived an approach to aesthetic urbanism modeled on Karl Popper's understanding of the incremental, fragmentary, and contingent nature of the discovery of knowledge, supplemented by Lionel Trilling's definition of the humanist's contradictory and dialectical view of society, which simultaneously exalts two antithetical propositions—the *ideal* of perfect social justice and the *worth* of social continuity, however imperfect it may be. Translated into architectural terms, this approach understands change as the incremental, contingent subversion of the status quo (Popper), effected through a discourse between 'ideal' types and 'imperfect' contexts (Trilling).[4] The concept of perfect and perfectible type was inherited from modernism; the renewed concern for continuing contexts was a reaction against it. This discourse, because it involved an interest in existing contexts, came to be known as *contextualism*.[5] The term has been taken up by much of the architectural avant-garde. It is usually

thought of merely as a procedure of "matching" new additions to the style and scale of the existing context. This is a gross misunderstanding of Rowe's original intent, and a distortion of his underlying attitudes.

He originally intended contextualism to mitigate two received architectural images of the city: the traditional city, with its open spaces "carved out of a solid mass" (fig. 2), and Le Corbusier's "City in the Park," with its isolated buildings standing free in open space (fig. 3).[6] The traditional city, its bounded open spaces defined by contiguous buildings, combined with the modernist city, its buildings set in boundless open space: some version of this fundamental and precise spatial idea underlies almost all Rowe's urbanistic work. He wanted the discourse between type and context, enlivened by this spatial idea, to act as a counter-model to Le Corbusier's urbanism, without losing the grandeur of the latter's images, as well as to counteract Archigram's "Tube City," without descending to an equivalent of their scenic, neo-futurist, pseudo-technological mania (fig. 4).

From the first, he envisioned that this argument between type and context—between ideals and continuity—might be carried out through a range of compositional strategies: either a complete resolution of parts, or a collage of parts, or a collision between parts.

To adopt an attitude of any kind toward 'urban composition' is to think about cities in a radically different way from the modernists. For instance, most modernists concluded that painting and single-building architecture were concerned with composition—that is, with relationships between objects (fig. 9)—while urbanism was concerned with the typical nature of elemental objects themselves (see fig. 3). Even though Le Corbusier, for example, was a covert aesthete-urbanist, his interest in elemental urban *objet-types* outweighed his concern for their composition into groups. His groupings tended more to be exercises in geometrical logic abetted by presumptions of functional propriety than compositions as such (fig. 6).

In this connection it can be suggested that most modern-

6 *Ville Radieuse, Le Corbusier, 1927. General plan.*

7 Suprematist composition, *K. Malevich, 1914.*

8 Still Life, *Le Corbusier, 1925.*

9 *Project for a private home. T. Van Doesburg, C. Van Esteren, 1922.*
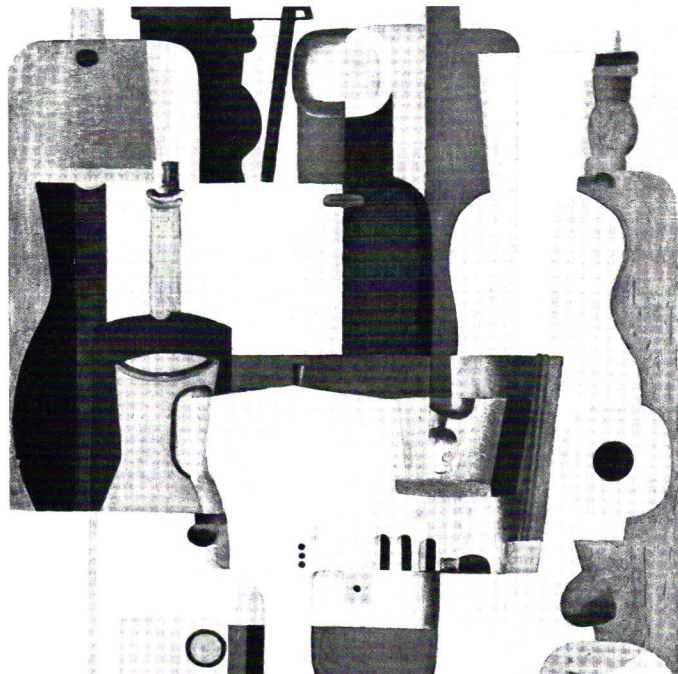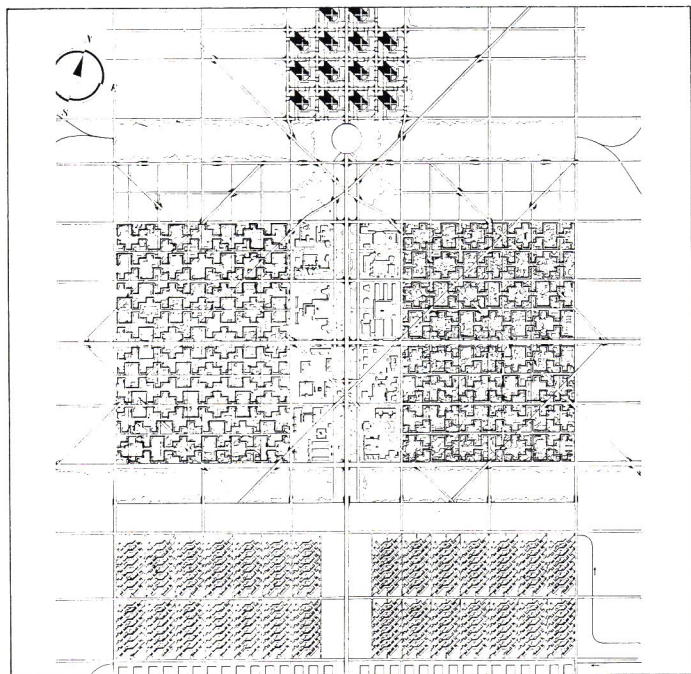
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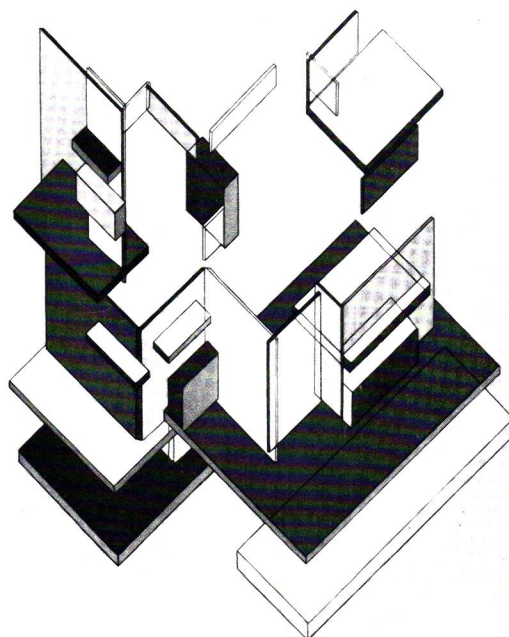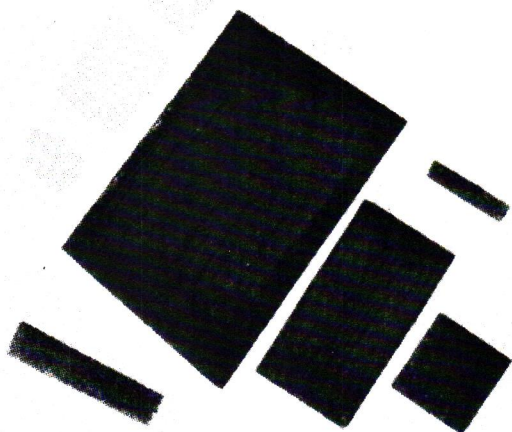
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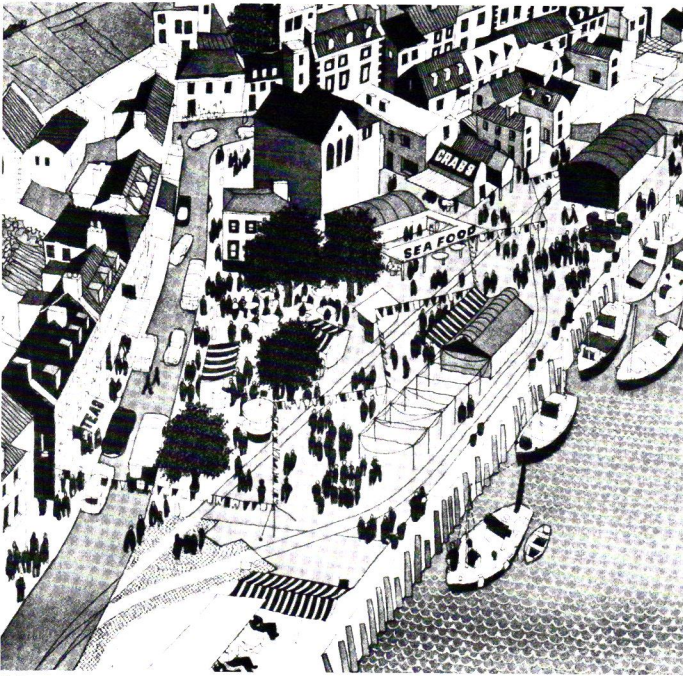
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ist paintings were contextual[7] insofar as they subordinated the typal characteristics of individual elements to an overall composition. This can be seen to hold from Cubism and Futurism to Elementarism, Neo-Plasticism, Suprematism, and Purism (fig. 8). Even a Malevich painting, with each element intact, is composed (fig. 7). The Bolshevik city, by contrast, was to have been *constructed* (fig. 5).

To observe that modernism adhered to such differing principles of type and composition relative to small-scale and large-scale work—to "painting" and "cities"—is to state in a particular way Rowe's criticism of modernist urbanism. But to observe that his approach descends in part directly from modernist painting suggests that his inclinations are pictorial but anti-picturesque. For all his interest in three-dimensional spatial concepts, with their scenic implications, he works like an abstract painter composing in two dimensions. Thus it is crucial to understand how he uses—or decides not to use—the various two-dimensional strategies of composition available to him (resolution, collage, collision).

But compositional *strategies* alone are not sufficient to a developed approach. To implement these strategies he needed a *process* that would set him apart from the picturesque approaches of townscape (fig. 10), many of whose ideas he found difficult to refute, and Camillo Sitte (fig. 11), much of whose formal lexicon and enthusiasm for bounded urban spaces matched his own. Further, he needed a process that, while pictorial, could be defended as 'rational', one that transcended mere shape-making. His Popperian premises indicated the process should be partial and ameliorative. But at the same time his humanist premises denied him the luxury of simple relativism, just as they denied him the pleasures of simple idealism. He wanted the process to exhibit both continuity and change, reflecting the two paradoxical faces of the historical process itself.

These conflicting requirements led to a process of design and presentation featuring two main components: the figure-ground plan and the notion of the "set piece," or com-

posite building. The figure-ground plan, especially that of a traditional city (see fig. 2), directly represents a dialectical equivalence between its "solid" parts (buildings) and its "voids" (open spaces). It became an iconic anchor for Rowe. It could be read as visually reversed, the spaces acting as separate, discrete figures and the building patterns as continuous background. It was well suited to his contingent, dialectical approach, and it tended—as an image—to put the traditional city in a better light than the city of modern architecture. The traditional city is more interesting as a pattern of buildings and spaces, and with its uniform roof heights, more susceptible to two-dimensional representation (fig. 12). Although figure-ground is a pictorial device involved with *Gestalt* assumptions and procedures, it is not picturesque in the scenographic sense. It suggests the abstract painter rather than the painter of scenes, relationships rather than objects, pattern rather than picture. It betrays Rowe's inclination toward the totally activated field of much modernist painting (see figs. 8, 14). Thus it unites two of his great enthusiasms: traditional urban space and certain aspects of modernist art. It also allows him to work with pattern structures at a scale as grand as Le Corbusier's. These patterns are abstract—and anti-picturesque—in a further way: their huge size enables them to be imagined from the plan, but prevents them being seen as pictures in front of the eye (figs. 25–29). Finally, it facilitates his claim to engagement in a rational process—a formalist analogue to functionalist rationality. Using the device, he can apply the *parti* method of building design to the considerably larger scale of the city, working within a deductive formal logic from general patterns in the context down to particular architectural shapes free of any functionalist causation. He can maintain that these shapes have been arrived at rationally because they are arguably the deductive result of formal choices made at a larger scale—that of their context. This is the precise opposite of, but also the precise equivalent to, building up either a functionalist rationale or an inductive formalist rationale from within the bounds of a form's own intrinsic objecthood. This way, it is a radical deviation from modernism.

If the figure-ground plan forms the general armature for Rowe's process, then the set piece, or composite building, acts as the principal device within that process. He thinks of this device as a "fragment of utopia" (in this way he resembles Popper) and also as representing Trilling's humanist dialectic between the "perfect" connotations of type and the "imperfect" connotations of real contexts. It is usually a complex building or a coherent grouping that can be imposed upon a context, undergo a mutual deformation with that context, and become something new. It sustains a general typological identity, usually through geometrical regularity at its core, and promotes a local particularity of composition, usually through irregularity at its edges. Among his favorite models of this device are the Hofburg in Vienna, the Residenz in Munich, and the Asplund competition entry for the Royal Chancellery in Stockholm (figs. 13, 15, 16). Through their particular scale and innate complexity, they separate from or fuse with existing contexts of buildings, acting as either objects in open space or as parts of built-up fields. In other words, they act as either *figure* or *ground*, and thus the "figures" could be either buildings or "spatial objects."[8]

Rowe's early projects show how his compositional strategies develop between resolution, collage, and collision, through a process using figure-ground and the composite fragment. These strategies and this process imply definite consequences with respect to (1) the general argument between type and context; (2) the concept of total design versus incremental change; (3) the newly refurbished concept of scenographic monumentality in urbanism; and (4) the ultimate effect of a deductive, hypothetical process of urban design on everyday urban reality. These subjects form the basis of the following analysis.

Buffalo Waterfront Project, 1964
The site (fig. 18) consists of remnants of an "ideal" Latin frame modified by topography and early transport routes. It is overlaid by sprawling, colliding grids that blur its perimeter and confuse its interior. The scheme (fig. 17) isolates the original town center from the surrounding sprawl by means of a huge expressway. It proposes a grand housing complex at the waterfront, a new commercial strip downtown, and a rationalized transportation net

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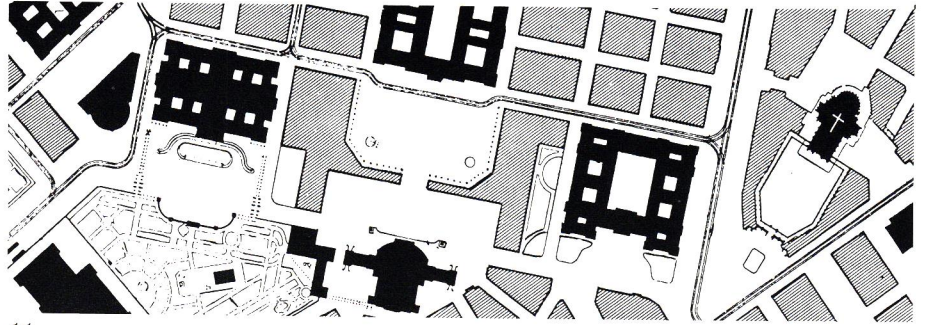
11 Ringstrasse, Vienna, Austria,
C. Sitte, published 1889.
Suggestion for western portion.
12 Lucca, Italy. Air view.
13 Hofburg Palace, Vienna,
Austria. G. Semper, extension 1871.
14 Simultaneous counter-
composition, T. Van Doesburg,
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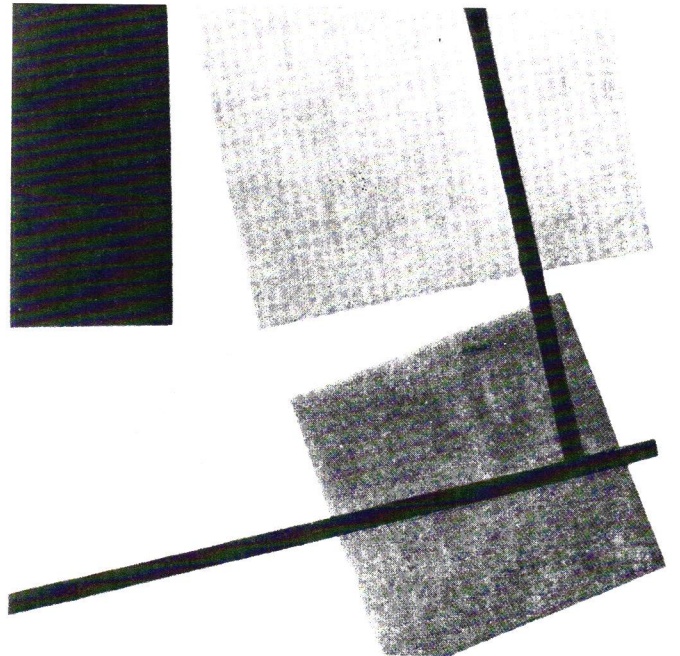
attaching a recreation and park complex to the mainland, all of which focus upon and incorporate the city hall area. Rowe considered the colliding grids as a latent *parti*. The compositional strategy was one of both resolution and collision. The tactic was to clarify the ambiguous collisions by giving predominance to some axes and subordinating others. This intensifies the sense of collision between the parts even though at the point of collision each part is carefully resolved with respect to the others. For all Rowe's interest in the traditional city as "a continuous solid out of which a structure of spaces has been carved," Buffalo consists essentially of the imposition of modified modernist building types standing free in space but compressed into dense, directional layers. These furnish the movement necessary to activate the static town center. They invade it like a benign virus attacking—and enlivening—a tired cell. With its interplay of grids along three axes, its open spaces, and its linear buildings seen as connected figures, the Buffalo project takes the Baroque idea of a system of connected nodes and places it under the compositional auspices that typified Suprematist and Elementarist painting. It is the Quirinale complex executed by Malevich, Philadelphia by Van Doesburg.

Buffalo shows the usefulness of the linear building for contextual operations. This elemental type, used so reductively and rigidly by Le Corbusier and the German rationalists, is unique in its capacity to retain its typal characteristics while undergoing contextual deformation or elaboration. Made incrementally more complex, specific, and subservient to its surroundings, it can be easily forced into a dispute between typological amnesia and typological recall. It can twist, crank, or bend to promote formal structure in confused urban patterns.

Certain parts of the scheme are presented at greater detail (fig. 19). Using the presentation technique of Nolli's plan for Rome (fig. 20), only the most significant and public interiors are shown as spaces. Otherwise the buildings are rendered as solid objects, part of a carefully worked out figure-ground composition. It represents the scarcely sublimated wish to design Rome as it happened to exist when Nolli painstakingly portrayed its public spa-

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15 Royal Residenz, Munich,
Germany. L. von Klenze, completed
1826–1833.
16 Royal Chancellery, Stockholm,
Sweden. G. Asplund, 1922. Site
plan.

tial circuit in 1748. But it does so as if through the eyes of an Elementarist or Suprematist painter.

With respect to an overall stylistic and compositional development in Rowe's work, Buffalo is an initial attempt to resolve formal conflicts in an urban setting by producing a composition of modernist and historically ambiguous shapes that weave the new city into the old one. His method of composition here is one of almost Baroque formal and spatial complexity, with an intensely high degree of purely formal resolution at points of collision. In combining collision with resolution it is a true collage, a rich, persuasive argument between type and context.

The questions that will arise as this analysis proceeds are, does Rowe's deductive formalism amount to architectural totalitarianism in liberal guise; where is the line between architectural totalitarianism and architectural humanism in these projects; and what is the relation of this deductive approach to actual urbanism?

Harlem Urban Renewal Project, 1966
If Buffalo can be seen as a mediation between two urban grids, the Harlem Urban Renewal Project of 1966 suggests a mediation between the traditional urban grid and modernism's "City in the Park."[9] Neither was acceptable alone. Both already existed on the site, but in the abused forms of slum blocks and project housing. Terrain and building condition suggested the retention of a central spine of traditional blocks, flanked by open zones containing new freestanding buildings (fig. 21). Rowe proposed to upgrade the existing blocks into a hybrid type, containing new towers and the suggestion of more freely-formed sub-elements (fig. 22). He brought the existing project housing into the larger organization of new buildings set in open space.

As a composition it lacks the energy and coherence of Buffalo because there is, in effect, no appreciable argument between type and context. There is proximity but no engagement. There is contrast but no contradiction. The new city is added to the existing context, but the discourse between them is mute. The new object buildings are so different from the traditional blocks that they cannot enter into an active exchange. Because the edges of the existing grid remain intact, separating it from the new additions, the elaborate shapes of the new buildings seem gratuitous. However, the isolation of this field of blocks accomplishes a significant compositional ploy: the field, while background, also takes on the qualities of a regular figure sitting in a larger field of isolated irregular buildings.

The one diagonal element in the context produces a compositional response in the pattern of new building that seems forced and self-conscious—at once insufficient and too much. This suggests that Rowe's method and his selection of forms at this point are most successful in a context already possessing a high degree of irregularity and collision. Stylistically, and in terms of the argument between type and context, Rowe here uses the traditional city as a problem context, and his *partis* are still developed firmly within a repertoire of modernism. His compositional strategy is more collage than resolution, so it does signify change and open process; but the circumstance of simple dualism between new and old blunts the effect of any argument between type and context.

At the huge scale of this project it becomes easier to imagine the problems that may lie within the deductive *parti* method of renovating existing cities. Because cities tend to change by heterogeneous, piecemeal additions, the larger the scale of the project, the less likely it is to correspond to actuality. Thus the smaller the context from which the solution is deduced, perhaps the better, if it is to correspond to Rowe's original intention to create a humanistic discourse between contradictory entities, and if it is to have any effect on reality.

Lower East Side Project, New York City, 1967
In many ways this project is a combination of the Buffalo and Harlem projects. The compositional strategy of collision comes into play more firmly than ever before (figs. 23, 24). As in the Buffalo project, there is a certain transparency between new development and existing context, an interweaving of old and new pattern structures. But

17 Buffalo Waterfront Project, Buffalo, New York. Shadow plan, 1964.

The initial project was prepared by: R. Baiter, R. Cardwell, D. Chan, W. Copper, H. Forusz, F. Koetter, M. Miki, E. Olympio, F. Oswald. Critics were: C. Rowe, W. Seligmann, J. Wells.

18 Existing street-block plan, fragment.
19 Figure-ground plan, detail.

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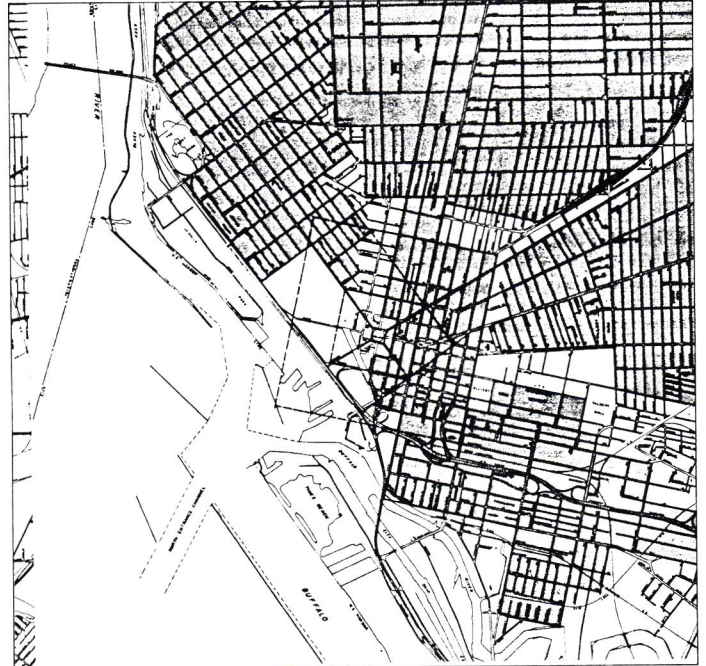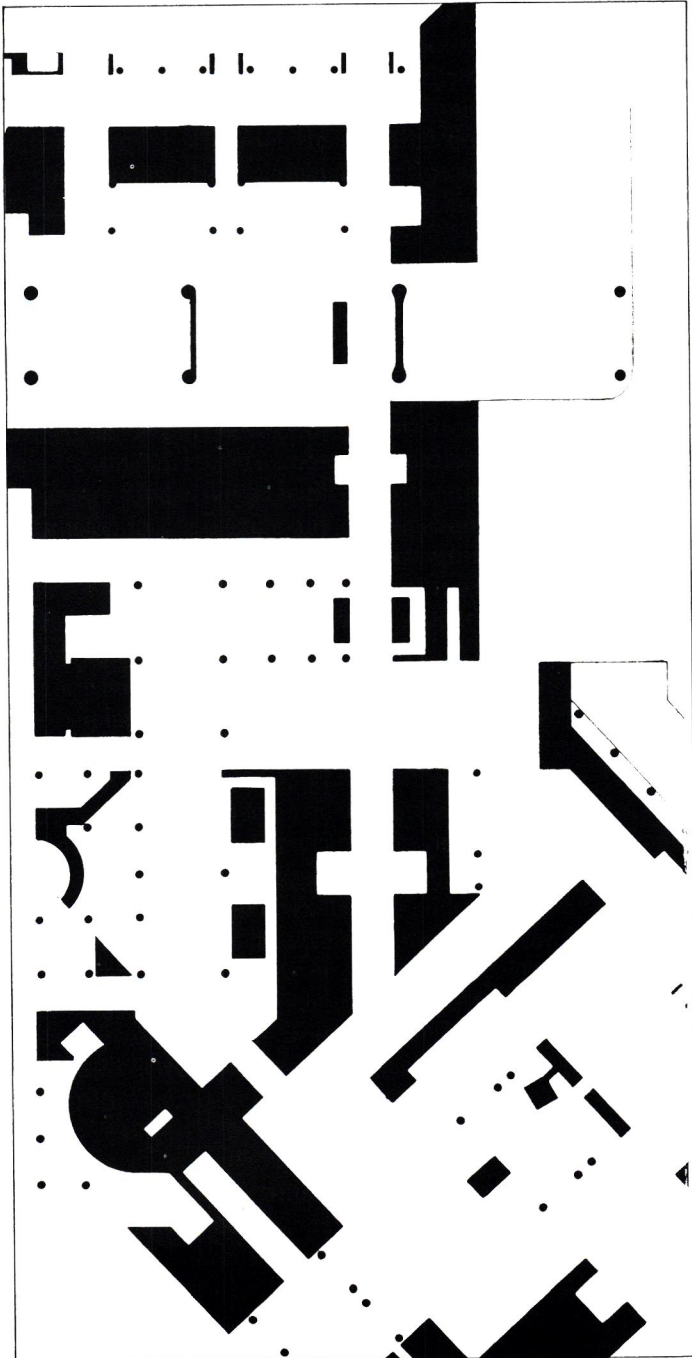
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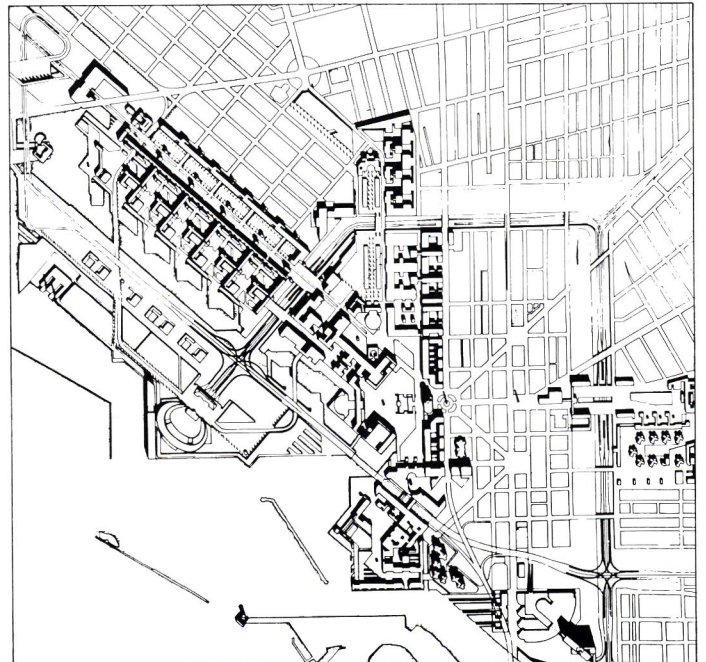
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20 Rome, Italy. G. Nolli, 1748. Plan
drawing, fragment.
21 Harlem Urban Renewal Project,
Harlem, New York. Shadow plan,
1966. C. Rowe, T. Schumacher,
J. Wells, F. Koetter, Assistants:
S. Potters, M. Schwarting,
C. Stearns.
22 Figure-ground plan, fragment.
Modified grid, 1966.
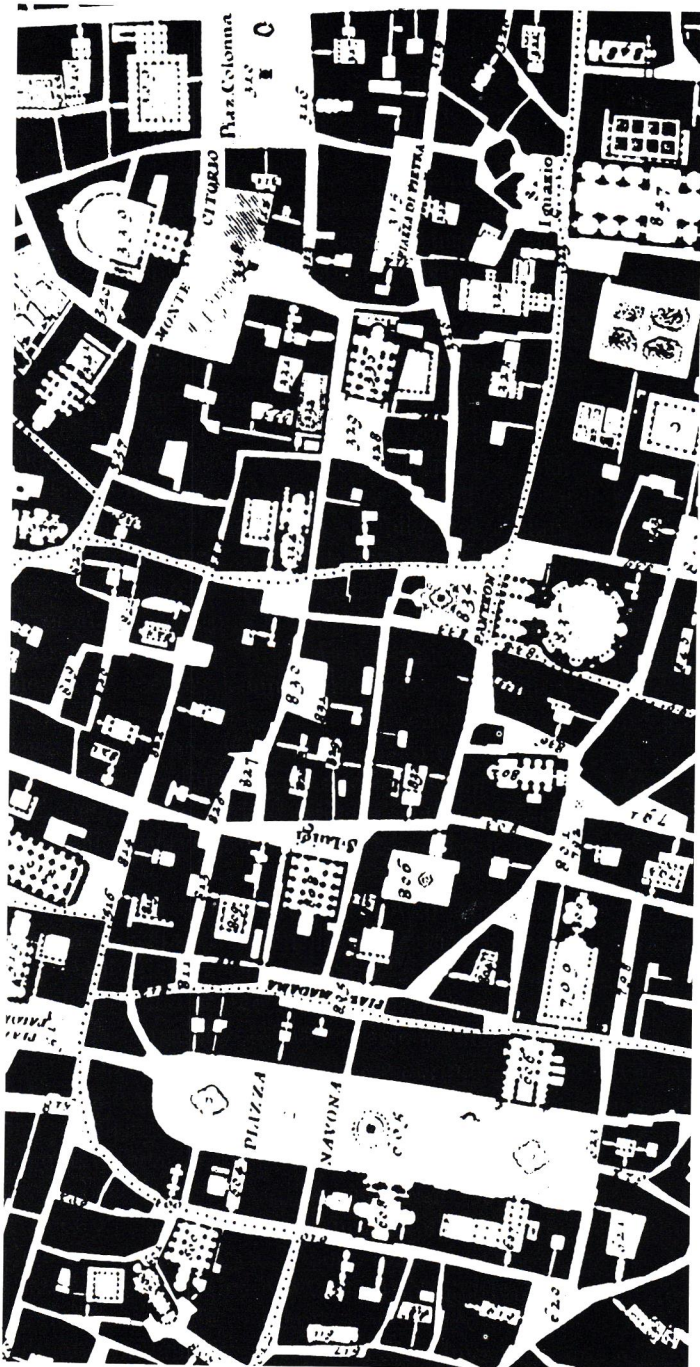
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here the new development is more than just the augmentation and clarification seen at Buffalo of existing conditions. Rather than attempting to completely resolve colliding parts, positive use is made here of the tensions arising from slightly antagonistic impingements between elements in space. Of Rowe's projects so far, this marks it as the most direct descendant of Suprematist painting.

As in the Harlem project, he treats both megastructures and gridded fields of urban texture as types, each of which can be read alternatively as figure or ground. Again, the edges of one existing grid are carved away. But here, because of its rotation relative to the surrounding context (see figs. 23, 24), this gridded field is not only isolated but becomes a positive part of the Williamsburg Bridge complex. Like the bridge, it literally intrudes upon the city. Being an intrusion, it is more apparent as both a type and a figure than is its counterpart in the Harlem project. The tactic of relating to the bridges more than to the surrounding grids is applied also to the new megastructures, lending great effectiveness to the strategy of collision. To the north, a diagonal track is cut through existing texture and anchors a new complex at the water's edge that both collides with and is resolved into the existing context. This diagonal cut is more convincing than that of the Harlem project because it acts as a negative lineal element to form a set with the bridges, each on a different axis.

As a composition, the play between type and context, change and persistence, blatant collision and delicate resolution, is elaborate and convincing. It also suggests a stylistic and compositional change, from the model of the Baroque spatial circuit toward one of Neoclassical juxtaposition. This, coupled with the contrast between the giant scale of the new additions and the smaller scale of the existing parts, lends the composition a sensate, scenic monumentality, that sense of intrusion from other realms, that has more recently become a hallmark of many architect-urbanists (see figs. 35, 36). Here can be seen the beginning of Rowe's struggle between his sense of overall intellectual order and compositional resolution on the one hand, and his fascination with the isolated, monumental event—the scenic object—on the other.
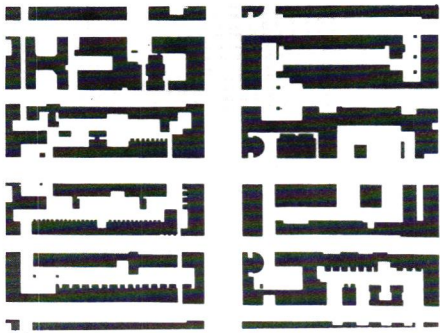
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Because the strategy of collision frees the project from the feeling of obsessive formal resolution, it tends to persuade us of its contingent, fragmentary nature. This makes it a convincing demonstration of the possibilities within his deductive approach for that humanistic argument between ideals and continuity, involving contradiction and change over time, and for the real possibility of such discourse in subsequent development and actual implementation.

North Bronx Project, 1967–1968

In this project Rowe works in an extremely abstract way. Here his deductive approach is applied for the most part at the largest possible scale, seldom descending to explicit architectural detail, and then only at the very end of the study. For this reason the project is a curious, almost paradoxical example of both the potential soundness and the apparent weakness of the deductively contextual approach to urban change. Down to a certain level of specific detail, the approach provides a formally and contextually rational set of suggestions as to how a given context might change incrementally over time (figs. 25–29). Although anti-functionalist, it does not flaunt its formalism or disdain workability; it merely presumes a loose fit between form and function. Hence the reasonableness of suggesting that the existing context itself can indicate the direction and general formal nature of appropriate change, either as extension of or as contradiction to its existing state. At this general level, the approach is hardly more than one of common sense guided by a fine hand and imaginative speculation about possibilities. Its deductive nature is reasonable—even at a huge scale—as long as it posits very general suggestions. At this scale it is analogous rather than precisely equivalent to the *parti* method of design at the scale of architecture. As such, it pretends to deal only with those formal recommendations, appropriate to its large scale, that are very loose and general.

The problems arise when the process becomes overbalanced toward its contextual concerns to the detriment of a dialogue with imposed types; when it is taken, in a more or less unbroken deductive chain, from the scale almost of a regional plan down to the scale almost of architectural
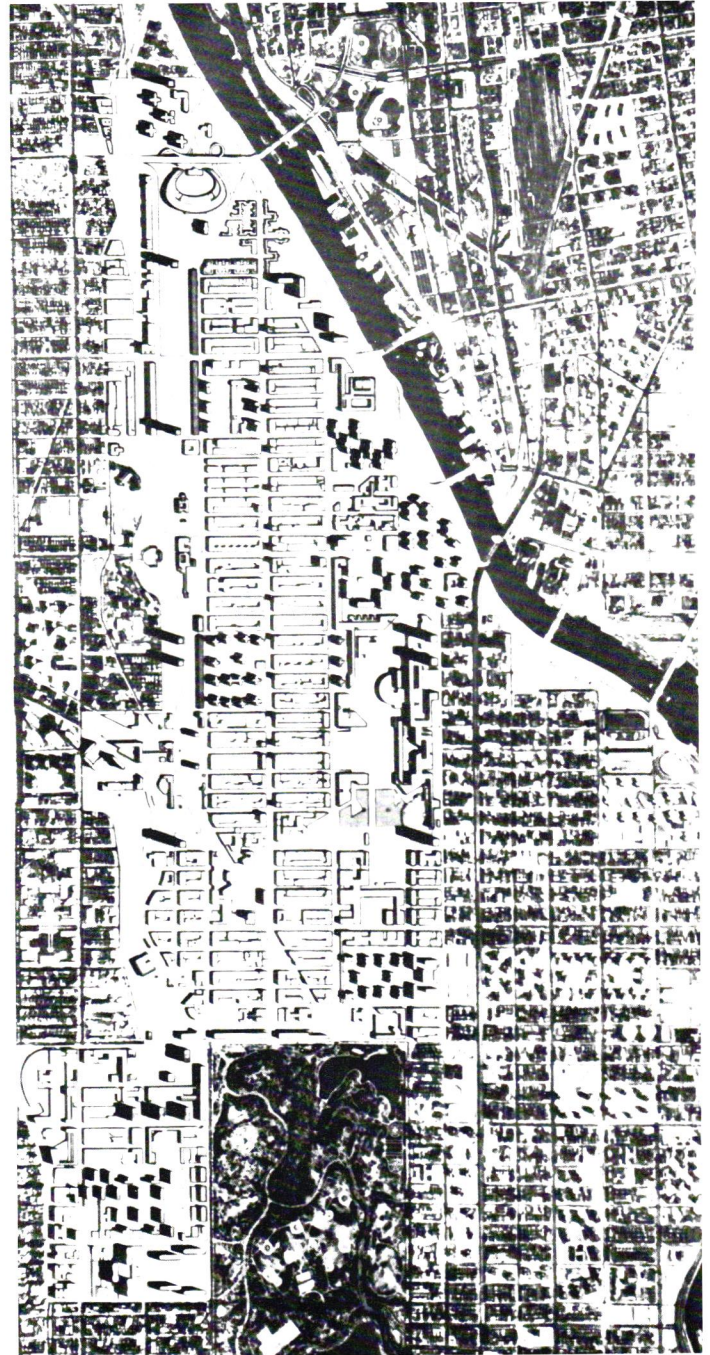
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plans (figs. 25–29). Here, at least by implication, the contingent, dialectical premises that originally constituted the argument between type and context are contradicted. The process begins to disallow notions of openness and change. This is because, below a certain scale of endeavor, cities are not only deduced from larger contexts, but are also *induced* as agglomerations of individual buildings, subject to a number of forces other than contextual propriety alone. The particular shape of a block or a building as deduced here may be formally—and even functionally—valid in relation to its surrounding context, but because cities change over time, this building, seen as a piece of data, is just as likely to become obsolete in contextual terms, as other data would become in technological or demographic terms, by the time of implementation. Thus, as a theoretical demonstration attempting to affect the nature of reality, the more architecturally precise the deductive procedure becomes, the less effective information, paradoxically, it is likely to contain.

It is a significant aspect of this project that it demonstrates the capacity of this approach to propose suggestions for extremely large areas. While this may be theoretically audacious, the question of their usefulness in reality lies not so much in their size as in their level of particularity. Moreover, the more precise and detailed they become as deductive results of decisions at a larger scale, the less humanistic they are in Trilling's terms as an argument between contradictions, and the more totalitarian are their implications.

Another significant aspect here is that Rowe introduces a new twist in the argument between type and context. The large patterns discernible by inspection or interpretation or, if you will, by "analysis," are *imagined to be types* as well as patterns existing in the context—imperfect and highly particular types to be sure, but types nonetheless. The patterns are, in effect, given a typological life. Through this leap of attitude, the context—or patterns within it—is suddenly equipped with all the apparatus of both type and context, with ideals as well as deficiencies, with rational consequences as well as problems. It is three things at once: the "problem," the im-

25 North Bronx Project, New York City. Orthogonal grid, emphasis on vertical elements, 1967–1968.
C. Rowe, P. Eisenman, W. Ellis, S. Potters, J. Schwarting, J. Stouman.

