

D E S I G N B O O K R E V I E W

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Mumford Remembered

ALEXANDER TZONIS and
LIANE LEFAIVRE:
Lewis Mumford's Regionalism

STANISLAUS VON MOOS:
Mumford vs. Giedion

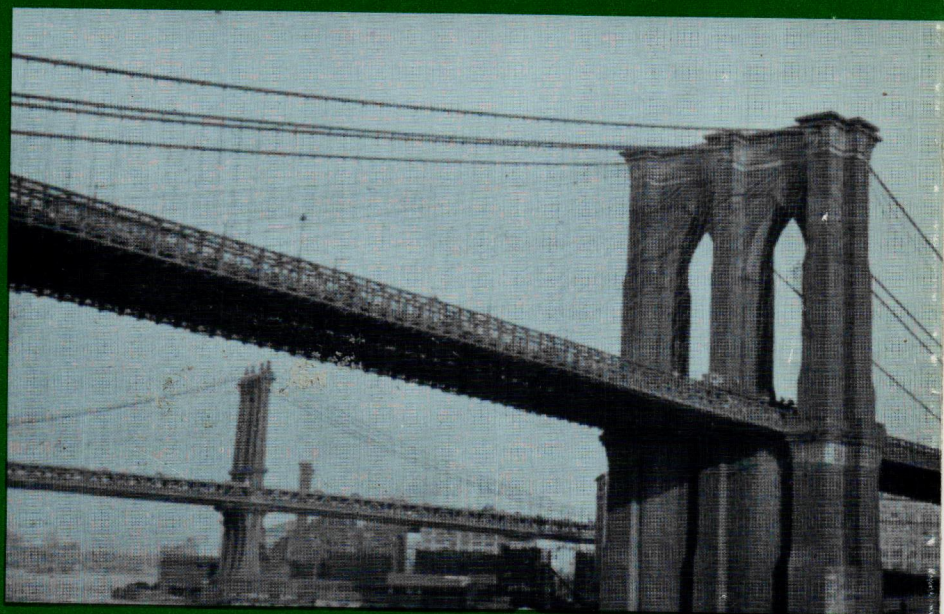
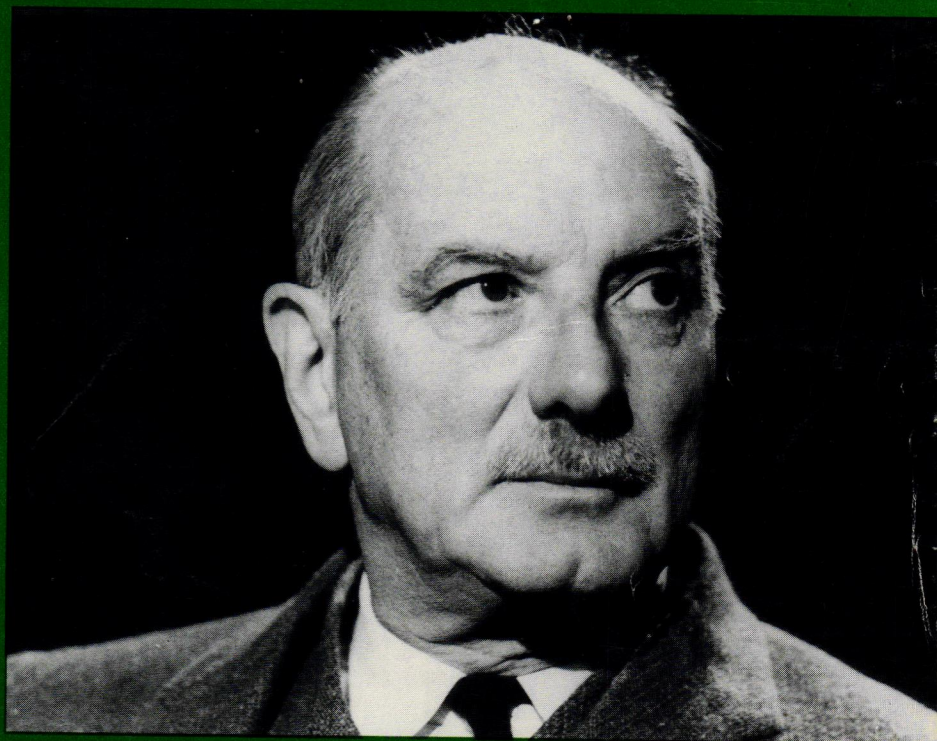
JANE MORLEY:
Mumford and His Critics

THOMAS BENDER
on Americans and Machines

JUDITH WOLIN
on Russian Constructivists

ZEYNEP CELIK
on Third World Architects

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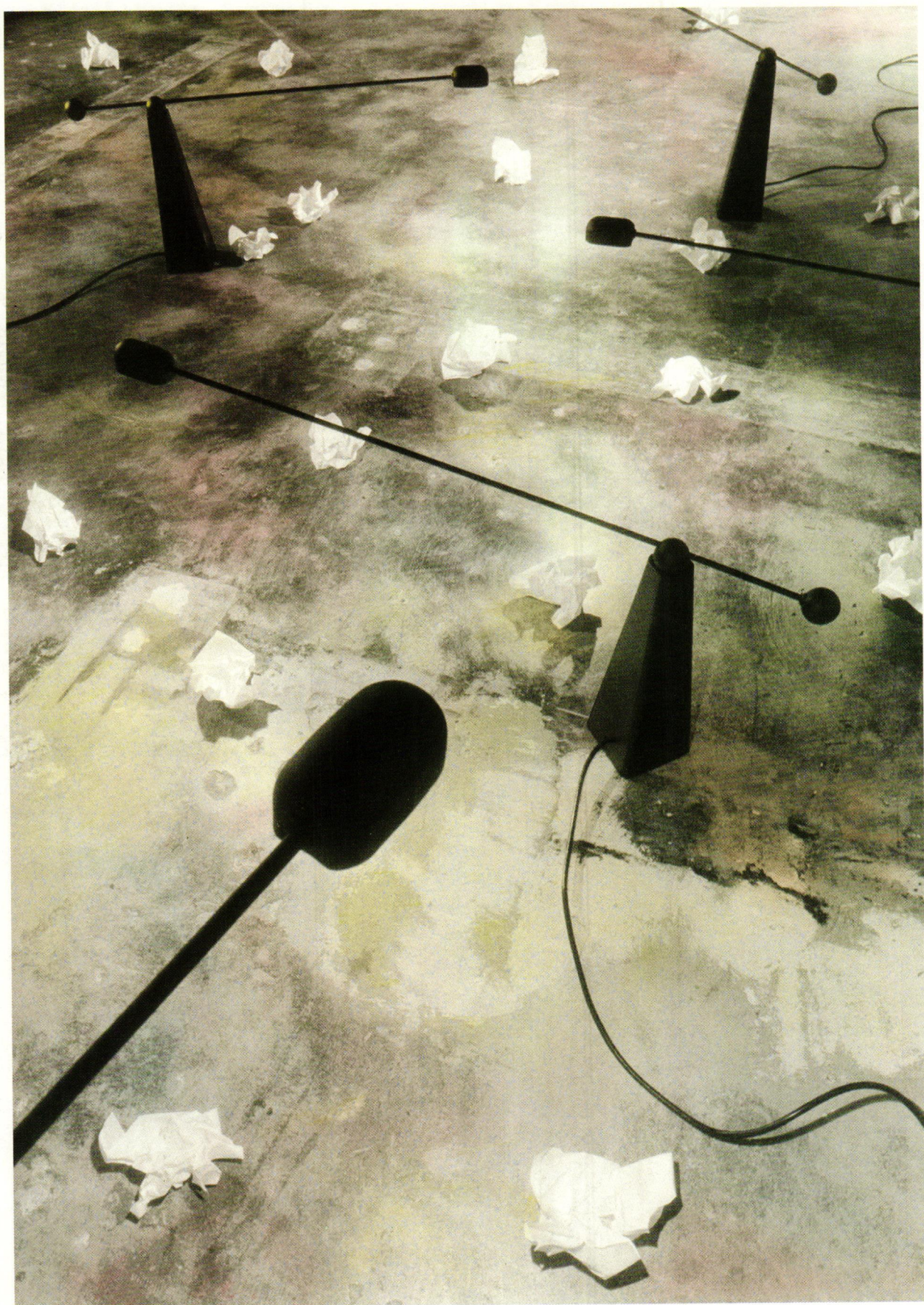
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Issue 19 - Winter 1991

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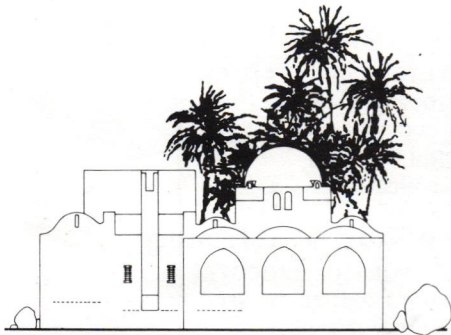
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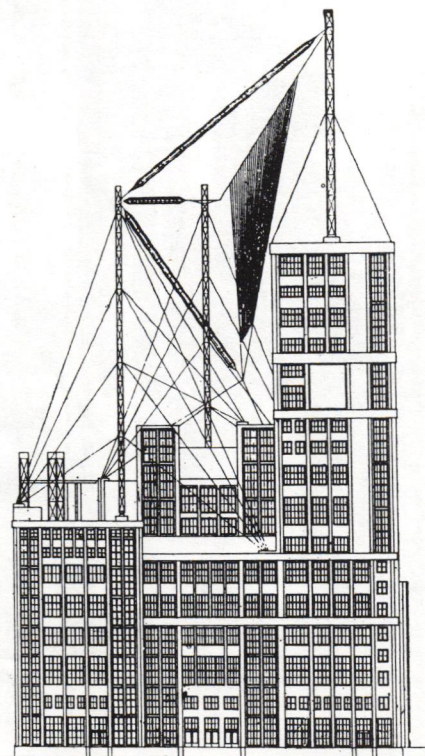
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 WINTER 1991

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Utopia Hates Deadlines

Issue 19 of *DBR* marks a significant turning point in the magazine's history. *DBR* is nearing its anniversary of being somewhere between five and eight years old—having been founded eight years ago in 1983, but not having quite produced five years' worth of issues (according to a quarterly schedule). Five years is usually the breaking point for small magazines; oddly enough it is also the average life span of utopian communities. But the two have more than duration in common: both require a great deal of personal sacrifice from their participants, and both are usually predicated on the naive assumption that they can change the world for the better through their example. Reality (in the form of unwashed dishes and unpaid bills) finally gets the better of the utopian effort and the committed individual is either forced to change or sink in despair. I doubt whether anyone listed on the masthead of *DBR* (or anyone reading it for that matter) would have ever suspected it of having an idealistic program—an eclectic heterotopia might apply, but utopia never. Still, despite the lack of utopian aspirations, there has been a great deal of sacrifice during the past eight years, particularly on the part of the publishers, John Parman and Elizabeth Snowden and their families. Their effort, while it has not made them rich, has enriched a little corner of the world where people furtively read and write about the discourse of architecture and design.

The occasion to be marked here is not an anniversary, or the success or failure of utopia, but a momentous transition in the magazine's structure. We are happy to announce a new partnership between the original publishers and the Journals Division of The MIT Press. The office in Berkeley, whose small staff has had to tend to both the content of the magazine and man-

age its business, will now be relieved of the latter chores and become solely responsible for editorial matters. The MIT Press will handle circulation, subscriptions, advertising, and production. With this more efficient division of labor, we hope it will finally become possible to come out according to schedule.