26 Diagonal grid emphasized, 1967–1968.
27 Isolating site from adjacent areas, 1967–1968.
28 Connecting site to adjacent areas, 1967–1968.
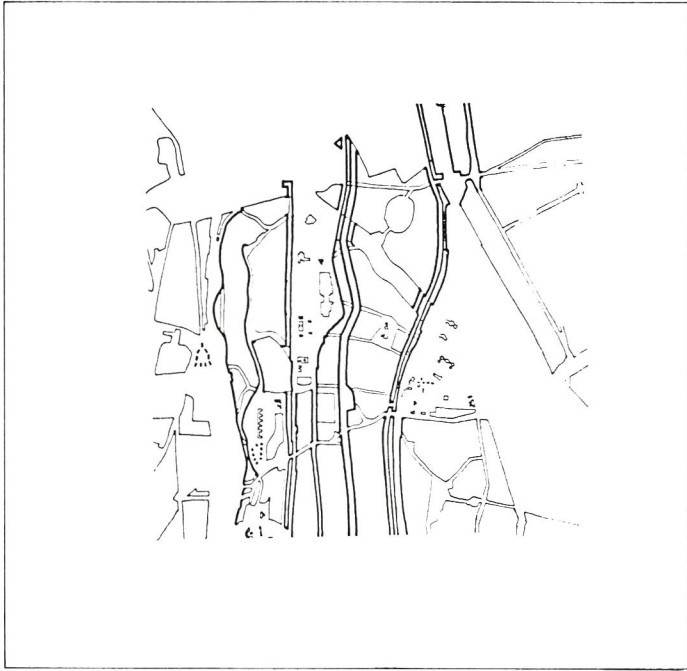
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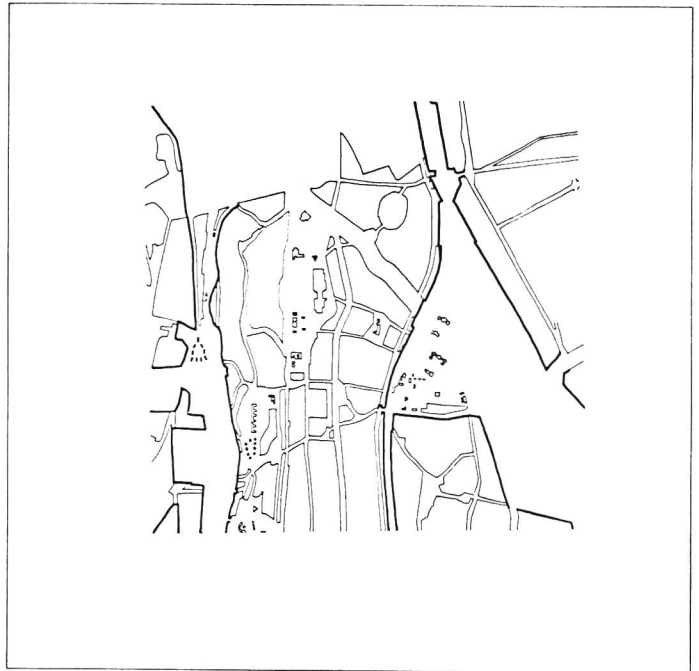
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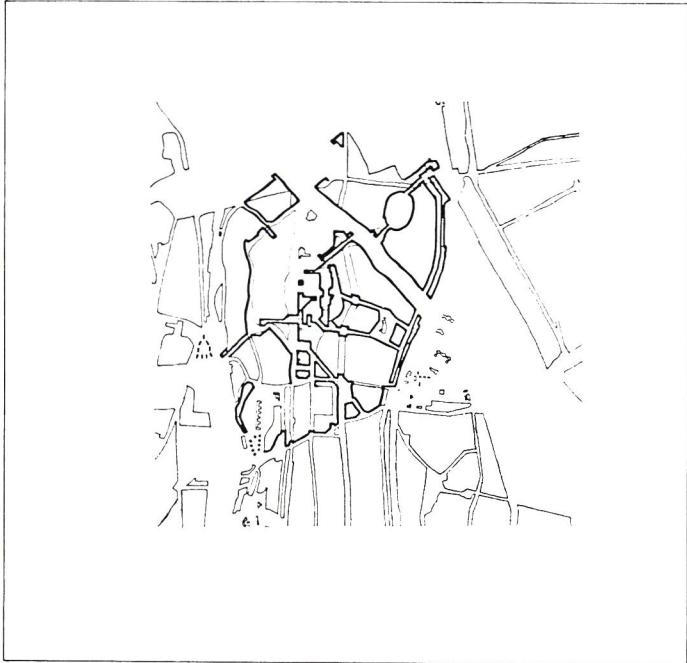
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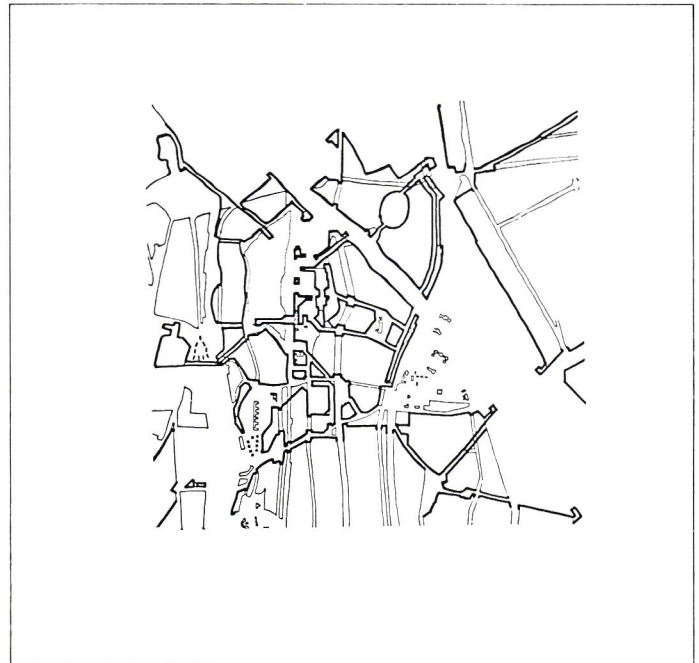
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29 North Bronx Project, New York
City. Figure-ground plan, 1967–
1968. C. Rowe, P. Eisenman,
W. Ellis, S. Potters, J. Schwarting,
J. Stouman.

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30 Minneapolis Renewal Project, Minneapolis, Minnesota. Island plan, 1976. C. Rowe, J. Di Maio, J. Hartley, S. Potters, M. Kleinman.
31 Isola bella, Lake Maggiore, Italy.
32 Padua, Prato della Valle, Italy.
33 Minneapolis Renewal Project. Plan, 1976.
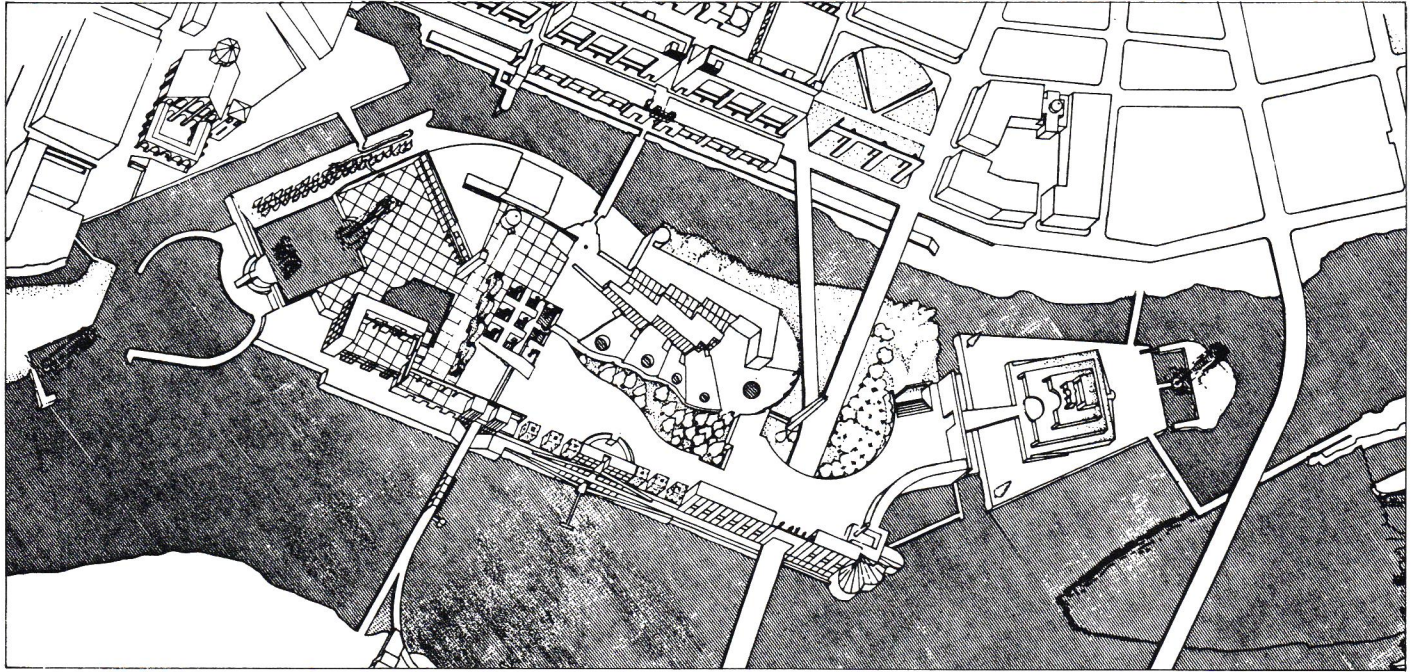
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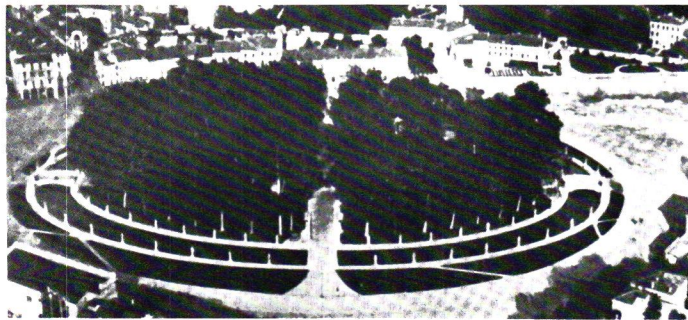
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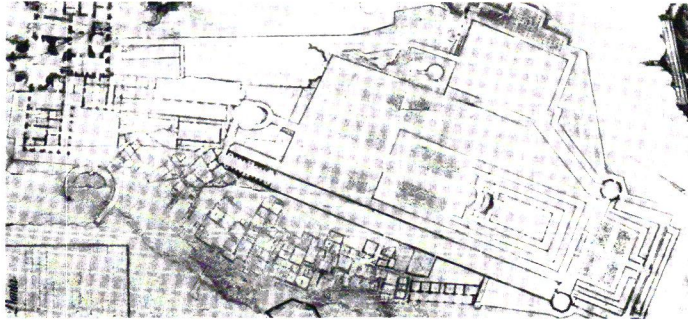
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34 *Roma Interrotta. C. Rowe and*
S. Peterson, 1978. Sector eight.
35 *Roma Interrotta. L. Krier, 1978.*
Bird's eye view of social center, St.
Peter's Square.

36 *Roma Interrotta. L. Krier, 1978.*
View of monument and urban
fabric.
37 Oblique drawing, *R. Jagals,*
1967.

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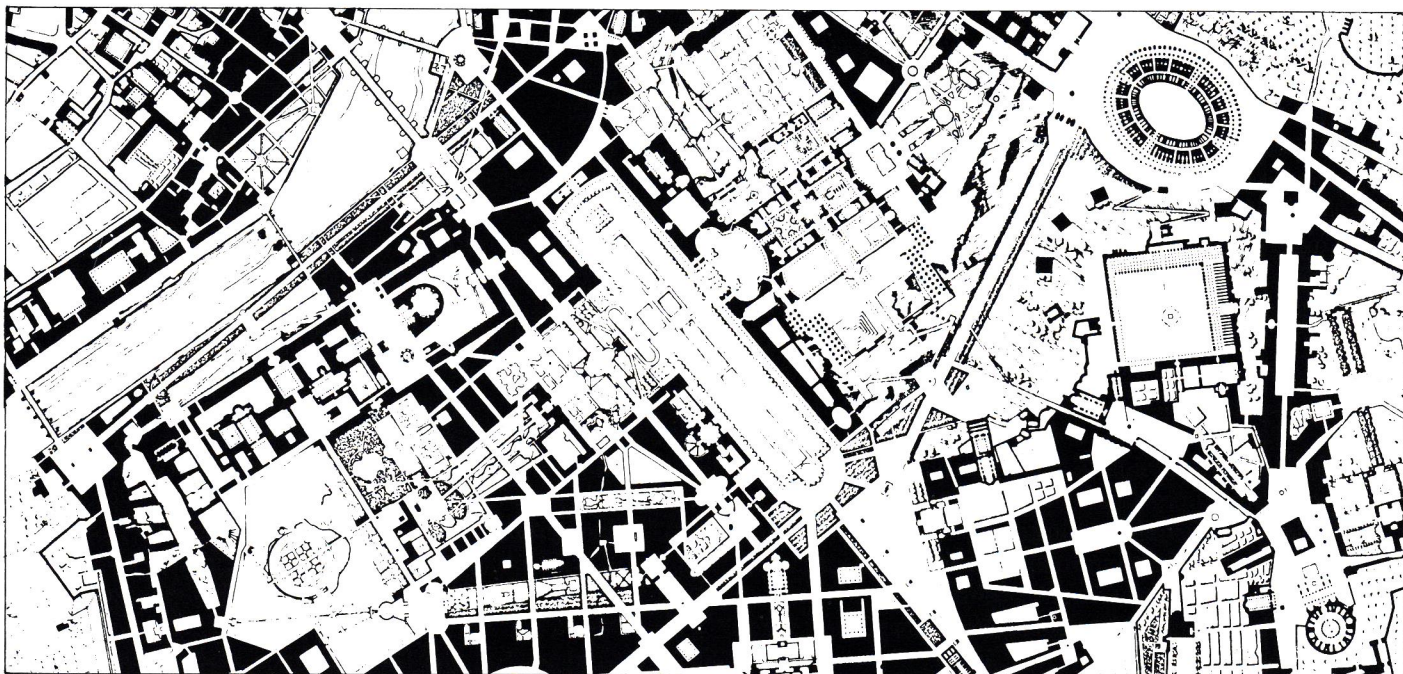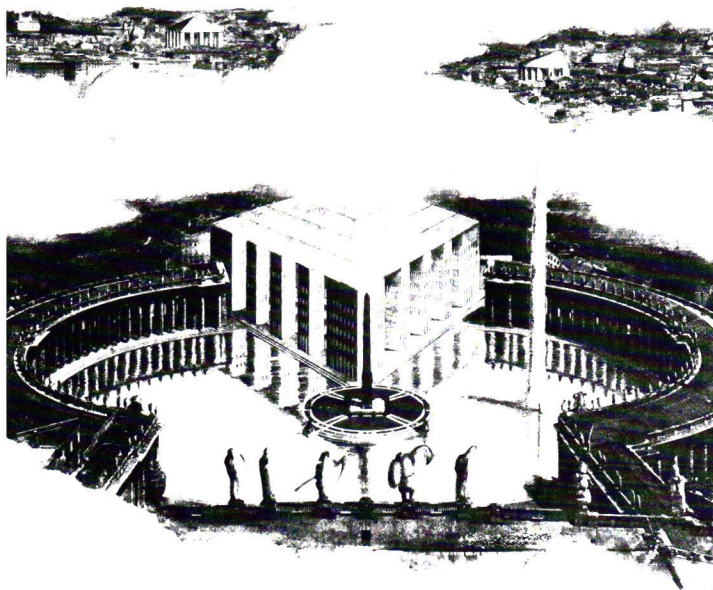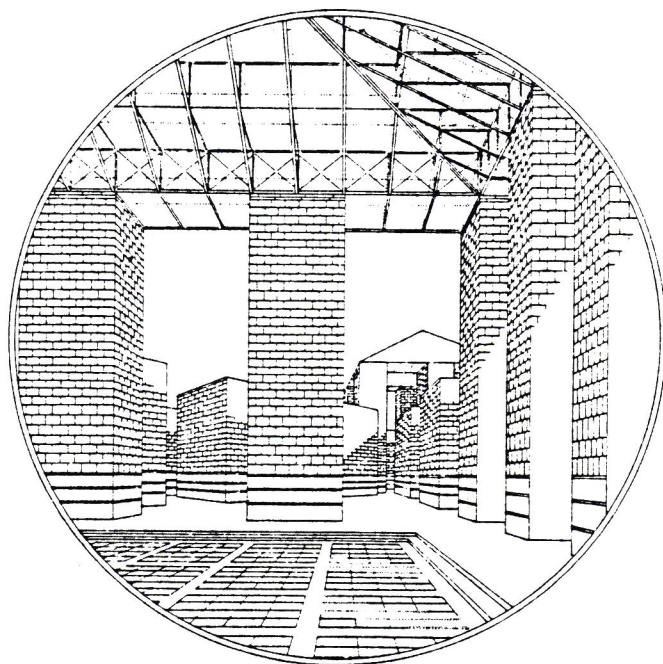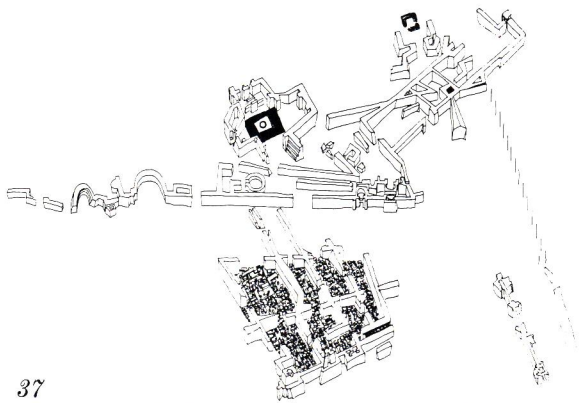
perfect depiction of its own "perfect" state, and its own agent for directing rational change toward formal perfection in its own terms.

These basic aspects are illustrated by the two schemes developed for the overall organization. One of these imagines the orthogonal grid system to be a set of vertical striations laminated together (fig. 25). This emphasizes the centripetal possibilities of the site in order to separate it from adjacent parts of the Bronx to the east and west (fig. 27). The other scheme imagines a latent diagonal grid system as a radiocentric type (fig. 26). This emphasizes the centrifugal possibilities of the site, connecting it to the adjacent parts on each side (fig. 28). In each scheme the relation between Fordham Road and the site is a key factor, as it could, by manipulation, be made to read as part of either grid system. The fragmentation of the tight urban texture just north of Fordham Road and its transformation into green space would bring Fordham Road into the diagonal grid, suggesting the radiocentric type-*parti* (see figs. 26, 28). Alternatively, Fordham Road could be confirmed as part of the orthogonal system (see figs. 25, 27), suggesting the set of laminated striations as the type-*parti*.

In the argument between type and context, this project represents an exercise, not without its obvious fascinations, in chasing one's typological tail. As to the question of architectural totalitarianism, it illustrates that the problem lies not so much in the size of the project as in the architectural precision with which huge projects are proposed.

Minneapolis, 1976
This project illustrates an idea that is central to Rowe's subsequent book *Collage City*, and which had been adumbrated in the Lower East Side project, but is seldom allowed free rein in his work: namely, the change from a more or less resolved composition of abstract shapes (painting or collage) to the unresolved collision of specific historical prototypes. In the interplay between type and context, this development must be understood as a change from a condition in which the context is likely to suggest

a type to one in which a type suggests a context. While there still may be a concern with what the site could become in terms of its own latent properties, there is now also a concern to mine architectural history for prototypes that provide, *arbita dicta*, the rules for changing a context. This approach makes the already strong anti-functionalism in Rowe's work up to this time seem trivial by comparison. It suggests that history is the veritable science of urbanism. It is difficult to imagine a more disdainful—and potentially brilliant—anti-functionalist stance.

Minneapolis offers two examples of the overt use of historical prototypes, and they are each used in different ways. The first is the Prato della Valle at Padua (fig. 32). It is imposed as a prefabricated insert, a stabilizing focus for a vast open piazza (fig. 30). It absorbs the discordant impingements that bear upon it, not through resolution but by fending off the elements juxtaposed around it. In other parts of the scheme, Rowe's predilection for fully resolved pattern composition still dominates his procedure (see fig. 33). But as he flirts here with a fragmentary, arbitrary juxtaposition of parts, we see his fascination with the possibilities of a city of fragments colliding with each other to produce the scenically monumental effect of objects transported from unlikely places and remote times, and placed together in a locale in unlikely ways (see figs. 35, 36, 46).

The other prototype is Isola Bella, at Lake Maggiore (fig. 31). It offers a particular instance of topographically manipulative terracing based on an elegant collection of skewed axes and apposite adjacencies, with specific suggestions for various descents from summit to waterline. Rowe uses it as a model for the development of an island in the Mississippi between Minneapolis's "left" and "right" banks (fig. 30). In so doing he goes beyond the procedure of inserting an undistorted type into a context. In fact, he reverses it. He literally smothers an island context with a prototype. Instead of collision between parts, there takes place a total collisional overlay, the virtual absorption of a context by a prototype. Also, by selecting a prototype rather than using a general pattern such as a checkerboard layout or a band of linear buildings side by

20 side, the procedure becomes less one of "designing" and more one of modifying, or ruling out portions of a pre-selected solution. It has the virtue of suggesting the decisive, particular relationships peculiar to old things. This is an incalculable advantage when faced with the problem of creating something out of nothing, an alternative to the kind of geometrical or topological pattern-thinking usually resorted to when faced with empty ground.

Both these developments can be suggested to have their origin not only in Rowe's acute historical erudition, but also—at least obliquely—in the work of Rainer Jagals[10] (1940–1967) with which Rowe has been fascinated for some time (fig. 37). Among other attributes, Jagals's work suggests the monumental possibilities of juxtaposing unlikely prototypes, taken from throughout architectural history, to form eclectic urban groupings that disregard any consideration of either context or typal similarity. They act as collages of disputatious types, set on open ground, forming their own unique context—illustrations of historical architectural fragments. This work, little known outside certain architectural circles, must be assumed to have influenced any number of current architect-urbanists, especially many of the 'Neo-Rationalists'.

Roma Interrotta, 1978
Roma Interrotta might almost have been designed to exploit Rowe's humanistic desire to "concilliate between eras." The context is itself a juxtaposition of historical prototypes, a palimpsest ranging from sacred traces in open land to empty shells, to active buildings and complexes. His use of specific prototypes to shape the development of this context now becomes chronologically and typologically indiscriminant. They are both "historical" and modern, and completely eclectic in scale, configurational type, and associational image. The Palatine palaces, the Labyrinth/Ziggurat of the Mundaneum, Rockefeller Center, the Roman theater, the ideal Italian town, the empirical Italian hill town, the Italian garden, the Egyptian temple, landscaping à la Ville Radieuse—all these can be found here (fig. 34).

Considering the movement observed thus far toward a compositional strategy of collision, it might be expected that these historical prototypes would be arranged as a series of monumental fragments in some kind of contingent, unresolved juxtaposition. But this does not happen. Instead, each prototype is made to act as a precisely designed nucleus of a field of miscellaneous urban texture. They operate much like Rowe's model of the "composite" building, with the "ideal" nucleus providing a dialectical focus for the "contextual" periphery. But these areas and their peripheries, for the most part, are also designed as complete, precisely resolved compositions, sometimes even penetrating each other to establish elaborately interwoven formal patterns much like some of his earlier two-dimensional figure-ground projects. Thus any discourse between type and context insofar as it might involve openness to change, contingency, or that mutual contradiction so basic to the analogy of Trilling's humanistic definition is done away with altogether. Moreover, the emphasis on figure-ground presentation heightens the sense of perfectly worked-out unity between the prototypes as nuclei and the fields of built-up texture they are meant to anchor. What is presented here is total design, perfect within its own formal premises. It can be considered a mirror image of Le Corbusier's city of modernism—more involved with circuits of space and less with object-buildings, more contextually deductive and less typologically inductive, but total design nonetheless.

The captivating bogus history invented by Rowe for this project as a textual apology for his contextual sorties bears out his tendency toward more hermetic compositions, perfect within themselves. His compositional virtuosity is impressive. The layer of associational meanings that adheres to a specific prototype, but is absent from a more general type, invigorates this work. The use of such prototypes may well, as he has suggested, "make the good easy and the evil difficult."[11] But the more the historical choice becomes obscure the more it must be accompanied by an exercise of pure explanation in order to give it any meaning other than as a shape. It does appear to be an almost automatic process (see figs. 30, 33). Simply thumbing its nose at function, it—brilliantly—convinces us of the potentially interminable list of architectural inventions

38 Newton's Cenotaph, exterior by
day. E. Boullée, 1784.
39 Marylebone District
Redevelopment, London. S. Fong,
1979.
Studio project, figure-ground plan.
40 Marylebone District
Redevelopment. Axonometric view.

41 Waterfront strategy for
Richmond, Va. S. Muse, 1978.
Studio project.
42 Urban development for upper
Manhattan. M. Manfredi, 1978.
Studio project, figure-ground plan.
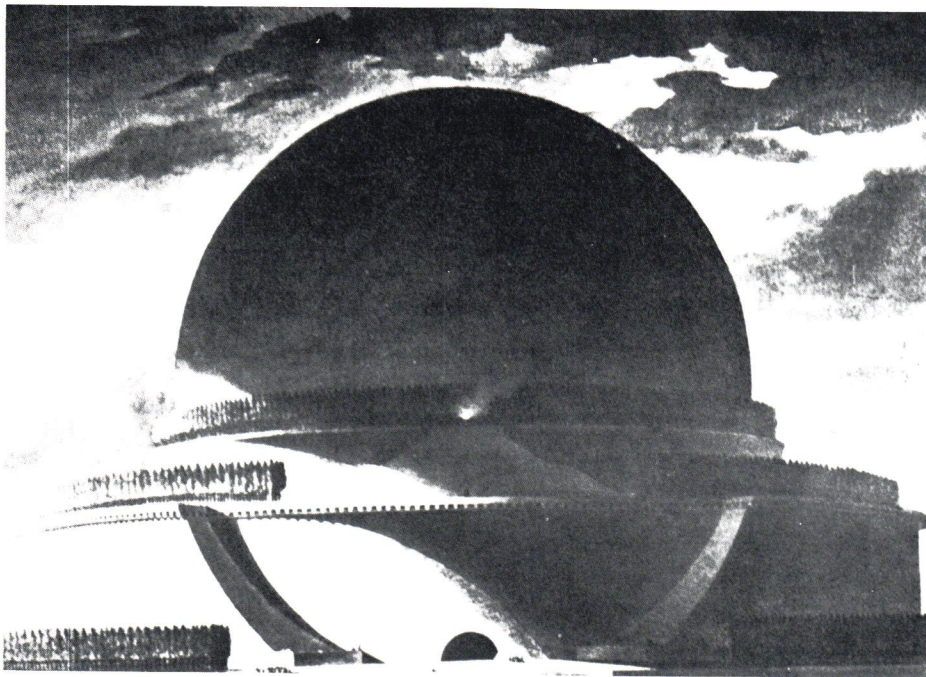
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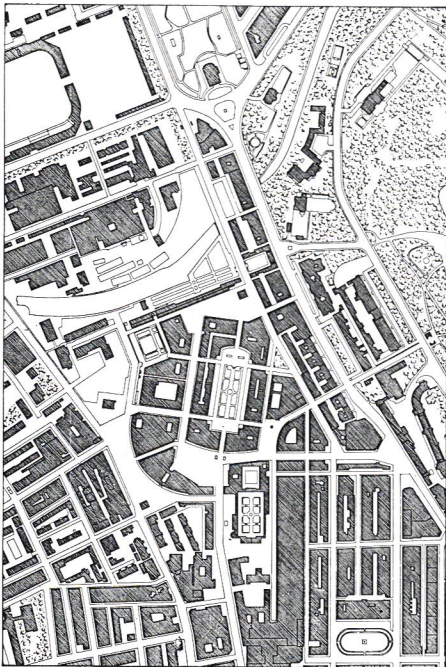
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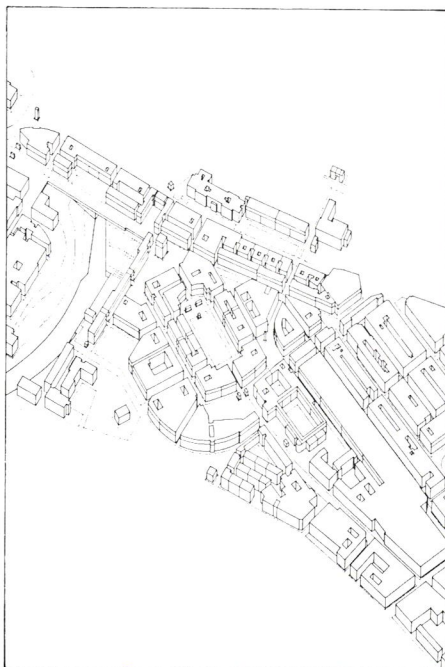
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that can be pulled from history to become perfectly functional urban fragments. It is the ultimate anti-functionalist demonstration, but also the ultimate eclectic demonstration. At the same time, in a certain respect, it is like the approach of the functionalists, which was similarly imbued with a certain automatism, which was to have made "the good easy and the evil difficult." And just as functionalism has proven too simplistic to deal alone with so complex an activity as urbanism, so these transformations of historical prototypes run the risk of a complacent, hermetic virtuosity, one that leads to a formularized process of pattern-rationalism, the virtues of which are apparent only on the exhibition wall; the question arises as to what degree Rowe seems content to exploit virtuosity for its own sake.

In Rowe's terms the issue may well come down to virtuosity versus defeatism. But the argument might equally well be put as hedonism versus heroism. Manfredo Tafuri has said, speaking of Roland Barthes' "literature of pleasure," "there is no heroism in a language that makes hedonism its realm."[12] George Baird has asked, referring specifically to Rowe's own remarkable contribution to the ideological demolition of Modern Architecture, "how far, creatively speaking, should we expect to be able to go in our new, mature, and disillusioned enlightenment?"[13]

Thus Rowe's aesthetic predilection for completely resolved composition and the fully worked-out two-dimensional field pushes him toward a form of total design that belies his initial assumptions of a dialogue between contradictory forces. But it also reflects an attitude toward the concept of monumentality that, at least since *Roma Interrotta*, sets him apart from most other architect-urbanists. It suggests a disdain for the more sensational— even atmospheric—aspects of visual or scenic monumentality that have come largely to constitute that quality for the modern mind, and which are energetically evoked by many current practitioners of "aesthetic urbanism."

Compare, for instance, some work of Leon Krier (figs. 35, 36) to some recent work from Rowe's studio at Cornell (figs. 39–42). Both are Neoclassical in a sense, but Krier's

43 Landscape with the Ashes of Phocion collected by his widow, N. Poussin, 1648.

44 Fantastic View of the Grand Canal, Venice, A. Canaletto, 1730–1735.
45 Propylean, Munich. L. von Klenze, 1846–1860.

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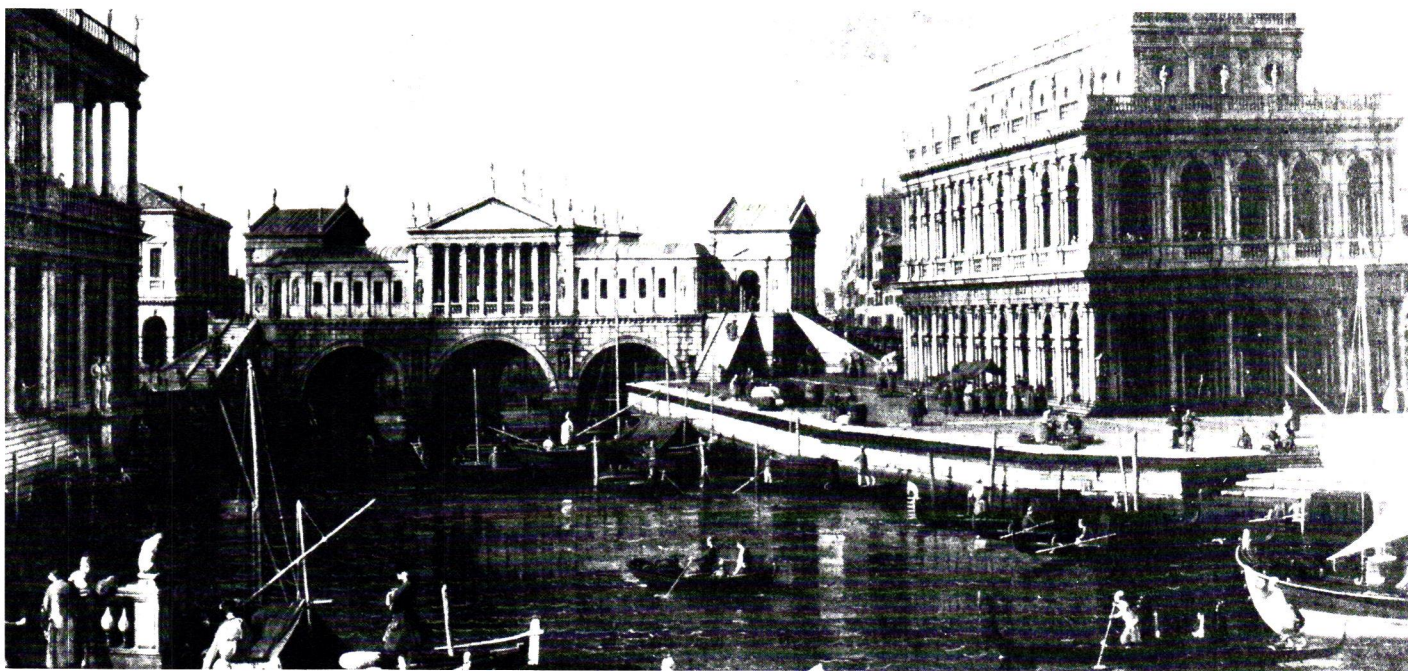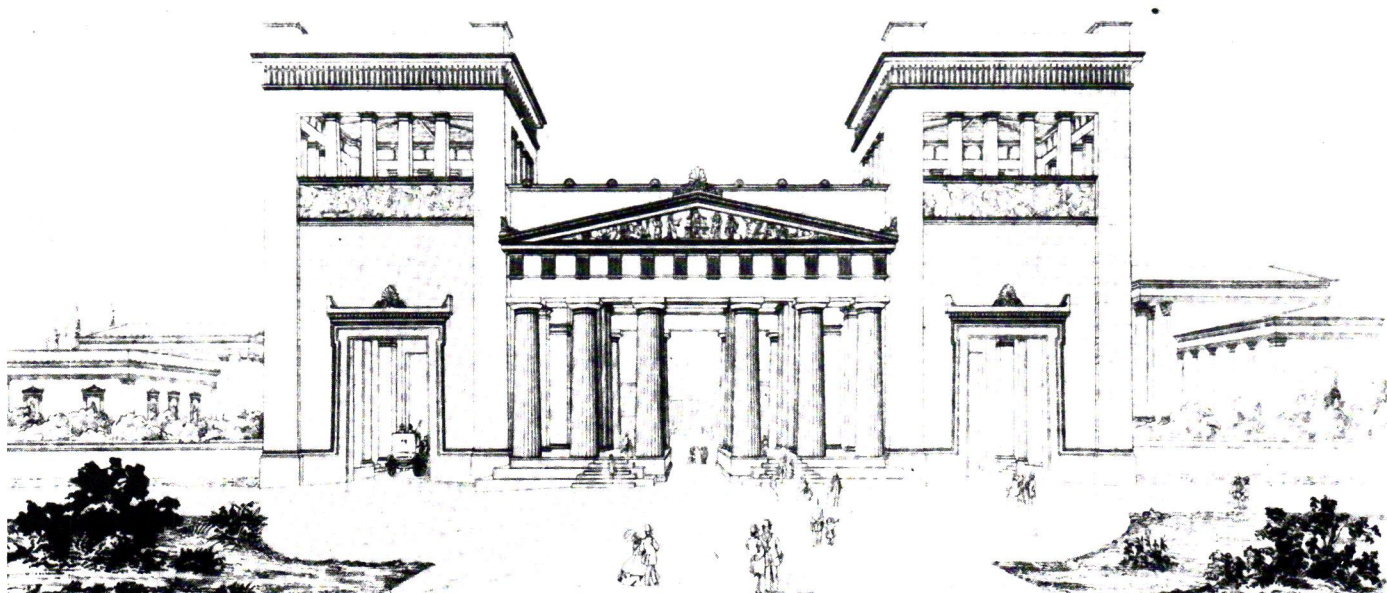
piece achieves monumentality through a certain surreal juxtaposition, while the pieces from Rowe's studio sacrifice some of the monumentality they achieve through their relative simplicity for a contextual completeness developed according to what is essentially still a medieval or Baroque model of spatial circuitry with no predominating parts. They are Neoclassical more in the denatured and delicate style of Thomas Hope than in, say, the savage mode of Boullée (fig. 38). This is neither good nor bad in itself; it is Rowe's oscillation between fascination with and disdain for scenographic monumentality that is of interest.

Although there are numerous mitigations and exceptions, it can be suggested that prior to the Romantic movement, monumentality was an *idea*, at times one without even a name, integral with collective civic life.[14] Since the Romantic movement, monumentality has been perceived not so much as an idea, but as a scene, more often than not a scene depicting something lost or out of context (see fig. 36), removed from rather than integral to our daily lives. It is usually manifested as a haunting visual memory, being equated perhaps most succinctly with the image of the *ruin*, with its dreamlike overtones of nostalgic melancholy and individual appropriation (fig. 35). It is an emotional recollection, a view of something poignantly displaced. It constitutes a subjective, privately held perception of loss, a thing remote in time or space—somehow isolated, empty, apart. It is often perverse in some way: irrational, surreal, excessively crude or excessively simple, primitive, decayed or incomplete, too large or too small, at odds with its surroundings. It predominates because of this perversity.

As it is a picture, it is sensate, not cognate; a picturesque event, not a pattern. Whether it be object or space, it is usually a three-dimensional scene, sustained in silhouette, often viewed from the ground, in a state of cleavage with its surroundings—a provocative intruder, whether from a Golden Age or from a longed-for nowhere, a symbol of an unknown, relinquished past.

The architecture of Romantic Classicism had these qualities in greater clarity and abundance than any architecture before it or since (see fig. 38). It was a more *memorial* architecture than that of any previous period, an architecture that remembered, whether or not the object of that memory ever existed. Spiritually and stylistically, it attempted to evoke a primitive, mythical architecture and to drag it from an imagined context over an immense distance, unchanged, to serve a present time. The object being "revived" came from a greater spiritual remove than in any other period. This quality of remoteness also underlies the current prevailing attitude toward monumentality, and connects Romantic Classicism with the scenic monumentality presently in vogue.

Within his discourse between type and context, Rowe's struggle with the two concepts of monumentality comes down to a decision between two compositional strategies. One is the complex and refined resolution of parts, which tends to emphasize the entire organization of a compositional field, establishing a complete spatial public realm, and thus diminishing the visually monumental effect of any of its parts. The other is raw collision, which tends to emphasize the visual monumentality of discrete parts, not only through contrast, but also through contradiction, irresolution, and blatant visual simplicity. In his work the first and perhaps more wholesome concept seems to predominate. It can be appreciated by the intellect as a formally rational idea. In his book *Collage City*, the second and perhaps more illicit interpretation seems to hold sway. It is emotional; it affects our senses. An example of the first might be the figure-ground plan of a typical medieval or Baroque city such as Turin (see fig. 2), a complex, totally activated field, an overall public organization. The other might be represented by the hypothetical "City of Composite Presence" from Rowe's *Collage City* (fig. 46), a sensuous, emotionally affective juxtaposition of eclectic parts, monumental not only because we recognize them as such from architectural history, but also visually monumental because of their dissonant, arbitrary, mutual confrontation, as if they were lost pieces brought together by a grand happenstance from other realms. This gives them a faraway, dreamlike, exotic quality, nostalgic in both the spatial and the temporal sense. The power of this drawing to provoke us arises from its

46 City of Composite Presence.
D. Griffin, H. Kolhoff, 1976.
Collage-drawing.

47 Roma Interrotta. C. Rowe, 1978.
Sector eight, air view.

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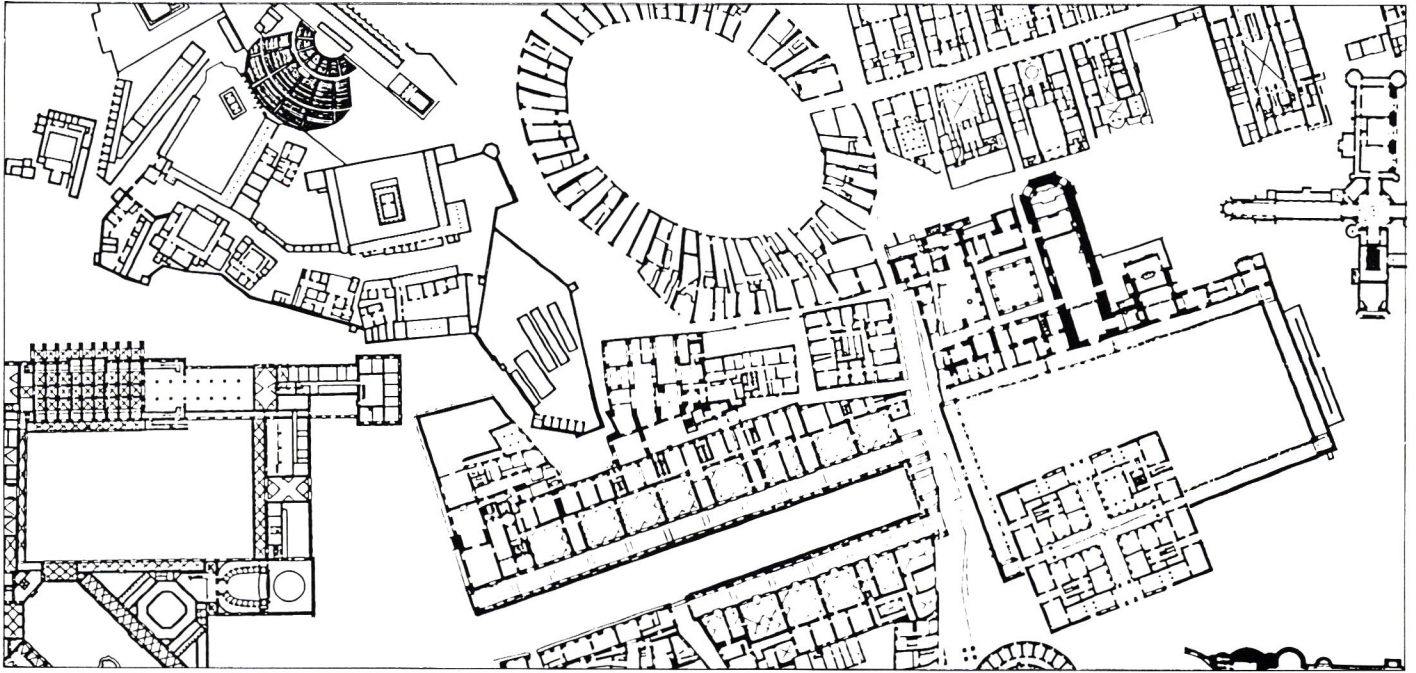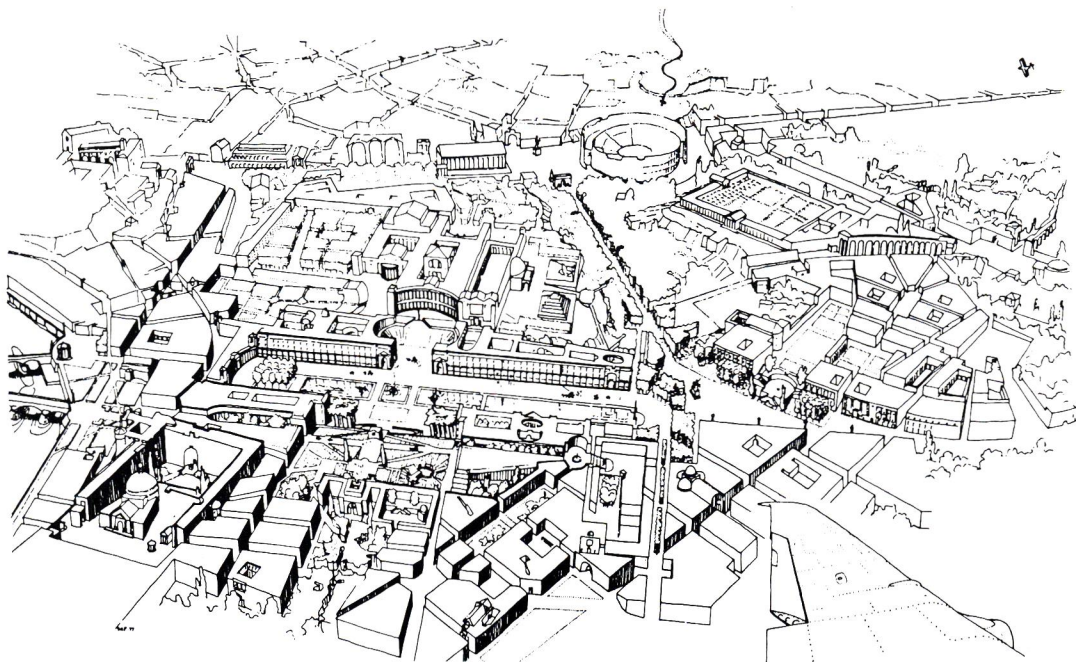
perversity. The parts are re-contextualized into what we cannot help but realize—because the original aura of the objects hangs on—is a non-context. We know it is nowhere. That there is no genre texture in this grouping might be thought to explain its monumentality. To the contrary, its power as monument is surely the compositional dissonance of its parts, with their semantic power enhanced by disdain for time and place.

In *Collage City* Rowe proposes the related nineteenth-century idea of *the city as museum*, using, incidentally, the post-Romantic, Neoclassical images of Von Klenze's Munich as example (fig. 45). This city would feature "precisely presented discrete objects/episodes" in an eclectic museum-like agglomeration. This ideal is accompanied by a number of ground-level views of Biedermeier Munich, suggesting the scenic monumentality he so assiduously avoids in his own work (fig. 47). He further establishes this direction in his "Excursus" at the end, "an abridged list of . . . possible *objets trouvés* in the urbanistic collage," and with a final "Commentary" he provides a flourish of ground-level or water-level scenes in which buildings have been set into "poetic" relation to form haunting monumental urban settings, as envisioned by painters from Poussin to Canaletto, and Marlow (figs. 1, 43, 44).[15]

Under the rubric, then, of the discourse between type and context, Rowe's development can be seen to go from instrumental and open to hypothetical and totally designed, from work at the scale of city fragment or set piece to the deductive design of whole areas of the city. Within this overall shift there can be seen two contradictory sub-streams. One reflects his responsiveness to external stylistic developments: he moves from the mixing of modern types with traditional contexts, through a complex spatial contextualism inspired by medieval and Baroque models, through the eclectic imposition of large historical set pieces, finally to a Neoclassicism of delicate simplicity. The other reflects his struggle *against* external stylistic influences: a tendency to sustain resolved, complete compositions rather than the more abrasive "monumental" fragments now in vogue (compare figs. 34, 35, 36, 47). The shift toward Neoclassicism denotes a flirtation with emotionalism verging on scenographic monumentality. But ultimately Rowe retains the compositional method of resolution, belying his preference for rationalism and order. It may be a costly exchange, since it is this compositional preference that tends to promote those potentially debilitating tendencies toward total design and over-precise deductive demonstration referred to above.

Rowe has long been an acrobat on Le Corbusier's tightrope, treading between "order and disorder" in that humanistic zone of the contradictory. But as his work becomes more hypothetical, and as more and more of the urban field is perfected within the hermetic terms of his compositional standards, it addresses only the "merely" ideal. It could be argued that this work presents a picture of coherence that everyday life cannot, and thus has value. To a large degree this argument is worth maintaining. But in imagining that it can resolve all contradictions, it falls short of, for example, the humanistic tradition of literature, espousing the dialogue between ideals and the importance of continuing social intercourse. Although the novel, for instance, might produce a coherence that life cannot, it is a coherence about human dilemma—about *contradiction*.

Brilliant as his compositions are, Rowe is in danger of forsaking that powerful fuel of humanism: profound contradiction and dilemma. His Popperian "fragments of utopia" are threatening to become unrecognizable as fragments; too large and complete, and because of this, unrecognizable even as change.

Urban theory of any kind operates at the level of opinion. It is successful not as a predictive device, but as a prescriptive one. Its success is measured to the extent it persuades the undertaking of real action. The design of artifacts like large cities never takes place in an unbroken deductive sequence. Thus, the larger and more precisely resolved Rowe's urban demonstrations become, the less influence, paradoxically, they can have at the large scale, and thus the less successful they are as theoretical urbanism.[16] As these fragments—these demonstrations—become more perfect within themselves, they diminish their

own possibility to persuade. They are true cities of the mind, 'perfect', in search of contradiction and human life. They exist in a new order of reality. Appreciated for themselves alone, they surely enlarge our urbanistic repertoire, but they also reflect the pessimistic climate that currently surrounds the unending cleavage between the reality of art and that of our ordinary existence.

They are at once emblems of hope in a future and symptoms of our present enlightened disillusion.

Notes
1. Lionel Trilling, ed., *The Portable Matthew Arnold* (New York: The Viking Press, 1949), introduction.
2. Ibid.
3. In addition to G. and C. Collins, see A. Boyarsky, *Camillo Sitte: City Builder* (unpublished thesis, Graduate School of Cornell University, 1959) for insights into Sitte's urbanism and his covert relationship to modernist urbanism, especially that of Le Corbusier.
4. Rowe has often spoken of the architect's "highest duty" as "the rational subversion of the status quo." By this he intended not merely an economic or technologically rational process but also a formal—architecturally rational—process.
5. The term was originally coined as "contexturalism" by one of Rowe's students at Cornell, Stuart Cohen, suggesting an overriding concern for the 'texture' of the problem context. Its original implications of contextual determinism have retained an enormous force that veil the possibilities of ambiguity, dialectic, and contradiction lying between type and context which are fundamental to Rowe's approach. For an important early clarification, see T. Schumacher, "Contextualism: Urban Ideals & Deformations," *Casabella*, 359–360, 1971.
6. See exhibition pamphlet *Buffalo: Waterfront* (Buffalo, New York: Albright-Knox Art Gallery, 1969).
7. See S. Pepper, *The Basis of Criticism in The Arts* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1956) containing intriguing analogies using the same term, and in which contextualism is characterized as a type of art criticism that takes account of all factors surrounding the work: emotional, proximate, the setting of the works, especially as the work itself contributes to that setting. Also see S. Pepper, *World Hypotheses* (Los Angeles: Univ. of Southern California Press, 1942).
8. See William Ellis, "The Spatial Structure of Streets," *On Streets* (Cambridge, Mass.: The MIT Press, 1978), pp. 114–131.
9. C. Rowe's essay in the exhibition catalogue *The New City: Architecture and Urban Renewal* (New York: Museum of Modern Art, 1967).
10. See exhibition catalogue, *Rainer Jagals*, Galerie Strecker (Berlin, 1967).
11. C. Rowe and F. Koetter, *Collage City* (Cambridge, Mass.: The MIT Press, 1978). The play on Einstein's apparently functionalist remark to E. Mendelsohn concerning the latter's Einstein Tower in Potsdam is noted.
12. M. Tafuri, "Order and Disorder: The Dialectic of Modern Architecture," The Hans Vetter Memorial Lecture, Carnegie Mellon University, Pittsburgh, 7 April 1976.
13. G. Baird's remarks at Institute for Architecture and Urban Studies forum on the Museum of Modern Art's Beaux-Arts Exhibition, concerning Rowe's leading role in the current wave of architectural revisionism. See W. Ellis "Beaux," in *Oppositions*, 5, Summer, 1976.
14. See Jose Ortega y Gasset, *The Revolt of the Masses* (New York: Norton Press, 1957), pp. 150–153, in which he equates the idea of monumentality to the collective and, equally important, *spatial* nature of the Greek *polis*. See also G. C. Argan, *The Renaissance City* (New York: Braziller, 1969), p. 27, for the Renaissance concept of monument as it related to the historical importance of buildings and cities to their citizenry.
15. Rowe and Koetter, *Collage City*.
16. It would be fair to suggest, for instance, that the premises and stylistic predilections underlying Rowe's urbanism have influenced the recent vogue for an architecture of discrete interior spaces more than they have influenced an urbanism of discrete exterior spaces.

Theory

Kahn, Heidegger and the Language of Architecture

Christian Norberg-Schulz

1 (frontispiece) Salk Institute, La Jolla, California. Louis Kahn, 1959–1965. Master plan, view from "village" (living place), showing "meeting place" across ravine.

Louis Kahn already belongs to history. Only an echo of his message reaches us, and the promise of a new beginning has not been fulfilled.[1] Again confusion reigns, and our environment degenerates ever more rapidly in spite of "design methods" and "technological progress." But the buildings of Kahn are standing, reminding us that architecture *is*, even in our time. The "unnecessary" porches of the Kimbell Art Museum tell us that (figs. 2–6). They make us ask: Perhaps we ought to give more thought to Kahn's message?

And, in fact, when we take a closer look at the writings of Kahn, the outline of a "theory" of architecture emerges. It is certainly not worked out in detail, but the basic structure is coherent. To make Kahn's theory generally useful, it needs to be interpreted and developed. As it has a philosophical basis, this work cannot be confined within the limits of architectural theory as such. In philosophy the most useful aid is found in the writings of Martin Heidegger, whose ideas in certain respects show a striking resemblance to those of Kahn. After an exposition of the theory of Kahn, I shall therefore use Heidegger for the needed interpretation and development. Finally I shall sketch the outlines of an objective theory of architecture, based on the message of Louis Kahn.

Kahn's famous question, "What does the building want to be?," is usually taken as the point of departure when discussing Kahn's "philosophy." This question reaches beyond the approach of functionalism. Functionalism is as a matter of principle circumstantial, going from the particular to the general.[2] Kahn's question, on the contrary, suggests that buildings possess an *essence* which determines the solution. His approach thus represents an inversion of functionalism; the latter proceeds from "below," whereas Kahn starts from "above." Over and over again he emphasized that there exists an *order* which precedes design. One of his most well-known statements starts with the words "order is." This order comprises the whole of nature, including human nature. Thus "a rose wants to be a rose." In his earlier writings Kahn used the term "form" to denote what a thing wants to be. He must have felt,

2, 3 Kimbell Art Museum, Fort
Worth, Texas. Louis Kahn, 1966–
1972. Sections of vaults.
4 Perspective sketch. 1967.
5 Section sketch, mechanical
systems, 1967.
6 Section of cycloid, final version.
7, 8 Sketches and poems by Louis
Kahn, n.d.

7 "Eternity is of two Brothers
"The one desires to be to express
"The one to be to make
"The one light non luminous
"The one light luminous"
8 "Spending to the emergence of
Material
"The prevailing luminous
"Groups to ignite a wild dance of
flaming prevailance"

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The one desires to be to express the one

Eternity is of two Brothers

to go to make the one who

Man Luminous now Luminous right now

7

Spending to the emmergence of Material

flaming prevalence

The prevailing Luminous

Luminous of spirits or grain drops

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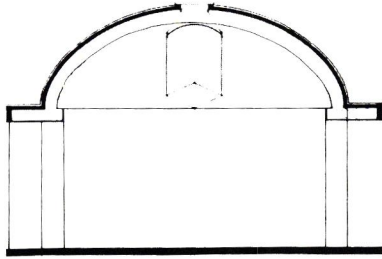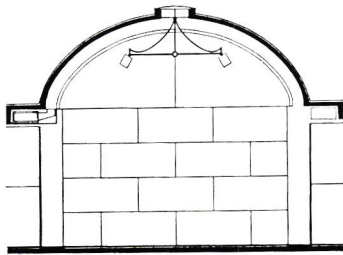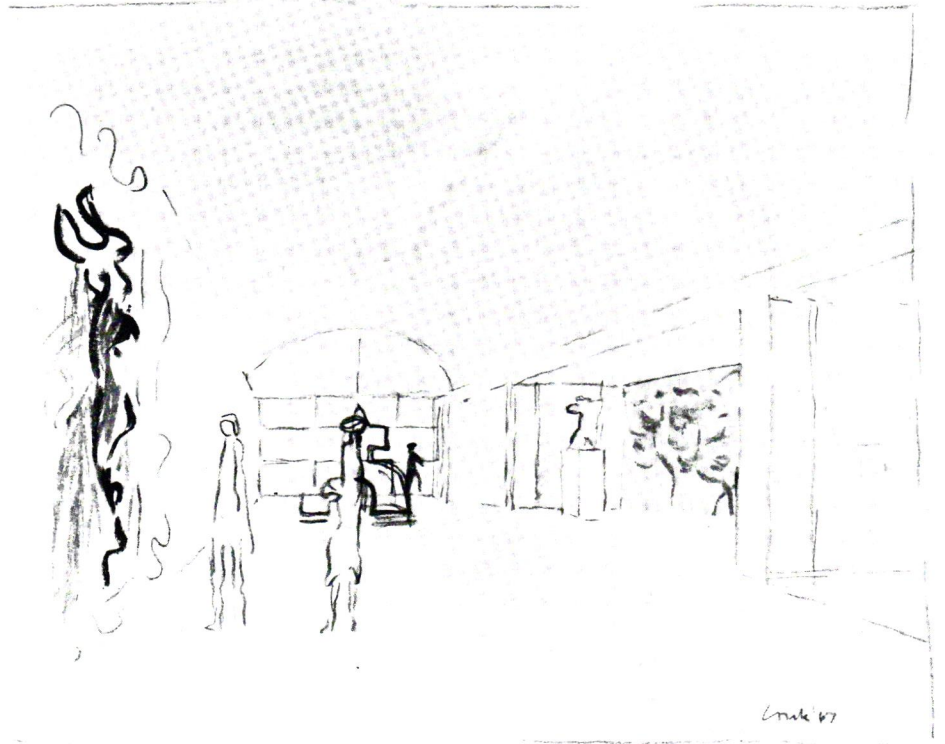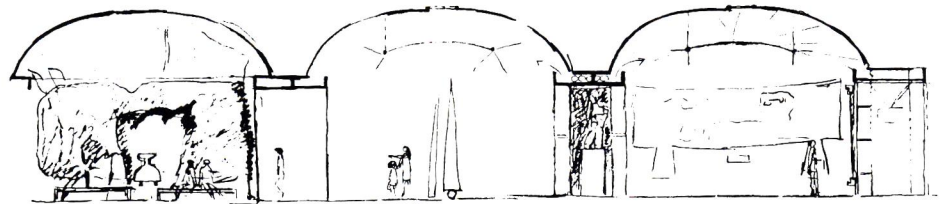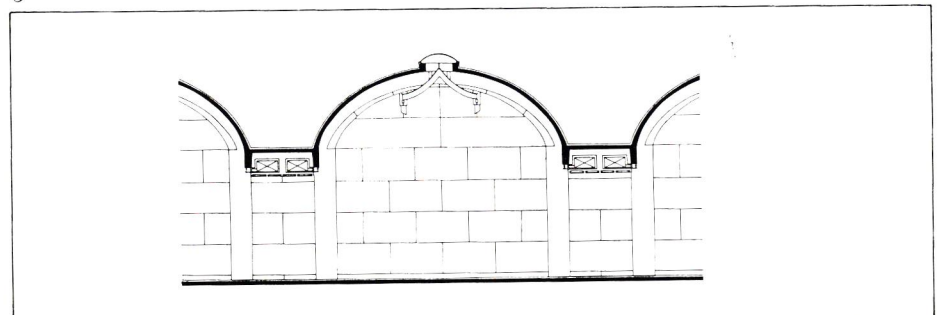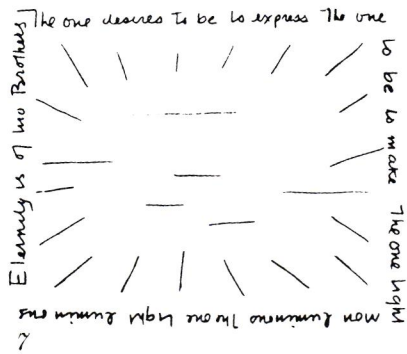
however, the danger of misunderstanding, as this term normally has a more limited meaning.[3] Thus he introduced the concept of "pre-form." Later he preferred to talk about the realm of essences as *silence*. Silence is "unmeasurable," but it possesses a "will to be." Every form has an "existence-will," which determines the very nature of things. This existence-will is satisfied through *design*, which means a translation of the inner order into being. Before I go into this problem, however, I want to give some more attention to the notions of order and form (figs. 7, 8).

Evidently it was not Kahn's intention to make general philosophical statements. He was concerned with architecture, and wanted to give this field an "objective" basis. His aim was to show how "architecture is an embodiment of the unmeasurable." To approach this problem, he introduced the concept of *institution* (see figs. 1 [frontispiece], 9). Above all, architecture is an expression of man's institutions. These institutions stem from the "beginning," when man came to realize his "desires" or "inspirations." The main inspirations are those to learn, to live, to work, to meet, to question, and to express. Kahn used to mention the *school* as an example of an institution which stems from such inspirations. "Schools began with a man under a tree who did not know he was a teacher, discussing his realization with a few who did not know they were students. The students reflected on what was exchanged and how good it was to be in the presence of this man. They aspired that their sons also listen to such a man. Soon spaces were erected and the first schools became."[4] What Kahn talks about are man's basic forms of Being-in-the-world, to use Heidegger's terminology. Life is not arbitrary, but has a structure which comprises man and nature. Kahn confirms this holistic view, emphasizing the commonality of man's inspirations and institutions. "It is not what you want, it is what you sense in the order of things which tells you what to design." He names the institutions with concrete words, for example: "The street is probably the first institution of man, a meeting-hall without a roof." "The school is a realm of spaces where it is good to learn." "The city is the place of assembled institutions." These names usually refer to concrete built forms. For Kahn, however, they also denote institutions, and he says, "Everything that an architect does is first of all answerable to an institution of man before it becomes a building." Architecture is thus founded on the general forms of man's Being-in-the-world. Kahn is quite explicit about the institutions' having form. Not only does he mention form in general, but he makes "form-drawings" to illustrate the spatial properties of an institution,[5] and says, "In the nature of space is the spirit and will to exist in a certain way." Through their properties the institutions become "the houses of the inspirations." The word "inspiration" denotes an "understanding" of "things that already exist." Inspiration is related to *light* as the symbol of understanding, and is "the feeling of beginning at the threshold where silence and light meet: silence with its desire to be, and light, the giver of all presences" (see figs. 7, 8).

With the notion of "light," we arrive at the problem of *expression*. The will to be implies a will to express, that is, to give the institutions "presence." Through expression man uncovers the inherent structure of the world (of which he is himself part), and thereby fulfills his basic task. "To express is the reason for living," Kahn says. Expression is accomplished by means of *art*. "A work of art is the making of a life. The architect chooses and arranges to express in spaces, environment, and relationships man's institutions. There is art if the desire for and the beauty of the institution is filled." Art therefore does not reside in the concrete realization as such, but in an adequate relation to the institutions, or as Kahn says: "Art is the making of a life." As "we live to express," art becomes "the only language of man." The essence of art resides at the threshold where silence and light meet, where "the will to be meets the means of expression." The "will to be/to express" therefore becomes "the will to be/to make." The process of making Kahn calls *design*. Design is concerned with "how" rather than "what." But "how to do it is infinitely less important than what to do." This does not mean that Kahn does not value the quality of realization. He just means to emphasize that a good answer is without interest if the question is wrong. Hence "designs derive their imagery from order," and "form

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inspires design." "Form can be detected as the nature of something, and design strives at a precise moment to employ the laws of nature in putting that into being by allowing light into play (fig. 10). Light is "the giver of all presences," but "whatever is made of light casts a shadow." "Our work is of shadow." To fulfill its task, light therefore needs material and structure. Thus Kahn says, "The sun never knew how great it was until it struck the side of a building." And, "The choice that you make of the element of structure should be also the choice of the character of light that you may want." Structure and material are thus considered from the very beginning of the design process in relation to light. "Structure is the giver of light." The general purpose is the creation of a space which knows what it wants to be. "If you create the realm of spaces you make the institution alive," Kahn says. When a space knows what it wants to be, it becomes a *room*, that is, a place which has a particular *character* (fig. 12). The character of a room is, as we have seen, first of all determined by the relationship between light and structure. "To make a square room is to give it the light which reveals the square in its infinite moods," Kahn says. Therefore all rooms need natural light. "I can't define a space really as a space unless I have natural light. And that because the moods which are created by the time of the day and seasons of the year are constantly helping you in evoking that which a space can be. . . ." Structure, however, also possesses an order of its own. Thus Kahn says that "the beam of brick is an arch," and talks about "the order of brick and concrete" (figs. 11, 13, 16, 21). In general, a building should show "the way it was made" as a manifestation of its will to be. If that is the case, we may talk about "inspired technology." "Engineering is not one thing and design another. They must be one and the same thing." The technological realization is therefore an incarnation of the institution. In this sense it is unmeasurable, although it is measurable as a building.

"A work is made in the urging sounds of industry and when the dust settles the pyramid echoing silence gives the sun its shadow." In this famous statement Kahn summed up his architectural "theory." "A work is made in the urging sounds of industry . . ." brings to mind the excitement caused by the circumstantial situation and the process of making. "When the dust settles," that is, when the excitement has passed, leaves us either with empty hands or with something that has real presence: a building which makes light a concrete reality and thereby discloses the *order of silence*.[6] Thus the work of architecture becomes "an offering to Architecture." Any building which echoes silence represents a return to the *beginning*. "What will be has always been," Kahn says, implying that the basic structures of Being are given once for ever. Only the *circumstances* change, and thus the need arises for ever new interpretations of these structures. "I am trying to find new expressions of old institutions." The new expressions bring about a "deformation" of the form of the institution, without however causing it to break. A particular epoch or a particular society therefore does not create anything truly new. "Did society make Mozart? No." A work of art is not a product of "needs," or the result of a meeting of "needs" and "resources." It is a product of the inspiration and the desire to express what was always there. This does not mean that history stands still. Not only do the circumstances change, but at certain points of time human institutions which up to then were hidden may be dis-covered. Thus Kahn says, "some man realized that a certain realm of spaces represents a deep desire on the part of man to express the inexpressible in a certain activity of man called monastery" (fig. 14). And in general, "somehow a light shines on the emergence of a new institution of man, which makes him feel a refreshed will to live." Institutions are thus dis-covered and re-discovered, but as such they are based on and stem from the timeless structure of the world. Being complete existential units, they may be considered "small worlds," and Kahn in fact talks about the beginning of architecture, using Stonehenge as an example, as the desire for making "a world within the world" (figs. 15, 17). The small world he calls "a place of concentration, where man's mind becomes sharp." We could also say that the inspirations of man represent foci within the existential structure, and that the institutions as their "houses" are the centers around which existential space is organized. Hence, "architecture creates the feeling of a world within a world, which it gives to the room."

9 Salk Institute, La Jolla, Ca. Louis Kahn, 1959–1965. Laboratory buildings, 1962 version showing garden between laboratories.

10 Center for British Art and Studies, New Haven, Ct. Louis Kahn, 1969–1974. Perspective sketch, showing main exhibition court with diamond-shaped staircase and skylights, c. 1971.

11 Phillips Exeter Library, Exeter, N.H. Louis Kahn, 1967–1972. Left, detail elevation of brick arches; right, detail section through arches.

12 "The Room," Sketch, Louis Kahn, n.d.

13 Institute of Management, Ahmedabad, India, Louis Kahn, 1962–1974. Dormitories, detail section and elevation showing interior circular arch and exterior flat arch.

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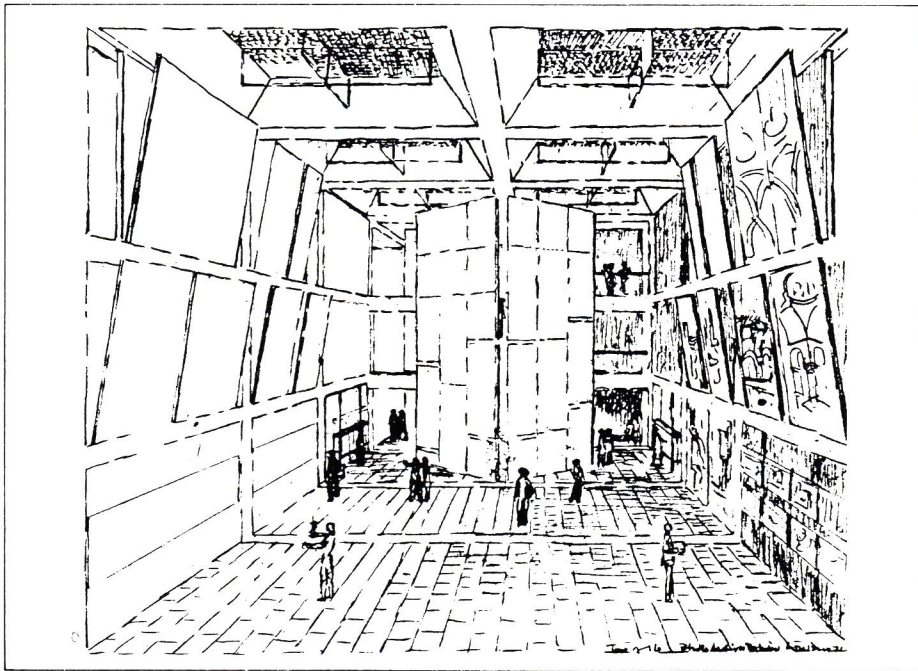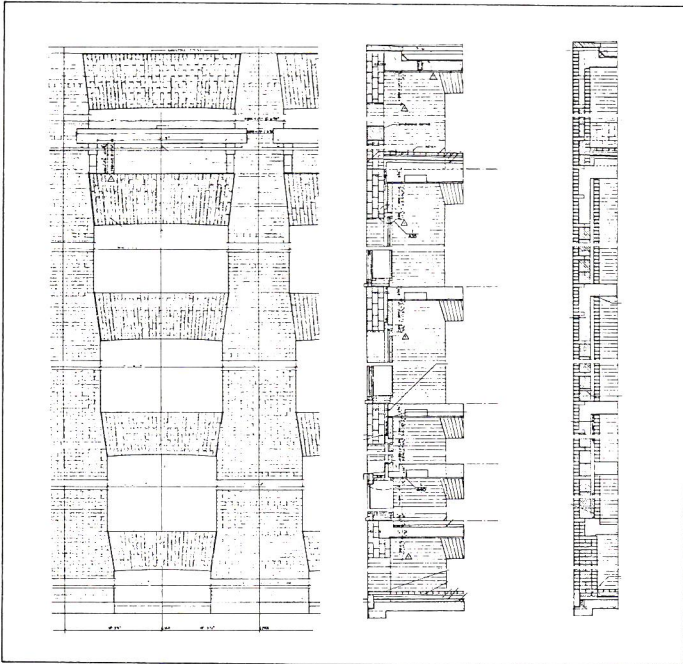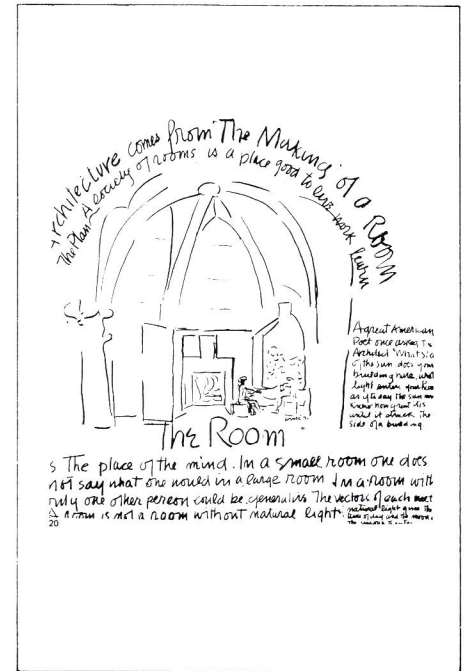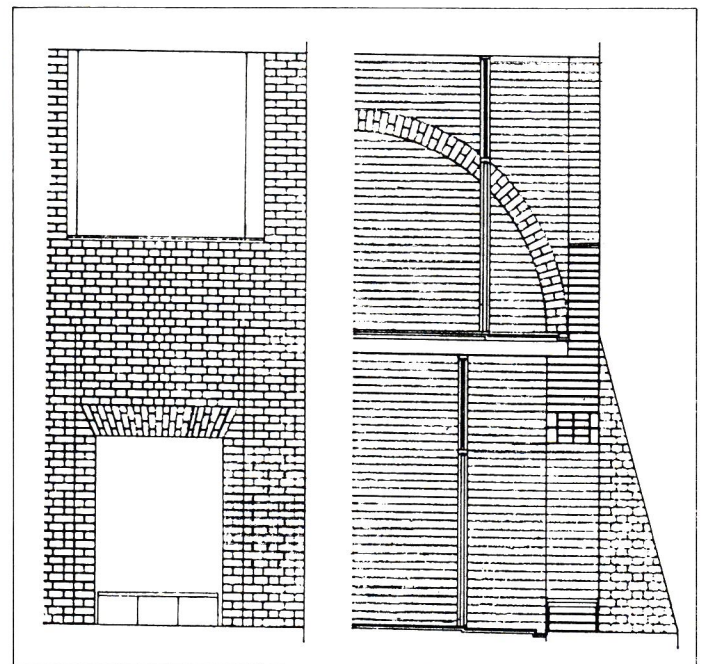
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14 Dominican Sisters' Convent,
Media, Pa. Louis Kahn, 1965–1968.
First floor plan, final version.
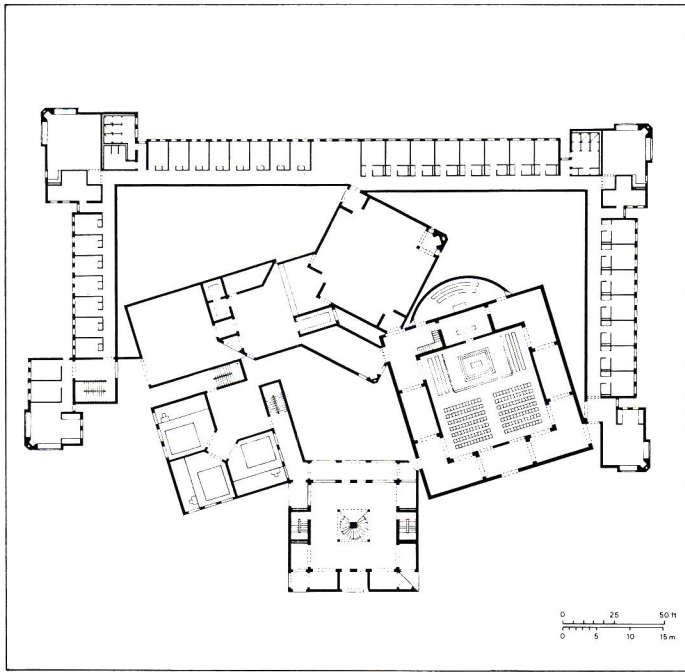
15 Hurva Synagogue, Jerusalem,
Israel. Louis Kahn, 1968–1974.
Section sketches and roof study
1972.
16 Institute of Management,
Ahmedabad, India. Louis Kahn,
1962–1974. Perspective sketch, from
west showing lake in front.
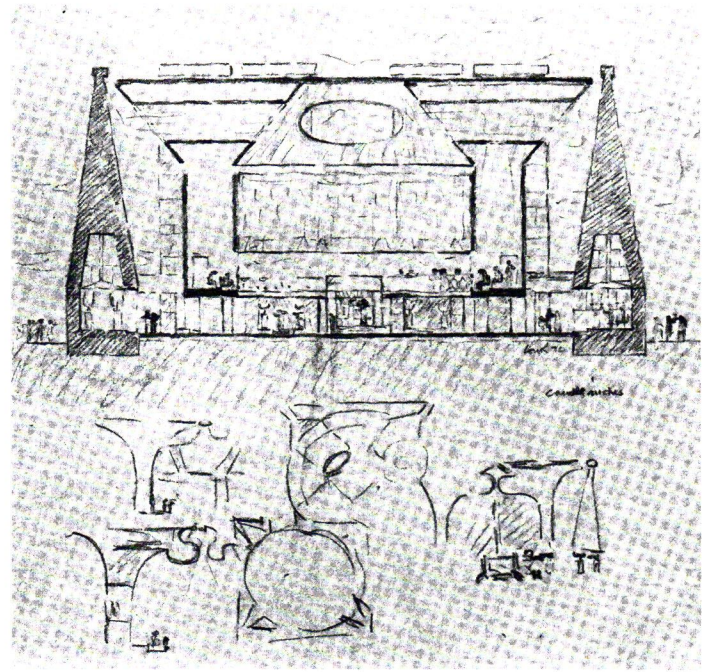
17 Hurva Synagogue, Jerusalem,
Israel. Louis Kahn, 1968–1974.
Plan.

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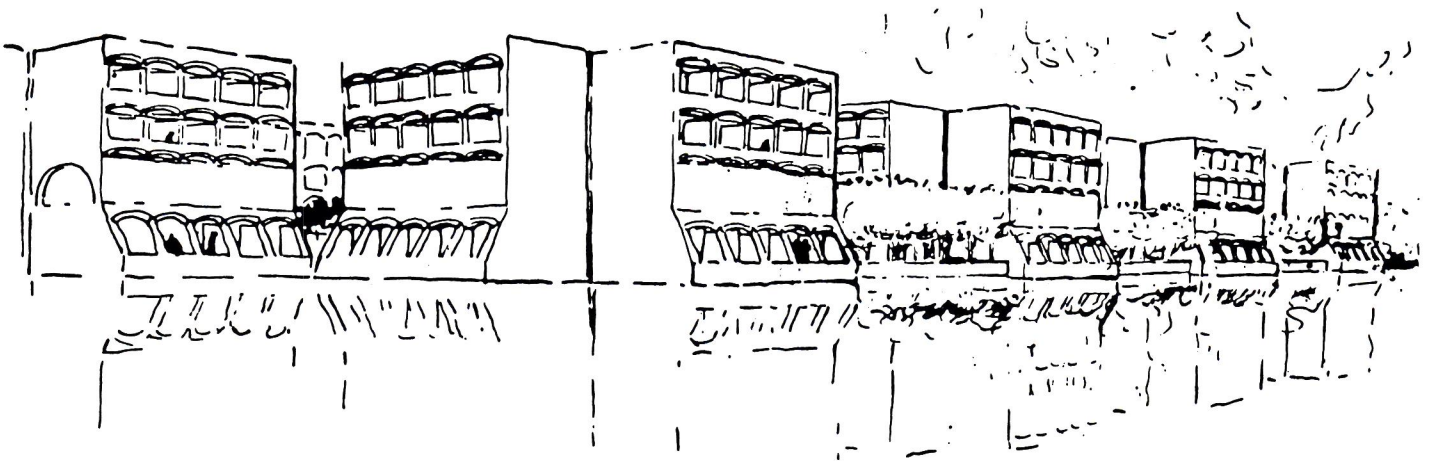
Kahn's philosophy evidently has Platonic origins. Thus he talks about *form* in the Platonic sense of *idea*, and he considers art a result of the will to "express." He even uses the word "shadow" in connection with the concrete things of the world, as did Plato in his *Allegory of the Cave*.[7] Kahn also subordinates the *existentia* to the *essentia*, and thus thinks within the tradition of Western metaphysics. Being a practicing architect, however, Kahn did not seek to become involved in a philosophical pursuit of perfect forms, elevating them from the imperfections of the everyday world. Rather he wanted to discover or reveal the *essentia* directly. Thus he really returned to the "beginning." Moreover he defined the *essentia* in terms of human inspirations and institutions possessing order. Rather than separating the *essentia* from the *existentia* he instead conceived the world as an integrated whole. The *essentia* do not belong to a realm of their own, but are the basic structures of the one and only world. His illustrations of the notion of "beginning" clearly prove that. The man under the tree represents an existential situation and not an inconceivable *idea*. It is however distinguished by being of "essential" importance. Kahn thus takes the total Being-in-the-world as his point of departure, and defines our human task as the uncovering of its structure. Thereby he indeed comes close to the philosophy of Heidegger, who was also deeply concerned with "beginnings."

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The Contribution of Martin Heidegger
Heidegger's point of departure is his conception of man as Being-in-the-world (*Dasein*). This implies on the one hand that man cannot be understood in isolation from his "environment" (without giving so far a definition of this term), and on the other that our understanding of the world is always related to man. It might seem that this approach corresponds to the one of existentialism. Existentialism also takes the given situation as its point of departure, and maintains that the *existentia* are what is real. Moreover it is basically subjective, as the *existentia* are related to the perceiver. Heidegger's concept of Being-in-the-world differs from this in that rather than starting with what is given, Heidegger investigates the *basic structures* of Being-in-the-world (*Seinsstrukturen*),
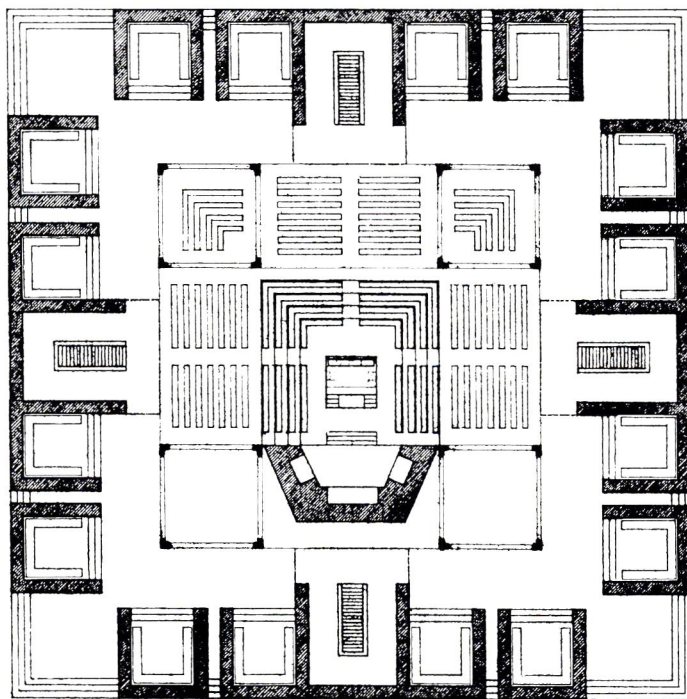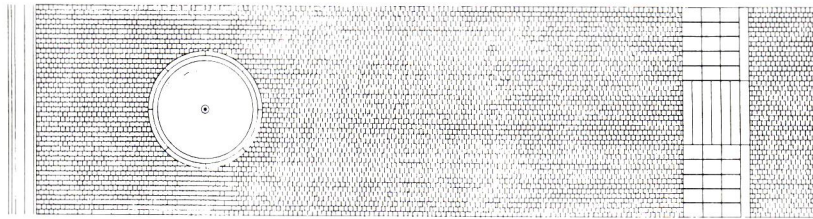
36 and understands the given situation in terms of these structures. This approach does not imply a quest for *essentia* and a division of the world into everyday and transcendent realms. It simply asserts that Being is structured and that the meaning of the single situation consists in its relationship to the general structures.

Like Kahn, Heidegger therefore understands reality as a unitary phenomenon, where *existentia* and *essentia* are integral aspects of the same totality. He says, "That which is, the particular being, stands in Being."[8] The *essentia*, thus, are not to be found in a remote realm of their own, but are part of "given" reality. A work of architecture, for instance, is what it is in relation to Architecture. It is a commonplace to say that any noun, such as "sky," names a particular being as well as a "general" essence (Being). Today it is normal to understand the essences as generalizations from particulars. This is the approach of natural science, which starts with observations of individual phenomena and by means of induction arrives at general assertions.[9] Thus metaphysics and ontology are "abolished." Asking what a thing wants to be, Kahn evidently does not accept this approach. Rather he understands the particular as a "variation" on an essential theme, as when he says, "I am trying to find new expressions to old institutions." Heidegger makes the same point in a more general way: "Beings are themselves by virtue of Being."

In his early *magnum opus Being and Time* (1927) Heidegger set out to analyze the basic structures of Being. Splitting the term "Being-in-the-world" in two, he investigated the structure of "Being-in" (*Insein*) as well as the structure of "world." The method used was the phenomenology of Husserl, but whereas Husserl investigated *experiences* phenomenologically, Heidegger analyzed the basic existential structures.

"Being-in" comprises several such structures: "understanding" (*Verstehen*), "state-of-mind" or "mood" (*Befindlichkeit*), and "discourse" (*Rede*). "Understanding" here means something much more complex than mere cognition, and comprises practical as well as intellectual aspects. In general we may say that what *is* is understood as something, that is, relative to an existential structure. "State-of-mind" denotes the immediate "mood" which is the primordial relation between man and his environment, or in Heidegger's words: "states-of-mind disclose *Dasein* in its throwness."[10] "Discourse," finally, denotes the expression of "meaning." Evidently these structures correspond to Kahn's notions of "inspiration" and "expression." Heidegger also points out that Being-in always implies "being with," a term which names the structures of social intercourse and association, recognizing the fact that "the world is always the one that I share with others."[11] In our context it is useful to relate "understanding," "mood," and "being with" to Kahn's notions of "learning," "well-being," and "meeting" as basic inspirations.[12]

To complete his analysis, Heidegger discusses the "world." In *Being and Time* he describes the world as a multitude of "entities" which are understood in the light of an essential "worldhood" (*Weltlichkeit*), that is, a Being of the entities. In daily life we are in fact dealing with these entities or things (*pragmata*),[13] among which what Heidegger calls "equipment" (*Zeug*) is of particular interest. The totality of equipment makes up our pragmatic everyday environment. The "worldhood," or in short "world," is thus understood in terms of "use" or "involvement," and as "spatiality." In his later writings Heidegger develops the analysis of "world," at the same time as he aims at describing the relationship between the world as essential structure and the given everyday things. Thus he arrives at a definition of the world as a "fourfold" of "earth," "sky," "mortals," and "divinities." I shall not enter into a discussion of the difficult concept of the "fourfold" (*Geviert*) but only point out that the notion of earth and sky is of particular interest to us as Heidegger connects it directly with the problem of "building" and "dwelling." (fig. 18, 19).[14] It is also useful for our purposes to conceive the world in such "concrete" terms. Of particular interest too is Heidegger's definition of "spatiality." In *Being and Time* he says, "inasmuch as any entity within-the-world is likewise in space, its spatiality will have an ontological connection with the world. . . . In particular we must show how the aroundness of the environment . . . is founded upon the worldhood of the world."[15] In his
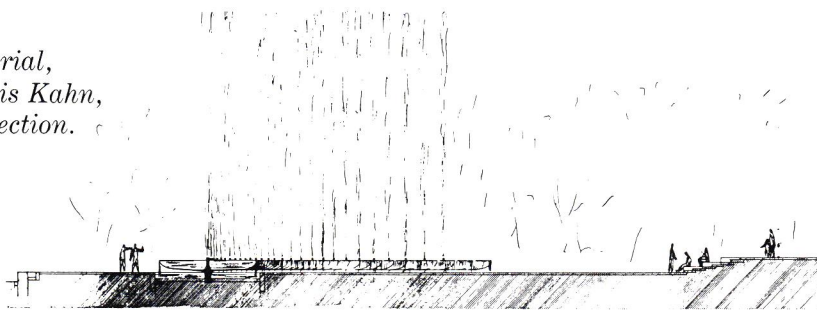
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later writings Heidegger solves the problem, defining space in terms of earth and sky, that is, as an interrelation of the concrete *places* which are present between earth and sky.[16] To Heidegger "space" is therefore not an abstract, mathematical concept, but a concrete structure within the world. Unfortunately he does not analyze the properties of this "existential space."[17]

Whereas Heidegger gives considerable attention to the structure of the world, Kahn hardly refers to this basic problem. Indirectly, however, we understand that he considers the world as having an essential structure ("a rose wants to be a rose"). His notion of space is similarly concrete. It comes forth in the statement that "a space which knows what it wants to be is a room" (see fig. 12).