There is, of course, the question of potential conflict of interest, since The MIT Press is one of the largest publishers of architectural and design books. This would become manifest if we started running only reviews of MIT Press books or only favorable reviews of their products. This has not been true in the past, and we do not intend to make it so in the future. The ownership, editorial policy, and content of the magazine—and thus its independence—will continue as before: each issue will have a feature section devoted to a special theme, such as this issue's "Mumford Remembered" theme, to be followed by a dozen or so review essays inspired by recent books.

This issue also marks the departure of *DBR*'s most important player, managing editor Barbara Oldershaw. Barbara has single-handedly kept the magazine alive during these past two years of difficult times, doing most of the business, production, and editorial work without the benefit of Shiva's extra pairs of arms. We will all dearly miss her, but must respect her decision to move on to a career where she can focus on her personal interests as a writer. Replacing her will be Michael Zavala Tobriner, who we welcome to a difficult job. Also leaving us this issue is circulation manager Patricia Cochran, who contributed several years of very pleasant service.

Richard Ingersoll

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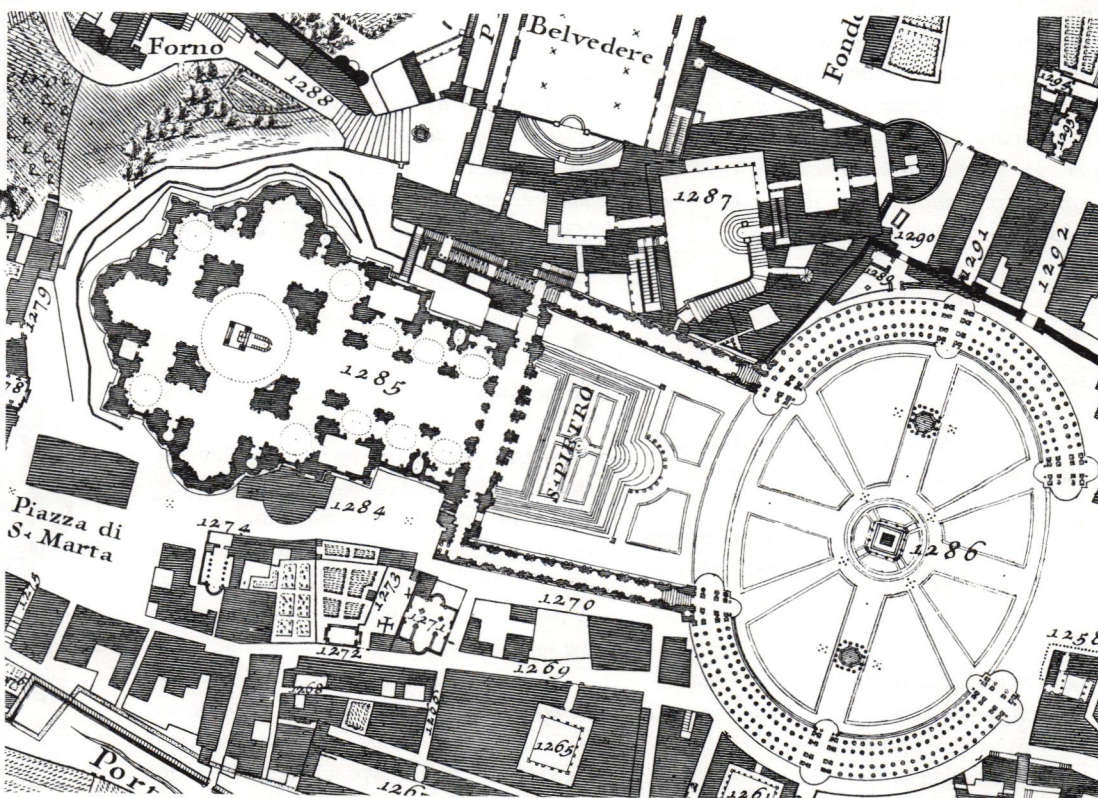
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LETTERS

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To the Editors:

It has been some time since I originally subscribed; probably more than a year. I have only just received the fourth issue of that subscription. But since I have yet to receive a renewal notice, I've enclosed a check. Please be sure that my subscription continues.

Indeed, I almost feel I should offer up a prayer to the gods for your continued existence. Again, my recollection isn't precise, but your issues seem to arrive with extreme irregularity. From quarter to quarter I wonder, did they survive for another issue? I have a notion that you have funding problems, and if that is so, I wish you continued luck in finding support. I enjoy your magazine very much.

—Peter R. Olsen
Montgomery, Alabama

■
Thank you, Peter Olsen, for your concern and support. We wondered when subscribers were finally going to start noticing the discrepancy between the number of issues and the number of quarters per year. A subscription is valid for four issues, no matter how many quarters slip by. We thank our loyal subscribers for hanging on and refer them to the editorial for a more detailed explanation of why things should get back on track with this issue.

●
To the Editors:

Your Spring 1990 issue on architectural publishing is *superb*. I read it cover to cover.

—Suzanne Stephens
New York, New York

■
DBR would like to apologize for neglecting to mention the assistance of Rosalie Geneviro and the Architectural League of New York in gathering information for issue 18 on architectural publishing, the subject of a symposium sponsored by the League in spring 1989.

ALVIN BOYARSKY, 1928–1990

The disheartening news of Alvin Boyarsky's death last August came after Issue 18 had already gone to press. That issue of *DBR* contained an interview with Boyarsky on the Architectural Association's publishing activities; Issue 11 featured an interview with him on the subject of architectural education. As director of the AA in London from 1971–1990, Boyarsky was the single most important catalyst for the discourse on architecture during the past two decades. A mercurial *bricoleur* of people, events, and ideas, he used the AA as a centripetal node for innovative exhibitions, arcane or daring publications, renegade education, and non-stop socializing. His tiny private school, sandwiched into a couple of terrace houses on Bedford Square, functioned like an international agora for the culture of architecture. Boyarsky was a generous, open, and adventuresome man, whose entrepreneurial talent and intellectual perspicacity allowed architectural education for a brief moment to become the place where wholly unrelated characters could dream together.

■
Although we tried to be as comprehensive as possible in the survey of architectural publishers in DBR 18, some significant presses went unrepresented, and we gladly print the reaction of two of those who were unfairly, but not intentionally, excluded:

●
To the Editors:

I was astonished to find no mention of the Architectural History Foundation in *DBR* 18, devoted to architectural publishing. It is remarkable that a house whose books have been awarded the Alice Davis Hitchcock Award six times in its twelve years of publishing should be omitted from your survey.

With its 1978 publication of Sebastiano Serlio's sixth book, *On Domestic Architecture*, the Architectural History Foundation pioneered the kind of facsimile-type reprint the Princeton Architectural Press began recently. Titles such as Joseph Connor's *Borromini and the Roman*

Oratory: Style and Society are generally considered landmarks in architectural history studies of the last decade, not to mention breakthrough work such as *Holy Things and Profane: American Parish Churches in Colonial Virginia* by Dell Upton, one of your own board members.

A survey of architectural book publishing without the Architectural History Foundation is at its best careless journalism. It threatens the credibility of the *Design Book Review* and of the Architectural History Foundation.

—Victoria Newhouse
The Architectural History Foundation

●
To the Editors:

I very much enjoyed your Spring 1990 issue on "Architectural Publishing." *DBR* should be commended for bringing such a fascinating and intelligent forum to its readers.

Unfortunately, I noted with some concern the absence of any Japanese publishers among your otherwise fine selection from the international community. Japanese publishers have been leaders in graphic design and architectural publishing for more than a decade. Their contribution is widely recognized, and their new publications are much sought after in the United States and around the world.

Global Architecture / A. D. A. Editra, for example, has been publishing a variety of ma-

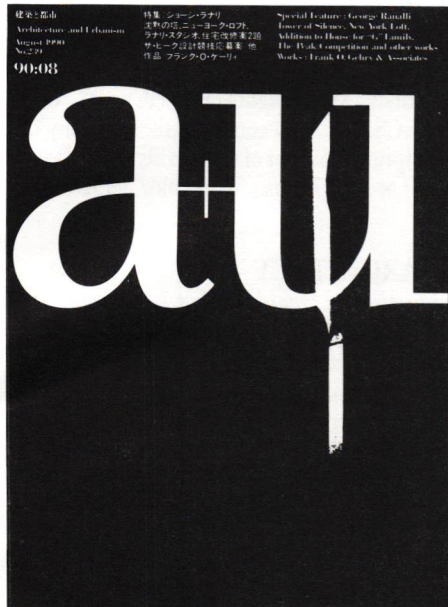


*Frank Lloyd Wright
Taliesin East, Spring Green, Wisconsin. 1925–
Taliesin West, Paradise Valley, Arizona. 1938–
Edited and Photographed by Yukio Futagawa
Text by Masami Tanigawa*

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A.D.A. EDITA Tokyo



terials since the early 1980s. Their publications track new directions as well as classics by such architects as Frank Lloyd Wright, Le Corbusier, Mies van der Rohe, Alvar Aalto, and many others. The **a+u Publishing Company** is well known and respected for its magazine and book publications. Their continuing series of Special Editions provides authoritative collections focusing on contemporary architects and architectural trends. **Process: Architecture** offers books and magazines that explore selected topics in depth, while relating them to human values.

The list goes on. **Graphic-sha Publishing Co., Ltd.** contributes an extraordinary list of fine graphic, illustration, and architectural rendering books; **Shotenkenchiku-sha** provides an ongoing series of references to the latest in restaurant design, covering everything from facades to signage to menus; and **Shokokusha** brings architectural masterpieces to life through the inventive 3-D origamic creations of Masahiro Chatani.

I am certain that these, and other Japanese publishers, would have contributed insights of interest to your readers regarding trends and directions in architectural publishing.

Thank you, again, for a lively and intelligent issue! I hope that *DBR* will consider this important publishing community in your future coverage of architectural publishers.

—Henry Kornman
Director, Marketing and Sales
BOOKS NIPPAN

To the Editors:

I first ran across your publication a few days ago and would like to thank you for publishing such a fine and helpful quarterly. I would like to bring to your attention two excellent architecture bookstores overlooked in your Bookstore Directory (*DBR* 18):

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—Myron Nebozuk
Edmonton, Alberta

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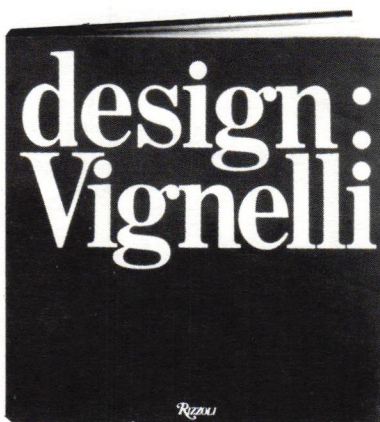
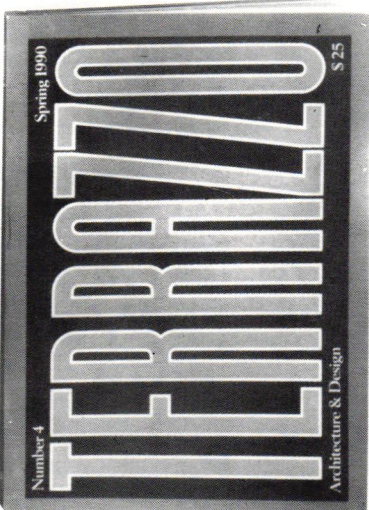
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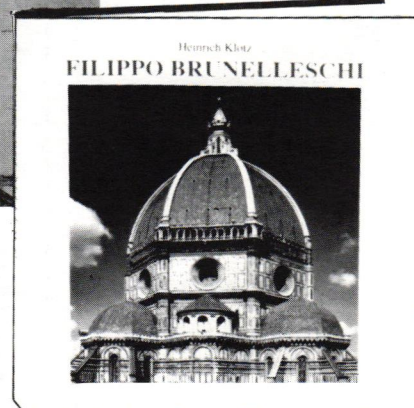
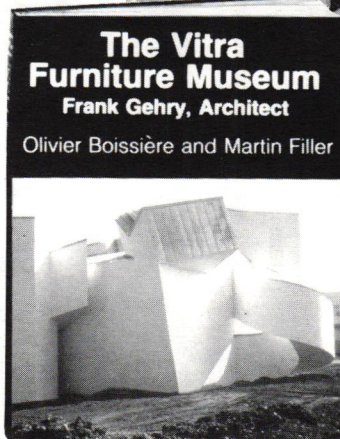
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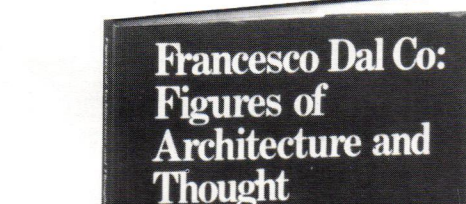
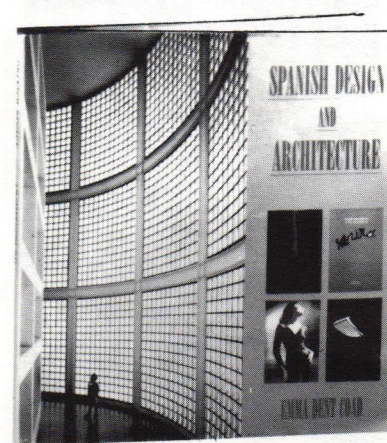
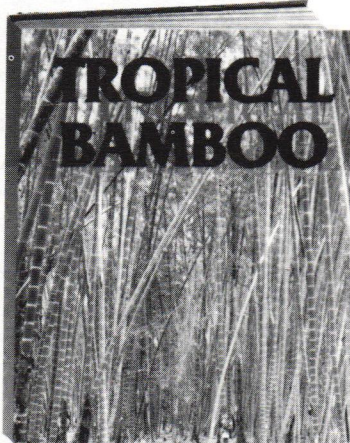
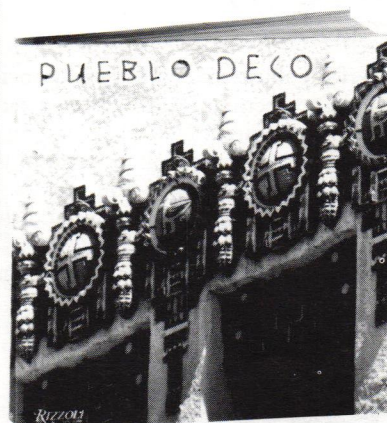
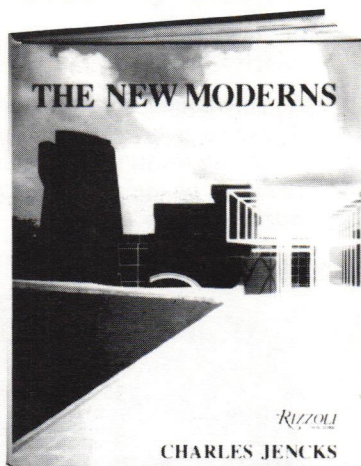
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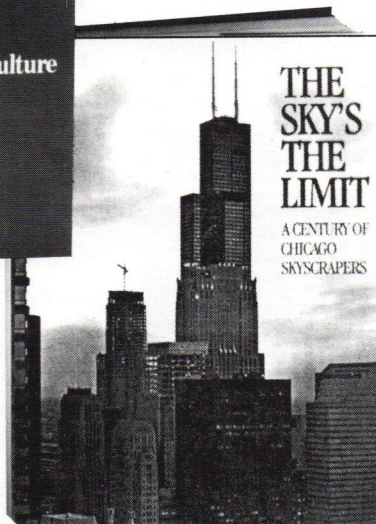
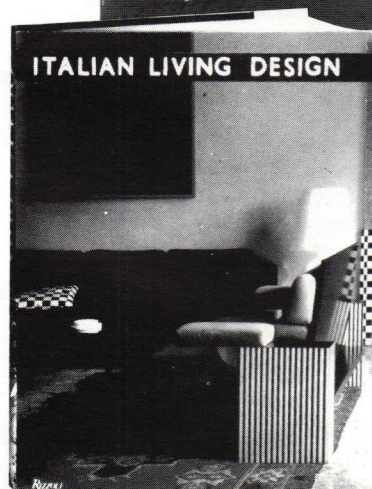
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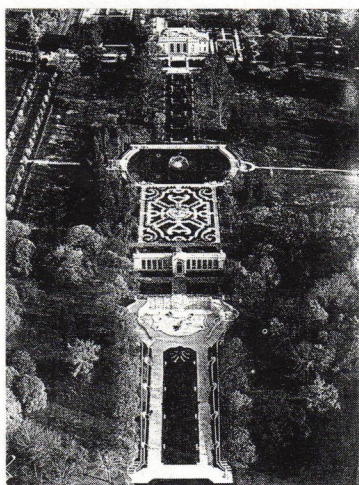
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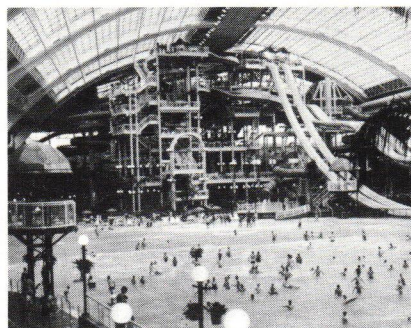
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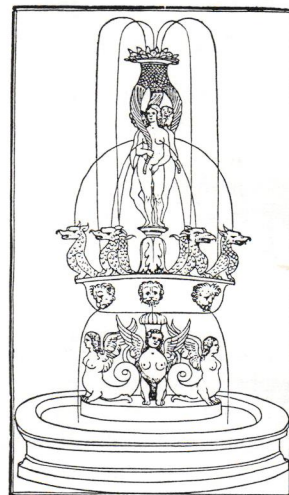
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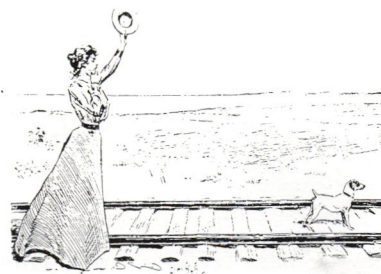
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Mumford: A Usable Man of the Past



The publication of Issue 19 nearly coincides with the first anniversary of Lewis Mumford's death. Mumford, whose writing career spanned most of the 20th century, carved out a unique, and gigantic, cultural niche as a self-described professional "generalist." A keen observer of literature, technology, environmental issues, architecture, and urbanism, Mumford's righteous authorial manner made him the "conscience" of liberal America. It is appropriate that a book-review magazine dedicate an issue to Mumford's work not merely because he was such a prolific author of books (27 titles, most of which are still in print), but in particular because he reviewed so many books. The hundreds of reviews he wrote for *Harper's*, *Atlantic Monthly*, *The New York Review of Books*, *The New Republic*, *Technology and Culture*, and many others, were, as he described, "jottings and notes for the books that I was eventually to write."

They became an important part of the process of assembling the "usable past" into an interpretation of culture.

Now that Mumford himself belongs to the past we have gathered some opinions about what in his work is currently useful. Martin Filler, who was closely associated with Mumford during his last decade, remembers him as America's foremost critic. Alexander Tzonis and Liane Lefaivre, initiators of the theory of Critical Regionalism, have gathered quotes from Mumford's writings on regionalism to demonstrate his intellectual position. Stanislaus von Moos has critically compared the visual culture of Mumford with that other great glossator of technology, Sigfried Giedion. Finally, Jane Morley, who has done extensive bibliographic work on Mumford, discusses the most contended issues in the emerging Mumford studies.

Martin Filler

MUMFORD REMEMBERED

Lewis Mumford was one of the true giants of 20th-century American culture, an intellectual who proudly defined himself a “generalist” in the face of widespread specialization and sectarianism. He was admired as much for his writings on architecture as for his essays on American literature, technology, anthropology, sociology, and urban life. It is some measure of his continuing relevance that nineteen of his thirty-one books are still in print, some after almost seventy years. His death on January 26, 1990, at the age of 94, received surprisingly little attention in either the popular or architectural press. In an attempt to compensate for this lack of remembrance *DBR* has asked Martin Filler to comment on Mumford’s life and work.

Martin Filler, an architecture critic working in New York City, was closely associated with Mumford from 1975 to 1985, and edited the collection of his articles for *Architectural Record* published by McGraw-Hill in 1975 as *Architecture as a Home for Man*. Filler is a consulting editor of *House & Garden* and writes for a variety of publications including *The New York Review of Books* and *The Times Literary Supplement*. His essay on the practice of architectural criticism in *The Critical Edge: Controversy in Recent American Architecture* (Tod Marder, editor, 1986; see *DBR* 9, Spring 1986) remains the best source on the subject to date. With his wife, the architectural historian Rosemarie Haag Bletter, Filler was a guest curator for the Whitney Museum’s 1985-86 exhibition “High Styles: Twentieth-Century American Design,” and together they wrote and were consultants for the documentary films *Beyond Utopia: Changing Attitudes in American Architecture* (1983), *Arata Isozaki* (1985), and *James Stirling* (1987). The following comments were taken from an interview with Filler.

Mumford was my spiritual father, and I mourn him like a son—that is to say, with a complex mixture of emotions. His work made me want to become an architecture critic. Mumford’s writings possess both a sense of social purpose and an understanding of the larger forces that affect architecture, a synthesis I found lacking in almost every other source. As much as I respect the contributions of someone like Henry-Russell Hitchcock, his was a formalist and antiquarian approach. Vincent Scully’s is an aesthetic and anecdotal interpretation, which helps to get people, especially young people, interested in the subject. But in focusing on what I find to be the truly formative and generative aspects of architecture, I think Mumford was by far the most insightful and penetrating.

Mumford disliked being categorized as an architecture critic. He preferred to be seen as a philosopher or sociologist. When he died, the early edition of *The New York Times* ran a picture of him on the front page with a caption beginning “Lewis Mumford, self-styled ‘social philosopher’.” That bothered me greatly—I don’t see the need either for the term “self-styled” or the quotes around social philosopher, unless one doubts that’s what Mumford was. It’s strange that the *Times* didn’t even begin his obituary on page one, which they did several weeks later for such lesser figures as Halston and Sarah Vaughan, both of whom got two columns and their pictures on the front page. As a result of the *Times*’s treatment, none of the network TV news programs picked up the news of Mumford’s death and both *Time* and *Newsweek* reported it only briefly in their obituary columns.

But Mumford’s reputation had been like a roller coaster throughout his career. He was forgotten and rediscovered several times, and it was perhaps only chance, or because he was *non compos mentis* during his last three or four years, that recognition



Self-portrait, Lewis Mumford (1920). (Courtesy of the Mumford Art Collection, Monmouth College, West Long Branch, New Jersey.)

was at a low point when he died. For example, at the beginning of the 1960s, the publication of *The City in History*, one of his most important books, and the one-two punch of *The Myth of the Machine* and *The Pentagon of Power* at the end of that decade bolstered his reputation after it had slipped during the 1950s. During his last active decade before he became unable to write in his late eighties, Mumford’s almost exclusive attention to his various autobiographical works might have satisfied his excessive egotistical needs, but with the exception of his 1982 autobiography, *Sketches from Life*, the best portions of which had been written in the 1950s, these works did little to enhance his literary standing.