In his later writings Heidegger also develops the concept of "thing" beyond the notion of equipment. Thus he goes back to the original meaning of the word "thing," saying, "Gathering or assembly, by an ancient word of our language, is called 'thing'."[18] The nature of the thing thus consists in something more than patterns of use. Its nature primarily resides in its *gathering a world.*[19] Heidegger says, "Things open up a world," and "Things visit mortals with a world." In other words, things are what they are relative to the basic structures of the world. The things bring the world close, and thereby condition man. *Wir sind die be-dingten,* "we are the conditioned ones," Heidegger says. The understanding of the thing as a gathering is of particular importance in our context. Works of architecture are things, and their "meaning" consists in what they gather, that is, their world. In general the gathering is possible because of the existence of Architecture, that is, a language of essential architectural structures. I shall return to the question of the language of architecture. First we have to take a look at Heidegger's discussion of language in general.

Already in *Being and Time* Heidegger had analyzed "discourse" (*Rede*) as one of the basic existential structures.[20] Thus he said, "The intelligibility of Being-in-the-world *expresses itself as discourse.*" Moreover he stresses that "discourse is existentially equiprimordial with state-of-

mind and understanding" and that "in discourse being-with becomes explicitly *shared.*" We are, in other words, only together in the world insofar as we possess a common discourse. "The way in which discourse gets expressed is language." Language therefore does not primarily serve communication, but discloses the basic existential structures. Primarily *language speaks,* and "man only speaks as he responds to language."[21]

To emphasize the fundamental role of language Heidegger characterizes it as *the house of Being.* But language does not disclose Being directly. It does so by naming things. "In the naming, the things named are called into their thinging [i.e., gathering]. Thinging they unfold world."[22] We understand thus that language represents a "unifying middle" of world and things. "The world grants to things their presence. Things bear world. They penetrate each other. The two traverse a middle. In it, they are at one," Heidegger says.[23] This "middle" he names in different ways. He uses the terms "between," "rift," "difference," and "conflict" to indicate that things and world, or beings and Being, are simultaneously unified and separated. To describe another aspect of the meeting of things and world, Heidegger uses the words "open," "clearing," and "lightening," which characterize the "middle" as the place where *truth* is disclosed, in accordance with the ancient Greek *alētheia.* To Heidegger "truth" neither means a set of transcendent ideas, nor a correct representation in the sense of Descartes, but the unconcealedness of Being. Truth happens in the meeting of things and world, and therefore Heidegger uses the word "event" (*Ereignis*) as an all-inclusive concept for reality. The "middle" thus becomes an existential "center," and Heidegger in fact uses this term too. In language truth is disclosed. The true nature of language is *poetic,* because it serves the bringing-forth of *poiēsis.* Heidegger says, "Poetry proper is never merely a higher mode of everyday language. It is rather the reverse: everyday language is a forgotten and therefore used-up poem."[24]

Heidegger's understanding of discourse and language represents a worked-out explanation of Kahn's notion of expression. Kahn in fact does not conceive expression as

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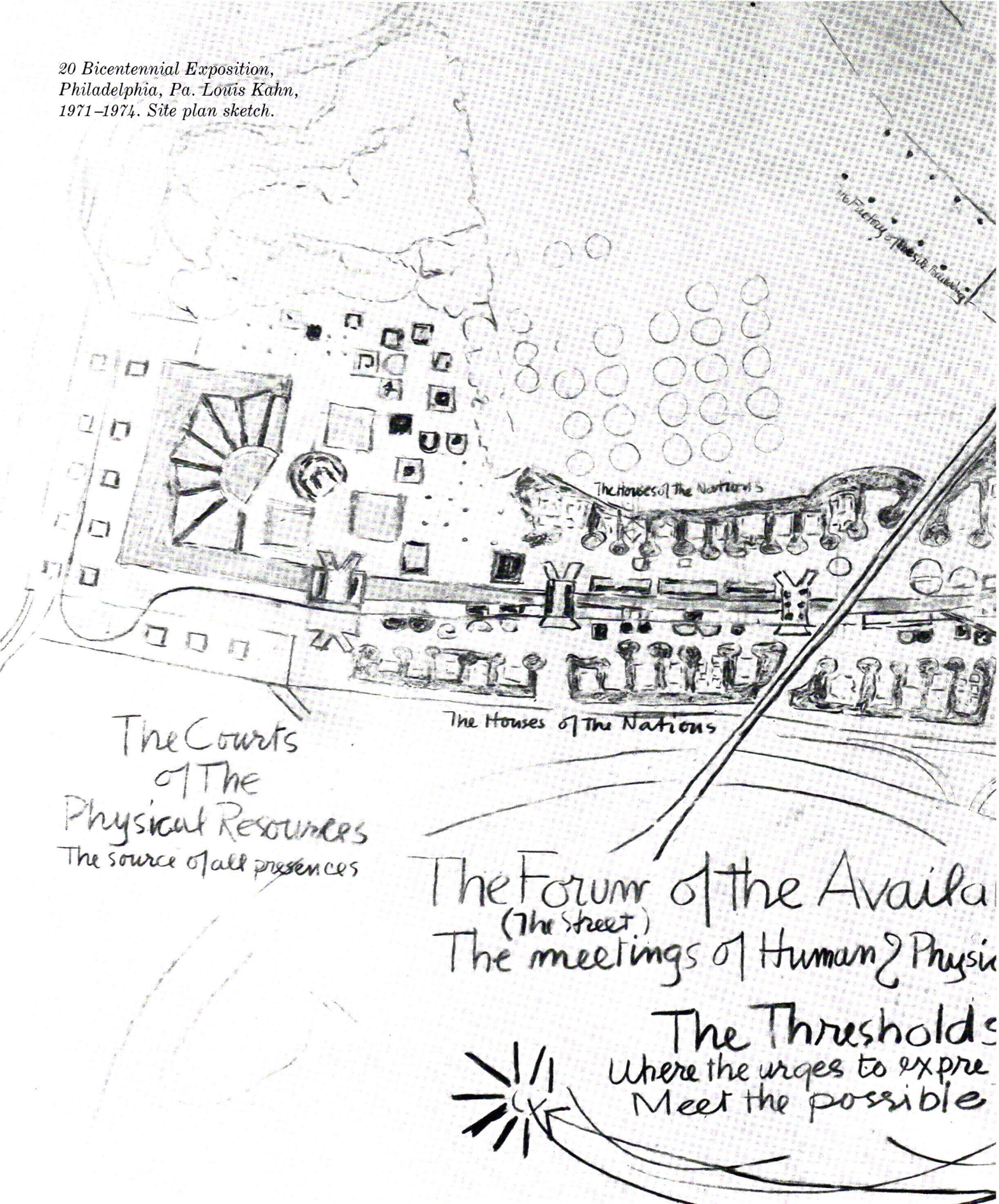
The Houses of the Nations

The Houses of The Nations

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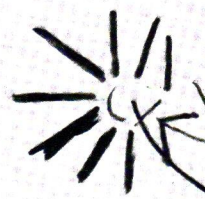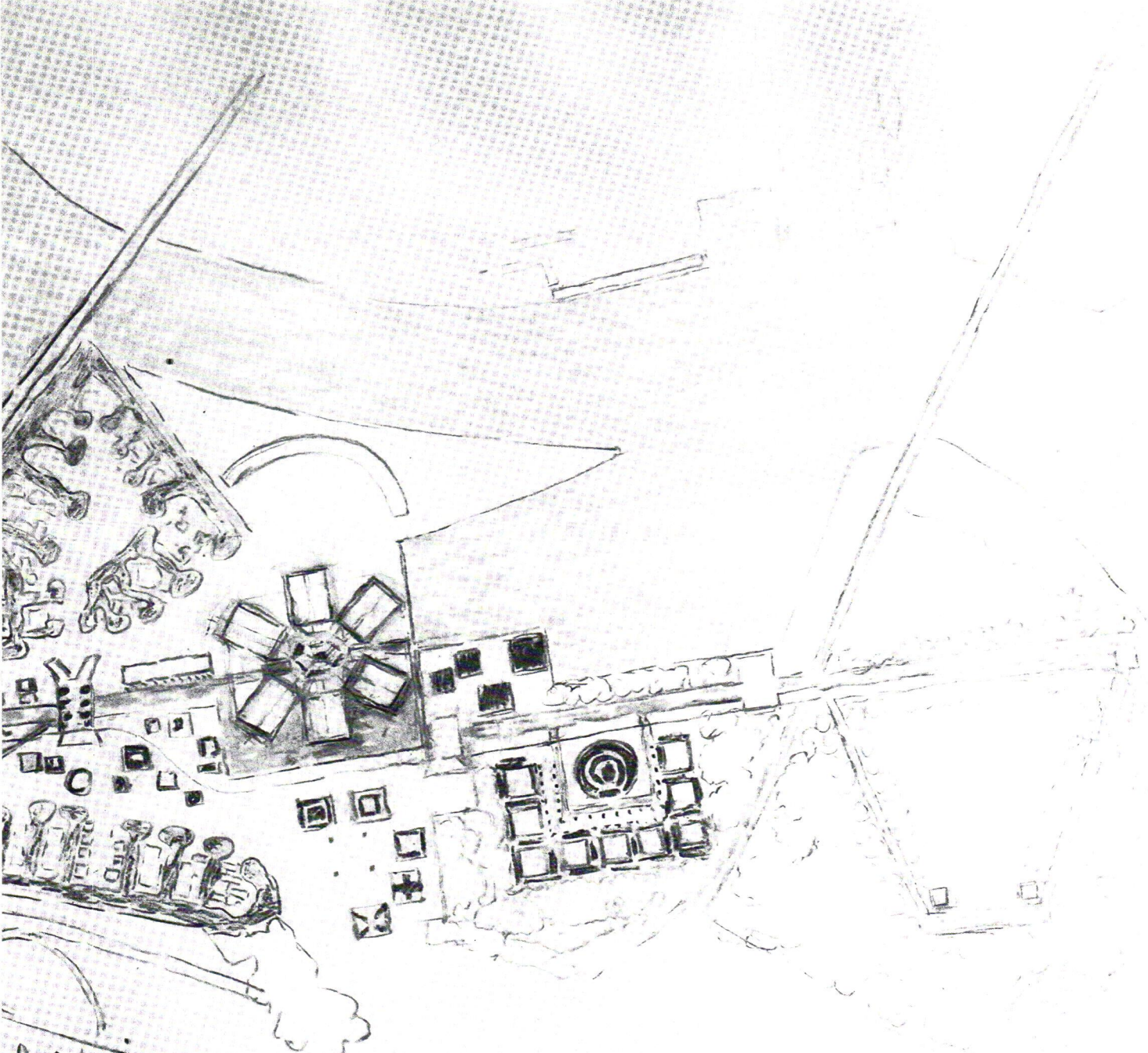
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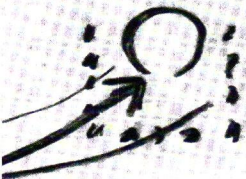
self-expression, but as the disclosure of what things want to be, that is, Being. Therefore "the man who discovers things that belong to the nature of things does not own these things." Moreover Kahn defines art as the "threshold of silence and light," that is, the meeting of Being and beings (fig. 20).[25] It is interesting to note that Heidegger also uses "threshold" as a concrete image of the "gathering middle." Finally, Heidegger understands the disclosure of truth through language as a "beginning," using a word dear to Kahn to indicate that this disclosure is what puts history into motion.

Together with painting, sculpture, and music, Heidegger explicitly names architecture as one of the "arts" which "in essence are poetry." In general "art is the setting-into-work of truth."[26] Basically this happens as a "poetic projection" which "sets itself into work as figure" (Gestalt). "Figure is the structure in whose shape the rift composes and submits itself."[27] "Figure" is here understood not as an abstract shape, but as a concrete embodiment. "The rift must set itself back into the heavy weight of stone, the dumb hardness of wood, the dark glow of colors." In general, embodiment takes place in things, or in the "earth," which Heidegger in this context understands as the opposite to the world. The setting-into-work thus becomes a "strife between world and earth," the world offering the "measure" and the earth the "boundary" of the figure. In this way art becomes "the saying of world and earth, and the saying of the arena of their conflict." This saying opens up or discloses "that into which human being as historical is already cast."[28]

To illustrate his notion of art Heidegger uses an example taken from architecture. Talking about the Greek temple, he says,
"A building, a Greek temple, portrays nothing. It simply stands there in the middle of the rock-cleft valley. The building encloses the figure of the god, and in this concealment lets it stand out into the holy precinct through the open portico. By means of the temple, the god is present in the temple. This presence of the god is in itself the extension and delimitation of the precinct as a holy precinct. The temple and its precinct, however, do not fade away into the indefinite. It is the temple-work that first fits together and at the same time gathers around itself the unity of those paths and relations in which birth and death, disaster and blessing, victory and disgrace, endurance and decline acquire the shape of destiny for human being. The all-governing expanse of this open relational context is the world of this historical people.
"Only from and in this expanse does the nation first return to itself for the fulfillment of its vocation.
"Standing there, the building rests on the rocky ground. This resting of the work draws up out of the rock the mystery of that rock's clumsy yet spontaneous support. Standing there, the building holds its ground against the storm raging above it and so first makes the storm itself manifest in its violence. The luster and gleam of the stone, though itself apparently glowing only by the grace of the sun, yet first belongs to light the light of the day, the breadth of the sky, the darkness of the night. The temple's firm towering makes visible the invisible space of air. The steadfastness of the work contrasts with the surge of the surf, and its own repose brings out the raging of the sea. Tree and grass, eagle and bull, snake and cricket first enter into their distinctive shapes and thus come to appear as what they are. The Greeks early called this emerging and rising in itself and in all things phusis. It clears and illuminates, also, that on which and in which man bases his dwelling. We call this ground the earth. What this word says is not to be associated with the idea of a mass of matter deposited somewhere, or with the merely astronomical idea of a planet. Earth is that whence the arising brings back and shelters everything that arises without violation. In the things that arise, earth is present as the sheltering agent.
"The temple-work, standing there, opens up a world and at the same time sets this world back again on earth, which itself only thus emerges as native ground.
"The temple, in its standing there, first gives to things their look and to men their outlook on themselves."[29]

Heidegger's description of the Greek temple explains to us the "theory" I have tried to outline. And it does this with words which make the work become alive. We are not lost in abstractions, but get access to the temple as a

gathering thing, as an embodiment of truth. We are brought back to reality from our inauthentic everyday world, or rather, through this everyday world. Thus we understand that Heidegger in his philosophy does not fly above the earth in order to escape it. We also understand that poetry (in all its forms) is what makes human existence meaningful. And *meaning* is the fundamental human need. Heidegger's understanding of the work of art (architecture) as an embodiment of truth corresponds to Kahn's definition of "design" as the "how." "It is through art that order becomes manifest," Kahn says, and he regards this making manifest as a strife between order and circumstances, rather than a mere question of "representation." It is not surprising that both use "silence," "light," and "shadow" as images when explaining this fact. "Language speaks as the peal of stillness," Heidegger says.

Whereas Kahn defines the purpose of architecture as the expression of man's institutions, that is, "the most timeless and fundamental aspects of human existence," Heidegger introduces the more general concept of "dwelling." To him "dwelling" means something more than to reside in a place; it means how "mortals are in the fourfold," that is, an authentic relationship between man and the existential structures. Thus dwelling becomes "the basic character of Being." Furthermore he says, "Dwelling keeps the fourfold in that with which mortals stay: in things. Dwelling preserves the fourfold by bringing the presencing of the fourfold into things." That means, man dwells when he is able to embody the basic existential structures in things such as buildings or places (locations). In fact Heidegger says that a location (place) "installs the fourfold." As an art, architecture helps man to dwell in the true sense of the word, that is, *poetically*. "Poetry builds up the very nature of dwelling. Poetry and dwelling not only do not exclude each other; on the contrary, poetry and dwelling belong together, each calling for the other."[30] As poetry, "the nature of building is letting dwell." Thus Heidegger discloses the basic existential importance of architecture: "Man dwells in that he builds."

The word "building" immediately brings the problem of *technology* to mind. How can technology be related to building as an art? To the Greeks, however, *techne* meant to make something appear.[31] Originally, therefore, technology was part of the process of disclosure of truth. Heidegger reminds us of this fact, and Kahn revives this meaning in his concept of "inspired technology," which implies that the "existence-will" of a building is made manifest when it shows "the way it was made."

Heidegger's unusual use of language may at first sound bewildering. He combines philosophical, poetic, and everyday expressions, and his discourse seems to take place in a world of its own.[32] The tension between structural concepts and concrete description is however meaningful. It makes the distinction between world and things, or between Being and beings, manifest, and thus corresponds to reality. It expresses the *event*. In this way Heidegger really satisfies Husserl's aim: "Back to the things, themselves!"

The Language of Architecture
Through his building and his thinking Louis Kahn made architecture revive as an art. "Expression is the reason for living," he said, and Heidegger echoes, "Man is language and is he who says." Neither of them, however, discussed the language and the poetry of architecture in detail, nor did they define its existential basis. Let me therefore attempt a further development of their ideas.[33]

Heidegger has shown that basic existential structures may be defined, and that language as "the house of Being" expresses these structures. Kahn supports the same view, saying, "What wants to be has always been." Several writers have approached the problem, but their contributions have so far been drowned by the ruling relativism. As an example I may mention Rudolf Schwarz, whose book *The Church Incarnate* is a profound study in the basic phenomenology of architecture.[34] The concepts of Kevin Lynch also denote archetypal structures, although he does not explain them as such. In my book *Existence, Space and Architecture* I tried to analyze the structure of "existential space," and furthermore defined architectural space as a "concretization" of existential space. I explained, however, existential space in terms of psycholog-

ical schemata rather than existential structures.[35] Many practicing architects have given attention to the question of an "objective" architectural language. Le Corbusier fought with the problem his whole life, but in his thinking he did not proceed much beyond assertions of a general nature, such as "architecture is the masterly, correct, and magnificent play of volumes brought together in light." He understood, however, that this "play" had an objective basis, saying, "Architectural emotion exists when the work rings within us in tune with a universe whose laws we obey, recognize, and respect."[36] Thanks to the writings of Heidegger we may today understand these "laws," not in terms of natural science, but as existential structures. If we therefore return to the philosophy of Kahn and Heidegger and apply their "model" to our problem, we understand the different sub-problems and their interrelatedness. Two basic questions emerge: How can we define the language of architecture in terms of existential structure? How can we understand the process of gathering (embodiment) which makes a building a work of architecture?

The first question concerns language as such, the second its use. In general, the language of architecture expresses the existential structure called "spatiality" (*Räumlichkeit*). Heidegger does not analyze this structure in detail, but as it is understood as a general property of the world, it is necessarily connected with all the modes of "being-in." The spatial aspect of "understanding" we may call "orientation," to adopt a word which is commonly used today.[37] Through orientation we come to terms with the *order* of the environment. "Mood" becomes "identification," that is, our state-of-mind is determined by the *character* of the environment. "Being-with," finally, consists in patterned "meetings" of people, which determine our *institutions*. Whereas "orientation," "identification," and "meeting" denote structures of Being-in, "order," "character," and "institution" denote spatial world-structures. Together these structures form the existential basis for the language of architecture, or, in short, Architecture. I should repeat that this basis comprises individual as well as social aspects and thus is in the full sense "human." As the "house" of that aspect of Being which Heidegger calls

spatiality, Architecture discloses the existential structure just mentioned. As a language, Architecture "speaks," or rather, "shows." How does the structure of Architecture make this showing possible?

Following the "model" introduced above, Architecture may be divided into three basic structural components: "topology," "morphology," and "typology."

Topology is concerned with spatial order, and is in the single work of architecture concretized as "spatial organization." Its basic structural components are "center" and "path." I have discussed the phenomenology of center and path in *Existence, Space and Architecture* from which I quote: "The center represents to man what is *known* in contrast to the unknown and somewhat frightening world around. It is the point where he acquires position as a being in space, the point where he 'lingers' and 'lives' in space."[38] I may add that the center also represents an "inside" in a surrounding "outside." "From the center paths lead into the environment. The horizontal directions represent man's concrete world of action. Structurally all horizontal directions are equal and form a plane of infinite extension. The vertical, however, has always been considered the sacred dimension of space. It represents a 'path' towards a reality which may be 'higher' or 'lower' than daily life, a reality which conquers gravity, that is, earthly existence, or succumbs to it." "The simplest model of man's existential space is, therefore, a horizontal plane pierced by a vertical axis."[39] The quotation demonstrates how the topological structure is related to man's orientation, but we understand that this term is a qualitative concept, rather than an "empty" relationship. Orientation is always orientation within a world-space where there are qualitative differences such as the distinction between "up" and "down." Thus Heidegger characterizes man's Being-in-the-world as being "on the earth under the sky."

Morphology is concerned with the "how" of architectural forms, and in the single work of architecture it is concretized as "formal articulation." A spatial organization may be embodied in infinitely many ways, and accordingly the character changes, within the limits posed by the various

types of organization. We may, however, define basic structures.[40] In general, the character of an architectural form is determined by how it "is" between earth and sky. This was understood with fine intuition by Le Corbusier, who repeated the following statement as a heading to all three "theoretical" chapters of his *Vers une architecture*: "My house is practical. I thank you as I might thank Railway engineers, or the Telephone service. You have not touched my heart.

"But suppose that walls rise towards heaven in such a way that I am moved. I perceive your intentions. Your mood has been gentle, brutal, charming or noble. The stones you have erected tell me so. You fix me to the place and my eyes regard it. They behold something which expresses a thought. A thought which reveals itself without word or sound, but solely by means of shapes which stand in a certain relationship to one another. These shapes are such that they are clearly revealed in light. The relationships between them have not necessarily any reference to what is practical or descriptive. They are a mathematical creation of your mind. They are the language of Architecture. By the use of raw materials and *starting from* conditions more or less utilitarian, you have established certain relationships which have aroused my emotions. This is Architecture. Art enters in."[41]

Here Le Corbusier tells us that walls may rise toward the sky in such a way that we are moved, and that different ways of rising express different moods. Moreover he says that the stones which have been erected tell us so because they stand in certain relationships to one another. "This is the language of Architecture," he says, even capitalizing "architecture."

The concrete forms implied in this statement are the well-known "elements" of a building: floor, wall, and roof (ceiling). Together they make up what we may call the spatial *boundaries*. Heidegger says, "A boundary is not that at which something stops but, as the Greeks recognized, the boundary is that from which something begins its *presencing*."[42] Morphology is therefore concerned with the articulation of the spatial boundaries, as a means to define an environmental character. Morphology analyzes the

question, *how* do buildings (settlements) stand, rise, and open?[43] The word "stand" denotes the relationship to the earth, "rise" the relationship to the sky, and "open" refers to the spatial interaction with the environment, that is, the relationship between outside and inside. Standing is embodied through the treatment of the base and the wall. A massive and perhaps concave base ties the building to the ground, whereas an emphasis on the vertical direction tends to make it "free." Verticality, rising lines, and certain forms (such as a serrate silhouette) express an active relationship to the sky and a wish for receiving light. Verticality and religious aspiration have in fact always gone together. The outside-inside relationship is first of all expressed through the treatment of the openings in the wall.[44] In the wall, thus, earth and sky meet, and the way man "is" on earth is embodied in this meeting.[45] Some buildings are "ground-hugging," others rise freely, and in others again we find a meaningful equilibrium. Such an equilibrium is for instance encountered in the Doric temple, where the details and the proportions of the columns express that they stand *and* rise. By means of subtle variations in the treatment, the Greeks could express significant nuances within the general equipoise.[46]

But the being between earth and sky is not only made manifest by means of horizontal rhythms and vertical tensions. "Earth" and "sky" imply concrete properties such as material texture, color, and light. Morphology therefore comprises the concrete embodiment in terms of built structure. It is this embodiment which gives a mood presence.

Typology, finally, is concerned with the basic structures of Being-with, that is, of the meeting of human beings. In the single work of architecture it is concretized as a particular type of room or building which is perceived as a strong *image*. Kahn has, perhaps for the first time, offered a key to its understanding by his concept of "institution." An institution is never an individual phenomenon, it is always a form of coming together, of participation and sharing. The language of architecture translates the institutions into types of spaces, as is suggested by Kahn when he says, "When you create the realm of spaces you

make the institution alive." Then he goes on to list the settlement, the street, the village green, the house, and the school as examples, implying that all of them "want to be" a certain type of space. This also holds true for the city as the place of "assembled institutions." In contrast to topology and morphology, typology hence analyzes comprehensive, spatial totalities.

Together topology, morphology, and typology make up *the language of architecture*. The three aspects are, as we have understood, interrelated and form a unitary whole. The typology of spaces is for instance based on the orders of center and path, and any space, be it typical or particular, has a character.[47] For analytical purposes, however, it is useful to distinguish the aspects, and the distinction also makes it possible to develop an existentially founded theory of Architecture. In general the language of architecture possesses the capacity to translate lived reality into built form.

This translation happens through a process of *gathering*. The building (settlement) becomes a "thing" when it "gathers world." *What*, then, is gathered, and *how* does the gathering take place? In one of his less well-known essays Heidegger gives the answer: "The buildings bring the earth as the inhabited landscape close to man and at the same time place the nearness of neighborly dwelling under the expanse of the sky."[48] This statement offers several clues to the problem of architectural gathering. What is gathered, Heidegger says, is the earth as "inhabited landscape." An inhabited landscape obviously is a *known* landscape, that is, an environment with which we identify, in which we can orientate, and in which we come together with our fellow men. This landscape is brought close to us by the "buildings."[49] This implies that the buildings gather the properties of the landscape and by means of the language of architecture make the landscape "speak." The "neighborly dwelling" which is thereby achieved is placed "under the expanse of the sky." This placing is hardly meant as a mere putting something there, but implies that the sky also enters the process of gathering and embodiment. In other words, we return to the concept of building and place-making as an installation of the fourfold. New, however, is the use of the word "landscape."

To understand this word better it is useful to take a closer look at Heidegger's definitions of "earth" and "sky." He says, "Earth is the serving bearer, blossoming and fruiting, spreading out in rock and water, rising up into plant and animal." "The sky is the vaulting path of the sun, the course of the changing moon, the wandering glitter of the stars, the year's seasons and their changes, the light and dusk of day, the gloom and glow of night, the clemency and inclemency of the weather, the drifting clouds and the blue depth of the ether."[50] Heidegger's description represents an attempt at approaching the environment in a concrete, phenomenological way. His definitions are sketchy, but remind us of the fact that the earth primarily consists of rocks, water, and vegetation, and that it "spreads out" and "rises up." Together these elements and relations constitute a *landscape*, which is the basic form of the earth. The sky also belongs to the landscape, as a more distant element, which however has basic properties. The structure of the sky has in fact played an important role in the history of architecture, determining orientation, spatial layout, and quality of light.

The humans, or "mortals," are "on the earth under the sky," that is, in a "between" which may be understood as a concrete image of the existential structure of "world," "thing," and "gathering middle." Heidegger's term "inhabited landscape" denotes the spatiality of the "gathering middle." An inhabited landscape obviously comprises natural as well as man-made entities. To make this clear, "inhabited landscape" may be exchanged with the more general word *place*, whereas "landscape" is used to denote the natural aspects of a place. The structure of a place, that is, the "dimension" where life *takes place*, is the *genius loci*. According to ancient Roman belief every being has its *genius*, its guardian spirit. This spirit gives life to people and places, accompanies them from birth to death, and determines their character. The *genius* thus corresponds to what a thing *is*, or what it "wants to be." In general we may say that ancient man experienced his environment as a revelation of definite *genii*.[51] He also

21 Institute of Management,
Ahmedabad, India. Louis Kahn,
1962–1974. School building,
isometric.
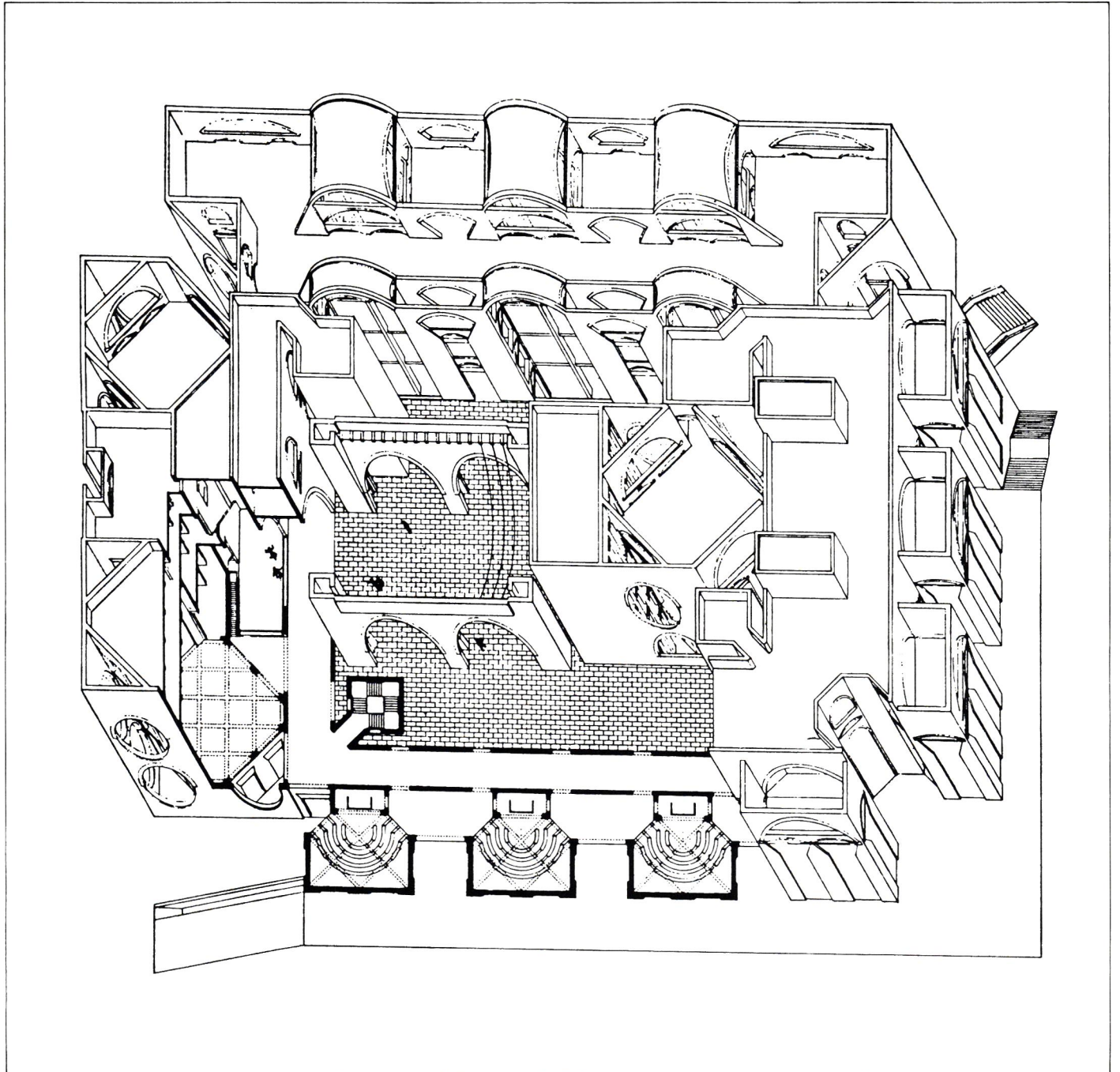
understood that it is an existential necessity to come to terms with the *genius* of the locality where his life takes place. During the course of history the *genius loci* has remained a living reality, although it may not have been explicitly named as such. Artists and writers from Goethe to Lawrence Durrell have "explained" the phenomena of everyday life as well as art by referring to landscapes and urban milieus. In my book *Genius Loci* I have analyzed the structure of natural and man-made places, using three great cities, Prague, Rome, and Khartoum, as major examples. Thus I explain how the architecture of these cities gathers and embodies the structural components of their *genius*. I also show that the gathering is taken care of by a set of architectural forms which represent a "selection" from Architecture. A sub-language thus discloses the identity of the place, at the same time as it makes it part of that all-embracing world which is the existential ground of Architecture. The meaning of the place is thereby revealed. In general we may say that *the existential structures which are gathered by a place constitute its genius loci*, and that *the gathering is taken care of by the language of architecture.*

Gathering implies that a meaning is moved from one place to another. From times immemorial man discovered basic existential structures in particular places, which were thus considered "holy" (see fig. 14). By means of languages he could transpose his "understanding" to man-made centers, which thereby became gathering foci of civilization. Such centers are places in the true sense of the word, be they settlements or buildings. A place is a gathering thing with concrete presence. Thus we understand Heidegger's statement that "spaces receive their being from places (locations) and not from 'space'."[52] *The creation of places is the purpose of architecture.*

To accomplish Kahn's wish for a revival of architecture as an art, we have to do two things: We have to "rediscover" the world, and we have to learn to "say" what we have discovered. In general we have to reinstate the existential dimension of reality.

Today we are almost exclusively concerned with beings. We quantify and classify, and reduce reality to its "measurable" aspects. Thus we understand man in terms of measurable "needs" and the world as a multitude of measurable "resources." This approach is learned by everybody from childhood on. Art is certainly taught, but its existential basis and function are hardly understood, and it becomes a mere pastime. The general result of our present approach is alienation from things and from our fellow men. Our "understanding" is reduced to quantification, our "state-of-mind" to sentimentality, and our "Being-with" to lack of true contact. A "split of thought and feeling" results, and our access to the world is blocked. The world withdraws, and life becomes "meaningless," or an "act without an image," to use a phrase of Rilke. Thereby man is even alienated from his own nature, and becomes mere "human material."[53] To disclose the world again, we have to return "to the things, themselves," because the world is known through the gathering of things. A return to the things demands a *phenomenological* approach. Thus phenomenology ought to become the gathering middle of education. Today science plays this role, but science is not an original happening of truth, but "the cultivation of a domain of truth already opened," to quote Heidegger again.[54]

A return to the things themselves is, however, futile as long as we cannot "say" them by means of language. This saying is indeed what makes the return possible. "What are poets for in a destitute time?," Heidegger asks, quoting Hölderlin. We have already seen that it is poetry (in all its forms) which brings man back to the things themselves, and thus makes him dwell. Education in the understanding and use of languages therefore ought to be the pillar of education. In our context that means to study the language of architecture and to learn how to let it "speak." When we in this way reinstate architecture as an art, we may reach beyond the superficial quantification of functionalism and the arbitrary codification of semiology, and make our places become alive.

Notes

Source Note: This text is to be published in a volume of collected essays by Academy Editions (London, 1980).

1. In 1962 Vincent Scully wrote, "The impression becomes inescapable that in Kahn, as once in Wright, architecture began anew." Vincent Scully, *Louis I. Kahn* (New York: G. Braziller, 1962), p. 25.
2. A pronounced neo-functionalist approach is found in C. Alexander, *Notes on the Synthesis of Form* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1964).
3. Kahn also sometimes used "form" in the "normal" sense, as when he said, "Art is the making of meaningful form."
4. The quotations from Kahn are taken from many different sources. It would burden the text too much to give accurate references. A complete bibliography of Kahn's writings is to my knowledge still lacking.
5. See the preliminary sketches for the church in Rochester. *Perspecta 7, The Yale Architectural Journal*, 1961.
6. Today we do see the pyramids without their "circumstances" and behold their essence.
7. Plato, *Republic* VII.
8. Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time* (1927) (London: SCM Press, 1962), pp. 78ff.
9. See C. Norberg-Schulz, *Intentions in Architecture* (Oslo and London: Universitetsforlaget, 1963), p. 27ff.
10. Heidegger, *Being and Time*, pp. 175, 204.
11. Ibid., p. 155.
12. Kahn's term "institution" represents an installation of inspirations.
13. Heidegger lists "houses, trees, people, mountains, stars." *Being and Time*, p. 91.
14. Heidegger, "Building, Dwelling, Thinking," *Poetry, Language, Thought*, ed. A. Hofstadter (New York: Harper, 1971).
15. Heidegger, *Being and Time*, p. 134ff.
16. Heidegger, "Building, Dwelling, Thinking," *Poetry, Language, Thought*.
17. A first attempt is made in C. Norberg-Schulz, *Existence, Space and Architecture* (London and New York: Praeger, 1971).
18. Heidegger, "The Thing," *Poetry, Language, Thought*.
19. This understanding of the thing differs from the conventional thing concepts of "bearer of traits," "unity in a manifold of sensations," and "formed matter," all of which are discarded by Heidegger.
20. Heidegger, *Being and Time*, p. 203ff.
21. Heidegger, *Poetry, Language, Thought*, p. 225ff.
22. Ibid., p. 199.
23. Ibid., p. 202.
24. Ibid., p. 208.
25. Heidegger also sometimes talks about Being as silence or "stillness." *Poetry, Language, Thought*, p. 207.
26. Heidegger, "The Origin of the Work of Art," *Poetry, Language, Thought*, p. 77.
27. Ibid., p. 64.
28. Ibid.
29. Ibid., p. 41ff.
30. Ibid., p. 227.
31. Ibid., p. 59.
32. In *Being and Time* Heidegger excuses his "awkwardness" of expression, p. 63.
33. Such a theory of "meaning in architecture" would represent an alternative to the relativistic approach of semiology. The latter is explained in C. Jencks, *The Language of Post-Modern Architecture* (London: Academy Editions, 1978).
34. R. Schwarz, *The Church Incarnate* (Chicago: Regnery, 1958).
35. C. Norberg-Schulz, *Existence, Space and Architecture*, p. 17.
36. Le Corbusier, *Towards a New Architecture* (London: J. Rodker, 1927), pp. 31, 32.
37. For instance by Kevin Lynch, *The Image of the City* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press and Harvard University Press, 1960). Also C. Norberg-Schulz, op.cit., and C. Norberg-Schulz, *Genius Loci* (Milan, 1979).
38. Norberg-Schulz, *Existence, Space and Architecture*, p. 19.
39. Ibid., p. 21.
40. Norberg-Schulz, *Genius Loci, passim.*
41. Le Corbusier, *Towards a New Architecture* pp. 141, 165, 187.
42. Heidegger, "The Origin of the Work of Art," p. 154.
43. Norberg-Schulz, *Genius Loci*.
44. The outside-inside relationship is studied systematically from the phenomonological point of view in T. Thiis-Evensen, *Outside and Inside* (Oslo, forthcoming).
45. The importance of the wall as where architecture "takes place" was pointed out by R. Venturi in *Complexity and Contradiction in Architecture* (New York: Museum of Modern Art, 1967).
46. See V. Scully, *The Earth, the Temple and the Gods* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1962).
47. In C. Norberg-Schulz, *Genius Loci*, "configuration" is used to denote the totality topology-typology.
48. Heidegger, *Hebel der Hausfreund* (Pfullingen, 1957).
49. Heidegger, *Hebel der Hansfreund* explicitly considers villages and cities "buildings" in this context.
50. Heidegger, *Poetry, Language, Thought*, p. 149.
51. C. Norberg-Schulz, *Genius Loci*.
52. Heidegger, *Poetry, Language, Thought* p. 154.
53. Ibid., p. 112.
54. Ibid., p. 112.

Confrontation: 1933
Mies van der Rohe and the Third Reich
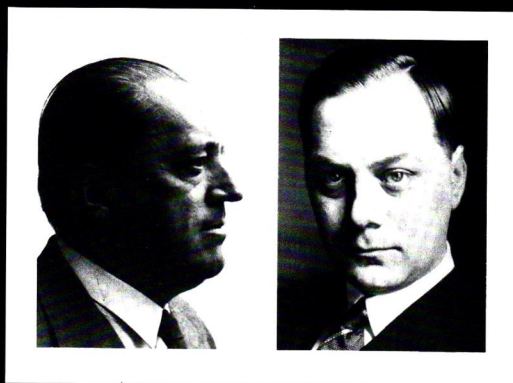
Elaine Hochman

1 (frontispiece) left, portrait of
Ludwig Mies van der Rohe, 1931;
right, portrait of Alfred Rosenberg,
1933.

"*Many Europeans had moved here with the triumph of
Hitler in the 1930's. Few of us asked questions about their
past or present convictions because we took for granted
that they had left either in fear or persecution or to make
a brave protest. They were our kind of folks. It took me
a long time to find out that many of them had strange
histories.*"
Lillian Hellman, Pentimento, *1973.*[1]

In 1933, at the age of forty-seven, Ludwig Mies van der
Rohe was already a legendary figure. Tall and physically
imposing, with handsome, granite-like features, he was to
all with whom he came in contact a singularly impressive
individual. With his commanding physical presence, al-
ways impeccably groomed, he radiated self-confidence.
"An ideal father figure . . . bulky, unflappable, and always
right, a real prewar man with a big cigar" is how Vincent
Scully once described him.[2] "A very formidable person,
very formidable. Just being in his presence was a little
terrifying, in a sense," recalls Kevin Roche, the American
architect who studied with Mies in Chicago.[3]

With the completion of his formal education at the age of
fourteen, Mies had dedicated his life totally to architec-
ture. Shielded by devoted friends from the drudgery and
distractions of daily life, Mies had little to distract his
vital energies from his architectural preoccupations. He
was, in many respects, the "gentleman architect," a con-
noisseur of food, wine, Cuban cigars, and ribald humor.