Despite his objections during his lifetime, Mumford will probably be remembered more as an architecture critic than as a philosopher. I wish someone would publish an anthology of all his “Sky Line” articles for *The New Yorker* from 1931 to 1963. It’s

there that he did some of his best work, from general considerations of cities and highways to critiques of specific buildings such as Rockefeller Center, the Cathedral of St. John the Divine, the United Nations Building, right down to Childs' Coffee Shops. Because of those pieces Americans who have even heard of Mumford tend to consider him an architecture critic above all. It was remarkable that *The New Yorker* provided Mumford with a national platform for more than a generation. Until the mid-1950s when his "Sky Line" articles began to taper off (Mumford's relations with William Shawn, editor of *The New Yorker* from 1952 to 1987, were not nearly as cordial as those with Harold Ross, editor of the weekly magazine from its founding in 1925 until his death in 1951), Mumford was the architectural conscience of America. Speaking to an educated lay audience which has not been replicated in its breadth and concentration, his *New Yorker* column laid the groundwork for those readers to become the main constituency for his major works, especially in the 1930s. *The Culture of Cities*, in my estimation his most important book, could be read by an intelligent layperson in 1938 in the same way a book by the historian Simon Schama (author of *The Embarrassment of Riches* and *Citizens*) is today: an immersion in a subject written by an author who has exhausted primary and secondary sources and then has synthesized them in an abbreviated but accurate manner, stimulating readers to further thought.

One reason that no one has replaced Mumford's as the great generalist critic of the built environment is the lack of commitment on the part of publications willing to support that kind of outspoken, uncompromising voice. Newspapers in various cities have occasionally had a regular architecture critic of value, but for all the talk about architecture being a hot topic among the public today, I don't see that premise supported by periodicals. Henry Luce, who put Mumford on the cover of *Time* in 1938 and who also published *Architectural Forum*, made sure that *Time* frequently covered

architecture. Today *Time* runs articles on architecture only three or four times a year, as opposed to about twenty-five pieces annually on art. Of course, architecture has changed immensely since Mumford's heyday, and he would not be doing today what he was able to do then. He discontinued the "Sky Line" in 1963, and although he wrote several articles on architecture after that, it marked the end of his interest in contemporary architecture.

To a certain extent, Mumford was confined by his strong principles, but that was also one of his greatest assets. On the other hand, Mumford was not so fixed in his thinking that he could not change his mind, which I consider a sign of his largeness of spirit. For example, Mumford was highly

Mumford was more of a pragmatic reformer, like his heroes Patrick Geddes and Ebenezer Howard, than a utopian like Charles Fourier.

critical of the plans for Rockefeller Center when they were first published, but praised the complex as a whole after it was finally completed. Richard Pommer, an architectural historian whom I admire very much, pointed out in a recent lecture the inconsistencies in Mumford's writings on architecture. But as a critic, I wish there would be more such reassessments and, when necessary, reversals by those who write about new architecture. Most often we see buildings only once, shortly after they're finished, before we know how successful they are as functioning structures. There are some buildings I've revisited long after I've first written about them that I wish I could write about again in order to recant my initial opinion, whether positive or negative. Far from interpreting Mumford's shifts as faulty judgment, I see them as a model more critics should follow.

Mumford, who always put social concerns before aesthetic considerations, addressed his audience in a very direct way. He talked about how buildings are used and their role in the life of the community. In our pluralistic times, many architecture critics tend to throw up their hands and refuse to make judgments. Mumford never gave in to that, sometimes to his detriment in the short term, but rarely in the long run. Yet his almost complete sidestepping of aesthetic issues did omit one of the major components of good architecture—beauty, or even a sense of visual pleasure. Of course, it is not unusual for any critic, let alone one whose career spanned eight decades, to remain a product of his formative period despite the changing scene around him.

As far as actually affecting the American environment, Mumford often felt like a prophet without honor in his own country. When he went to England after World War II, he was cheered in the streets as a hero. Mumford was highly respected as a town planner there and certainly had a more active influence than he did in the United States, especially as England had an extensive government-supported program for postwar reconstruction. One has to remember that even during the New Deal, Mumford and the other members of the Regional Planning Association of America were not used by Roosevelt in the way they should have been. That failure was largely political in origin, since the RPAA's president, Clarence Stein, had been closely associated in New York State with Belle Moskowitz, the housing advisor to Alfred Smith, FDR's political rival who preceded him as governor and Democratic candidate for president and later became one of Roosevelt's most vitriolic critics. It is ironic that at the high point of federal support for new towns and greenbelt communities in the 1930s, Mumford and his colleagues had little direct participation, although they contributed greatly to the general moral tone and helped create the climate in which those concepts could be implemented.

Mumford's attitude toward the acceptance of his ideas was, "I have given you the

wisdom with which to act, and if you choose to ignore me, you do so at your own peril.” He felt he had done as much as one man could, and then stood back and assumed the Jeremiah-like posture that was always a familiar part of his personality. But it became even more pronounced during the postwar period, when it was clear that his prescriptions for reshaping the world were not going to be followed at all. As much as he complained during the 1950s and 1960s about unchecked suburbanization, the proliferation of massive superhighways, destructive urban renewal, the lack of coherent regional planning, and excessive military spending, he had a certain grim satisfaction in being proven right again and again, though even he could not predict how much worse things were to become during the 1980s.

Mumford did not see our existing political institutions as the likely means for achieving what he wanted. After all, if he was ignored by FDR, what hope would there ever be for him in the American political establishment? Mumford would have liked a more socially responsive reconstitution of the political system, but he saw no desirable alternative in the socialist or communist parties in this country. He was so self-consciously independent that it is difficult to imagine him joining any movement short of a Mumford party. But his aloofness from the political process was one of the reasons he was left alone during the McCarthy period. Although Mumford was among the first Americans to warn against Hitler in the 1930s and the nuclear-arms race after World War II—either position was enough to qualify one as a suspect for the House Un-American Affairs Committee—his lack of identification with any political group probably kept him from being persecuted. It was the same when he became an early and outspoken critic of the Vietnam War, publicly condemning Lyndon Johnson for his escalation in 1965. But LBJ did not sic J. Edgar

Hoover on him, and he wasn’t on Nixon’s enemies list.

Mumford’s physical distance from the centers of public affairs for most of his adult life no doubt made him less threatening to those in power. Mumford likely did both himself and the world great good by moving to the solitude of the small upstate New York town of Amenia in 1936. I’ve always suspected that aside from his stated reason of needing the quiet of the country for his work, Mumford couldn’t stand the literary life of New York City. He wanted to be the center of attention, and since he wasn’t the only star in the city, he had to go where he could be. This was a sore subject with him because he did not like to see himself depicted as one who had withdrawn from the world. In fact, he traveled a great deal, sojourned at various universities, and with the proliferation of media was as in touch with current events as he would have been anywhere. But the enlivening

social component of intellectual exchange was missing during his long writing sieges in Amenia, and that took its toll not just on his life, but on his work as well.

It was very strange for such a child of Manhattan to move to a tiny rural hamlet and thereupon denounce big cities. I disagree with his conviction that urban life above a population of 500,000 is necessarily destructive. Although New York City today is the inescapable proof of his exhortations against overdevelopment, congestion, and the social ills that stem from the decline of basic civic services, I don’t think his insistence on decentralized urbanism was realistic. Do we really want sixteen cities of 500,000 each instead of a metropolis of eight million? For all of his keen insights into the nature of urban life, Mumford underestimated the natural human impetus for more people wanting to live where more people are.

Mumford was more of a pragmatic reformer, like his heroes Patrick Geddes and Ebenezer Howard, than a utopian like Charles Fourier. He believed in the possibility of improvement—“The Renewal of Life,” as he entitled his tetralogy—rather than the inevitability of retrogression, and although far from being a dreamer, he shared the strong modernist belief in the perfectability of mankind through architecture, urban planning, and design. Today we see such convictions as utopian, though in the 1930s they seemed like the necessary means for survival. Mumford’s obituary in *The Nation* quoted a member of the Green party in Germany saying that Mumford will be remembered primarily as an environmentalist, and that his contribution to ecology in the 20th century will loom as large in history as Marx’s does for economics in the 19th century. That’s an overstatement, and not too much of a compliment given the collapse of Marxist economies around the world now. But it could well be that in the next few decades Mumford’s early championing of ecology and the need



“Our Home at Amenia,” drawn by Lewis Mumford (1944). (Courtesy of the Mumford Art Collection, Monmouth College, West Long Branch, New Jersey.)

to think of planning's global implications will stand out in the highest relief. There was enough variety in Mumford's vast output for people to rediscover individual aspects of it at will. Whether it is Mumford the founder of American studies, Mumford the architecture critic, or Mumford the ecologist, he had such a breadth of vision that people will always find meaning in his work, even though his overall standing in the history of ideas may not be as high as he would have liked.

Mumford tried to set himself up as an Emersonian *isolato* of American culture. He loved the fact that he was a creature almost entirely of his own invention. Even as a teenager, he fretted about whether to deem himself a sociologist, philosopher, or journalist, well before he had credentials in any of those disciplines. His shadowy origins were basic to his self-image. He was an illegitimate child, sired by one Lewis Mack, who lived in the boarding house in which Mumford's mother worked, and was an adult before he learned the identity of his natural father. Mumford was less than pleased to learn that Mack was Jewish, even though Mumford's wife Sophia is Jewish. The Mumfords' daughter recalls her father's ambivalence on that subject, and once heard him recite the couplet "How odd of God / To choose the Jews." Equally unconventional were Mumford's sporadic education and his refusal later in life to accept numerous offers of honorary degrees (though he did make exceptions for Edinburgh University, because his hero Patrick Geddes was a Scot, and the University of Rome, because his son Geddes had been killed in Italy during World War II). He was always determined to carve out a role for himself that did not fit into any existing professional pigeonhole. But that fervent desire to remain unique at all costs only fed the growth of his overweening ego. Though he was revered as a very good teacher—he was a visiting professor at Berkeley, MIT, Stanford, the University of Pennsylvania, and Wesleyan—he didn't have many direct disciples. He was more of a moral guide or guru rather than a nurturer of followers. But as for establishing a school

of thought, Mumford purposely avoided identification with any of the academic specialities, and it would be difficult to determine in which department of a university to establish a Lewis Mumford chair.

We're still much too close to Mumford to assess how some of his work will hold up. His 1929 book on Herman Melville is now considered an important document of

As a voice crying out in the wilderness, Mumford provided a necessary counterpoint to the worst impulses of this country.

America's rediscovery of its own literature, even though it's been superseded by more thorough and accurate historical studies. I expect that will happen with some of his other books, too, though he saw his "life-work," as he always called it, as absolute and not subject to the depredations of time. I think of Mumford as our link to Emerson, Thoreau, Whitman, and Melville—a rude, self-reliant individualist who embodied certain very characteristic American qualities.

One could never confuse Mumford with a European intellectual of the same period. He was typically American even if he was drastically out of step with the production, both intellectual and otherwise, of the American century. As a voice crying out in the wilderness, Mumford provided a necessary counterpoint to the worst impulses of this country, though he often seemed insufficiently appreciative of some of the best aspects of America, particularly the vitality of our popular culture. It's amazing that the great critic of highways never learned how to drive a car.

Mumford's writings on Frank Lloyd Wright are especially telling because there he came head-to-head with an ego of equal proportions. It took one to know one. Yet for all the problems one can find in Wright,

Mumford saw his essential greatness and his appreciation of it took precedence over everything else. That may have had to do with Mumford's recognition of a kindred spirit, a self-made pioneer who emerged from obscurity to dominate his field into very old age.

But Mumford could be almost insanely competitive with his contemporaries. I remember how livid he was after Edmund Wilson's *The Twenties* was published in 1975, just when Mumford's *Findings and Keepings* came out. He complained that Wilson's book had a lower list price, was advertised more, and was getting more reviews. Wilson was a particular Mumford obsession, perhaps because they were exact contemporaries. Both were born in 1895, but into very different worlds, and so it remained. I recall Mumford telling me (and I also remember almost falling out of my chair when I heard the great man saying the actual words),

Wilson has written a dirty book. It's not dirty because of the sex scenes and the language—there's nothing wrong with saying "fuck" and "cunt"—but because of the way he treated people. Once he had an affair with a waitress and broke off with her by leaving a note and a ten dollar tip on the table in the restaurant. We both lived in Greenwich Village in the 20s, but his 20s were not my 20s.

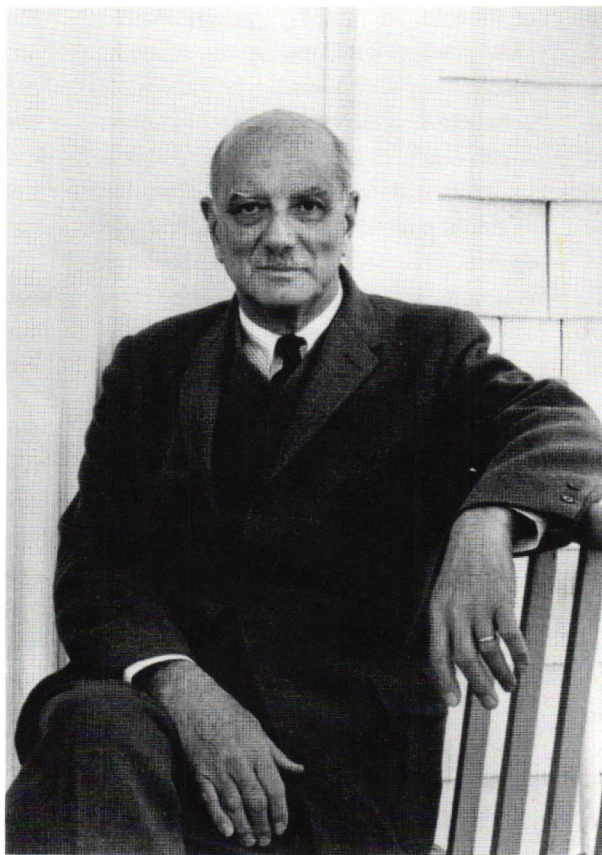
That's absolutely true. Mumford led a life of privation during that period, constantly stepping aside from the financial traps of getting and spending in New York. For instance, he turned down a job as a part-time art adviser to the DuPont Corporation in 1928 because he felt it would be too compromising and had no desire to become implicated in the world of big business. One might say that he worked hard to remain poor. The Mumfords' close friend Van Wyck Brooks spoke of their "ascetic household," but Mumford took pride in it, though it can't have been easy for his wife, Sophia. In his autobiography Mumford wrote how her great beauty made it possible for her to do without fancy clothes and how they lived frugally in a tiny flat in Brooklyn Heights, eating spaghetti and

beans for weeks on end. But despite their passionate sense of purpose and single-minded devotion to his career, they both paid a terrible emotional price for it.

Knowing Mumford personally was a mixed experience for me. I first met him when I was in my mid-twenties and approached him as an acolyte of the godlike dispenser of wisdom. It was necessary for me, at that stage in my own life, to cast him in that role, and he was only too happy to accept it. My initial visit to him in Amenia was almost exactly the same as that depicted by Philip Roth several years later in *The Ghost Writer*. When that book was first published I was astonished by the similarities—the hopeful young writer making a pilgrimage to the country retreat of the great savant, the white colonial farmhouse, the cordial but slightly formal manner, the long-suffering wife, the mistresses hidden somewhere in the background: it's all there. E. I. Lonoff, Roth's writer, was Lewis Mumford to the life. And as with Roth's young character, I was shocked to eventually realize that Mumford, like many great men and women—even highly moralizing ones—was much less admirable as a person than as a writer.

In many respects he was a *monstre sacré*: self-centered, demanding, manipulative, an inexhaustible user of his family and others around him. As our relationship continued, it became clear to me that he was most interested in what one could do for him. He was not particularly generous or encouraging to an aspiring architecture writer.

There was one revealing moment I remember when Mumford was invested with his honorary knighthood at the British Embassy in Washington in 1975. After the ceremony, he was holding the blue morocco leather presentation case with all the regalia of a Knight Commander of the Order of the British Empire—the star, the sash, and a smaller decoration for less for-



Lewis Mumford (1980). (Courtesy of the Mumford Art Collection, Monmouth College, West Long Branch, New Jersey; photograph by David Gahr.)

mal occasions. Sophia looked into the box and said, "Oh look, Lewis, there's one for the wife, too!" It was the perfect remark because she indeed deserved a medal for remaining with him. Though Mumford was the only one knighted at that investiture, the actress Irene Worth was given one of the lesser honors, the Commander of the British Empire. At the reception afterward she asked me if I could introduce her to Mumford, who was one of her heroes, and from what she said to him I could tell that she had indeed read his books. Later Mumford said to me, "You know, when I was a young man I met Maude Adams when she was appearing in *Peter Pan*, and ever since then there's always been a certain scent about me that's attracted actresses."

Certainly one of his least admirable aspects was the extent to which he subjugated his wife and family to his career. Although

Sophia is a highly intelligent woman—she was an editor at the *Dial* magazine, where she and Mumford met in 1919—she gave up her career to become his amanuensis. But Mumford believed that people should sacrifice themselves for him. Not surprisingly, his family life was awful. He had a number of emotionally involving affairs throughout his marriage, the last at age 75 with a much younger woman who apparently made a specialty of famous old men, including Thomas Mann. Mumford always thoughtfully provided Sophia with all the details. She said that she found that final fling the most devastating of all. But even afterward, Mumford continued to torture Sophia by rehashing his sex life in his autobiographical writings, which she told me at the time was tearing them apart. The image of the Mumfords in their 80s, acting out this psychodrama in rural isolation, is pathetic to contemplate.

Furthermore, he never hid the fact that his work came first, ahead of his wife and children. The shut door to his study was an unbreachable barrier. Sophia was a much better mother than he was a father, but as was the case with Winston and Clementine Churchill, she unhesitatingly put her husband's needs ahead of their children's, to very destructive effect. As Mumford wrote in *Green Memories*—his memoir of their only son, Geddes, who was killed in World War II at the age of 19—the boy had terrible developmental and behavioral problems, which possibly would have continued into adulthood had he lived. Their daughter, Alison, who is now 55, was left very much out of the picture and has suffered greatly in later life. If we think of Mumford as an advanced, liberated personality and ethical teacher, it's tragic to learn that his family was like something out of a Dostoyevsky or Tolstoy novel.

But as a writer, Mumford to me stands above reproach. His writing style has influ-

enced me tremendously. He had a superb command of the English language, much like Abraham Lincoln's—sentences with scriptural cadences, drawing on a tradition of literature that has vanished from American education: the Bible, *Pilgrim's Progress*, Longfellow. Very often I'm struck by the sheer beauty of Mumford's writing, not just by the power of its moral imperative, but also by how gracefully he could convey it. His diction is accessible, yet he was a consummate prose stylist. His writing, free of architectural and intellectual jargon, is imaginative and original without being tricky, highly suggestive (especially his gift for describing the world of nature), conversational and easy for the educated reader to comprehend. One might counter that the writing styles of some current architecture critics are also accessible, but in my opinion they don't approach the intellectual content and social commitment Mumford invariably brought to his analysis of architecture.

His letters are wonderful to read and display his incredible spontaneity as a writer; he once urged me to respect my intuitive inner voice when writing. Mumford was very much a product of the 19th century in that he was never at a loss for words. Everything was written down, every day, from correspondences that went on for decades to random thoughts that were jotted down and filed away for possible later use. Then all of it was methodically organized and preserved in a way that will certainly not be done in this generation, and which will make Mumford a very attractive subject for researchers, which was definitely part of his intention.

Though he didn't write about how to be a critic or a writer, he once gave me some advice that I always remember: "Have something to say, and say it as briefly and as clearly as possible." I always keep the former in mind when accepting an assignment, and the latter when I'm writing and editing my work. Through Mumford's example, I have no patience for the kind of obscurantist, jargon-laden writing that appears in many journals. No matter how much I might

respect the thought that went into them, I feel they serve absolutely no purpose unless they are understandable to readers, even intellectuals. Mumford would have railed against the impenetrability of most post-structuralist criticism.

Moreover, he would have been unsympathetic to recent trends in architecture and planning. Even twenty years ago he felt alienated from new developments. He became completely disenchanted with the direction of architecture in the late 1960s and 1970s largely because he felt that the social impetus, which was of the greatest importance to him, had disappeared. In retrospect, I'd have to say he was right. For instance, Mumford would have laughed at such celebrated recent developments as Seaside, Florida, with its plan by Andres Duany and Elizabeth Plater-Zyberk. Seaside's nostalgic evocation of superficial, even cosmetic, town-planning notions, its lack of any true social program, and its amnesiac attitude toward the place of the automobile—to mention only some of its most glaring weaknesses aside from its kitsch aesthetic—would have made Mumford question why one should write about it at all, especially as he had been an active agent in the creation of real new towns in this country during the 1920s and 1930s. And yet to some people Seaside seems like a paragon. The retrogressive tendencies of most current architecture would have made it very difficult for Mumford to function as a critic today.

He saw no room in architecture for humor or irony or historical references. Though he could be appreciative of architectural classics, his aesthetic sense was neither highly developed nor did he find it the most pertinent factor in evaluating a building. The contemporary architect whom Mumford singled out for the most special attention was the now-forgotten Matthew Nowicki (1910–1950), whose work Mumford felt was the embodiment of what he had been writing about.

Mumford was much more concerned with planning principles than visual matters. If you look at the architectural design

of the houses at Sunnyside and Radburn, which Mumford was involved with as a member of the Regional Planning Association, they're banal in a way that does not even attain the level of Robert Venturi's self-conscious banality. But that didn't bother Mumford in the slightest. He was more interested in open space, circulation, and transportation in those projects than aesthetics, which I think he considered a bit effete. For example, he was a great foe of Le Corbusier's Unité d'Habitation, as were a number of other critics. But even if Mumford had been transported to the chapel at Ronchamp, I doubt that he possessed either the detachment or the sense of aesthetic pleasure to appreciate a very different and universally loved work by the same architect. He didn't often surrender his principles to sensual pleasure in his work, though he was certainly no puritan in his private affairs.

Mumford simply could not deal with the concept of pluralism, and would never have been able to respond to the much broader range of architectural design being produced today. He was most at home dealing with absolute, demonstrable principles, and tried to remove architecture from subjective opinion. An aesthetic approach did not interest him because it could not be applied in a socially scientific way, with predictable results and effects. Patrick Geddes's all-embracing model of sociology was central to Mumford's vision. He rejected criticism that judged things good because they corresponded to one's personal taste, as many critics are still doing. We would benefit greatly from a reintroduction of standards as rigorous as Mumford's, though perhaps a bit more flexible. Yet it is also that uprightness which made Mumford so convincing and authoritative. Whatever his failings, the accomplishments of those who come after him seem small in comparison, not just because of the quantity of his immense body of work, but above all because of his constant adherence to high principles, in his writing if not always in his personal life.

Liane Lefaivre and
Alexander Tzonis

LEWIS MUMFORD'S REGIONALISM

Lewis Mumford's idea of regionalism is an integral part of his writings and it allowed him to reflect upon problems of much deeper and broader significance than architecture. The recent return of the question of regionalism to architectural debates only makes Mumford's way of opening up mental compartments and of making new, unorthodox syntheses—his own unique legacy of free thinking—all the more alive and vital.