Slow and thoughtful, he approached problems cautiously
and patiently. Some claimed that his reticence and qui-
etude stemmed from obtuseness; most understood his
withdrawal into deep concentration as a necessary aspect
of his artistic personality. Only after hours of thought and
endless sketches did he come to the point of "stripping
away" all superfluity. Everyone who knew him remarked
on his powers of concentration—his 'otherworldliness'.

Mies's architectural philosophy, its idealism as well as its
methodology, was molded in his youth during his Aquinian
education in the Domschule in Aachen. Like Thomas
Aquinas, Mies had an absolute faith in rationalism, as well

50 as a belief in a 'higher' reality. Mies's unswerving commitment to reason, as well as to the notion of an elevated level of meaning in the world, remained with him throughout his life, along with a tendency to view empirical reality and the world of experience as reflections of higher values. These views formed the basis of Mies's conception of life and architecture from which he never deviated. "I would throw out everything that is not reasonable."[4] "Questions concerning the essence of things are the only significant questions."[5] "We must have order, allocating to each thing its proper place and giving to each thing its due according to its nature."[6] Such statements appear throughout Mies's career. With such a rationalistic bent, it was only natural that classicistic principles of order, clarity, and logic would appeal to him. "Architecture is not a martini, . . ." he once commented. "It is like a chess game—there are certain rules."[7] Preoccupied with little other than architecture, Mies embarked on his constant quest for the "meaning" of architecture. Like Aquinas, Mies assumed the existence of God, the axiomatic presence of Truth.

Mies believed that architecture expresses, as he put it, "the essence of the epoch," the "sustaining and driving forces of civilization," and "the crystallization of the essence of the time." For Mies, the essence of the twentieth century ("the only thing worth expressing") was technology and industrialization. The materials of technology, such as steel and plate glass, as well as its techniques, such as prefabrication and standardization—utilized in a manner which stressed structural honesty, refinement of detail, proportional relationships, and expression of material—were the means by which the essence of a building was brought in existence and the building could be said to express the essence of its time (*Zeitgeist*). For Mies, these concepts were self-evident truths and, hence, beyond debate. Kevin Roche once observed of Mies's dogmatism, "It had the ring of absolutism. . . . It was the final word. Whatever it was, it was the final word. You wouldn't even dream of questioning him."[8] The extent of Mies's authoritarian self-assurance is indicated in his remark, "He who has once learned to think correctly can no longer change his thinking."[9]

Mies first arrived in America in 1937, a famed but penniless refugee from Nazi Germany. Of the great German modernists, Mies was the last to leave Germany; Mendelsohn and Gropius having both departed soon after Hitler came to power. These four years that Mies spent under Hitler remain unaccounted for in his otherwise well documented career.

While Mies had numerous contacts with the National Socialists dating from earlier than 1933 when the NSDAP actually assumed national power, none of these confrontations were as dramatic, revealing, or dangerous as the confrontation that took place in the spring of 1933 between Mies, then director of the beleaguered Bauhaus, the Gestapo, and Alfred Rosenberg, who had for the past decade been the cultural philosopher of the Nazi party.

On April 11, 1933, two hundred Gestapo troops surrounded the reconverted factory in the Berlin suburb of Stieglitz that, for less than six months, had housed the classrooms and studios of the Bauhaus (fig. 2). "I nearly died. It was so wrong," remarked Mies two decades later as he recalled his coming upon this strange scene.[10]

The following day, an account of the incident appeared in the Nazi newspaper, the *Völkischer Beobachter*: "Yesterday afternoon, on the instructions of the Dessau public prosecutor's office, the property of the Bauhaus in Steglitz, Birkbuschstrasse, was searched. The search was led by police major Schmahel, who occupied the building with the help of the Lichterfeld security police and volunteer police. The action against the Bauhaus took place because it could be assumed that numerous communist materials could be found in the rooms of the building. Nothing final is yet known about the results of this police measure. However, it is definite that various illegal printed materials were found. Furthermore, fifteen persons who could not identify themselves were apprehended. . . ." For better or worse, Mies—who had prided himself on his apoliticism—was plunged into the world of politics.

In power only several weeks, by April, 1933, the Nazi terror was already notorious. Concentration camps had

2 Newspaper article (Lokalanzeiger, Berlin) concerning the raid and closing of the Berlin Bauhaus on April 11, 1933—a highly biased Fascist account. No communist material was found; Gropius was not in Russia nor had Mies fled to Paris—all of which were stated in the article.

been set up and the "disappearances" of individuals had become daily, if muted, occurrences.[11] Albert Speer recalls in his memoirs the Berlin of 1933, where "hundreds of thousands of people were trembling because of their descent, their religion, or their convictions."[12] The passage of the Enabling Act (Ermächtigungsgesetz) on March 23, annulling the Constitution, effectively removed German government from the ranks of those countries that ostensibly submitted to the rule of law and the principles of justice. This law in turn (the Nazis were always meticulous about cushioning their illegal acts within the legal structure) paved the way for legislation passed on April 7, 1933, the Law for the Restoration of the Civil Service, which forbade the presence of Jews and politically unfavorable people in all state supported institutions, such as universities and schools, museums, theaters, orchestras, and so on. It deprived Germany, at one blow, of such figures as Albert Einstein, Max Reinhardt, Bruno Walter, Carl von Ossietzky and Kurt Tucholosky (editors of the Weltbühne), Irwin Panofsky, Fritz Busch, Ernst Cassirer, and Edmond Husserl, among many others.[13] By May, the American journal The Nation reported, "Culture, as that term is generally understood among the civilized peoples of the world, is in the process of annihilation in the Nazi Third Reich."[14]

Yet, as is well-known, many individuals (including not a few prominent intellectuals) refused to take either Hitler or the Nazis seriously. The short durability of previous chancellors during the Weimar regime provided a misleading precedent: Hitler's immediate predecessor had remained in office only fifty-seven days. For many, these were still the "happy days," as Jacques Barzun observed, "when many thought Hitler a rather ludicrous imitation of the man who had made Italian trains run on time."[15] Max Beckmann joked about the "Verführer," the misleader or seducer. A Swedish newspaper summed up a common attitude when it wrote, "Such a regime cannot last indefinitely; but every day is a day too long."[16]

The initial purges by the Nazis were directed against Leftists and Communists. As early as February 4, only a few days after Hitler was named Chancellor, an emer-

Hausfuchung im „Bauhaus Steglitz"
Kommunistisches Material gefunden.

Auf Veranlassung der Dessauer Staatsanwaltschaft wurde gestern nachmittag eine größere Aktion im „Bauhaus Steglitz", dem früheren Dessauer Bauhaus, in der Birkbuschstraße in Steglitz durchgeführt. Von einem Aufgebot Schutzpolizei und Hilfspolizisten wurde das Grundstück besetzt und systematisch durchsucht. Mehrere Kisten mit illegalen Druckschriften wurden beschlagnahmt. Die Aktion stand unter Leitung von Polizeimajor Schmahel.

Das „Bauhaus Dessau" war vor etwa Jahresfrist nach Berlin übergesiedelt. Damals waren bereits von der Dessauer Polizei zahlreiche verbotene Schriften beschlagnahmt worden. Ein Teil der von der Polizei versiegelten Kisten war jedoch verschwunden, und man vermutete, daß sie von der Bauhausleitung mit nach Berlin genommen worden waren. Die Dessauer Staatsanwaltschaft setzte sich jetzt mit der Berliner Polizei in Verbindung und hat um Durchsuchung des Gebäudes. Das Bauhaus, das früher unter Leitung von Professor Gropius stand, der sich jetzt in Rußland aufhält, hat in einer leerstehenden Fabrikbaracke in der Birkbuschstraße in Steglitz Quartier genommen. Der augenblickliche Leiter hat es aber vor wenigen Tagen vorgezogen, nach Paris überzusiedeln. Bei der gestrigen Haussuchung wurde zahlreiches illegales Propagandamaterial der KPD. gefunden und beschlagnahmt.

Alle Anwesenden, die sich nicht ausweisen konnten, wurden zur Feststellung ihrer Personalien ins Polizeipräsidium gebracht.

2

3 Ludwig Mies van der Rohe with Bauhaus architecture students, around 1931. If the date is accurate, this particular session took place in Dessau, prior to the move to Berlin.

4 Converted factory building in the Berlin suburb of Steglitz that housed the Bauhaus.

3
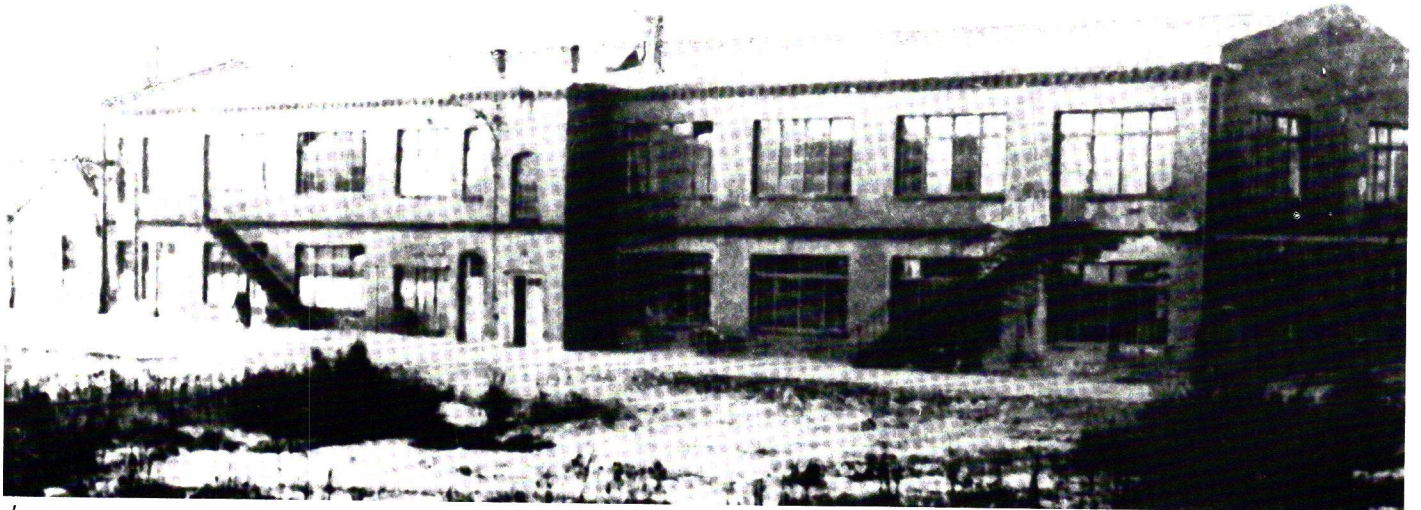
4

gency decree "for the protection of the German people" was passed, forbidding any criticism of the regime. Infractions were punishable by harsh actions. The Reichstag fire on February 27 provided the opportunity for more specific repression of the Leftists and Communists. On February 28, a law was passed forbidding publications of the left-wing press, and Communist and Socialist Party leaders were imprisoned. Any Leftist dissent was now considered an act of high treason and punishable by death. When the police took their action against the Bauhaus on April 11, the alleged purpose was to search for Communist material.

Although the cultural direction of the Third Reich did not explicitly become clear, either to the public or the party hierarchy, until mid-1937 with the "Degenerate Art" Exhibition, in 1933, certain directions were fully evident. The Nazis were opposed to any art whose principles did not arise out of a racial or biological connection with *Deutschtum* ("German-ness"). Such art was labeled "Bolshevik," and the International Style, as the architectural style became known, with its debt to the postwar Leftist political movements as well as its commitment to universal principles, became a prime target. Although the epithet "cultural Bolshevists" had long been applied to these architectural modernists, by 1933 such accusations had become dangerous.

Coming upon the Bauhaus surrounded by troops on April 11, 1933, Mies was at once checked by one of the Gestapo officers posted as a sentry. "This is my factory. I rented it. I have a right to see it," insisted Mies. On learning that Mies was the individual they were looking for, the officer invited him in. As Mies later recalled, "He knew I would never come out if they didn't want me to."

The officer in charge told Mies that the police were looking for documents relating to the founding of the Bauhaus, yet Mies realized that they were really searching for incriminating Communist evidence. Eager to remove suspicion, Mies ordered everything open for inspection, certain there was nothing that could be misinterpreted by the police.

Mies had been director of the Bauhaus since 1930 (fig. 3). When the Nazis and other right-wing extremists gained control of the Dessau City Council in 1932, one of their initial actions was to withdraw the state subsidy from the school, forcing it to close. In their haste, the Nazis had prematurely terminated the school's contract with the city of Dessau, permitting Mies and the faculty to claim compensation for the monies still legally due them. In addition to these funds, the school received significant royalties for the Bauhaus wallpaper designs, for which Dessau had also severed its claims. With these funds, along with a substantial investment from his own pocket, Mies decided to open the Bauhaus as a private institution in the more cosmopolitan and anonymous atmosphere of Berlin.

By October 18, 1932, with deliberately little fanfare, the Bauhaus reopened its portals in Berlin (fig. 4). In a series of interviews published at this time in several Berlin newspaper, Mies strongly reiterated the principles on which the Bauhaus intended to operate. "With emphasis, Mies van der Rohe added that he conducts the institute beyond the realm of all political tendencies," noted the *Steglitzer Anzeiger*. The *Montag Morgan* asked Mies if he expected any particular support from the city administration (which had been so important to the Bauhaus in Dessau). "We hope for nothing and we fear nothing. . . . In Berlin we will work more quietly, unobserved, undisturbed," replied Mies.

Six months later, the Gestapo was searching through the Bauhaus factory so painstakingly cleaned and whitewashed by the faculty and students. After a fruitless search they finally departed, taking with them fifteen students who were unable to produce immediate identification. Dejected and depressed, the faculty and some older students met with Mies outside the building, which had been sealed off by the police. The meeting continued the following day in Mies's apartment. For Mies, as usual, the issues were simple and incontrovertible. Whatever the Bauhaus had been in the past, right now, in 1933, it was totally apolitical. Moreover, as a private institution it was no longer under the control or jurisdiction of the state. He had to convince the authorities that he was neither

54 pro- nor anti-Nazi and that such issues were insignificant for him and for the school.

Three years earlier, during the summer of 1930, when Germany had been faced for the first time with the real possibility of Nazi domination, Mies spoke of his apolitical ideology in a speech presented before a Werkbund meeting in Vienna.[17] Although the modernists were certainly used to political hostility, it now appeared—with the growing political strength of the Nazis, and the subsequent hostile environment—that the very survival of modernism was at stake. For a so-called "political naive," Mies's perception was amazingly succinct. Shortly thereafter, on September 14, the Nazis would rise from the ninth and smallest political party to the second strongest in the national parliament. In that speech Mies said: "The new era is a fact; it exists, irrespective of our 'yes' or 'no'. Yet it is neither better nor worse than any other era. It is pure datum in itself without value content. . . . Let us accept changed economic and social conditions as a fact. . . . All these take their blind and fateful course. . . ."

It was now more imperative than ever for the modernists (as well as the Bauhaus) to remove themselves from the political battlefield, and Mies's urgings were addressed to the modernists, as well as the Nazis. With the emergence of a powerful and dangerous group so vehemently opposed to the modernists' conception of the "spirit of the times," with Hitler preaching a racial and nationalistic renewal, it was painfully clear that if the modernists wished to participate in the new era, they had better refrain from further antagonizing their opponents.

After all, for Mies, what mattered most in architecture was the opportunity to build. For him, an architecture composed only of words was nothing. For Mies the essence lay in mortar and bricks, not in esoteric theorizing. "Ours is not an age of pathos," he had said in 1924, "we value reason and realism."[18]

Since the Bauhaus and modernism had now become a highly charged emotional and political issue, the commitment of the modernist architects to the viewpoint that modernism was more responsive "to the great struggle for the new way of life" (advocated by Mies as much as anyone) seemed unnecessary, if not foolhardy. Mies urged his fellow architects to put down their stridency, to lessen their identification of modernism with a style of living which alarmed many people, and to adopt a position of political neutrality. The justification of modernism must now be purely aesthetic and functional; and the Nazis, as well, must be made to recognize that any criticism is to be made along these lines. If the "spirit of the times" was without value, then no element—neither "German-ness" nor "technology"—was superior to another. The relative *value* of the so-called "new era" had to become irrelevant to a proper evaluation of the tenets of modernism.

Seduced by the reasonableness of his conciliatory attitude, Mies convinced himself that the closure of the Bauhaus was simply a bureaucratic error. He thought he had only to convince the Nazis of this "misunderstanding" and all would be well. He believed it was merely a question of having access to a high official. Accordingly Mies decided to go directly and immediately to the top. The day after the closing, he telephoned Alfred Rosenberg, the man assumed to be in charge of the cultural policies of the Nazi party.

In the spring of 1933, Rosenberg had the appearance of being the philosophical and cultural mentor of the Party. For many years, Hitler had been ironically known as "the mouthpiece of Rosenberg." Rosenberg's ideas, as expressed in his *Myth of the Twentieth Century*, had strongly influenced not only Hitler's *Mein Kampf*, but had become the *Weltanschauung* of the NSDAP. To Hitler, its hodge-podge of mystical, heroic, and biological theories seemed evidence of great profundity. According to Rosenberg, a mystical bond existed between the blood and land of one's forebears and formed the essential core of a community, most notably the German community. All subsequent aesthetic and cultural doctrines were to follow from this basic thesis. Just how this mystical bond between blood and art operated was never explained. And yet for both Rosenberg and Hitler, aesthetic questions were ultimately to remain biological and racial issues.

5 Ludwig Mies van der Rohe on a student excursion, 1933. While awaiting permission for the school to reopen, Mies often took the students on outings of architectural interest. Such activities contributed to an "ésprit de corps" that had rarely existed in earlier years at the Bauhaus.

5

Along with his arch rival Goebbels, Rosenberg was one of the very few Nazi leaders who had completed his university studies and was entitled to be addressed as "Doctor."[19] He and Mies were roughly contemporaries, Rosenberg being seven years older, born in 1893 at Reval (now Tallinin), Estonia. Rosenberg completed his university studies in Russia, receiving his diploma in architecture from the University of Moscow in 1917, at the time of the Revolution. Returning to Reval, he wrote to Berlin in 1918 with the intent of obtaining employment in Peter Behrens's atelier, the famed German architect whose office had provided initial training for Mies, as well as Gropius and Le Corbusier only a few years before. Although he received an encouraging reply, he decided against pursuing his architectural career and went instead to Munich, where he joined the National Socialist cause. In 1921, he was made editor of the *Völkischer Beobachter* which was published in Munich and under his aegis, the newspaper became an important NSDAP mouthpiece and one of the most outspoken opponents of modernism in art and architecture.

In 1926, during the first Nuremberg Rally, the Nazis established the Society for Culture and Learning (SNS) which, shortly afterwards, was placed under Rosenberg's leadership. Renamed the "Kampfbund für deutsche Kultur" in 1929 (the Combat League for German Culture), it soon became one of the principal forces struggling against the growth of modernism. Thus, although Rosenberg and Mies had never met, they were already thoroughly acquainted with each other's positions.

No two people could have been further apart. Rosenberg wielded enormous power; Mies was powerless. Aesthetic form, for the Nazi leader, was based on biological and racial qualities; while, for Mies, they were spiritual and universal. And yet both had been born in the heady days of certitude, and both were convinced of the irrefutability of their philosophies. For both, philosophical truth lay in great simplifications, and neither would have agreed with Jacob Burckhardt, the Swiss historian, who understood that the essence of tyranny lay in the denial of complexity.

Rosenberg was less than anxious to meet with Mies. "I am too busy," he said. "I understand that," said Mies. "But even so, at any time you tell me, I will be there." His curiosity now aroused by the urgency and insistence in Mies' voice, Rosenberg agreed to meet with him at eleven o'clock that evening. Mies' friends were horrified. Who visited Nazi leaders voluntarily—especially so late at night?

Fearing for his life, they implored him not to go. Eventually unable to dissuade him, they sat across the street from Rosenberg's office, in a café window where they could observe his leaving the building, alone or under guard or whatever.

"So I went that night and we really talked, you know, for an hour," reminisced Mies in later years. It was more than simply the opening of the Bauhaus that Mies was arguing for—it was the possibility for modernism to exist in the Third Reich. He must convince Rosenberg that neither he nor modernism represented a threat to the Nazis.

"Where do you, as the cultural leader of the new Germany, stand on the aesthetic problems which have emerged as the result of the technical and industrial development?" asked Mies, proceeding at once to the main issue. "Why do you ask?" replied Rosenberg, obviously surprised at Mies's apolitical perception of the problem. For the Nazis, the issue of modernism—and especially the Bauhaus—was very much a political issue. Anxious to allay the suspicions of the Nazis, Mies assured Rosenberg that the work on aesthetic problems was the major concern of the Bauhaus. Rosenberg, long immersed in Nazi rhetoric, appeared to be unable to understand Mies's quest. "Why do you want the backing of political power? We are not thinking of stifling individual initiative. If you are so sure of what you are doing, your ideas will succeed anyway." "For any cultural effort one needs peace," answered Mies. "I would like to know whether we will have that peace." "Are you hampered in your work?" responded Rosenberg. "Hampered is not the correct term,"[20] replied Mies, explaining to Rosenberg the ac-

56 tions of the Gestapo, of which he was apparently unaware.

Rosenberg then revealed to Mies that he had received a degree in architecture. "Then we certainly will understand each other," replied Mies. "Never," answered Rosenberg. "What do you expect me to do? You know the Bauhaus is supported by forces that are fighting our forces. It is one army against another, only in the spiritual field." "No, I really don't think it is like that," replied Mies.

Realizing that Mies was not to be moved by Nazi rhetoric, Rosenberg fell back to the core of Nazi hostility towards modernism . . . personal distaste. "I don't like what the Bauhaus is doing," said Rosenberg. "I know you can suspend, you can cantilever something, but my feeling demands a support." "Even if it is cantilevered?" Mies asked. "Yes," replied Rosenberg. "Listen," said Mies, "you are sitting here in an important position. And look at your writing table, this shabby writing table. Do you like it? I would throw it out of the window. That is what we want to do. We want to have good objects that we do not have to throw out the window." "I will see what I can do for you," said Rosenberg. "Don't wait too long," answered Mies.

Despite the civility of the meeting, it was apparent to Mies that Rosenberg was not about to do anything to assist the Bauhaus. Since the action had been carried out by the Gestapo, it was to them that Mies had to address his attention. Under the Nazis' terms for arrest and protective custody, Mies was in an exceedingly vulnerable position. He was a leader of a "culturally Bolshevik" movement, many of whose other advocates were, at that moment, already crowding the concentration camps. He was the Director of the Bauhaus, which had long been the focus of Nazi attack. To make matters even worse, Mies had designed the Liebknecht-Luxembourg Monument of 1926, honoring the assassinated leaders of the German Communist Revolution of 1918, Rosa Luxembourg and Karl Liebknecht. Mies had been the Director of the Weissenhofsiedlung Exhibition, which had, along with the Bauhaus, been a focal point of Nazi criticism; its supposed inappropriateness to Germany being made evident through the famous Nazi collage of the community as an Arab village. Through his connection with the hated Weissenhofsiedlung, Mies had been labeled by the Nazis as a "two-raced foreigner." The villa he designed for the Berlin Building Exhibition of 1931 had been criticized by the Nazis as being more appropriate for a stable. Quite simply, the Nazis viewed modernism in art and architecture as provocative; not only un-German but anti-German, a Bolshevik threat, and hence politically subversive. Much as he would deny it, Mies was, at least as far as the Nazis were concerned, *very* politically involved.

Mies's decision to go directly and in person to Gestapo headquarters was either an act of incredible bravery or stubborn foolhardiness.[21] Every other day he went to the headquarters on Alexanderplatz, waiting, calmly and patiently on the hard and deliberately narrow bench, to speak to the officer in charge (fig. 5). Finally, after three months of this dangerous vigil, Mies was seen by the chief officer.

"Why," Mies asked the youthful head of the Gestapo, "have you closed the Bauhaus? It is my private property. . . . We didn't steal anything. We didn't make a revolution." The young man claimed that the problem was the presence of the Russian-born Kandinsky on the Bauhaus faculty. "I am very interested in the Bauhaus movement and so on," he continued, an opinion not out-of-line with the avant-garde wing of the Nazi party which still existed in these early years.

Relieved at the apparent misunderstanding regarding the 'dangerous' presence of Kandinsky, Mies said that he would personally guarantee the artistically radical painter. "Be careful," replied the Gestapo officer. "If something happens, we will pick you up."

The end came in an unexpected manner. In June, Mies received notification that the subsidy, which the Bauhaus received from Dessau, was to be discontinued. These funds which paid the faculty salaries were the school's sole source of income. They were cancelled on the basis

6 The burning of books by the Nazis
in Berlin on May 10, 1933.

58 of the April 7th Law for the Restoration of the Civil Service, forbidding the presence of Jews and politically unfavorable people at state-supported institutions. Deprived now of the main source of its funds, there was no way the Bauhaus could reopen, whatever the decision of the Nazis in Berlin. Mies, however, had no intention of withdrawing his petition. Finally, on July 21st, the long-awaited letter from the Gestapo arrived. Although its conditions for reopening the school were unacceptable (i.e., the presence of individuals favorable to the Nazis on the faculty), the Gestapo agreed not only to permit the school to reopen, but to retain its cherished name as well.

Overjoyed at finally receiving this letter, Mies called Lilly Reich, his associate. "We can open the school again. Order champagne," said Mies. "What for?" answered Lilly Reich, always the realist. "We don't have the money." Nonetheless, the champagne appeared at the faculty meeting, where Mies explained in triumph, "Now, I went there for three months every second day just to get this letter. I was anxious to get this letter. I wanted to have the permission to go ahead. And now I make a proposition and I hope you will agree with me. I will write them a letter back: 'Thank you very much for the permission to open the school again, but the faculty has decided to close it'."[22]

For Mies, principles seem to have been more important than reality. From his point of view, he had won an important issue—Nazi recognition that the Bauhaus (and implicitly, modernism) was no threat to them. He had, he believed, removed the first hurdle of Nazi disapproval and ostracism that had been so characteristic of their attitude toward modernism and the Bauhaus. While official Nazi support of modernism was, as yet, unimaginable, the removal of "modernism" from the rank of treasonous activities was the first step toward accommodation, if Mies and his fellow modernists were to continue to practice in a Nazi-dominated Germany. For Mies, this issue had crucial professional significance as he had recently been invited, along with several others, to enter a design in the highly coveted Reichsbank competition of 1933.

Thus in Mies's mind a significant principle had been established. Unfortunately, as Mies was to only realize four years later, the Nazis were not interested in principles. In this regard, Rosenberg revealed more insight than Mies when he told him, "It is one army against another, only in the spiritual field."

This incident reveals the pattern of contact between Mies and the NSDAP that was to reoccur many times during the four years that he remained in his homeland. While not a Nazi, nor even a sympathizer (in fact, totally disinterested), Mies, with a stubborness and single-mindedness that enabled him to overlook personal dangers—conditions which would have dampened the ardor of a lesser man—refused to see the Nazis as they really were and repeatedly attempted some form of accommodation. Interested only in his narrow pursuits, he chose not to see the blood in the streets.

Simply put, Mies wished to build for his country—which, in his mind, was quite separate from its ruling government. He was able to make his extraordinary architectural contributions because of his absolute faith in the validity of his aesthetic principles. And yet, these same aesthetic certainties blinded him from seeing the truth of a regime in which all values, moral and aesthetic, had simply disintegrated (fig. 6). Mies's attempts at accommodation with the Nazis must be seen as being entirely consistent with the tenets of his architectural concepts.

Source Note: Portions of this text were taken from material for a forthcoming book of the same title by Elaine Hochman.
1. Lillian Hellman, *Pentimento* (Boston: Little Brown & Co., 1973), p. 185.
2. John W. Cook and Heinrich Klotz, *Conversations with Architects* (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1973), p. 7.
3. Ibid., p. 73.
4. Mies, "Conversations Regarding the Future of Architecture," *Print*, Vol. 11, No. 1, February–March 1957, p. 39.
5. Mies, "Mies van der Rohe: An Appreciation on the occasion, this month, of his 75th birthday," by Peter Carter in *Architectural Design*, Vol. 31, March 1961, p. 95.
6. Mies, inaugural address as Director of Armour Institute (1938). Quoted in Philip Johnson, *Mies van der Rohe* (New York: Museum of Modern Art, 1947), p. 186.
7. Mies, quoted in Peter Carter article, *Architectural Design*, p. 116.
8. Cook and Klotz, *Conversations with Architects*, p. 73.
9. Mies interview with Anna Teut in *Die Welt*, October 10, 1964.
10. Unless otherwise noted, all quotations are from an interview with Mies which appeared in the *Student Publication of the School of Design*, North Carolina State College, Vol. 3, No. 3, Spring 1953.
11. Due to foreign outcry, public beatings had been forbidden since the middle of March. Yet, behind walls and houses, hidden to view, Nazis continued to settle accounts with their many opponents, real or imagined, accumulated during their years of political struggles. The Nazi technique was already well-known. Count Harry Kessler noted in his diary: "They [the Nazis] abduct a man from his home, keep him for a week to a fortnight, thrash him over again, and constantly threaten him with death. When he returns home, he is a physical and mental wreck." Count Harry Kessler, *The Diaries of a Cosmopolitan, 1918–1937* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicholson, 1971), p. 453.
Mass "protective arrests" were already commonplace. Joachim Fest has estimated that five hundred to six hundred people were killed in those first months, and thousands more were injured, many of them permanently. Joachim C. Fest, *Hitler* (New York: Harcourt, Brace, Jovanovich, 1974), p. 401. Forced labor in the concentration camps had already begun. Not a great deal was known about these camps, but, judging by the number of individuals reported as "shot in flight," life in them could be neither pleasant nor safe.
12. Albert Speer, *Inside the Third Reich* (New York: MacMillan & Co., 1970), p. 26.
13. Ossietzky and Tucholsky were arrested; as were many other prominent individuals, such as Dr. Hodann, the City Physician of Berlin and a pioneer in sex psychology; Erich Mühsam, the anarchist poet; Ludwig Renn, the renowned author of "War"; and the recent convert to pacifism, Baron von Schönaich, a former major general in the Imperial army.
14. Emile Langyel, "German Culture in Exile," *The Nation*, May 31, 1933, p. 607.
15. Jacques Barzun, Editorial, "Art in the Third Reich," *Magazine of Art*, October 1945, p. 211.
16. *The Commercial and Shipping Gazette*, Gotenburg, Sweden. Quoted in *The Nation*, August 2, 1933, p. 121.
17. Publication of this speech given by Mies at the Conference of the German Werkbund which met in June 1930 in Vienna first appeared in *"Die Form,"* Vol. 13, August 1, 1930, p. 406. Quotation of the speech from Philip Johnson, *Mies van der Rohe*, p. 190.
18. Mies, ibid., p. 186–187.
19. As one of the more enigmatic individuals among the Nazi hierarchy, Alfred Rosenberg has not sparked the interest of many biographers. Essentially a loner, his often haughty, unsmiling and quiet person was rarely included among Hitler's preferred coterie of companions. He seemed content to rest behind his reputation as an intellectual whose metaphysical preoccupations removed him from the arena of ordinary interests. Perhaps the most interesting insight into the workings of his mind come from the fragments of his diaries, published as *Das Politische Tagebuch Alfred Rosenbergs aus den Jahren 1934/1935 und 1939/1940*, ed. Hans Günther-Seraphim (Göttingen: Musterschmidt-Verlag, 1956). The most significant biographical study published to date on Rosenberg is Robert Cecil's *The Myth of the Master Race: Alfred Rosenberg and Nazi Ideology* (London: B. T. Batsford Ltd., 1972). I also found G. M. Gilbert's psychological study of Rosenberg during the Nuremberg Trials of special interest. *Nuremberg Diary* (New York: Farrar, Straus, Cudahy, 1947).
20. Hans Wingler, *The Bauhaus: Weimar, Dessau, Berlin, Chicago* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1969), p. 175.
21. Reports of Nazi brutality continued. From the safety of Paris Harry Kessler noted some of the reports in his diary: "After lunch I went to Pierre Viénot where a small company of German refugees was assembled. He (Helmer—a young writer) and Hilferding described the icily cold-blooded process of Nazi maltreatment. It is applied to workers and intellectuals on an entirely individual pattern. For days and weeks they are mentally tortured and thrashed some three times a day, morning, noon, and night. But what gets the victims down more than anything, said Helmer, is that they are forced to watch the ill-usage of their fellows. That induces complete breakdown." Count Harry Kessler, *The Diaries of a Cosmopolitan*, p. 456.
22. Letter from Mies van der Rohe to the Office of the State Secret Police (for the attention of Minsterialrat Diels), Berlin, Prinz-Albrecht-Strasse, dated July 20, 1933.
"Dear Sir: I beg to inform you that the faculty of the Bauhaus at a meeting yesterday saw itself compelled, in view of the economic difficulties which have arisen from the shutdown of the Institute, to dissolve the Berlin Bauhaus. Your obedient servant, Mies van der Rohe." From Hans Wingler, *The Bauhaus: Weimar, Dessau, Berlin, Chicago.*
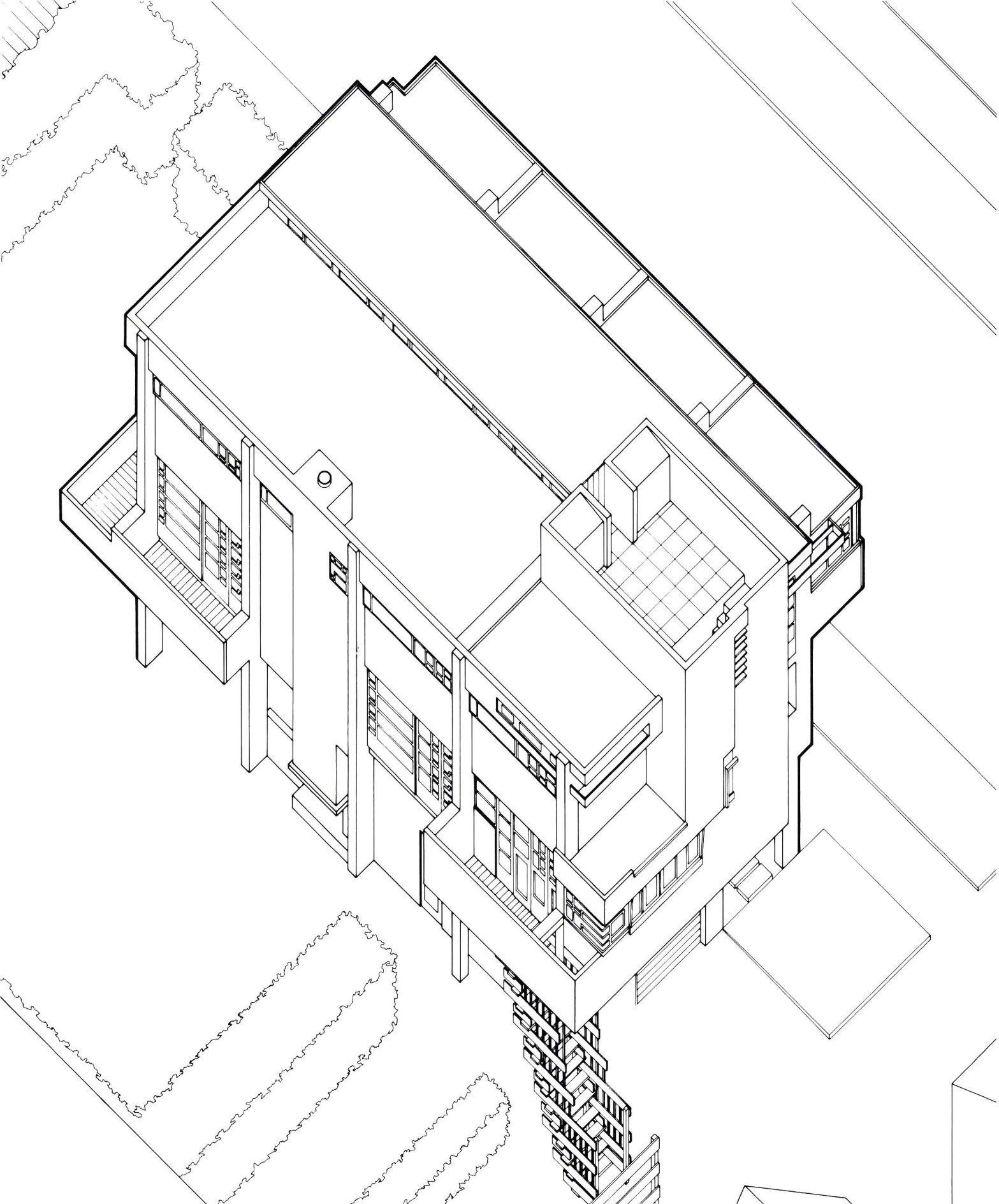
Figure Credits
All figures courtesy the author.
1 Photograph of Mies van der Rohe from the Bauhaus Archiv; photograph of Alfred Rosenberg from Ullstein Bilderdienst.
2–5 From the Bauhaus Archiv.
6 From Ullstein Bilderdienst.

Schindler, Lovell, and the Newport Beach House, Los Angeles, 1921–1926

Stefanos Polyzoides

1 (frontispiece) Lovell Beach House, Newport Beach, California. R. M. Schindler, 1926. South-east axonometric.

Phillip Lovell was a very well-known Los Angeles nutritionist and a practitioner of drugless medicine. During the 1920's and 1930's he authored a popular syndicated column in the Sunday Magazine section of the *Los Angeles Times* called "Care of the Body." In his lengthy articles, Phillip Lovell pioneered in the advocacy of ways of life based on mental and physical health. He wrote passionately and extensively on natural diets, the effects of stress on disease, the need for exercise, and the joyful pursuit of "natural" habits. Most importantly, he was curious and concerned about the possible effects of environment on health. His practice, writing, lecturing, and social connections allowed him to indulge in the luxury of sponsoring a great multiplicity of experiments in house design that tested out his ideas on living in health. His wife Leah was without doubt his connection to the culture of architecture. She was an educator, involved in the artistic, political, and social issues of the period. Her sister Harriet and her husband Sam Freeman sponsored a Frank Lloyd Wright House in 1923 and Leah Lovell was deeply aware of the power of architecture to affect human life. Her own radical activities brought her in touch with Pauline Gibling-Schindler as early as 1921.

Rudolph M. Schindler was born in Vienna in 1887 and arrived in Los Angeles in 1920 via Chicago and Taliesin East to oversee the construction phase of Frank Lloyd Wright's House B on Aline Barnsdall's Olive Hill. He remained associated with Wright until 1924. Pauline Gibling was born in 1893 and met and married Schindler in Chicago in 1919. She had recently graduated from Smith College and was a teacher of music after having spent the years 1917–1919 on the staff of Jane Addams's Hull House. Both Schindler and Gibling were people with strong personalities and radical convictions. He was the quintessential bohemian, rejecting the bourgeois ethic of his native city and developing a way of life and sense of form that were absolute in their truth to the beliefs that generated them. In a 1974 interview his wife described him as "a highly individuated, almost anarchic personality believing in the freedom of the individual to be himself, to develop a rich inner self within a dignified and simple daily life."

By contrast, she was a person with a highly developed social conscience, a believer in organized change on all fronts. She spoke out and wrote extensively throughout her life on the rights of those who were being oppressed by the structure of society. After her divorce from Schindler in 1928 her political activities were further expanded to include among other things membership in the American Communist Party. (She was later expelled for being less than conformist in her views.) She was throughout her life a sponsor of radical causes, her house a salon for the disaffected.

The introspective architect and the activist musician constructed their house in 1921 around a way of life that was based on independence, mutual respect, and simplicity. She described it thus in 1974: "I think that honesty was a part of what made our decisions. We lived in the way we believed, freely and committed to the quality of our experiences."

The Schindler House/Studio became a center of intellectual ferment from the beginning. The Schindlers attracted around them a group of friends that were equally dissatisfied with the prevailing ideology of blind technological progress and were committed to the idea of creating a new personal and social order through defining the behaviors and artifacts that would make it possible. Many of their friends were artists or political radicals or both. Many ended up as Schindler's clients. In all cases the Schindlers acted as catalysts, daring their friends to define the most desirable states of life.

The Lovells were one such couple who joined the Schindler circle. Pauline Schindler organized a nursery school with Leah Lovell and the two of them taught the children in a curriculum based on exposure to the sun, physical coordination, and music. She later described it as one of the early curricula based on freedom learning.

The Lovells and R. M. Schindler exercised their curiosity about the nature of modernity by engaging in discussions about the relationship between house form and health. During the twenties they were involved in four major projects of which three were built. The Lovell Beach House was the most important of the three. It is curious that it was Schindler who was engaged in the written outline of the programmatic scope of the Lovell House experiments. Perhaps it confirms the suspicion that within their circle the Schindlers dominated in their belief in the necessary link between modern form and modern life.

On six consecutive Sundays, from March 14 to May 2, 1926, and while the Lovell Beach House was under construction, R. M. Schindler authored guest articles in Dr. Lovell's *Los Angeles Times* column. In a broad sense, these six articles aim to demonstrate that the emerging new architecture was a vehicle toward a way of life based on health of the body and mind. In a narrow sense the articles constitute an outline of Schindler's developing formal intentions. Beyond the thinly disguised pseudo-moralistic chastising of past habits and the pseudo-scientific explanation of architectural phenomena, there emerge particular examples supporting a personal architectural aesthetic. These examples can be divided into three categories:

1) The outline of general principles—as in the primacy of space as the basic constituent element of architecture, or in the rejection of appliqué as a valid architectural dimension;

2) The posing of preferred relationships—as in the necessity for artificial and natural light to be evenly distributed in rooms, or in the incorporation of furniture and equipment into the body of the building, or in the continuity of space without concern for the definition of indoors and outdoors;

3) The prescribing of particular stylistic elements, as the thin wall, windows for light versus windows for ventilation, fireplaces without mantels, etc.

The Lovell Beach House is a pivotal building in Schindler's development as an architect. It marks an independent stance away from the architecture of Wagner and Wright toward an alignment with ideas and forms closer to the mainstream architecture of his modern European contemporaries. For that reason, the six articles become an important document in signaling the time and nature of one

of Schindler's most important formal shifts.

In a twist of historical irony, the Lovells were instrumental in the generation as well as the thwarting of the promise for a modern architecture in Southern California.

R. M. Schindler and Richard Neutra were acquainted during their student days in Vienna. They corresponded often between 1914 and 1924. R. M. Schindler emerges through the letters as the stable, rising star and Neutra as the desperate soldier, exile, and bitter intellectual. In the course of these letters, Neutra's pessimism about the European scene and his growing Americanophilia became transformed into an outright direct request to Schindler to invite him as an immigrant to the United States.