The notion of "regional" appears in Mumford's writings as early as 1924 in *Sticks and Stones*. He begins the discussion with what he terms the "imperial" Beaux-Arts architecture whose hold was still strong in the United States thirty years after its apotheosis at the 1893 World's Columbian Exposition in Chicago. Along with the associated City Beautiful movement, this style is, according to Mumford, an expression of "conspicuous waste" creating "new slums in the districts behind the grand avenues," which he likens to congested human "sewers," the equivalent of "icing on a birthday cake," which detracts from the

"realism" needed for the "the colossal task" of "the renovation of the city."

In addition, the "imperial facade" is the "very cloak and costume" of an "imperialist approach to the environment": it only displays a "negligence of the earth," using the land as a means of "profitable speculation and exploitation" rather than as a "home," resulting in "depletion and impoverishment" and the "poor quality" of the "great mass of modern houses" that are "no longer framed for some definite site and occupants."

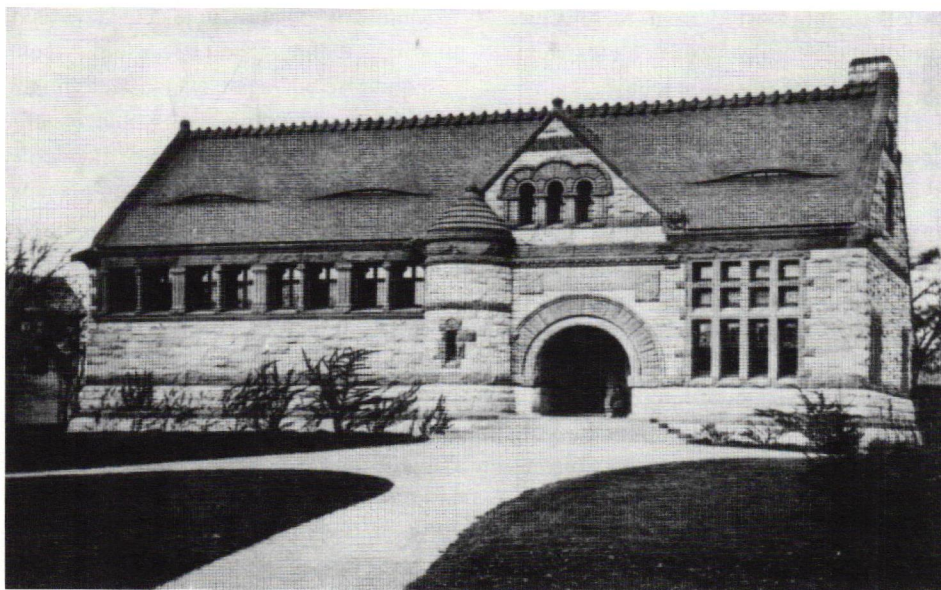
The alternative Mumford proposes is that of a "regional" architecture. Although unclear about what form it will take, Mumford goes on to say that it will be based on a deeper perception of "place" and evolve out of the "new frameworks provided" by "regional planning." Citing the precedent of "genuine regional planning" in Ontario, Canada, he specifies that the new regionalist framework "will redistribute population and industry" and will "serve economically." Within it, regional sources would no longer be ignored or depleted "for the benefit of ... the capital city." Moreover the more creative modes of architecture that might be derived from "achievements in science ... experiments in democracy" will "no longer be stifled" as they had been in the "imperial" framework.

In Mumford's *The Brown Decades*

(1931) regionalism is not far from his mind. Even if it is not mentioned by name, many passages echo the same preoccupations as in his previous works, in particular the passage on Thoreau who, by embracing "the totality of the natural environment," was a forerunner of a "fresh effort and action" against the "relentless spread of venal and mechanical civilization," and that on Frank Lloyd Wright's Oak Park and Prairie Style houses which, "with their low pitched roofs, their rambling plans, their marked horizontality," were "deliberate adaptations to the landscape," revealing a "sense of place."

Technics and Civilization follows in 1934. Here Mumford makes a brief historical sketch of regionalism, tracing its roots as a broad cultural phenomenon, which has influenced architecture as well as literature and philosophy back to the 18th century. It was then that regionalism first arose, in his view, as a form of opposition to the "de-regionalising processes" that "machine civilization" embodied. Mumford tries to distinguish his own view from this early form of regionalism by arguing that the latter's "besetting weakness lies in the fact that it is in part a blind reaction," an "aversion from what is," rather than "an impulse toward what may be." If Mumford looks forward to a "rational resettlement of the entire planet" into "regions," it is in order "to create a higher quality of life, material as well as social and spiritual" for the future.

In *The South in Architecture* (1941) Mumford first formulates his own deeply original syncretic theory of regionalism in architecture. The reason the United States cannot "create a regional architecture" at present, he argues, is that "we are only beginning to know enough about ourselves and our environment." In order to help overcome this lack of national self-knowledge, he devotes a study to H. H. Richardson. Richardson was "our first true regional architect," Mumford writes, because "he interpreted New England to itself and gave it a better sense of its own identity: he modified its Puritanic austerities: he gave to its buildings a color that they lacked: a color derived from its natural granites and sandstones, from weathered shingles and from the au-



Crane Memorial Library; Quincy, Massachusetts; H. H. Richardson. (1880) (From Lewis Mumford, *The Brown Decades*, 1931.)

tumna! tints of sumach and red oak." For all its "romanticism," Richardson's was "not an architecture of escape" from the "triumphant industrialism and rampant commercial enterprise," which was "loud, spectacular and vulgar." On the contrary, Richardson used his architecture as a means of criticism: "No one better confronted his age than Richardson did; no one exhibited more vigorously the strength to meet that age halfway and yet not be drowned by its corrupt vices, its contempt for beauty, its indifference to humanity."

Mumford admires Richardson's last works the most because in them Richardson becomes the first "regional" and "romantic" architect to "realize that his architecture must harmonize with the ever spreading forms of the machine," and "embrace, by creating fresh forms, the railroad station and the office building and all the other rising phenomena of the Industrial Age." The new sense of "regionalism" combined with "romanticism" and "functionalism"—best expressed according to Mumford in the Glessner House in Chicago and the Pray Building in Boston—forms "a primitive source of modern architecture, at least in the United States."

Mumford's October 1947 article in *The New Yorker* attacks the formalism of "New Monumentalism," the "New Humanism," and "Personalism" that had started to spring up in the writings of Giedion and Gropius (among others) in the professional magazines of the time. The problem, Mumford feels, is that, as in the case of the older "imperial" architecture, these new trends once more place the "premium on the facade." A preferable alternative, Mumford suggests, is Californian architecture, more precisely "that native and humane form of modernism one might call the Bay Region Style."¹

The idea is obviously so outrageous and creates such a tremendous stir that an open debate is organized at New York's Museum of Modern Art on the evening of February 11, 1948. The debate is titled "What is Happening to Modern Architecture?" and the speakers confronting Mumford include, among others, Barr, Hitchcock, Johnson, Gropius, Breuer, Hamlin, Nelson,

and Chermayeff. Most of the participants totally misconstrue Mumford's regionalism, and Gropius goes so far as to accuse him of a "chauvinistic sentimental national prejudice" inappropriate at a moment when "human problems on earth" were becoming an "interdependent entity."²

A year later, the Museum of Civic Art of San Francisco presents an exhibition of the *Domestic Architecture of the San Francisco Bay Region* (September 16–October 30, 1949) for which Mumford hammers home his position. The Bay Region Style, he argues, has only been used as a contrast to "the restrictive and void formulas of the so-called International Style, tied to tags and clichés."³ It was a reaffirmation of a truly modern movement and a defense against its postwar fakes. The argument is taken up in Wurster's lucid exposition in the same catalogue. In the special April 1954 issue of *California Monthly*, Wurster again restates Mumford's position, affirming that "architecture is a social art" and that "buildings cannot and should not conjure up life in any terms but those of their own era."

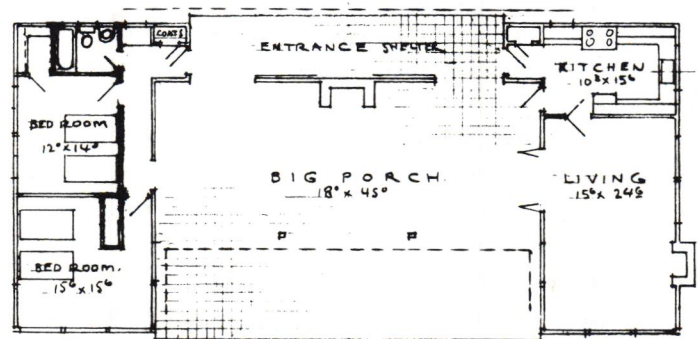
But it is a losing battle. Ironically, Mumford's revival of regionalism is probably partly to blame for the spread of regional kitsch expressed in projects like Edward Durrell Stone's Pakistan Institute of Science and Technology, Walter Gropius's University of Baghdad, Yamasaki's entry for the United States Embassy in London, and many of the Hilton hotels around the world in the late 1950s and early 1960s.

One decade later, writing in the German *Rowohlts* Encyclopedia (1956), Giedion responds to Mumford's 'regionalist' challenge to neo-monumentalism, on the one hand by appearing to accept regionalism, while on the other ignoring the issues Mumford had brought up in his discussion of regionalism. Giedion will claim that even de Stijl was regionalist—by referring to the similarity of its grid and that of the Dutch landscape. He points to regionalism's importance for "technically underdeveloped countries," and in addition to respecting "cosmic and ethnonic aspects," he praises regionalism's ability to "liberate us from

the tyranny of the rectangular form." Giedion remained silent regarding Mumford's critique, through regionalism, of bureaucratic and technocratic architecture.

Mumford soon after publishes an anthology of classic writings on American architecture by Greenough, Sullivan, Thoreau, Wright, Schuyler, Hudnut, Bauer, Stein, Hitchcock, and Johnson, among others, titled *Roots of Contemporary American Architecture* (1952). It is aimed at "the incurable inferiority complex of many Americans, especially those who have made themselves at home in Europe without having had the good fortune to strike any deep roots in their own country." These Americans are "embarrassed over the genius of Frank Lloyd Wright, because it had no aesthetic resemblance to the glib mannerisms of Le Corbusier," another allusion to the International Style. Mumford's own introduction, "What the American Tradition is Not," condenses previous writing. The book does little to fulfill Mumford's wish to stem the tide of the International Style in the United States, and even less to restore "conviction and direction" combining, in a synthetic way, "the domestic, the regional, the mechanical, the social and the universal" in the American architectural profession.

The Urban Prospect (1968) is an anthology of some of Mumford's most worried, most perceptive, and most dismissed articles on the city written during a key decade—the mid-1950s to the mid-1960s—in the history of American cities. He criticizes the Urban Renewal Act, urban expressways, regional councils, the Model Cities program, the New Towns movement, and land control. He attacks Jean Gottmann for his model of *Megalopolis*, which in Mumford's view is the "latest anti-urban design for non-living" in an "anti-city" where "mess is the message." To the "incoherent and purposeless urbanoid non-entity" which the city has become as it "dribbles over the devastated landscape" in the process of "producing the greatest amount of power, prestige and profit" for the "distant controllers" of the urban "mega machine," Mumford opposes the idea once



Perspective and floor plan, house for Mr. and Mrs. Robert C. Green; Mt. Diablo, California; William Wurster (1938). (Drawing courtesy of College of Environmental Design Documents Collection, University of California at Berkeley.)

more. This is not surprising, since “all my thoughts about the city have been toward laying the social foundations for urban rebuilding on a *regional* scale in both old cities and new communities” [emphasis added], the idea that a city is where “human interactions and human responses” should be “the first consideration” in order for the city to become “a place.”