Indeed, Pauline Gibling-Schindler, a United States citizen, sponsored the Neutras' petition to immigrate in 1923. After the arrival of the Neutras in the United States, the Schindlers helped them and supported them in a variety of ways. In 1925 Neutra was introduced to Wright through the intercession of Schindler. From 1926 to 1928 the Neutras lived in the Schindler House/Studio at 833 Kings Road. During this period, the two men collaborated on a variety of projects, culminating in a joint League of Nations competition entry that won third prize (1927). Considering the potential importance of this competition for the future of modern architecture, the professional rapport between the two men seemed promising indeed.

Two events rapidly reversed the apparent bright future of the Schindler/Neutra partnership. The League of Nations exhibition circulated in Europe with the name of Neutra as the sole author of their common entry. And, in 1928, the Lovells awarded the commission of their Los Angeles house to Neutra. It appears that both events were brought about by Neutra's actions through direct solicitation and in support of his narrow interests. Schindler felt compromised by the acts of his collaborator. He interpreted Neutra's independent contacts as a betrayal of trust and violation of ethical and professional standards. The incident dissolved their joint architectural efforts as well as their friendship.

The Schindler Lovell Beach House (1926) and the Neutra Lovell Health House (1929) were widely published in Europe at the time and were acknowledged as a substantial contribution to the body of a new architecture. Considering the early achievements of the Schindler circle, the potential for the establishment of an important philosophical base for modern architecture in the United States as early as the late twenties went unfulfilled.

2–6 Lovell Beach House, Newport Beach, California. R. M. Schindler, 1926.

2 Ground floor plan (garage, beach, storage, shower).

3 Second floor plan (living, dining, kitchen, half-bath, laundry).
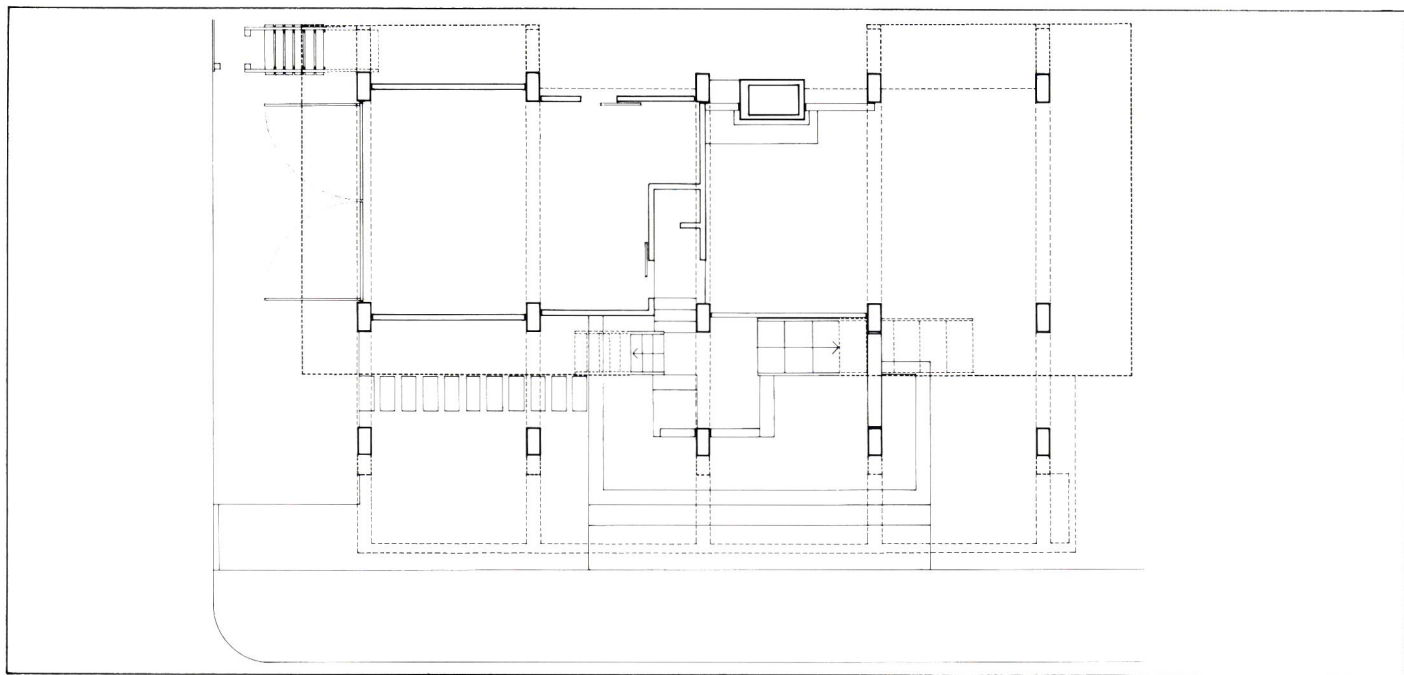
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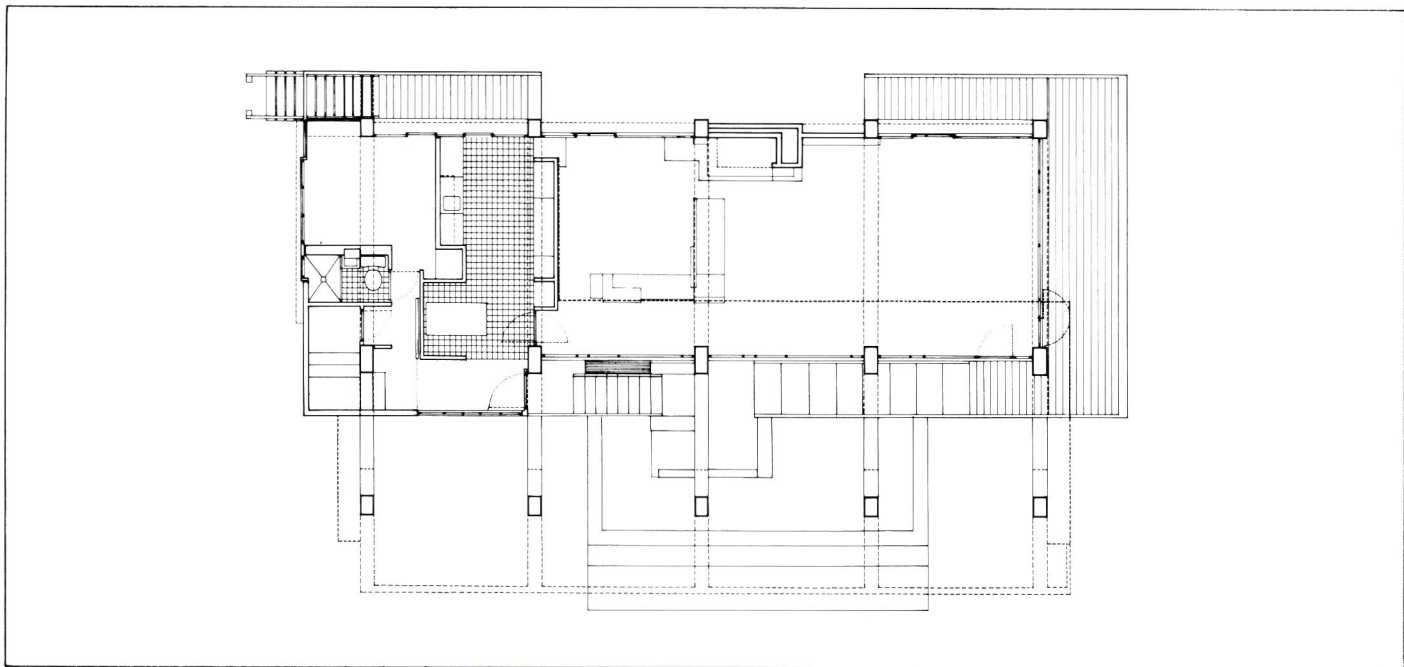
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4 Third floor plan (four bedrooms
with sleeping porches, bath).

5 Analytical axonometric (five piers
with base).

6 Worm's-eye axonometric.

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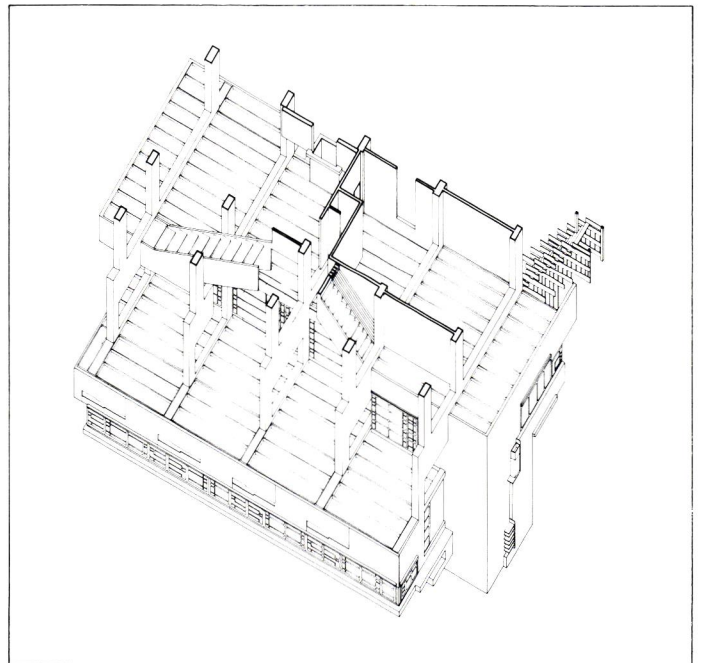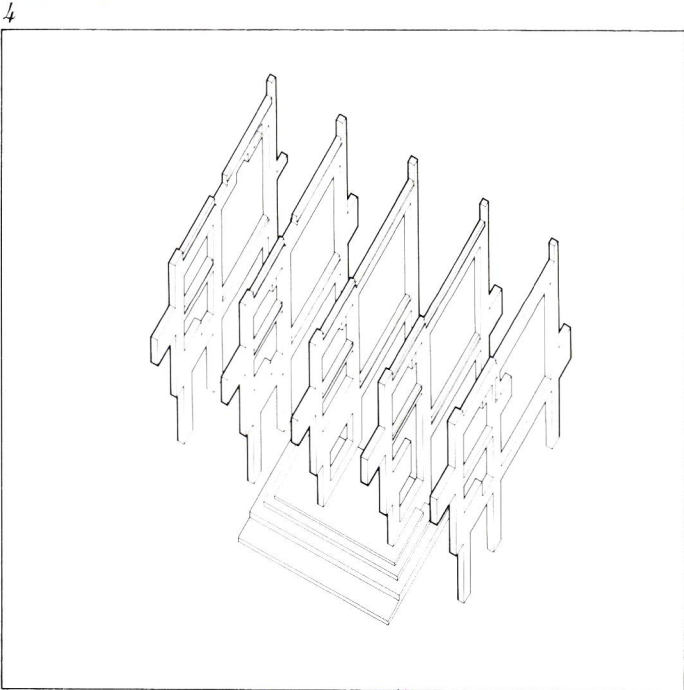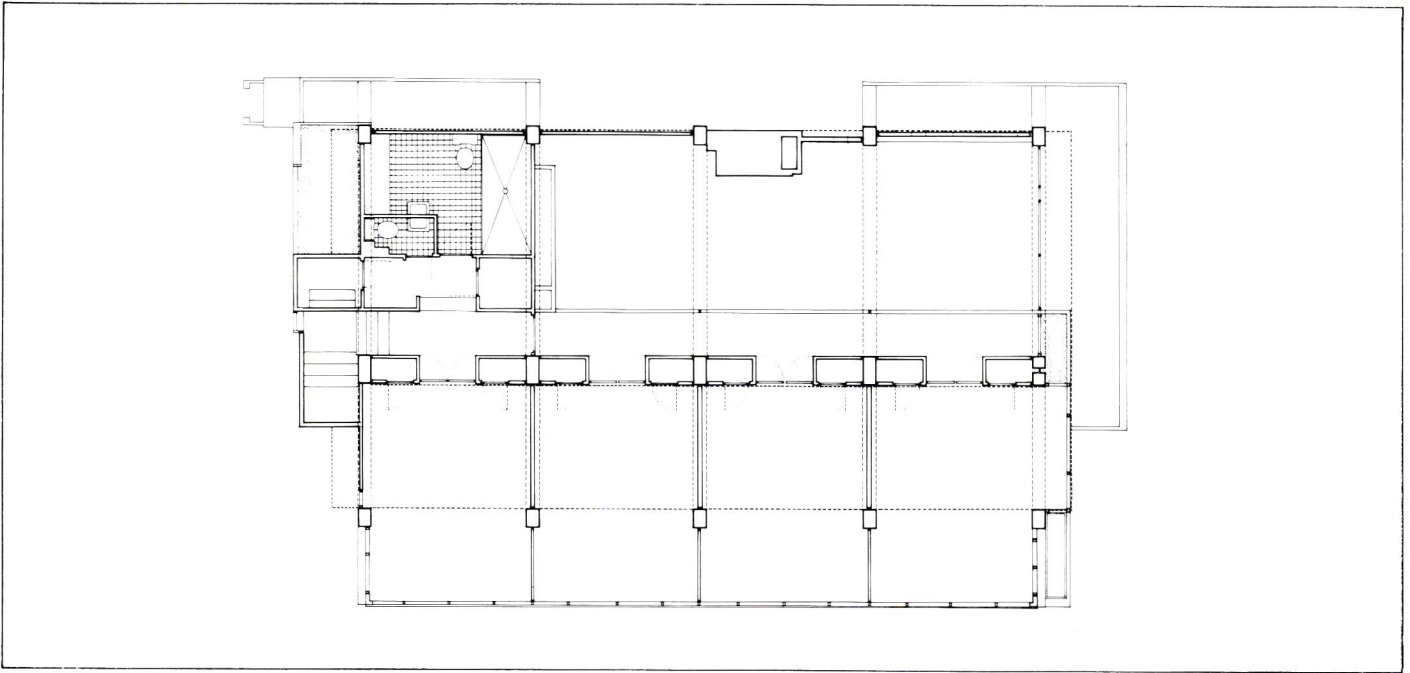
7–9 Lovell Beach House, Newport
Beach, California. R. M. Schindler,
1926.
7 East-west section.
8 North-south section.
9 North-west axonometric.

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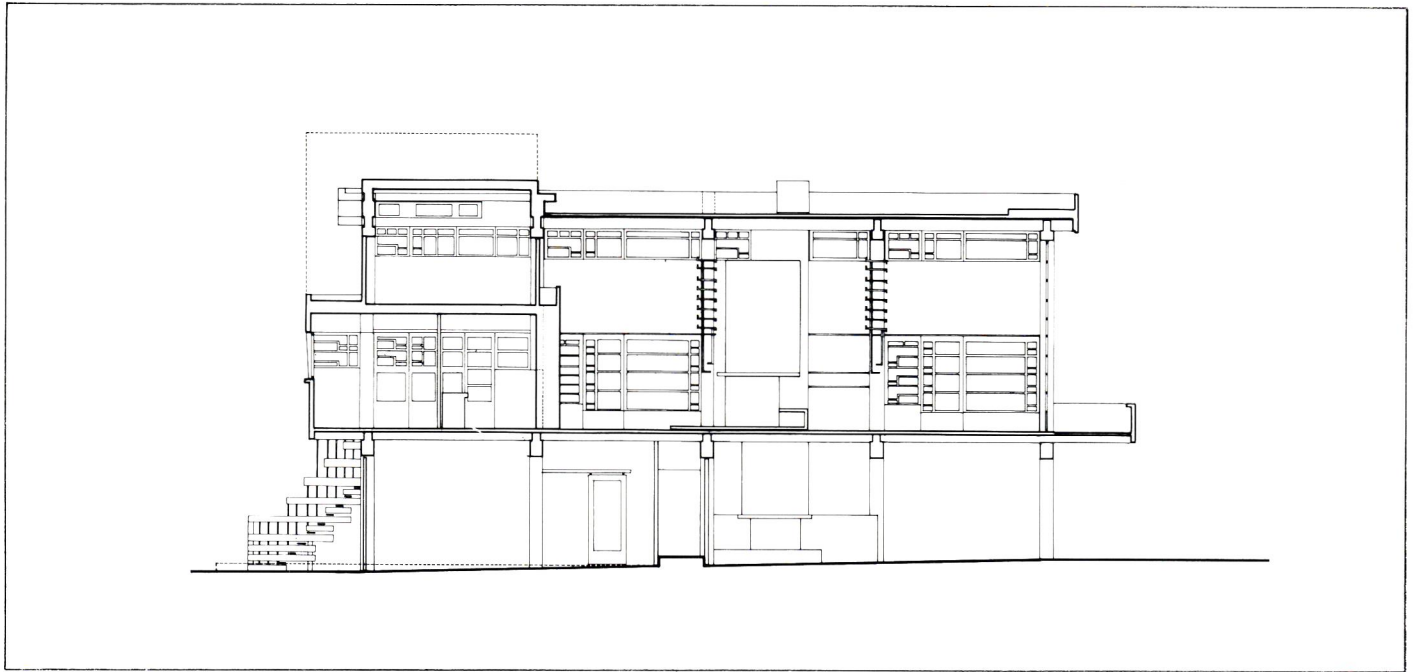
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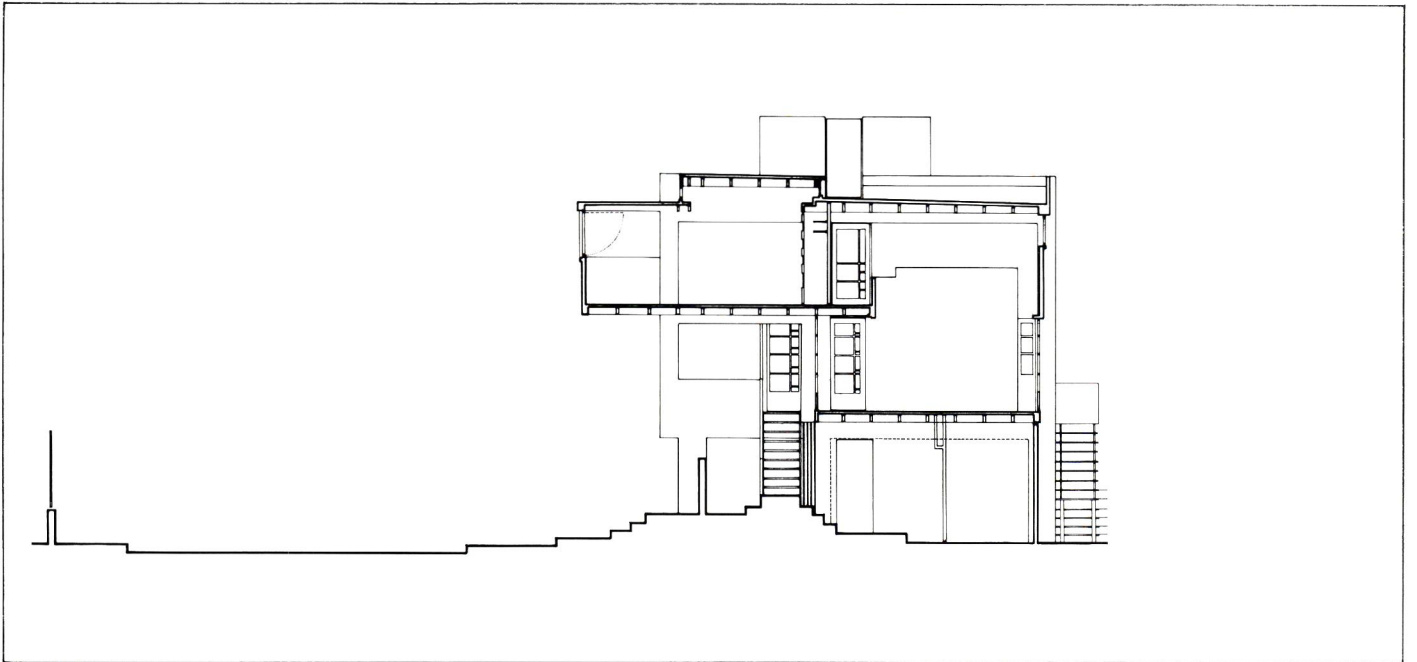
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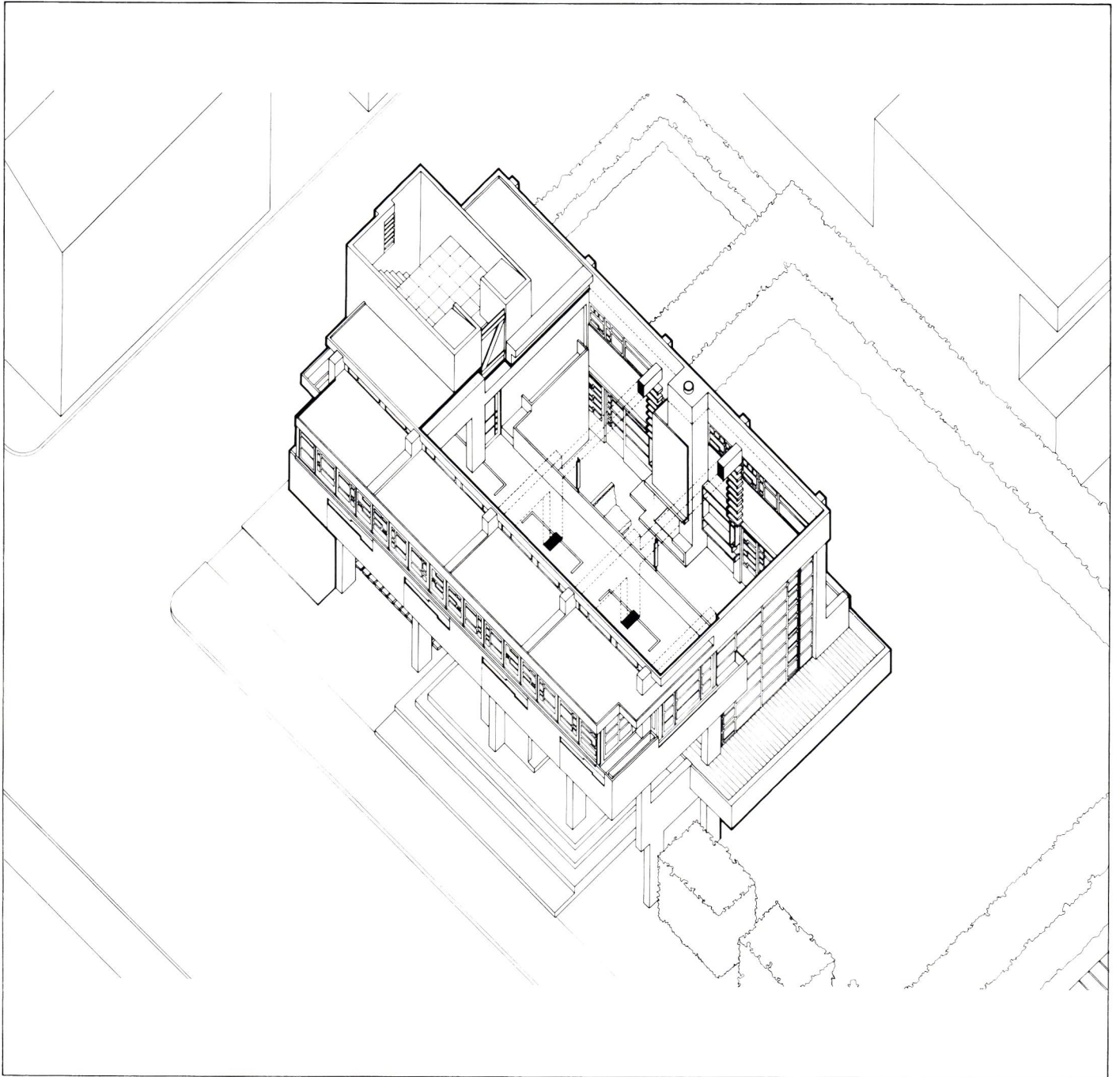
10–13 Lovell Beach House, Newport
Beach, California. R. M. Schindler,
1926.
10 North elevation.
11 South elevation.
12 West elevation.
13 East elevation.

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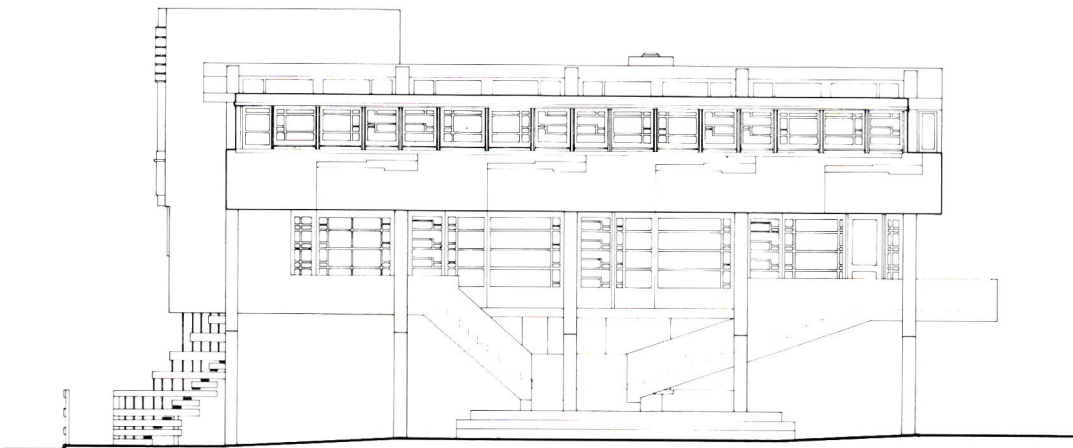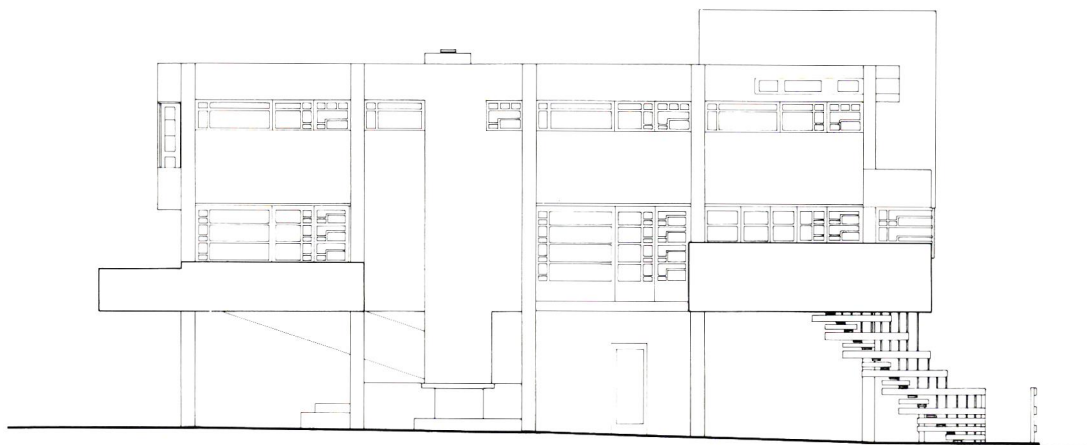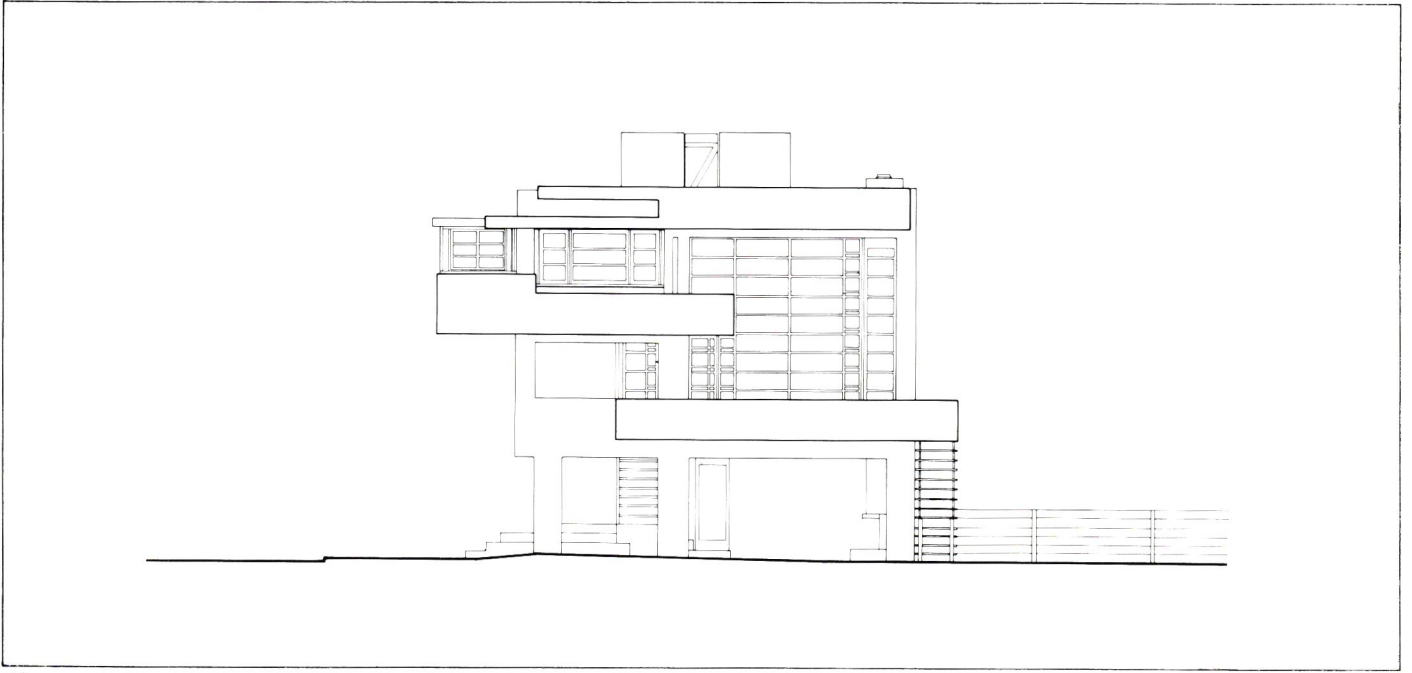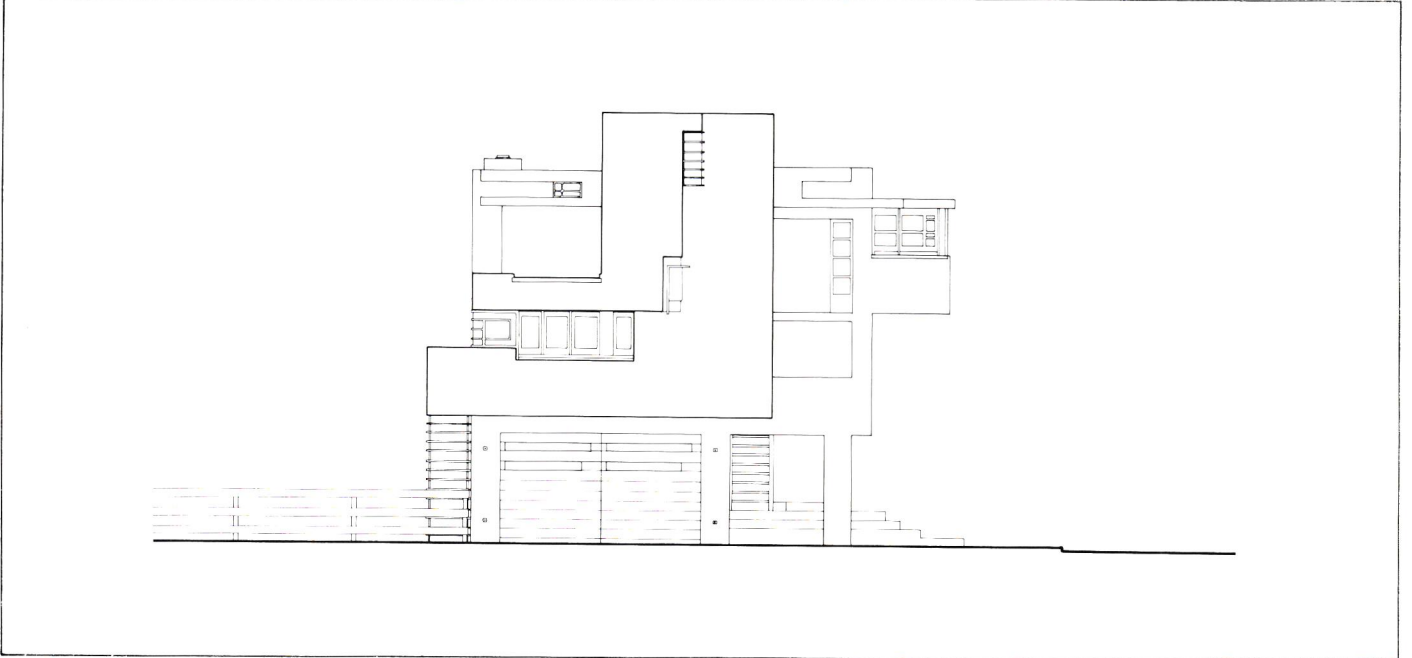
70 *14–18 Lovell Beach House, Newport Beach, California. R. M. Schindler, 1926.*

14 In this series of sketch perspectives the parti of the building is transformed into a complete image. The five, gray, regularly-spaced concrete piers become the armature against which the white stucco and glass edges of the rooms of the house are asymmetrically juxtaposed. The horizontal continuities of the four corners and the deep layering of the facades generate a reading of extraordinary plasticity. One recognizes the component public and private rooms of the house in contextually appropriate places. The overall reading of massive, floating volumes bounded by brittle skin creates an uncomfortable sense of visual and constructional instability. This is an architecture about space, therefore volume and surface, and not about structure and mass.
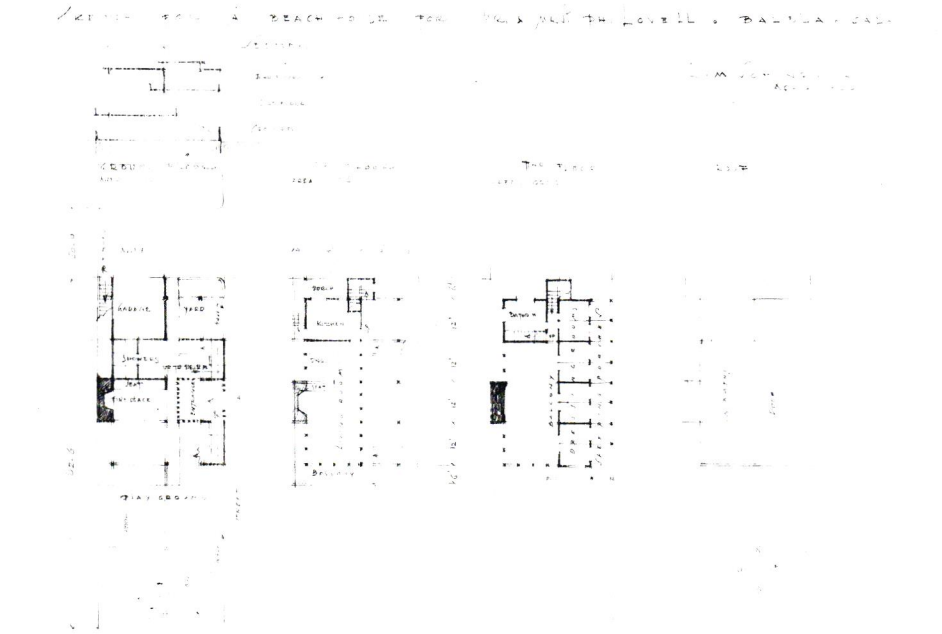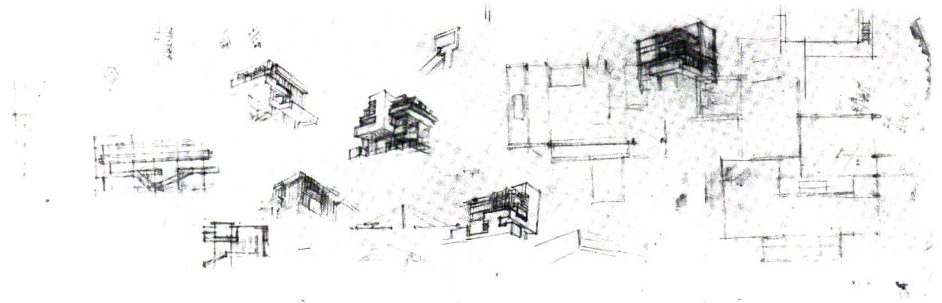
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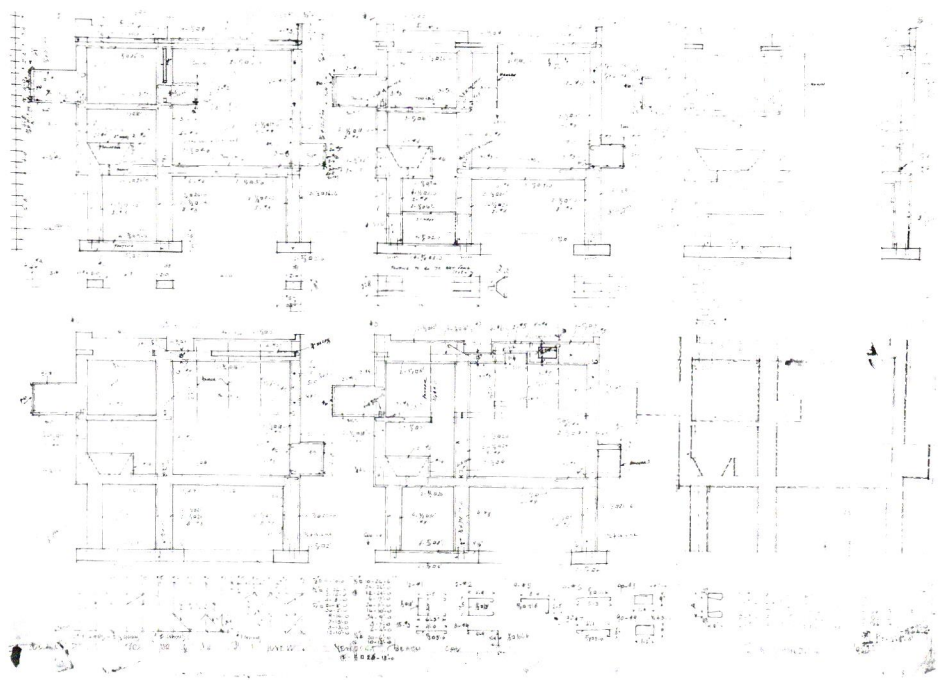
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15 The earliest parti sketch for the Lovell Beach House. Pencil on yellow tracing paper, 1926.

16 The idea of the building is based on the definition of five concrete frames connected by wooden infill. The frames were conceived as ideally equivalent elements. This structural drawing indicates the distortions of shape that were induced in their design when structure became realized as bearing material, space definer, and support for exterior and interior spaces.

17 The door and window schedule of the house illustrates Schindler's capacity to deal with compositional resonance at the level of architectural component. It also suggests that craftsmen of considerable skill were involved in the fabrication and installation of these pieces.