Mumford’s almost life-long preoccupation, briefly outlined here, with “place,” “the earth,” and “the land” as a “home” rather than a means of “profitable speculation and exploitation”—a concern linked to the vision of “the Bauer who plants” becoming “the Bauer who builds” (*Sticks and Stones*)—as well as his critique of “machine ridden civilization and technology”

brings to mind Martin Heidegger. Heidegger too writes about place, earth, land, home, and the relation between “Bauer” as both “builder” and “cultivator”. He too discusses the problem of homelessness as “not being redeemable through technology and the machine.” He too denounces technology and the machine, which, although “shrinking distances in time and space” and providing “housing,” ultimately fail because “short distance is not in itself nearness” (*The Thing*, 1950), and because the “real plight of dwelling does not lie merely in a lack of houses” (*Building Dwelling Thinking*, 1951).⁴

There is nothing strange in having such notions in common. Not only are Mumford and Heidegger part of the same historical

period, they are concerned with the same problem: the crisis of a civilization dominated by the machine. They both share the experience of the debates in Germany at the end of the 1920s and beginning of the 1930s. Mumford visited Germany in 1932 to carry out research for his *Technics and Civilization* and to study German planning and examples of *Siedlungen*. References to German books and projects abound in Mumford’s work at this time. Many of the dichotomies used by Mumford in his regionalist theory recall well-known dichotomies developed by German intellectuals during the first quarter of this century: culture versus civilization, mechanical versus organic, *Gemeinschaft* versus *Gesellschaft*. Many of these are associated with

the antitechnical, antiscientific, anti-positivist, antimass movements of the period. And of course the same oppositional categories are also to be found in Heidegger's writings.

But if Mumford and Heidegger are part of the same world, they occupy diametrically opposed positions in it. Heidegger's idea of "the earth," "the land," and "home" are inseparably linked with the idea of the *Volk*, a specific, closed, hierarchical, regimented human group joined by an abstract "German-ness" (*Deutschum*), concrete ethnic origins, soil (*Blut und Boden*), and language. In his view, these unique, exclusive bonds (*Bodem-ständigkeit*) guarantee "unity" (*Ganzheit*), "supremacy of character," and other qualities that identify a people as separate and superior. Loosening these bonds brings "decadence" (*Verderb*), "alienation," and "internal disintegration" (*Zersetzung*).

Mumford's "regionalism" has its ideological roots in anarchism, more specifically in Henry David Thoreau's *Walden* and Peter Kropotkin's ideas about "spatial power" decentralization, a process that was indifferent to ethnic spatial differentiation. Mumford inherited these latter ideas from his mentor Patrick Geddes, who had met Kropotkin in 1886. Mumford's regionalism, like Thoreau's, Geddes's or Kropotkin's could not be less connected to the idea of a prohibiting enclave, racial, national, or social. In *The South in Architecture*, originally delivered as a series of lectures to cadets who were about to leave for the front in World War II, Mumford was conscious of the importance of regionalism in Nazi Germany, with its "deification of *Heimat*," and eager to distinguish his own regionalism from it. He prefaces his exposition on Richardson by saying that "it would be useful if we formed the habit of never using the word regional without mentally adding to it the idea of the universal—remembering the constant contact and interchange between the local scene and the wide world that lies beyond it," because "the problem of regionalism is ultimately how to live in a world of particular interests" without ceasing "to sustain mankind as a whole."

Apart from moral and political stances there are also basic methodological issues that oppose Mumford and Heidegger. Heidegger's discourse is opaque and rhetorical, dependent on an exalted tone rather than evidence. Throughout all his writings Mumford maintained a rational argumentation, occasionally sentimental and "Edwardian" in style, but always open to analysis. This is not to say that his writings were indifferent to aesthetics. The opening chapter of *The Brown Decades*, with its analysis of the color brown as a "form of life," is one of the masterpieces of 20th-century prose.

In addition, Heidegger's contemptuous dismissal of "housing" (*Building Dwelling Thinking*) as not even "worthy of questioning and ... of thought" is grounded in a deeply antimodernist attitude. Behind it stands a condemnation of both modern technology and—as Pierre Bourdieu has remarked—of the welfare state, in fact the very idea of social democracy.⁵ Heidegger's problem is not with the placing of human priorities below those of machine efficiency, nor with the inertia of bureaucratic practices and centralization, but with the very existence of modern technology and modern social programs that are degraded, plebeian, lax, and opposed to the heroic essence of *Heimat* and *Volk*.

Far from antimodernist, Mumford believes (and makes clear from the very start) that regionalism in architecture is a necessary part of modernism. One of Mumford's complaints about the International Style is that even in matters of style it is not "modern" enough: he alludes obliquely to the International Style in *The South in Architecture*, "today there are hundreds of buildings ... that still lack the essential style of the present age." In addition, Mumford shares a "common appreciation" with the poet Hart Crane for the great work of modern engineering, the Brooklyn Bridge, as a work of art, and devotes a long section to its aesthetic contribution to the "feral landscape" of the city in *The Brown Decades*. As early as *Sticks and Stones*, forty years before the polemics of Scott-Brown and Venturi, Mumford criticizes architects be-

cause they "neglected new elements like the bill-board, the skysign, the subway, the tall building." He approved of "the cleanliness and strength" of the modern steamship (*Technics and Civilization*) but only up to a point, as he finds it "essentially paleotechnic in design." And thirty years before Reyner Banham promoted similar "Second Machine Age" aesthetics, Mumford's sympathies are with the streamline Dymaxion Car by Buckminster Fuller, the Union Pacific train, and the Soviet "Rail Zeppelin, spherotrain." (Banham not only ignored this fact but obviously having read only his postwar journalism, dismissed Mumford's critique of modernism as containing "largely irrelevant tergiversations on the problem of monumentality" coming from a person "too remotely placed," who "in spite of his sociological perceptiveness," lacks a "real sense of the aesthetic issues involved.")

As for the welfare state, Mumford is against its "barracks architecture," and its "uncritical belief in constantly raising the quantitative standard of production." In his Ribicoff Committee Statement of 1967, he discourages the government from beginning a massive-scale housing program. In other works he criticizes architectural failures of the TVA, but in these criticisms he only opposes certain aspects of the welfare state, those related to its overly regimenting, authoritarian tendency to function as an "exclusive system." The idea of regionalism can be seen as his answer to "the fallacy" of this system.

Mumford's "regionalist" antidote to "exclusive systems" was neither a return to what he called "paleotechnic," "speculative disorder" embodied in the libertarian 19th-century absence of planning, nor a regression to the order of the Old World where "region" meant something picturesque, "a place for the personal touch, for the cherished accident" (*The Transformation of Man*). Furthermore, the idea of Mumford's "regions," far from being an aristocratic, critique of the liberties of the welfare state, is almost identical to Kropotkin's anarchist idea of "decentralised ... small units, responsive to direct human contact" (*The City in History*).

Kropotkin's "regionalist" thinking reached Mumford through Patrick Geddes but also possibly derived from his schoolmates, mostly "the second generation of central European immigration that swept into the East Side after the assassination of Czar Alexander II."⁶

Mumford's anarchist definition of regionalism comes out in his belief in civil disobedience, especially as he grows older. The following incident is telling. At Harvard in the spring of 1970 Tzonis organized an exhibition of the work of Arthur Glickson. As Mumford's ideas of regionalism had significantly influenced Glickson's thinking and, since Mumford was resident at Harvard during that year, Tzonis invited him to open the exhibition and give a lecture. Mumford's talk departed from a discussion about Glickson's analysis of terrain and his housing projects by linking this work with the investigations of Patrick Geddes. He soon moved to a discussion about the autocracy of stereotypes, conformism, the stupidity of universal systems, their denial of the immediate surrounding reality, and the reality of the region. Then he spoke about the need for protest and defiance. He ended by narrating an event that had taken place at Harvard several years before, when the local authorities had ruled to cut all the trees along Memorial Drive. The students, hearing about it, had decided to lie down across the drive to stop the cutting. In the end the trees were saved and traffic went on its way, at least for the moment. Although it was a peculiar way for Mumford to move from Glickson's almost ecological, cultural analysis of mediterranean landscape regions and his idealistic—but at the same time pragmatic—housing projects to such moral, political issues, during the lecture Mumford's transition appeared natural and consistent to everyone.

Mumford applies Kropotkin's general principles—to which he always remained attached—to specific realities of the 1930s, endorsing typical welfare-state modern housing and engineering projects that Heidegger would have abhorred. In *Technics and Civilization* he celebrates the

housing in Sweden "typical of millions of such dwellings that came to Europe after 1915," thanks to "neotechnic methods in community planning" alongside the waterworks of the same country, which he qualifies as "the new architecture" of the "neotechnic region." In the 1932 MOMA exhibition on housing he curates with Catherine Bauer, he presents prototypical welfare-state housing projects such as Oud's Kiefhoek development in Rotterdam and Ernst May's Weimar Republic project in Romerstadt. He never stopped admiring the engineering works of the TVA and some of the landscaping around it.

Another contrast between Mumford's and Heidegger's approaches to "place" and "technology" lies in their respective methods of investigation. Heidegger pursues an abstract contemplative introspection, retreating to a neocatholic meditational brooding about "the fourfold" essence of dwelling, even though he had broken with the church, as Victor Farias had shown.⁷

Mumford on the other hand turns to history. In particular, he is drawn by novel contemporary developments in *Kulturgeschichte*, embracing social history, cultural history, and the history of science. He is inspired by the writings of Max Weber, Werner Sombart, Franz Maria Feldhaus, and Charles Singer. He also studies Marx and adopts the rigorous evolutionist thinking of Patrick Geddes. He relies upon documents and firsthand testimonies; he reviews "general" and "interpretative" histories and seeks supporting evidence in biographies and novels.

For Mumford, writing history is not an end in itself, but a hermeneutic handle with which to get a grip on current problems. *Technics and Civilization* is undertaken, as he states in his introduction, in order "to understand the dominant role played by technics in modern civilization." To do this he proceeds to "explore in detail the preliminary period of ideological and social preparation." If he also occasionally succeeds in writing excellent history—the first chapter of *Technics and Civilization* is one of the early classics of the "history of material life," while the book's sixth chapter is

still the best concise sketch of the history of regionalism—he does so only in passing.

We believe Mumford's penetrating theory of regionalism, which made him successful in identifying, interpreting, and predicting so many problems of the urban and natural environment, was very much the result of his particularly broad *historical* perspective, encompassing such a great range of human affairs, of putting, so to speak, Geddes's "outlook tower" over a historical horizon. Conversely, Heidegger's blindness, which ultimately made him unable to feel it necessary to distinguish between mass murder and a traffic jam, was due to the absence of a historical understanding in his work, as the ungenerous, polemically uncaring essay on *Building Dwelling Thinking* reveals. The absence of this broad historical perspective in Heidegger and its presence in Mumford probably contributed to Heidegger's opting for an exclusivist and totalitarian definition of *Heimat* and to Mumford's inclusive and anarchist reinterpretation of the "region."

It is always difficult to keep to a straight path in dealing with Mumford's writings. His background is polymorphic and his interests constantly shift. This is why his texts are relevant to so many different contemporary debates today. But there is another reason Mumford's regionalism seems inextricable from so many other themes in his writings. In *The South in Architecture*, Mumford tries to explain his interest in architecture: "It is fortunate that we can turn to architecture for help in stating the more general human problem that lies before us today," because "the problems raised by architecture" are "similar to those raised in every other department of social life ... [and] some observation which seems at first glance to have a purely architectural or aesthetic significance will lead you to trace its ramifications to conclusions in a quite different field."