18 In this drawing of the plan and elevation of the bedrooms and sleeping porches it becomes clear that furniture—both built-in and freestanding—was considered an indispensable aspect of the order of all rooms. Vertical and horizontal datums control all dimensions as a way of relating all objects within the building to each other.
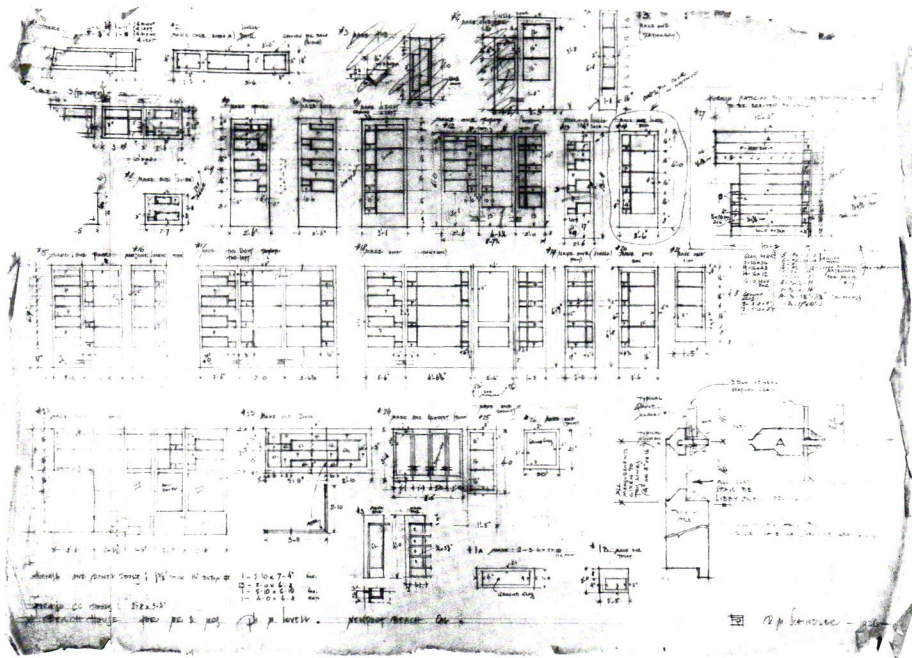
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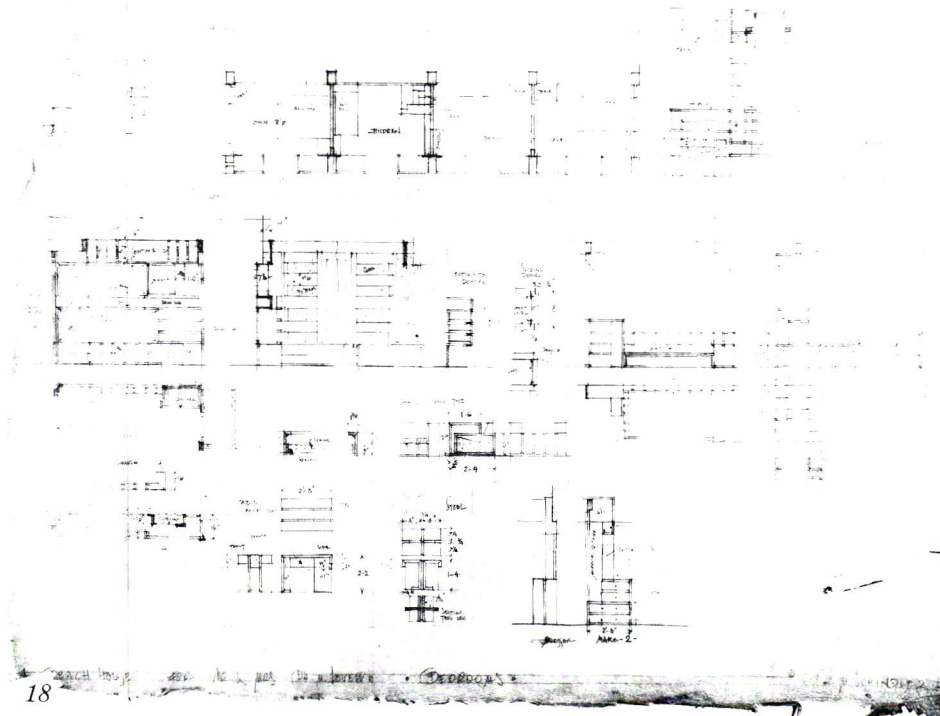
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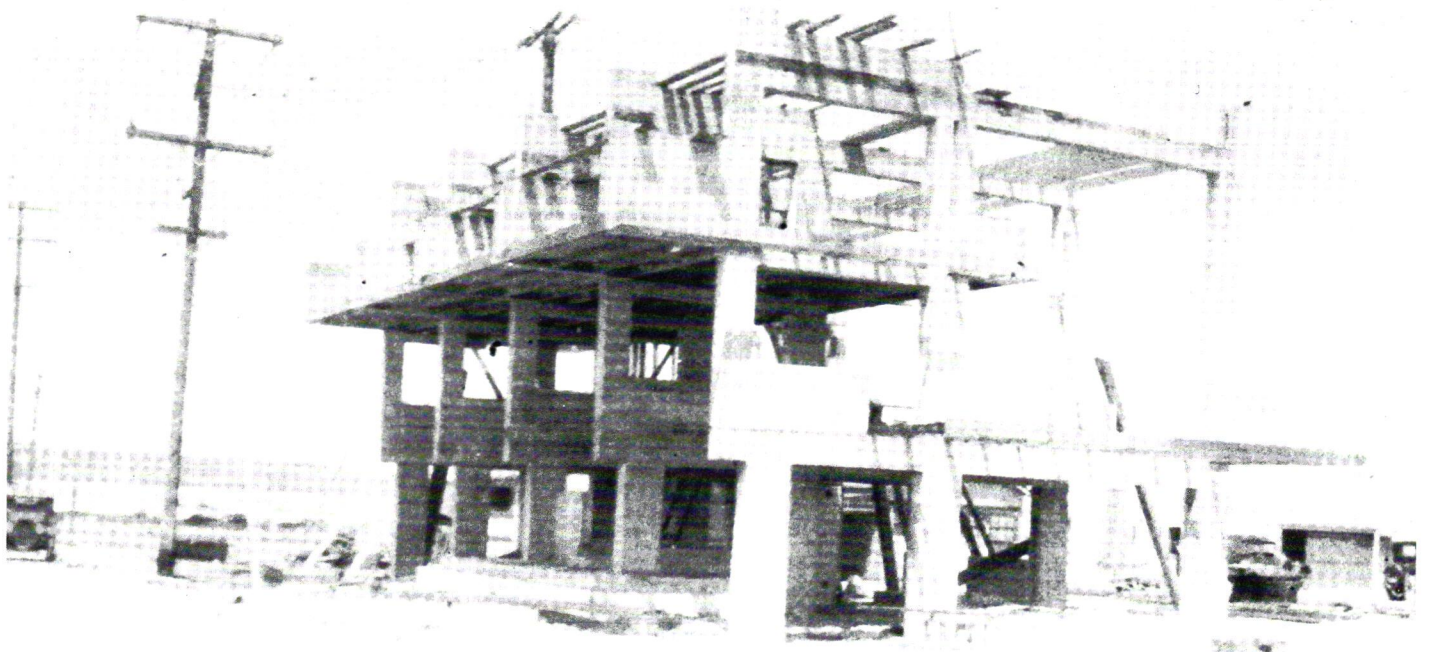
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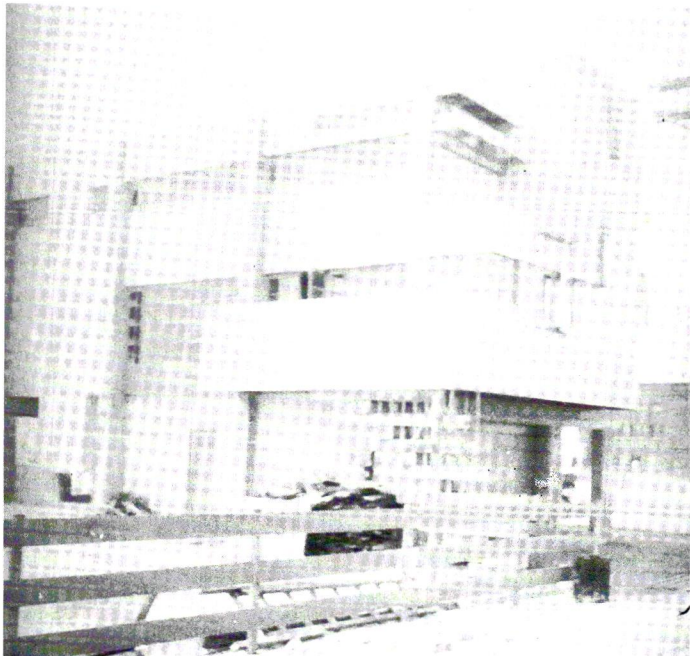
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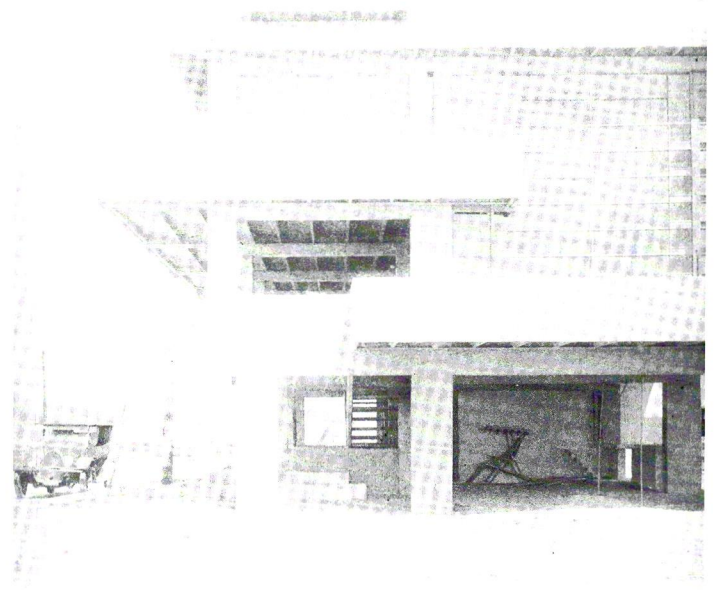
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19–21 Lovell Beach House, Newport Beach, California. R. M. Schindler, 1926.
19 A 1926 construction photo, later published by Neutra in his 1930 book Amerika.
20, 21 These 1926 photos of the just completed building show it sitting on a continuous ground of sand. The Lovell Beach House was one of the very first buildings built on the Balboa Peninsula. In the absence of a pre-existing urban structure, its capacity to respond to future contextual conditions is almost prophetic. Unfortunately, the leads that are incorporated in its form— the arcade on the street, the picture window on the beach view, the roof garden offered to the sky, the garage and service rooms collected on the alley—were largely ignored by subsequent neighboring buildings. In the two photographs, the dominant horizontal datums, the living room balcony, the sleeping porch, and the kitchen porch with its neoplasticist wooden tensile stair appear in their original condition.
22 R. M. Schindler (right) in the garden of his Kings Road studio c.1926 with Richard Neutra, Dione Neutra, and their son Frank Lloyd.

22

"Care of the Body"
Los Angeles Times, 14 March 1926

Rudolph M. Schindler

74 *Los Angeles is truly a city of homes. I know of no other city in the world in which the people are so excellently housed. Notwithstanding our splendid type of architecture, there is much, very much to be sought, not only in the realm of beauty but also in the realm of health.*

When we consider that we spend at least half of each day's hours in the home, the importance of building a structure for health purposes is evident. In the past, such elements as beauty, convenience, and comfort have played the dominant parts. Houses for health are even yet relatively unknown.

Health is more than a question of comfort. Too seldom one can find an architect or builder with views large enough to embrace not only beauty, convenience, and comfort but also fundamental health principles.

For a long time I have desired to publish a series of articles governing the technical aspects of house construction and its relationship to health. Now Mr. R. M. Schindler, an architect of wide experience, both here and abroad, will give his version of this question. Mr. Schindler's views on house construction are of a daringly liberal kind. Our entire architecture would be changed to conform to a greater utility and to a larger purpose were we but to follow his teachings.

I have asked him to write other articles on the various aspects of house construction. If you contemplate building a home, it will be well worth your while to read these articles as they will give many practical pointers of an exceedingly valuable nature. They will cover the subjects of ventilation, plumbing, heating, lighting, furniture, and finally, shelter or playground.

Every one of these elements has a fundamental relationship to health. Treated in a novel and interesting fashion by Mr. Schindler, they should prove of great value to those who contemplate building.
Dr. Philip Lovell, editor

Ventilation
Although the old cultures of the Orient have developed a deep understanding of the physiological aspects of human breathing, the truths about proper physical conditions of the air for our breath are new and largely unknown.

Remainders of the old animal instincts for safety and religious prejudices against the night air led to the pernicious but widespread custom of closing the house up tight at sundown. The pursuant use of incense and perfumes is proof of the infantile stage of ventilating habits.

As long as we use directly the immense reservoir of air the out-of-doors provides, no problem of air supply arises. If, however, a portion of this body is enclosed in a room, conditions change entirely. The air in the room will be changed, chemically, physically, and bacteriologically through the exhalations of the inhabitants and objects in the room until it is entirely unfit to sustain life.

This enclosed body of air is not of even consistency, but arranges itself in layers according to its temperature and density. The moisture released through our breath and our skin tends to rise toward the ceiling, and forms a layer of invisible clouds. The carbon dioxide produced in our lungs, on the other hand, is heavier than clean air, and sinks to the floor. It is, therefore, evident that proper

constant ventilation necessitates exhaust openings to the outside near the ceiling and near the floor, whereas the pure air should be allowed to enter at the height of its level of density.

The usual open window creates a current of air through the room which does not efficiently affect the layers of air above the level of its lintel, below the level of its sill, and in the corners of the room. This startling fact has its parallel in the warm or cold water currents of the ocean, which are able to transverse distances of thousands of miles without mixing very much with the surrounding fluid. If such localized currents of air through a room attain very noticeable speed we call them "drafts."

To breathe polluted air most of the time, only to get a few wafts of fresh air for short periods by opening a window or two, is an unclean procedure. The lack of tightness of the average window or door is a life-saving feature, and the advent of the modern metal weather strip a real menace, provided no other means to obtain a constant and diversified ventilation is provided.

The problem of ventilation is, therefore, to change the air slowly and constantly as a body with avoidance of localized drafts and stagnant air pockets.

The house of the future will abandon the present window and provide separate systems of openings for air and light.

The old superstition that rooms must be high in order to be wholesome is obsolete. Instead of a high room with a few half-height windows at one or two sides, the rooms should be low, with small openings at all sides and levels, building the whole house on the principle of a basket. If these openings are formed in such a way as to reduce the velocity of the air sufficiently, we shall have a constant and not noticeable exchange of air through the whole house.

The moving force for this exchange will not be the violent localized differences of temperature used theretofore, but a much more efficient horizontal movement caused by wind, differences of density, and barometric pressure.

An important impediment to good ventilation is our method of using the air as a vehicle for heat transference. In order to heat a room sufficiently it is really necessary to stop ventilating it. An entire new scheme for heating will have to be developed; of this I shall speak later.

Contrary to the custom of our ancestors, we are more and more aware of the beauty and healthfulness of sleeping out of doors. The bedrooms are slowly degenerating into dressing-rooms and our beds are placed on an open porch. But still there are architects who think they may enhance the "homey" appearance of a house by fitting it out with the old criminal wooden shutters, and reminding us of the resultant wonderful bedroom "atmosphere" which must have oozed through their perforations.

The basement is another insane reminder of past limitations. Why anyone should build such an expensive, unventilatable, moist, dark room in the ground is not understandable. By means of a thin layer of heat-insulating material, any room above the ground may be made as heat-proof as the basement.

The city planner has not even begun to think about his problem of ventilation. The present city street is absolutely unfit to form a proper channel for the air supply, and is only inhabitable through various uncontrolled conditions.

Although the new law for terracing the skyscraper helps ventilation indirectly, the frequent eddies and whirls in our streets, made apparent by the dust raised, show the failure of our city system. However, there is hope that by the time the growth of cities will have intensified this problem beyond the bearable, we shall be ready to abandon the form of social grouping altogether.

76 *Plumbing and Health*

The first attempt at plumbing is the rule-of-camp of all primitive social groups, to reserve the water of the neighboring brook for drinking purposes, and to do washing and bathing after it has left the settlement.

This "close-to-the-water" tendency of the primitive is strangely in contrast with the customs of our cultural ancestors in medieval Europe. Intense crowding, compelled by social conditions, polluted streams and wells. Sanitary considerations and taste led more and more to the constant use of artificial beverages like wine, beer, milk, and other water substitutes. Infrequent bathing and its consequences, on the other hand, compelled the use of strong perfumes, powder, and rouge.

The abundant water supply which our modern cities provide has changed our customs of washing and drinking completely. Furthermore, it makes it possible to liquefy the waste matter to a degree which leads to an efficient and sanitary removal of sewage. This does away with the dangers of decay in our immediate surroundings, and it will, in the end, eradicate unreasonable fear of our drainage system.

A modern, smooth, tile sewer, properly graded and ventilated, is an entirely sanitary tube. If the pipe is well ventilated by being carried into the open above each roof, the air in it is freer of dust and germs than is that of our city streets. However, to prevent this air from entering our rooms, American cities prescribe elaborate backventing systems which form the one unsanitary feature of the scheme. The multiple connections with the dry ventpipes provide unflushed pockets for stagnant waste matter, and invite decay.

The plumbing system of the future will use traps which may not easily be siphoned, but which will do away with all ventpipes. It will try to preserve a uniformly smooth interior for the drainage pipes, keeping them sufficiently small in diameter to insure a complete high velocity flush at every use.

Although the material of modern plumbing fixtures is developed very highly, their forms are not free from the influence of the past. Both washbowl and bathtub are fixtures designed for infrequent use, and in view of a limited water supply.

The principle of leaving one's body in stagnant water which has been polluted by the cleansing process is not sound. It is further impossible to keep washbowl and bathtub entirely clean, or to prevent the water from coming into contact with stoppers, overflow pipes, and the like, which have been soiled by preceding use.

With the possibility of drawing water of any temperature and mixing it with soap and other ingredients before it leaves the

faucet, it will be feasible to use flowing water exclusively. Both bathtub and washbowl will be replaced by fixtures built on the shower principle.

The toilet bowl will have to be lowered for physiological reasons, and should be cleaned by an efficient noiseless flushing valve.

Instead of being crowded into the smallest possible space, the bathroom will more and more assume the spaciousness due to a room for physical culture. It will have the largest window in the house and be adjoined by porches for sunbaths and gymnastics.

The respectable "Saturday night" bath has developed into showers taken at least daily. It is natural that this change of attitude toward the cleanliness of our body will reflect on our attitude toward our clothes. Most of our textiles are still designed on the astounding principle that they should not "show the dirt." The washing machine should make it possible to develop the spasmodical "dry-cleaning" into a condition of more constant cleanliness. It will only be necessary to do away with all the ugly cuts, seams, buttons, and fasteners, which make the present cleaning process such a chore for an expert, and to use, as much as possible, textiles which need not be pressed at all.

These points indicate the tremendous significance of the

"plumber" in our lives, and in the effort to make them enjoyable without the necessity of getting "drunk" on substitutes for clean water.

78 *About Heating*

Civilization is, to a large degree, a result of the success of the human race in adapting itself to varying conditions by means of its inventive imagination instead of physical development. So, instead of growing a fur in order to meet rigorous climatic conditions, men have invented looms and the elaborate heating systems of our buildings.

If we make a campfire in the open, we are careful to select a place which affords some protection to our backs. Only the direct heat radiation of the first serves for comfort. The air warmed by the flames escapes unused. All the heating systems developed since try to use the air as a vehicle for heat transference, and in consequence require a tight enclosure for our rooms, and insulation for our houses against the influence of outside temperatures.

Our time has developed efficient schemes for such insulation, effecting important changes in our architectural conceptions. The thick heavy wall has been abandoned and the room enclosures are designed subject to the principle of division of labor. The material which serves to insulate the house is separate and distinct from the one which forms the room and carries the roof. Being made with one purpose in view only, this insulating material is efficient enough to require but a very thin layer. As much as we may like them, the deep embrasures and jambs, thick adobe walls and their imitations are a thing of the past.

Their use is not possible in any honestly built house of our time, but relegates all such sentimental reminiscences into the category of misplaced stage settings.

The old attic, too, has lost its reputation as a heat protector for the house. The few dusty spiderwebbed vent openings in its side cannot prevent the attic from becoming a more or less enclosed volume of air, not fit for insulating purposes. In summer this air will heat up during the day and keep the house uncomfortably hot long after sundown. In winter the usually thin ceiling construction of the top floor cause a tremendous heat loss into the attic.

It is much cheaper and more efficient to insulate a single roof construction by means of a thin layer of insulating material against heat loss and provide the necessary cooling in summer by a horizontal air current right underneath the ceiling.

Incidentally our ability to produce heat or cold, at will, is one of the most revolutionary influences upon our cooking. By keeping supplies cool and avoiding the initial decay, it is possible to do away with all the strong seasonings and flavorings of our old recipes invented to cover up the lack of freshness of the food.

The fireplace has lost its main original purpose of heating the house and forms now an important nucleus

for social grouping in the room. As such it gives a natural center around which to compose the whole of the room formally. To do this by placing the mantel, as is usually done, in the center of the long wall, frequently flanked by doors, is misunderstanding the problem. The fireplace and its hearth should be moved toward a quiet corner out of the path of the traffic lines in the room, and have enough wall space flanking it to make a comfortable grouping of seats possible. Why builders should insist on topping the place of the fire with a mantel shelf on which to put the usually hideous, insignificant ornamentation is not understandable. The fire should be kept the feature of a restful 'fire place' and only things related to it belong in its immediate neighborhood. A clock especially seems superlatively inappropriate in front of anyone who wants to browse. The flame is one of the most enjoyable luxuries of our lives and only the most innocent will be satisfied to replace it by modern gas logs and such atrocities.

On the other hand, there seems no reason for the frantic attempts at covering up all steam or hot water radiators. Although it is desirable that the room should digest formally all appliances in it and become an organic unit, this can be achieved only by a few of the most skilful architects. Usually the radiator cover used is much less sightly than the radiator under it, at the same time spoiling its best efficiency and sanitary qualities.

Useful as our heating systems may be, however, their basic principle is faulty. To use the air as a vehicle for the heat necessitates tight enclosure of rooms and the overheating of portions of them. Anyone who has experienced the stimulating effects of a cool pure breeze on a sunny mountaintop and the length of a stagnant hot-air night in the tropics, will realize that the old campfire uses a much more wholesome method of heating than all of our complicated modern plants.

The house of the future will provide cool, clean, constantly changing air, but will keep us warm by means of direct heat rays emanating uniformly from the walls and the ceiling. The methods for such distributed radiating heat supply are still entirely undeveloped, but the heating engineer must sooner or later realize the need.

"Care of the Body"
Los Angeles Times, 11 April 1926

Rudolph M. Schindler

Primitive life is filled with fear and superstitions concerning darkness, in spite of the protection against enemies offered through it. The feeling of safety created in dusky dens still gives us the illusion of coziness in darkened rooms. This remembrance, however, is rapidly overcome by our understanding natural phenomena, the pacification of the world, and our strong feeling for outdoor life. The house is losing more and more the character of the den and changes into an open shelter against the rain.

The architectural consequences of this development are important. The window has ceased to be a small light opening in a heavy wall, but becomes a glass wall in itself. The basic architectural scheme of all traditional architecture, that is, to surround the window opening by large wall surfaces and by decorative frame designs, is now out of place. The traditional small pane of the times of primitive technic has been supplanted by the large sheet of plate glass, removing the bars between us and the "out-of-doors."

The double-hung window, with its ugly crossbar and its meager breadth, is being supplanted by the out-swinging, open-armed casement.

The same tendency has done away with the use of the colored glass and the heavy drape of the last century. The glare in the room is now being softened by light curtains—which must be real draw curtains, in order to obliterate the horrible window shade with its unsightly roller and its restless mechanism.

It is therefore evident that the development of the window from a furtive peek-hole into a means of living out-of-doors at will must make it impossible to apply traditional architectural styles without turning our present houses into caricatures. A new type of architecture is in the making.

A similar revolutionary change can be observed in our artificial lighting schemes. The primitive means of producing light, like oil, gas, etc., required an inconvenient concentration of the light source into an awkward fixture, hung of necessity in the center of the room. The electric light, on the other hand, permits free distribution of the light sources into all places where light is required. The stupidity of furnishing electric light by means of a chandelier can therefore only be surpassed by trying to make the bulbs look like candles.

A mistake in the opposite direction is very often made, however, by using the possibilities of the electric light to the extent of imitating the effect of daylight. The indirect lighting schemes, with their lighted ceilings, should be sparingly used in homes, where brackets and low standing lamps brought into contrast with the dusk are much more restful. It is important that the manufacturer perfect brackets which

are utilitarian and useful instead of producing a host of "ornamental" atrocities with imitation candles.

No room should ever be cursed by an outlet in the center of the ceiling. The use of plugs and movable lamps should be encouraged wherever possible. The popular pair of brackets placed on either side of the mantel is to be condemned. Anybody sitting in front of the fire will be distressed by their light and will require instead a reading lamp behind his shoulder.

If the center light should not be used in any room for the sake of its spaciousness and restfulness, it is entirely out of place in the bedroom. Anybody lying in bed will prefer a low-placed light rather than the glare of a fixture or lighted ceiling.

In general, the bulbs will require transparent shades to distribute and soften the light. In the dining room, however, some exposed direct rays will increase the sparkle of the silver and the lucidity of the glass.

In absolute contrast to this are all entrance halls. The eye which emerges from the dark outside should be welcomed by meeting only the softest indirect rays possible.

The tendency of the modern architect who understands his problems will be to distribute light sources as efficiently and usefully as possible. He will do away with all unnecessary gingerbread commonly called "fixtures" and instead make the source of light as unobtrusive and glareless as possible. The bulb shall become a friend and helpmate instead of remaining the ridiculously overdressed, flashy and tiresome lackey of yesterday.

"Care of the Body"
Los Angeles Times, 18 April 1926

Rudolph M. Schindler

The relations between home and health are such that their importance cannot be overestimated. We are what our environment makes us and if our environment is such as to produce excellent health, beauty, joy, and comfort, it will reflect immediately in our lives.

One of the most potent enemies in our struggle for a happier life is our inability to remain masters of our creations.

The furniture, originally conceived to adapt the house to a more comfortable use, has usurped our place in it. Our homes have become storage places for all kinds of "things" instead of affording us a sheltered space for living, which means movement.

The house will have to cease to squeeze us through narrow door jambs, to keep us dodging among pieces of furniture, to perch us on top of scaffolds. It must permit us to indulge in the free harmonious motions of a walking and resting animal, which we are.

The most important development leading to a saner way of furnishing is the mastering of the floor problem in our densely populated social groups.

The medieval street served not only as a passage but as a gutter, sewer, and garbage-disposal plant combined. It was no wonder that walking was not considered dignified and that even the floors inside the houses had no good reputation.

The furniture had largely a mission of cleanliness and everything was raised as high off the floor as possible. It is characteristic that the Japanese, who solved a less acute floor problem by the use of two sets of shoes, never developed furniture in our sense.

A physical and mental tendency "back to earth" is making itself felt strongly in this century. We are again able to sit on the floor without physical, and especially, without social discomfort.

The furniture is growing lower and lower. A modern table should hardly be more than two feet and two inches high, and a modern seat measures less than sixteen inches.

Our bodily positions, too, are losing their stiff, representational lines. It has ceased to be a sign of politeness to assume the most uncomfortable position possible in front of our friends. Instead of impressing each other with a series of conventional postures and manners, certifying good ancestors and upholding our social prestige, we are trying to relax together, as the only way of getting real human contact.

The abandoning of the use of the corset, physically and mentally, forces a similar development of the furniture. The difference between a stiff medieval chair throne and a

good, really modern, upholstered club chair is a difference between two worlds of thinking and motioning.

And this is the reason why the busy attempts of our antique dealers, the copying manias of our furniture manufacturers, and the "true to style" concoctions of our interior decorators are so ridiculous.

Another development of equal importance is the one "away from pattern." The decorative forms and colors on the textiles and walls of our ancestors had a definite meaning and the significance of writing. With the use of the letter-alphabet, we have lost all understanding for this type of communication, and the modern pattern is usually an incoherent play with senseless forms.

Our highly developed technic is enabling us to produce materials of such variety of color and texture that the pattern is entirely unnecessary to give interest.

A plain, well colored, modern floor covering is highly preferable to any Oriental or other patterned rug. Even a simple border will have the bad tendency to restrict the apparent size of the room.

Especially the wallpaper must lose all its "decorative" attempts to compete with vegetable markets. It should, as a matter of course, be the quietest, most neutral note in the room. We must lose our prejudice that any kind of scrawl, laboriously applied to a surface, enhances its value. On the contrary, an interesting plainness is the most difficult and most precious thing to achieve.

If a design or picture is good enough, a whole room should be devoted to it. Repetition or grouping with similar bad ones will not improve its quality.

Vases belong in the closet unless some branch is in need of water and support.

Curtains are a convenient means to regulate and vary the light entering through our windows, and not useless rags fastened and draped for the sake of decoration.

It must be the basic principle of all interior decoration that nothing which is permanent in appearance should be chosen for its individual charm, or sentimental associations, but only for its possible contribution to the room conceived as an organic entity, and a background for human activity.

Rooms furnished according to historical styles belong in museums or on the stage. Our modern way of living is developed and characteristic enough, and has the power to create its own style.

Care of the Body
Los Angeles Times, 2 May 1926

Rudolph M. Schindler

It is not enough appreciated how directly and clearly our attitude toward life is expressed through our houses. The peasant who is trying to build his house exactly like his father's modernizes it unconsciously. The architect, however, who does not work freely from memory, but who uses reproductions to help his imagination, is too conscious about his effort and creates dead replicas.

Our present houses are too strongly under the influence of the past and its outlook on life. Fear dictated originally the form and spirit of the house. The behavior of our ancestors was overshadowed by constant defense reactions against real and imaginary enemies. The emphasis of the historian upon war and its physical heroism proves the tremendous need to counteract these fear complexes.

No wonder that everybody's house was his castle, and that all rooms tried to appear comfortable by emphasizing their safety through their heavy walls, small windows, ponderous grilles, thick curtains, and dim light.

This spirit was only partly broken when the crumbling of the caste system started the lower classes on a period of social climbing. The house was and is a source of social prestige. The parvenu who had access to the front rooms of the aristocrat insisted that his home be historical in design, and that every one of his own rooms be a replica of the luxurious salon which impressed him.

The American house of today is entirely a product of this attitude. Neglecting to consider the changes in our mental and physical life, it tries to give social prestige by masquerading in outworn historical styles.

These changes, however, demand expression. The earth, the sky, and the neighbor, the curse of the past and the retribution of the future, have lost their frightfulness.

Our high mechanical development easily controls our living conditions. Our knowledge about our own bodies releases us from slavery, and Nature becomes a friend. The house and the dress of the future will give us control of our environment, without interfering with our mental and physical nakedness.

Our rooms will descend close to the ground and the garden will become an integral part of the house. The distinction between the indoors and the out-of-doors will disappear. The walls will be few, thin, and removable. All rooms will become part of an organic unit, instead of being small separate boxes with peepholes. How petty the attempt to erect each one of different materials and to decorate them separately in different "styles!" Each house needs to be composed as a symphony, with variations on a few themes.

Our present scheme of social life in which we drudge behind the scenes most of the time in order to present an "impressive" face for a few moments of company is outworn. In driving out the king, we have lost the careless instigator of fashionable social manners. Our own everyday actions must achieve the dignity of the past ceremonials. Each one shall create his own fashions—but only for himself.

Our house will lose its front-and-back-door aspect. It will cease being a group of dens, some larger ones for social effect, and a few smaller ones (bedrooms) in which to herd the family. Each individual will want a private room to gain a background for his life. He will sleep in the open. A work-and-play room, together with the garden, will satisfy the group needs. The bathroom will develop into a gymnasium and will become a social center.

A simplified cooking will become part of a group play, instead of being the deadly routine for a lonely slave.

The architect will try to divine the possible development of his client, and will design a building which may grow with him. The house will be a form-book with a song, instead of an irrelevant page from a dictionary of dead form dialects.

And life will regain its fluidity.

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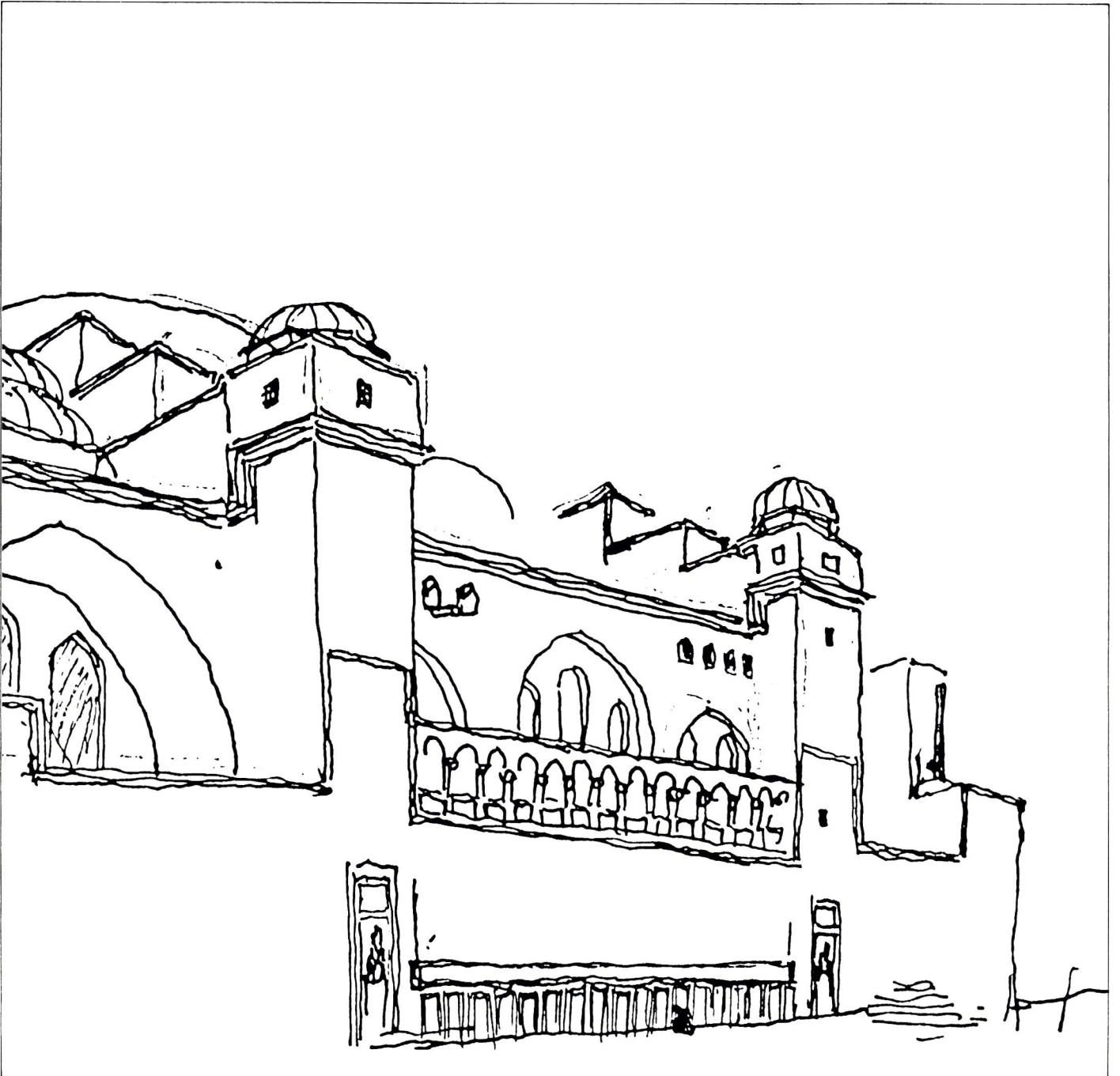
Of Le Corbusier's Eastern Journey

Ivan Žaknić

"Why do we make pilgrimages to beautiful cities if not to put gaiety into our mind and senses, if not to recognize by means of this witness in stone that man is capable of grandeur; and to feel in ourselves the joy that such a certainty gives us?"
Le Corbusier, Urbanisme, *1924.*

Fifty-four years separated the writing of *Le Voyage d'Orient* and its publication in book form. When this book was written there was little or no modern architecture; by the time it was published, there was nothing else.[1] Le Corbusier often referred to this period, and in spite of his doubts about the validity of the text and the manner in which he had articulated his early impressions, he was the first to acknowledge that it was for him a period of discovery. This "journey to the East" was to be of the utmost significance for his subsequent career, as he wrote later in his confessions,[2] the expedition was "decisive."

With no previous academic training of the type prevalent in the French *écoles des beaux-arts* (of which he spoke with scorn), he chose to educate himself.[3] From the year 1900, when at age thirteen he entered the art school of La Chaux-de-Fonds, to the year 1907 when he left it in order to travel for the first time, he underwent the strict and narrow training of a watch-case engraver.

Books played a very important role in shaping his education and his philosophy—more so than he liked to admit. At one point, he claimed that only the Bible, Cervantes, and Rabelais had influenced him.[4] However, his personal library at that time, now at the Fondation Le Corbusier in Paris, contained a number of influential books, often underlined and annotated.

In May 1911, not yet twenty-four, Charles-Edouard Jeanneret suddenly decided to leave for a trip to the East. With his knapsack on his back, some money from his first commissions in his pocket, and accompanied by his art student friend Auguste Klipstein, he embarked and was "on the road" for eight months.[5] On foot, by horseback, carriage, train, and river steamer he went, responding to what he called "the persistent call of the sun, of the great outlines of the blue seas and the great white walls of the temples, . . ." across the flat open country and the well-known cities. He went from Berlin to Prague and then to Vienna, through the plains of Hungary, across Serbia, Bulgaria, and Rumania to Asia Minor. In Constantinople, Athens, Pompeii, and Rome, he attempted to grasp "the birth of Art, the reason of Art, the place of Art. . . ."[6] Having known the fashions of Paris, Vienna, Berlin, and Munich, and already skeptical of their superficialities, he was now prepared to surrender to that persistent Mediterranean call. There he saw the great eternal monuments, the glories of human creation. Architecture was revealed to him as "the knowing, correct, and magnificent play of masses brought together in light . . . a coherent system of the spirit."

No particular reason or plan for undertaking this long and important voyage of discovery is known. But he was to always identify himself strongly with his French-Mediterranean origins, even though he was born in the Jura Mountains of Suisse Romande. This affinity for the South appears somewhat odd considering the prevailing topographical features of the two regions and the temperamental differences between northern and southern Europeans. However, the mystique of the South to which Jeanneret had succumbed was apparently influenced at least in part by two books which he read prior to the trip: John Ruskin's *Mornings in Florence* (1907) and Alexandre Cingria-Vaneyre's *Entretiens de la villa du Rouet* (1908).

The Ruskin text had accompanied him on his first journey through Italy in 1907. Cingria-Vaneyre on the other hand was the most extensively annotated of the books in his possession at that time. The subject of the *Entretiens* was a series of dialogues between some upper-class French-Swiss art-lovers, and the major theme was the need for creating an artistic identity in the Suisse-Romande, the most important single idea of the book being that "the true spirit of this region is Mediterranean, not northern, and that its art must be reoriented away from Germany and toward the Classicism of the Greco-Latin civilization."[7]
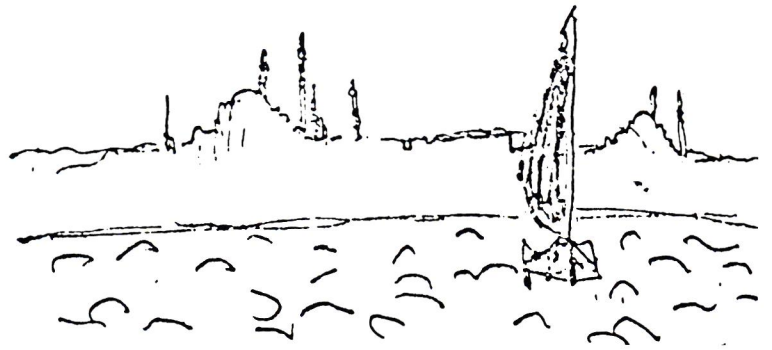
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88 Throughout this journey to the East which started in Berlin Jeanneret kept a diary, noting his impressions and executing many drawings. The collection of impressions, observations, and letters to his friends and classmates expresses personal attitudes in his own vivid language heavily enriched by strong adjectives and with admiration for the archaic classic, for peasant culture and anonymous peasant art.

It took several weeks for mail from the Balkans to reach La Chaux-de-Fonds. There, these articles were published in *La Feuille d'Avis*, the local newspaper, while he was still traveling. They amounted to the first half of the book. The remaining half, however, was not to appear in serial form, for on November 1 of 1911, Jeanneret returned to La Chaux-de-Fonds and discontinued publication, perhaps not wishing to see his strong impressions of Mount Athos and the Parthenon circulated in La Chaux-de-Fonds during the remainder of his time in the town.[8] However, he did not entirely abandon the idea of assembling these impressions, notes, and drawings, although World War I, together with other obstacles, prevented their timely publication, and the manuscript ended up being stored in his archives. The evidence would indicate that he contemplated their publication immediately after the war in a series to be undertaken with Amedée Ozenfant.

The collection, to be known as *Les commentaires sur l'art et la vie moderne*, and which began with *Après le cubisme*, was to contain *Vers une architecture* and works on painting, decorative art, and proportion, as well as an illustrated volume romantically entitled *Tilleul et Camomille*, which might well be conjectured to be a rather apposite reference to the text of *Le Voyage d'Orient*.

The fact that with this one exception all of the topics presented in the prospectus published in *Après le cubisme* were to appear shortly in the *Esprit nouveau* collection (*La peinture moderne; L'art decoratif d'aujourd'hui*) or in subsequent volumes separately authored by Ozenfant (*Foundations of Modern Art*) or Le Corbusier (*Modulor*) leads to the further speculation that if it actually was the original title for *Le Voyage d'Orient, Tilleul et Camomille*

was omitted from the series and subsequent publication. Indeed, it was suppressed until the end when it appeared as a final testament, precisely because it revealed too well the true romantic and poetic substance of Le Corbusier at a time when he and his cadre in *L'Esprit nouveau* were intent on projecting an altogether different view of architecture—not a more rational argument, but a polemic that could not at that time afford the possible embarrassment of romantic attachments to exotic ancient works and recidivist folk traditions.

In the years that followed, Le Corbusier frequently drew on this rich source for articles, essays, and drawings, which were published in *L'Esprit nouveau* and in *Almanach d'architecture moderne* and *L'art decoratif d'aujourd'hui*. A large part of *Towards a New Architecture* of 1923, his most polemical and influential work, articulated and formalized many of the important ideas and perceptions first formulated during this journey, supporting them with passages from the original manuscript, as well as drawings from his sketchbooks.

For Le Corbusier the "journey to the East" was not only a precursor to greater things but a necessary "preliminary sketch," rather in the same way that Beethoven's *Choral Fantasia* prefigured many of the themes of the *Ninth Symphony*. The idea of celebrating Schiller's *Ode to Joy* in music dated back to Beethoven's early years and he never wholly abandoned the project, despite the time that elapsed between its inception and fruition. In a similar fashion one could argue that the seeds implanted during these early travels remained in Le Corbusier and that later he would draw on this rich vocabulary so deeply engraved and stored in his memory.

Thus we find him writing in 1923 in *Towards a New Architecture* of his experiences in the East a decade before, "In Broussa in Asia Minor, at the Green Mosque, you enter by a little doorway of normal human height; a quite small vestibule produces in you the necessary change of scale so that you may appreciate, as against the dimensions of the street and the spot you come from, the dimensions with which it is intended to impress you. Then

you can feel the noble size of the Mosque and your eyes can take its measure. You are in a great white marble space filled with light. Beyond you can see a second similar space of the same dimensions, but in half-light and raised on several steps (repetition in a minor key); on each side a still smaller space in subdued light; turning around, you have two very small spaces in shade. From full light to shade, a rhythm. Tiny doors and enormous bays. You are captured, you have lost the sense of the common scale. You are enthralled by a sensory rhythm (light and volume) and by an able use of scale and measure, into a world of its own which tells you what it set out to tell you. What emotion, what faith! There you have motive and intention. The cluster of ideas, this is the means that has been used. In consequence, at Broussa as at Santa Sophia, as at the Suleiman Mosque of Stamboul, the exterior results from the interior." [9]

By the time that he wrote *Towards a New Architecture*, Le Corbusier, while still as emotionally involved in those experiences as ever, was capable of sublimating the romance of his first exposure to them, in order to put forth the cool rationalism of the "Esprit Nouveau" polemic with greater vigor and direction. Nevertheless, the Parthenon remained for him the measure of all Art and Architecture, the divine ideal and the absolute. Of the Acropolis, upon which he spent six weeks observing and sketching, he later wrote in the third person singular:

"The columns of the north facade and the architrave of the Parthenon were still lying on the ground. Touching them with his fingers, caressing them, he grasps the proportions of the design. Amazement: reality has nothing in common with books of instruction. Here everything was a cry of inspiration, a dance in the sunlight . . . and a final and supreme warning: do not believe until you have seen and measured . . . and touched with your own fingers." [10]

During this same *voyage d'Orient* Jeanneret wrote to his school friends of the peasant pottery he discovered in the Hungarian Balkans:

"The art of the peasant is a striking creation of aesthetic sensuality. If art elevates itself above the sciences, it is precisely because, in opposition to them, it excites the senses and awakens profound echoes in the physical being. "The jars were there, in their joyous dazzle and robust strength, and their beauty was comforting.

"You know those joys: to feel the generous belly of a vase, to caress its slender neck, and to explore the subtleties of its gable!

"The forms are expansive and swollen with vitality. The color, it too, is not as detailed as it is evocative, always symbolic. It is the end and not the means. It exists for the caress and for the intoxication of the eye and as such, paradoxically, with a hearty laugh, it jostles the great enmeshed giants, even the Giottos, even the Grecos, the Cézannes, and the Van Goghs! Considered from a certain point of view, popular art survives the highest of civilizations. It remains a norm, a sort of measure whose standard is man's ancestor—the savage, if you will." [11]

But above all, during this long voyage of discovery, Jeanneret drew constantly in pencil, ink, and watercolor, and hundreds of drawings executed during this journey reside today in the Fondation Le Corbusier. [12] Many of these sketches are undated, some undoubtedly have been lost, but Le Corbusier published a good number of them over the years as illustrations to the articles he wrote. For him, they were a repository of form and image from which he borrowed whenever he needed to because they had become a part of him. Of this process of experience and integration he wrote:

"When one travels and works with visual things—architecture, painting, or sculpture—one uses one's eyes and *draws*, so as to fix what is seen deep down in one's experience. Once the impression has been recorded by the pencil, it stays for good, entered, registered, inscribed. The camera is a tool for idlers, who use a machine to do their *seeing* for them. To draw oneself, to trace the lines, handle the volumes, organize the surface . . . all this means first to look, and then to observe and finally perhaps to discover . . . and it is then that inspiration may come. Inventing, creating, one's whole being is drawn into action, and it is the action which counts. *Others* stood indifferent—but *you saw*!" [13]

Thus in his sketches of Hadrian's Villa made in October
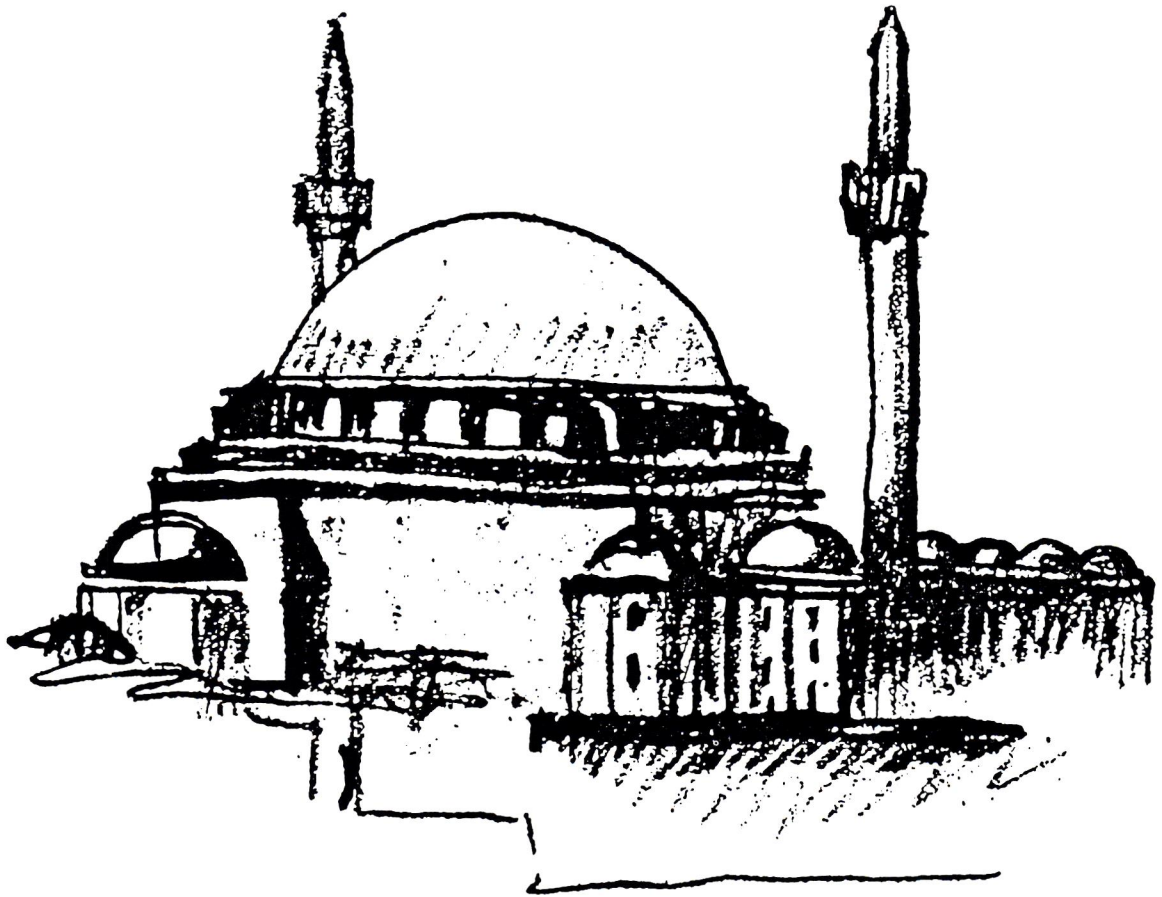
1911, he was to analyze the peculiar quality of the light, and forty-four years later he could return to this specific sensation and incorporate it into his design for the chapel at Ronchamp. Similarly, his visit of 1907 to the Carthusian Monastery of Ema at Galluzzo near Florence had made such an indelible impression on his sensibility that he returned to it once again at the end of his *voyage d'Orient*, to draw it and to record it once and for all in his repertoire of form and meaning. For apart from its plastic order the monastery represented for him the ideal form of communal life. He was to write: "I never thought to see such a joyous interpretation of dwelling."[14] Later, he was to admit that his visits here had influenced the direction of his entire life.[15]

Not until 1965, fifty-four years after the journey had been taken, did Le Corbusier finally decide to publish these impressions in a book which would testify to his doubts and discoveries as a young man. On July 17 of that year he finished editing the manuscript, and without resorting to any documentation he annotated and submitted it to Forces Vives for publication. He never saw it in print, however. On August 27, just over a month later, he died while bathing in the Mediterranean; the book did not appear until the following year.

Are we wrong to think of him as being on a further voyage of discovery, of his final failing as his eyes observed for the last time "the ever-changing ebb and flow of waves at play"?[16]

"O Freunde, nicht diese tone!
"Sondern lasst uns angenehmere austimmen
"und freudenvollere!"
Beethoven, Ninth Symphony (*chorale*)

1. This idea is expressed in the opening statement of Robert Furneaux Jordan, *Le Corbusier* (New York: Lawrence Hill & Co., Publishers, Inc., 1972), p. 1.
2. Le Corbusier, *L'art decoratif d'aujourd'hui* (Paris: Editions Vincent Fréal, 1924), p. 210.
3. One exception must be made here: Le Corbusier remarked that Charles L'Eplattenier, his master in the art school of La Chaux-de-Fonds and a man without formal background in architecture, had opened the 'door' of art for him.
4. One of the most important influences at the time was William Ritter, 1867–1955, a Swiss writer and art critic from Neuchâtel. Ritter became a mentor of the young Charles-Edouard Jeanneret. Through his books and personal correspondence he had a strong influence upon the itinerary Jeanneret chose for his Eastern journey. For more thorough coverage of Le Corbusier's early education see, Paul V. Turner, *The Education of Le Corbusier* (New York and London: Garland Publishing Inc., 1977).
5. From Stanislaus Von Moos, *Le Corbusier, l'architecte et son mythe* (Paris: Horizons de France, 1971), p. 29.
6. "Confession," in *L'art decoratif d'aujourd'hui*, p. 210.
7. Turner, *The Education of Le Corbusier*, p. 84. *Les entretiens de la villa du Rouet* was also published in *La voile latine*, winter 1906, in Geneva, an art magazine with strong patriotic undercurrents.
8. Idea expressed in a letter to the author of this article by the librarian of La Chaux-de-Fonds, Madame Hélène Augsburger, on January 4, 1979.
9. Le Corbusier, *Towards a New Architecture*, translated by Frederick Etchells (New York and Washington: Frederick A. Praeger, 1960), pp. 167–169.
10. Le Corbusier, *Creation Is a Patient Search*, translated by James Palmes (New York: Frederick A. Praeger, 1960), p. 21. (Here Le Corbusier speaks of himself in the third person singular.)
11. From *Le Voyage d'Orient*, pp. 13–15, selected fragments, translated from French by the author of this article.
12. The drawings from this period, similar to the description in the text, focus on overall geometry—the architectural mass, space, and volumes—and not on the superficialities of decorative detail and patterns which commonly preoccupied him during his earlier years, especially the 1907 trip to Italy.
13. From Le Corbusier, *Creation Is a Patient Search*.
14. From Le Corbusier, *Précisions sur un état présent de l'architecture et l'urbanisme* (p. 91), translation by the author.
15. This building from the fifteenth century, which Jeanneret referred to as a *cité moderne*, was especially influential on the design of the Dominican monastery of La Tourette at Eveux near Lyon, France, 1957–1960.
16. "A Tribute to Le Corbusier," *The Architectural Forum*, October, 1965, vol. 123, pp. 17–64.

The Mosques

Le Corbusier
Translation by Ivan Žaknić

92 One must have a quiet place facing toward Mecca. It must be spacious so that the heart may feel at ease, and high so that prayers may breathe there. There must be ample diffused light, so that there will be no shadows, and in the whole ensemble a perfect simplicity. A kind of immensity must be enclosed within the forms of the place. The ground must be more spacious than a public square, not for containing great crowds, but so that the few who come to pray may feel joy and respect in this great house. Nothing should be hidden from view: one enters and sees the immense square covered with mats of rice straw, golden and always new; no furnishings, no seats, but only a few low lecterns, bearing copies of the Koran, before which one squats. And at a glance one sees the four corners, feels their clear presence, and then builds the great cube perforated by small windows from which spring the four gigantic transverse ribs uniting the pendentives; then one sees the crown sparkling with the thousand little windows of the dome. Overhead is a vast space whose form one cannot grasp; for the half-sphere has the unique charm of eluding measurement. Innumerable wires hang down from above. Almost reaching the ground, they hold rods on which the little oil lamps are hung, a crystalline procession turning in concentric circles, presenting in the evening a glistening ceiling over the heads of the faithful. Within the girdle of the windows whose light is now extinguished, interminable, taut wires climb to the top of the dome and disappear in the obscurity of that immense space.

The *mihrab*, facing the entrance, is simply a gate to the Kaaba. It has neither protrusions nor body.

All these things are clothed in the majesty of a coat of whitewash. The forms stand out clearly; the impeccable construction shows all its boldness. Sometimes a high stylobate of delightful ceramic produces a blue vibration. Young Turks have been ashamed of the simplicity of their fathers, and all the mosques in Turkey, except the one at Broussa which was rescued by Loti,[1] have suffered the ignominy of repugnant and revolting painted ornamentation. If one is still to love them, one must work at it and really want to, as I have said. . . . In front of the sanctuary there must be a courtyard paved with marble and surrounded by a portico; pointed arches supporting small domes fall upon the antique green of porphyry columns. Under this portico there are three doors, one opening to the north, one to the south, and another to the east. In the center is the temple of water for ablutions, with its charming roof in the form of a kiosk and its twenty or forty open spigots set in marble panels under an enormous cylindrical basin that stands higher than a man. From the outside, the high walls of the courtyard form a rigid prism of bonded stones; the three doors open there under a cascade of stalactites. This prism is like the front feet of the Great Sphinx, which this mosque resembles sitting at night on the crest of Istanbul.

And then there must be a parvis, a deserted rocky space with a few cypresses. Paved paths lead to the doors of the mosque and toward the cemetery overgrown with weeds under age-old plane trees;[2] this cemetery is the counterpart of the courtyard on the other side of the sanctuary. A wall of cut stone, pierced by a thousand latticed bays, closes off the streets lined with caravansaries. Monumental gates as large as houses open directly onto the paved paths of the parvis. The caravansaries form a rigid quadrangle all around, and over their terraced roofs the multitude of little lead domes may be seen in alignment. These domes center, measure, and proportion themselves in relation to the sanctuary upon which they depend. For they enclose the schools of the imams[3] in courtyards shaded by arcades, rich with flowers and trellises, as well as the caravansaries with their superimposed double porticos, animated by the murmur of fountains.

Flanking the sanctuary, there must be tall minarets so that at hours regulated by the sun one may hear from afar the shrill voice of the muezzins chanting and calling the devoted to prayer. Impressive notes filter down from above. The city of wood lies all around. The white sanctuary, in its stone city, pushes up her domes on her great masonry cubes.

An elementary geometry orders these masses: the square, the cube, the sphere. In plan, it is a rectangular complex
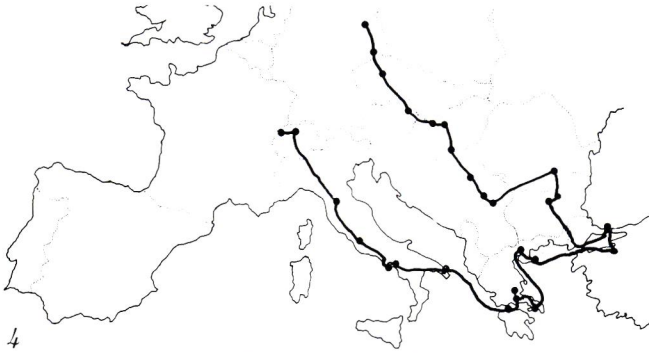
Itinerary of Le Corbusier's
Eastern journey of 1911: Berlin,
Dresden, Prague, Vienna, Vác,
Budapest, Baja, Belgrade,
Bucharest, Türnovo, Gabrovo,
Rodosto, Istanbul, Daphné, Bursa,
Athos, Solonica, Athens, Ithéa,
Delphi, Patras, Brindisi, Naples,
Pompeii, Rome, Florence, Lucerne,
La Chaux-de-Fonds.

with a single axis. The radiating of the axes of all mosques anywhere on Moslem soil toward the black stone of the Kaaba is an imposing symbol of the unity of the faith.

One evening, at the far end of Istanbul[4] near the Great Walls,[5] exhausted by so many comings and goings, I saw the dome and minarets of the Mosque of Suleiman[1] glowing in the murky twilight. I went toward it. In the streets, which also seemed tired from the day's swarming, the last Turks watched me pass by with astonishment: at sunset, Stamboul once again becomes wholly Turkish. People from Pera say, "Be careful, don't go there, don't stay there; they are barbarians, they will kill you!" I proceeded along a street overlooking vast vegetable gardens; then came the caravansaries, then the wall, then the open space with a few cypresses. Tombs encircled by their enclosure wall lean against the mosque, and türbes[2] are there too, as large as baptisteries. A high embankment wall plunges into the shadows; the Golden Horn loses its form in the night. And against the sky there is the black row of the great mosques. In the courtyard, the bubbling of the temple of water cannot be heard beyond the shadowy mists descending from the domed porticoes.

There are a few men with great dark robes performing their ablutions; then, one after another, walking across the marble paving stones, they lift by one corner the heavy door surbased with leather and red velvet under the trickling of the stalactites. In the sky, just before night hardens things, the emerald greens are flooded in indigo blue; it seems as though the great round bellies of the domes are throwing out the heat they have absorbed; these forms glow, green within a darker green, a majestic disk flanked by two shafts above the square of porticoes.

The door closes once again. A ceiling of stars expands out in concentric zones above the people praying. It is like a soft gauze made from the flickering of a thousand little lamps, and it makes the four squared walls of the sanctuary seem inordinately far away. The hum of pious voices rises through it and is transported ever higher into the forest of suspended wires where it fades away in the bosom of the dome. This imaginary ceiling of light, three

meters above the mats, and the immense area of shadows, which arches above it, are among the most poetic architectural creations known to me.

The faithful are in several rows in various places in the nave, their feet bare, and they bow down often, all together. They repeat "Allah" in a deep voice after the imam has uttered it from the gallery, after having waited for long-lasting seconds with their heads bowed down to the ground, or standing with their eyes beholding the mihrab and their hands folded in worship. Then one from the crowd begins to sing a credo in a sharp nasal voice like that used in the liturgy; the sounds, modulated along a horizontal line, are emitted in sudden spurts and then fall back mournfully, terribly sorrowful and melancholy. Then the faithful get up and leave.

When I went out, there were still a few of them in the darkness. One of them approached me and shook my hand; he laughed to himself because of our inability to communicate with each other and because of my air of vexation. The others came over and some of them also shook my hand. I left them and walked away toward the bridge. I knew that I would have to walk for two hours to reach home; I was happy in a silence filled with impressions.

The cut-stone enclosing walls to the cemeteries border this path, showing through their openings the sleep of all these tombs. How profuse are the temples of water here, whose fine-crafted beauty was ordained by the sultan donor who instituted the gift of water in this place for all eternity, so that one might venerate it! Here are the quadrangles of the caravansaries and the Sultan Mehmet[6] with its two rococo minarets and its huge dome, and then a gate closing off the courtyard. Two türbes—or a single one if seen in its prismatic form—mark the place where a sultan lies under his brocades, surrounded by the coffins of his wives; then even more cemetery walls appear. The somberness of the night is blackened by the aqueduct, a Byzantine specter which seems modern with its long form resembling a steamship perforated with portholes.[7] It leans against the Sehzade,[8] a strange mosque dominating several large tombs.

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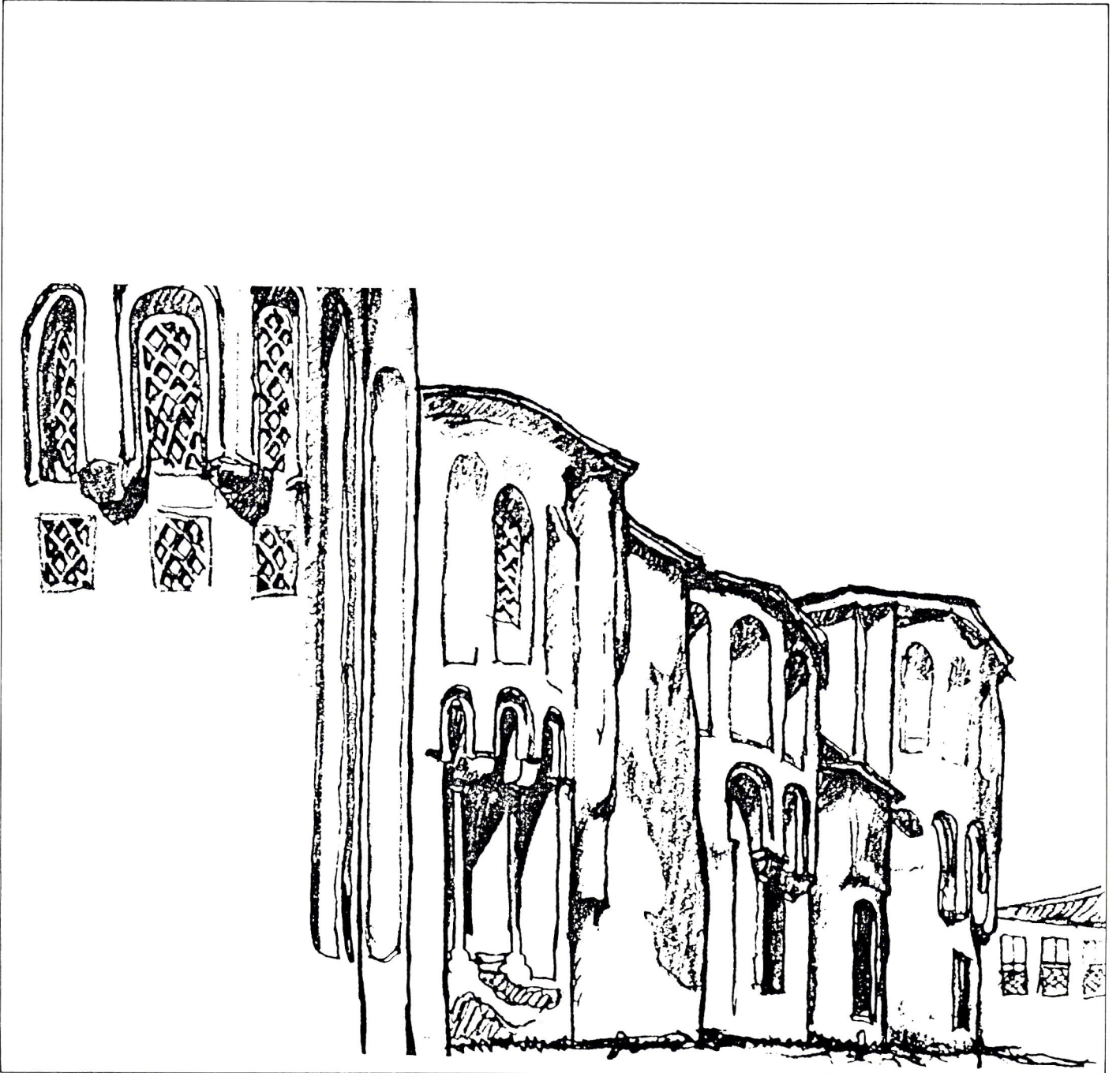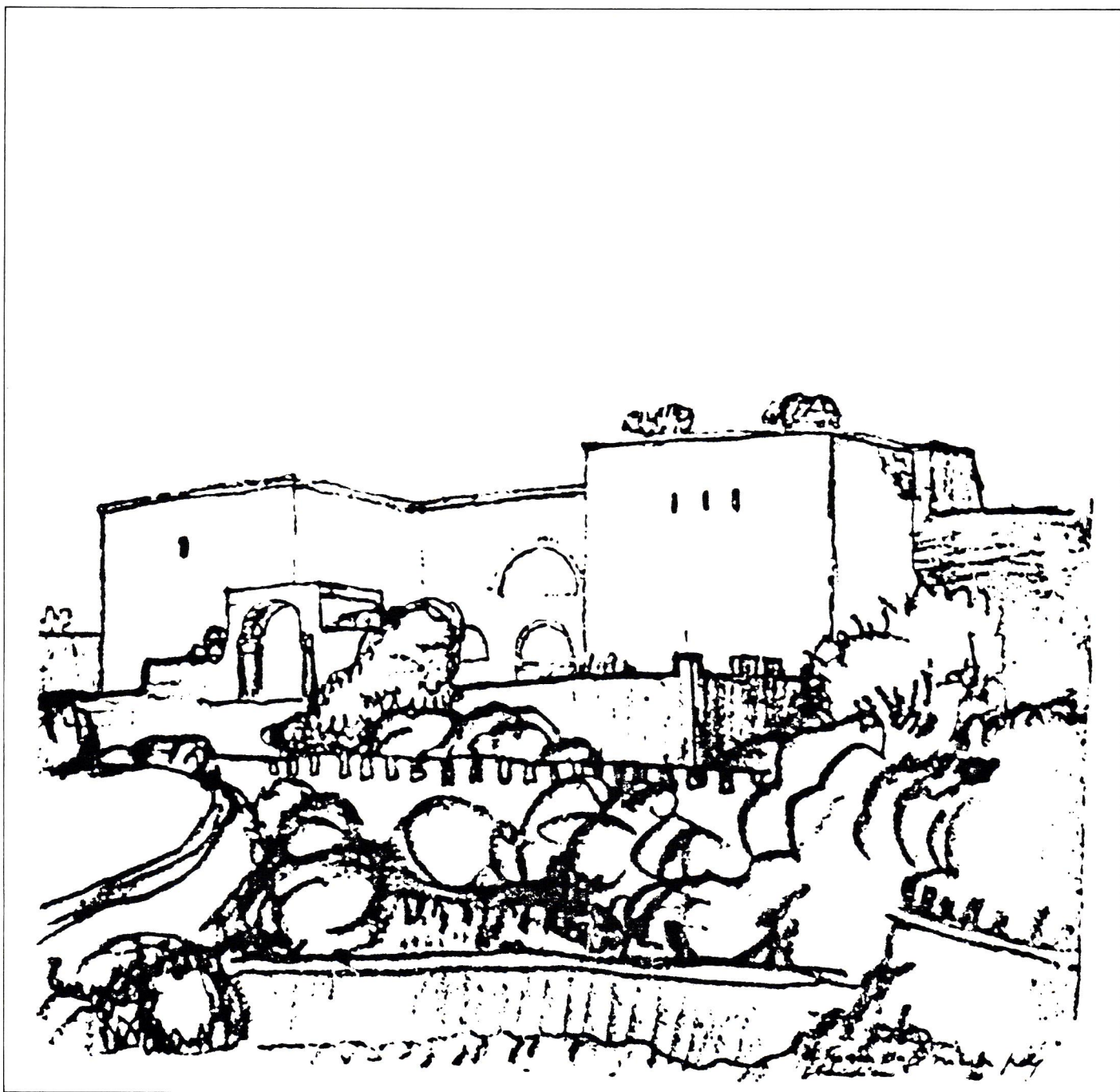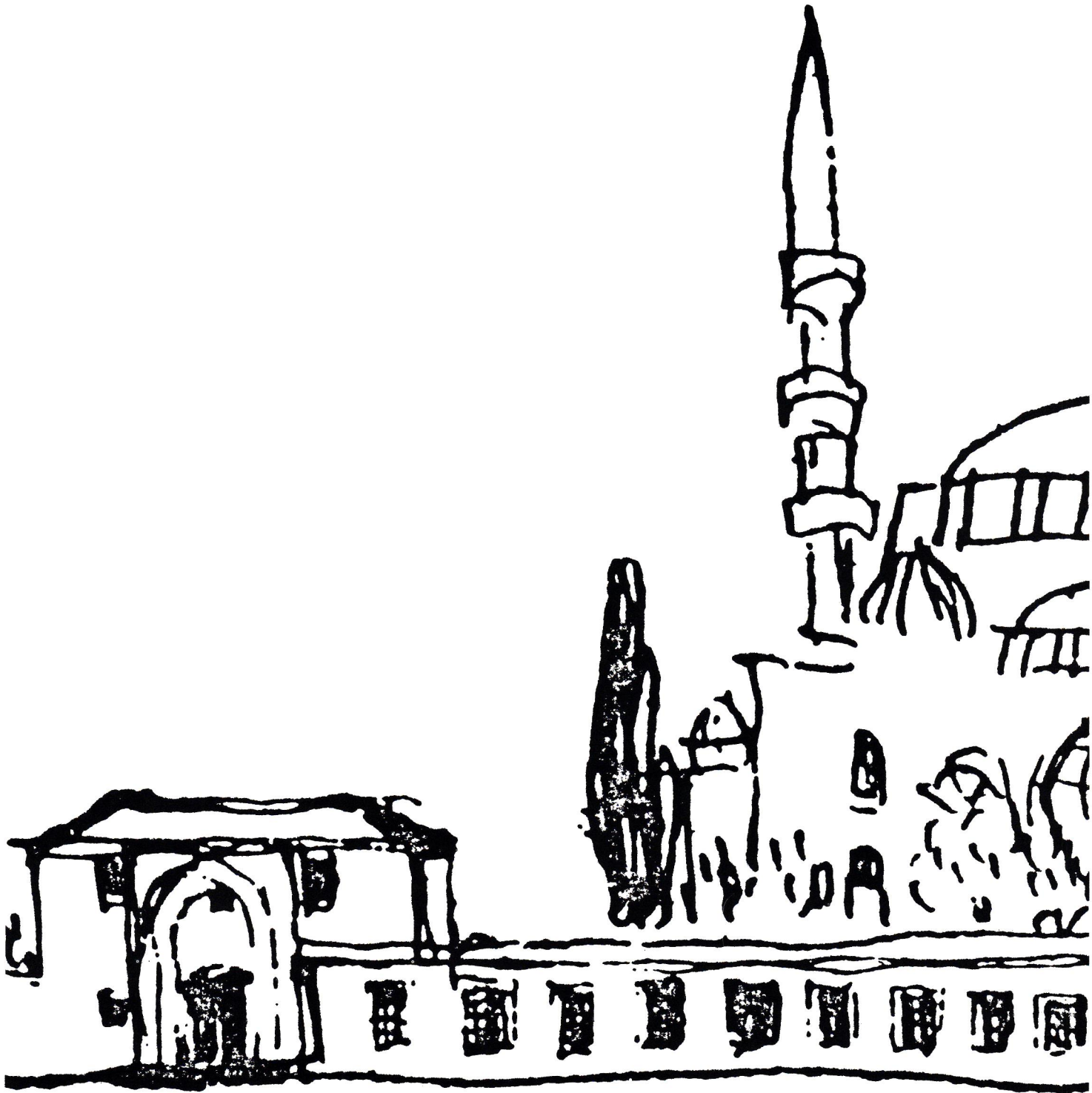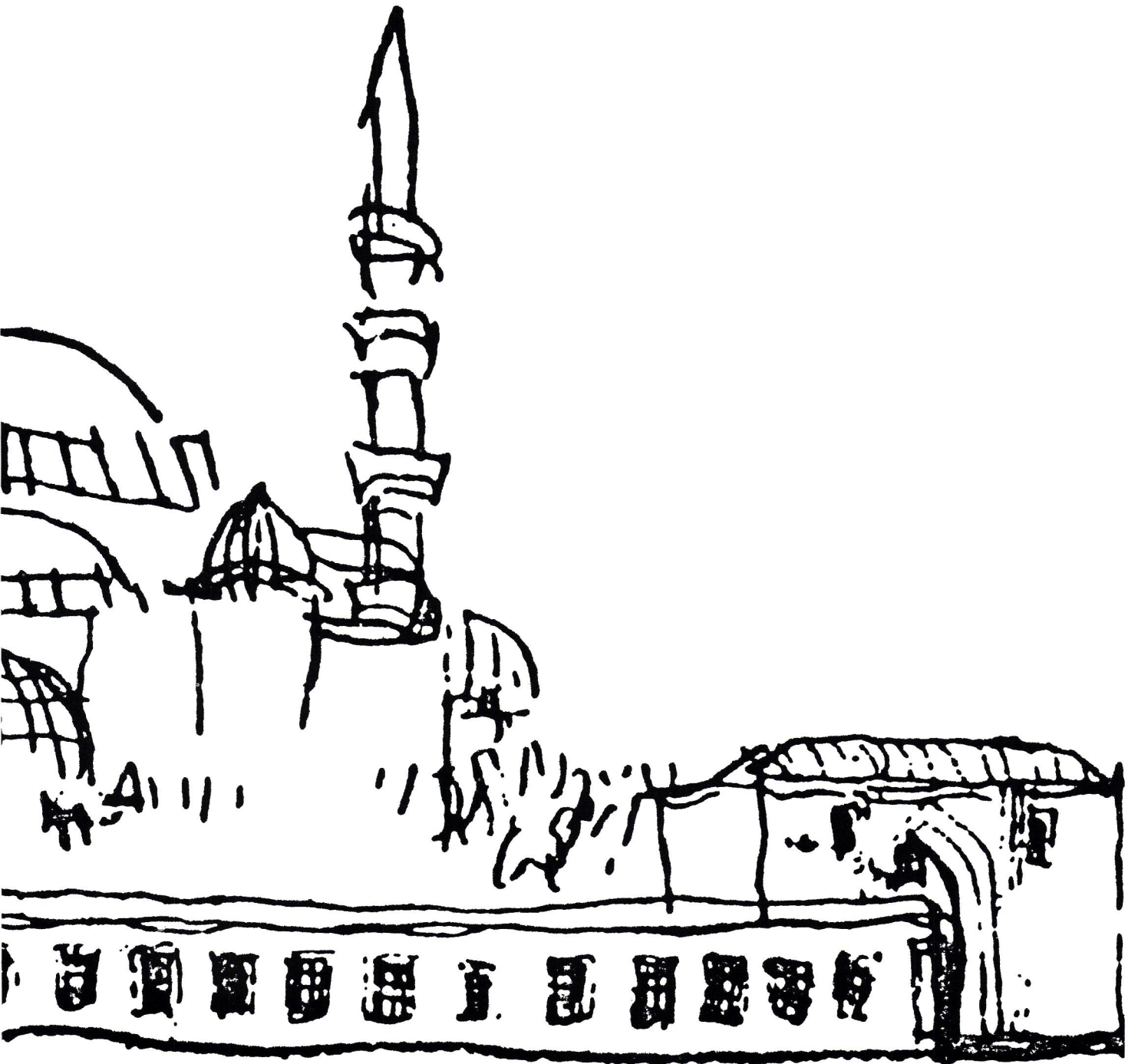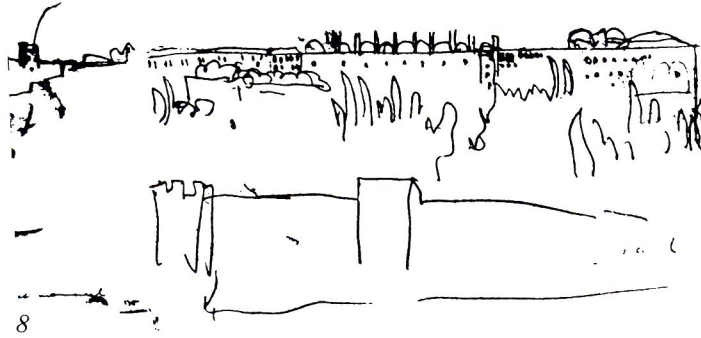
98 I met no one; a few street lamps illuminated a huge wall punctuated by arcades in the golden patina of the marble. Bronze gates weave their complicated spiderwebs there; cypresses thrust up overhead. By sticking my face up against the metal bars, I could distinguish the tombs. Occasionally, through an opening, one can see to the left the light reflecting off patches of the Golden Horn; sometimes the sparkle of the Marmara can be seen to the right. In the middle-ground, on a rise, is the sphinx-like apparition of the colossal Mosque of Suleiman,[9] the work of that man who built nearly a hundred of them and I don't know how many caravansaries. *Türbes* are interspersed within some school or other—no doubt a gift—and the roadway proceeds along between the darkened arcades, where by day the whole noisy turbulence of Turkish life expands through the streets.

Again, the dead may be seen sleeping to the left, to the right, then on both sides. Some sultans have illuminated the inside of their sober and often beautiful shrines with glazed tiles. Soon there appears Beyazit,[10] the Mosque of Doves, with its unusually distant minarets, forming an angle with the Great Bazaar, while Nur-i Osmaniye, the Mosque of Tulips,[11] sits opposite. One notices its minarets, pale and spaced far apart, and its walls all spruced up with a strange rococo. The Blackened Column, Byzantine in style but on a Turkish base, projects into the air its porphyry shaft, once shattered by the heat of fire but now held together by iron rings.[12] A few cafes were still open, already European in style, commonplace, with Viennese chairs. I was approaching the end; Hagia Sophia was about to close this unique avenue that had been so impressively opened a few hours earlier, against a luminous sky, by Mihrimah Pasha,[13] the "clumsy one," the "one without minarets," posed like an imperious monolith over huge crenellated ramparts. From the walls of Hagia Sophia, the Byzantine church with its four minarets added on, one can see the huge Mosque of Ahmet Pasha with its six minarets standing at the edge of the former Hippodrome. And the street turns suddenly; the bridge is not far away. Pera appears in a stark outline. And when it is late, the hovels of Galata seem to sleep. I climbed up slowly, tired, in the dark dust of the "Little Fields," stumbling against marble turbans, poor decapitated ones.[14] And then suddenly there burst forth the lights of the big cafes, where so many people seek relief in the pleasant, delicate, easy, and unfailing music of Puccini.

But my path deviated from there into an area devoid of houses, overhanging the Field of the Dead whose cypresses perish in too much dust. Then, turning around before reaching the threshold of our house, I saw all of them together, those great mosques sitting on this great humped back that is Istanbul—from Mihrimah the clumsy one to Ahmet the Almost Cursed.[3] A haze hovered over the Golden Horn; it got thicker as dawn approached, covering Pera, Stamboul, and everything else except the ones it cannot reach—the mosques. Feet submerged in this downy sea, each one was isolated in its synthetic block against a pallid dawn sky. Almost every evening they unleash the blue color of their majestic silhouettes.

9

Notes

Source Note: This article, originally published in French, is taken from Le Corbusier, Le Voyage d'Orient *(Paris: Forces Vives, 1966). The entire book is presently being translated by Ivan Žaknić and is to be published by the MIT Press as* The Journey to the East.—*Ed.*

1. It is one of the great mosques of Istanbul.
2. The *türbes* are large tombs built for important personages.
3. The Sultan Ahmet, by building six minarets for his mosque, aroused the religious wrath of the people, for only Kaaba at Mecca had that number. He cleverly got around this difficulty by erecting, at his own expense, a seventh minaret at Kaaba.

Translator's Notes:

(1) Pierre Loti (1850–1923): French novelist and naval officer during the French occupation of Istanbul.

(2) Moslem cemeteries are almost invariably shaded by a grove of cypress trees, and not plane trees as Jeanneret stated here. It was a custom of the Turks, when they first came to the Bosphorus, to plant beside each new-made grave a cypress tree; hence many of their cemeteries, especially in the Asiatic suburb of Scutari, are veritable forests of cypresses.

(3) Imam is a title given to a Moslem priest or, more generally, to any of various Moslems who have authority in matters of theology or law.

(4) The city of Istanbul is basically divided into two parts: the Golden Horn, an arm of the sea, cuts through Istanbul dividing old Stamboul (and older Byzantium) on the South from the drab Europeanized quarters of Pera and Galata on the North.

(5) Old fortifications at the outskirts of the city whose foundations are said to have been laid by Constantine himself.

(6) The Sultan Mehmet, also known as the Blue Mosque, was built in the 17th century by Sultan Ahmet I who hoped that it might surpass all other mosques in splendor.

(7) He is referring to the aqueduct of Valens.

(8) The Mosque of Prince Sehzade (Sehzade Camii) was built in 1548 as a memorial to a favorite son of the sultan, who died in 1543.

(9) The Mosque of Süleiman was the third and noblest mosque built for the Sultan Süleiman by Sinan. The actual mosque is the center of an extensive group of ancillary buildings including four schools, a training college, a library, a bath, a hospital, a public kitchen to feed worshipers, and a hostel to lodge them. An asylum and a lodge for the guardian of the tombs were added by the sultan to his benefaction (from Michael Maclagan, *The City of Constantinople* [New York: Frederick A. Praeger, 1968], pp. 135–36).

(10) The Beyazit Mosque is named after Sultan Beyazit II (1481–1512). It was the first of the great imperial mosques built between 1501 and 1505 on the forum of Theodosius. Ever since then, this site has been a center of traffic and communications.

(11) Nur-i Osmaniye is also known as the Mosque of Laleli and the Mosque of Tulips. This latter designation probably derives from general admiration of its flower-like beauty, for it was not erected until long after the reign of the "Tulip Prince," Ahmet III. (From Robert Liddell, *Byzantium and Istanbul* [London: Jonathan Cape, 1956], p. 179.)

(12) Rough and unsightly, this dilapidated column, blackened by fire and kept from falling to pieces by a series of iron rings, is a true monument. It has witnessed momentous historical events for over fifteen centuries. On its top was placed the famous bronze statue of Apollo by Phidias. Priests chanted sacred hymns and paid homage before it, and miracles were thought to have been performed at its base. (For more information, see John L. Stoddard, *John L. Stoddard's Lectures, Vol. II: Constantinople* [Chicago & Boston: Geo. L. Shuman & Co., 1915], p. 38).

(13) The Mosque of Mihrimah Pasha, also known as Büyük Cami and Iskele Camii, was built for the Princess Mihrimah, daughter of Süleiman the Magnificent and wife of Rüstem Pasha.

(14) In Turkish cemeteries, a tombstone which denotes the grave of a man is always crowned with either a turban or a fez, carved from the marble of the Marmora. Over the years, many of these tombstones have fallen to the ground, leaving the turbans strewn about like decapitated heads.

Figure Credits

1–9 © *S.P.A.D.E.M., Paris/V.A.G.A., New York, 1980.*

1 Le Corbusier, *Le Voyage d'Orient* (Paris: Forces Vives, 1966).

2 Le Corbusier, "Les Mosques," *Almanach d'architecture moderne* (Paris: Les Editions G. Crés et Cie, 1925).

3, 6, 7 Le Corbusier, *The City of Tomorrow* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1971).

4 Courtesy Ivan Žaknić.

5 Jean Petit, *Le Corbusier lui-même* (Geneva: Editions Rousseau, 1970).

8 Le Corbusier, *Oeuvre Complète 1910–1929* (Zurich: Les Editions d'Architecture Erlenbach, 1946).

9 Le Corbusier, *Towards a New Architecture* (London: The Architectural Press, 1927).

Contributors to this Issue

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William Ellis is an architect, urban designer, and design consultant. He was born in 1933 in Louisiana where he practiced architecture for six years before coming to New York City in 1967. He is a Fellow of the Institute for Architecture and Urban Studies where he has directed, researched, and designed projects for various agencies including the National Endowment for the Arts, the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, the New York State Council on the Arts, the Alfred P. Sloan Foundation, and the New York Landmarks Conservancy. He is Forum editor for Oppositions, and has written articles for a number of publications including Oppositions, Casabella, On Streets (The MIT Press), Skyline and Interiors Magazine. He teaches at the Institute for Architecture and Urban Studies. He is an Associate Professor of Architecture at The City University of New York. He taught architecture and town planning at the Cooper Union from 1969–1978 and has been a Visiting Critic and lecturer at Hunter College and the University of Kentucky. His work, both individual and with others, has been exhibited at the Graham Foundation for the Arts in Chicago, Carnegie-Mellon University in Pittsburgh, Tulane University in New Orleans, the Walker Art Museum in Minneapolis, and the Institute for Architecture and Urban Studies. For the past six years in addition to residential and office design, his practice has included design consulting to several major corporations, including IBM. He is a Director of the New York City Chapter of the AIA. He is now completing a book of essays on revisionist architecture and urbanism for the Oppositions Books Series.

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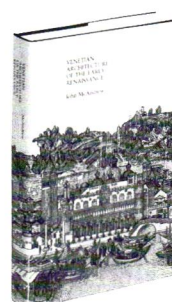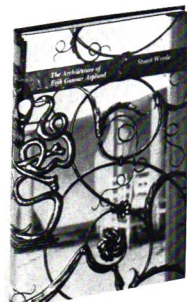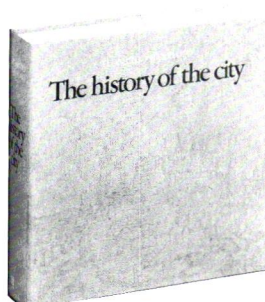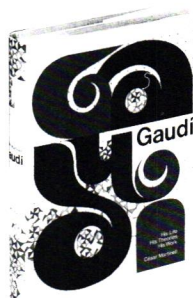
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