Of all the themes that preoccupied Mumford—"the machine, the city, the region, the group, the personality" (*Technics and Civilization*)—the region is the most important means for pursuing his aim of

stating "the more general human problem." Indeed, whether he was criticizing the Beaux Arts "imperial facade," the City Beautiful, machine civilization, *Heimat*, the International Style, New Monumentality, or the Megalopolis, he did so consistently from the standpoint of a regionalist. In what we believe to be Mumford's last public statement, which is also his last attack against the International Style, delivered during an event organized at the Harvard Graduate School of Design in April 1982 to commemorate the 50th anniversary of the International Style Exhibition at MOMA, that standpoint remains unchanged:

There is no international society, therefore there is no such thing as an international architecture.... I saw what happened after the first atom bomb was used, and within three weeks I had written an article denouncing it as a menace to mankind.... We are now at a stage where only the utmost ruthlessness with ourselves, with our habits of life, with our own outmoded ways of thinking will save us. Thinking about an international style when we don't have an international society is absurd.⁸

ACKNOWLEDGMENT: We wish to thank Anthony Alofsin, our coauthor in our first article on Mumford and critical regionalism, "Die Frage des Regionalismus," in M. Andriksy, L. Burckhardt et al., editors, *Für Eine Andere Architektur*, vol. 1, (Frankfurt: Fisher, 1981) pp. 121-134.

NOTES

1. "Skyline," *The New Yorker* (Oct. 1947).
2. "What is Happening to Modern Architecture," *The Museum of Modern Art Bulletin* 15, no. 1 (Spring 1948): pp. 1-21.
3. "Introduction," *Domestic Architecture of the San Francisco Bay Region* (San Francisco, 1949).
4. In Martin Heidegger, *Poetry, Language, Thought*, A. Hofstadter, editor (New York: Harper, 1971).
5. Pierre Bourdieu, *L'Ontologie politique de Martin Heidegger* (Paris: Minuit, 1988).
6. "A New York Adolescence," *The New Yorker* (Dec. 7, 1937).
7. Victor Farias, *Heidegger et le Nazisme* (Paris: Verdier, 1987).
8. *G. S. D. News* (Summer 1982).

Stanislaus von Moos

MUMFORD VERSUS GIEDION: REVIEWING THE MACHINE AGE

Lewis Mumford and Sigfried Giedion, two of the most influential architectural critics of this century and probably the two most perspicacious cultural historians of industrialization (next to Walter Benjamin and Norbert Elias), have recently received detailed biographical scrutiny.¹ In terms of outlook and method, the two biographies have little in common—one focuses on the

vicissitudes of Mumford's private life and the other on the structure of Giedion's doctrine—but both seem to share a solid distrust in visual matters, i.e., the aesthetic culture of the two men. The authors of these biographies must have dutifully read everything their heroes ever wrote—but have they *looked* at their books? The present article is not a book review, but rather an art historian's note in the margin of Miller's and Georgiadis' impressive pictures of their respective heroes. What about the artistic choices and the visual rhetoric that underlies Mumford's and Giedion's choice of illustrations?

In fact, it is worthwhile to take those illustrations not just at face value, as documents supporting the facts described in the text, but as a visual discourse parallel to the verbal discourse and partly independent from it, as well as to look at them as enacted techniques of *mise en intrigue*. Mumford himself, arguably the most verbal (and least visual) among all the commentators of the Machine Age, suggests such an approach in a book review published in *The New Republic* (1929): "We do not need verbal outlining so much as we need pictures". Responding to the impact of the powerful illustrations he found in the books under review, he concluded:

The phantasmagoria of the Sunday Graphic Section must be replaced by the coherent views and suggestions offered by an original mind.

Mumford's books obviously fall somewhat short of this standard of excellence: most of them could hardly be more programmatically committed to "verbal outlining." As is well known, the 158 articles Mumford wrote for *The New Yorker* between 1931 and 1963 had no visual support at all, nor did his primarily sociological works or his books in the field of literary and cultural criticism (like *Story of Utopias*, 1922, or the biography of Melville, 1929).

All the more surprising is the use of illustrations in *Technics and Civilization* (1934), Mumford's leap into what was then a new area of research, the cultural history



Plate IX, "Paleotechnic Triumphs"; Lewis Mumford (1934). (From *Technics and Civilization*.)

of industrialization. Perhaps Catherine Bauer, Mumford's friend in that period, played a part in his discovery of photographs as instruments of cultural analysis? The illustrations, all halftones, are concentrated in a huddled fashion on fifteen plates scattered throughout the text so as to form a kind of book within the book. The captions give the essential facts and the outline of Mumford's interpretation.

Any one of the fifteen plates of *Technics and Civilization* can be used as an example. For instance, plate IX, which documents the age of "Paleotechnic Triumphs," is composed of Catherine Bauer's snapshot of the Brooklyn Bridge, an old view of the Galerie des Machines in Paris, and a closeup of an ocean liner photographed from the pier together with Maudslay's original screw-cutting lathe of around 1800. Three of these four images belong among the established icons of modernity: the Brooklyn Bridge, the building that had opened Mumford's eyes to the grandeur of modernity, represents New York, and the Galerie des Machines represents Paris as its two most important market places. Finally, the ocean liner commuting between them suggests the transatlantic exchange of goods, people, and mythologies as one of the critical issues of its history.

Clearly, these illustrations offer a visual summary or synthesis of the argument discussed in the respective chapter; beyond that, Mumford confronts us with his private iconography of engineering and technology, i.e., in the most literal sense, his *view* of modernity at large. Yet the characteristic "message" of these illustrations emerges not from these modern icons alone, but also from the way they are arranged on the page to form a visual whole. In other words, we read the page as a sequence of images arranged as a continuous narrative. The individual images are related to each other with the help of formal analogies: because it looks like a bridge, the cutting lathe at the top of the page enters into a formal dialogue with the Brooklyn Bridge in the picture below. At the same time, the combination of the two images suggests a more subtle kind of equivalence: a screw is being turned



Plate XIV, "Modern Machine Art"; Lewis Mumford (1934). (From *Technics and Civilization*.)

in the top image, whereas below we have cables that are not turned but spun. In this way we grasp an analogy about the productive procedures employed in the two technical (or structural) devices.

Another plate ("Modern Machine Art") may illustrate even more clearly Mumford's tendency to arrange pictures in almost cinematographic sequences and with a special eye for direct formal correspondences. At the top we see ball bearings hovering mysteriously above a spring; below, glass bottles, and finally, kitchen ladles, arranged as if to counterbalance the oval form of the ball bearings. That this echo-effect (or visual rhyme) was deliberately intended is obvious; we can easily see that the image of

the ball bearings used for the illustration at the top was originally vertical ("in reality" the object was standing upright on a table) and had to be turned 90 degrees to achieve the intended effect.

When Mumford shows machinery—as on plate X: "Neotechnic Automation"—the focus is not the geometric quality of any single mechanical installation or apparatus, not an alleged absolute and platonic standard submitted to "Eyes that do not see" (to quote Le Corbusier's phrase). Rather we get the sense of an endless process, of a continuous flow of mechanical movements linked by crank actions and transmission belts and rolling dangerously toward us, albeit controlled by a human supervisor. Clearly, that lonely worker, who "lingers on as a machine herd," as Mumford states in the caption, is the center of the author's attention. He seems to relate to the spectacle of industrial production that appears to be rolling toward us by jerks—image by image—in the same way that the lonely figures on C. D. Friedrich's paintings relate to the cosmic landscape that surrounds them.

On the whole, reading Mumford and taking in the sequence of images that look alike, although they often show objects that differ in nature and function, one sees the correspondences that exist between the writer for whom writing his text also means "streamlining" historical evidence for what might be called an epic of the Machine Age and the social scientist preoccupied with analogies and similarities found among phenomena that are often distant in time and space. At any rate, this "view" of the machine expresses the deeper concerns of *Technics and Civilization* as we find them in the titles of its various chapters. Even better than words these plates symbolize what Mumford means by "The Esthetic Experience of the Machine" and by "The Dissolution of the 'Machine'"; they display "The Elements of Social Energetics" and anticipate Mumford's utopia of a "Dynamic Equilibrium" (all chapter headings of the book).

The roots of Mumford's visual rhetoric cannot be found in a literary genre or style alone; it has its visual premises as well.

Most likely, those premises are to be found in contemporary art and in the iconography of architectural propaganda. One name that comes to mind is Charles Sheeler. Mumford may have seen Sheeler's photomural titled *Industry* of 1932 (The Art Institute, Chicago): a triptych made of two vertical pictures flanking a larger center panel. Another reference is the architect Erich Mendelsohn. Mumford uses a photograph from Mendelsohn's book, *Amerika: Bilderbuch eines Architekten* (1925), showing an American grain elevator, and indeed his aforementioned call for "pictures" as opposed to "verbal outlining" had been provoked by another of Mendelsohn's giant scrapbooks. Mendelsohn offers a spectacular prototype for Mumford's cinematographic style of picture editing. For one of the Chicago grain elevators shown in *Amerika* he reproduced four almost equal views, each on a full page—like stills of a film.

Mendelsohn's brief comments are rhapsodic and, what is more interesting, they start by focusing on the grain elevator not as an isolated *objet* (as in Le Corbusier's well-known examples shown in *L'Esprit Nouveau*), but as an operating part in what Mendelsohn perceives as the digestive apparatus of America:

Special railway-wagons from the interior of the continent, ships carrying grain across the great lakes pour their content without interruption into the subterranean bunkers and mills. Batteries of elevators store the processed outcome into the rows of containers, in Chicago's nutritive harbour.

In other instances, Mendelsohn juxtaposed the "elevator-fortresses" of Buffalo to the "crane-monsters with living gestures" that served them. For him, these buildings expressed visibly the "most rational way of production." What is interesting for us is that Mendelsohn uses the same kind of functional, organic, anthropomorphic metaphors for these industrial processes as Mumford uses.

Mumford's preference for the sequential arrangement of images that look alike can serve a wide range of purposes. He often combines images that look alike even though

they have nothing else in common. In such a way, art and machinery are forced into the procrustean bed of a biotechnical utopia where nature mirrors technology and vice versa. Here Ruskin is a likely antecedent (although his comparisons juxtapose nature and architecture instead of the machine and art). The critique frequently leveled against this kind of arbitrary association of images is that it does not prove anything. Mumford's—and even more so Giedion's—books abound in such associational juxtapositions, and historians have been quick to point out that they are worthless as history. But what critics often failed to see is that the purpose of such synthetic comparisons is in general not to demonstrate an influence based upon chronological precedence, but to establish a conceptual level upon which phenomena of distant origin become comparable—or even part of a visual heritage or culture. This is the purpose of Mumford's surprising visual juxtapositions of Duchamp-Villon's horse with the concrete trusses of Nervi's stadium in Florence, or of Léger's painting of a Chicago grain silo, and of Brancusi's egg with a machine element—a comparison Mumford discusses in the following passage on Brancusi's "bird":

The obtuse United States customs officer who wished to classify Brancusi's sculpture as machinery of plumbing was in fact paying it a compliment. In Brancusi's sculpture the idea of the machine is objectified and assimilated in equivalent works of art.

Equivalence is the point here—not historical influence or descendance, and the same is true, of course, with respect to Giedion's famous juxtaposition of Picasso's *Arlesienne* with Gropius's workshop wing at the Bauhaus (from *Space, Time and Architecture*, 1941). If the argument was that the *Arlesienne* is the source for the Bauhaus wing, then Giedion's comparison would indeed be "sheer nonsense," as one critic recently put it. If the argument is that the two works are part of a growing tradition of modernism, then the comparison is at least a seminal episode of modernist myth-making and worthy of our historical interest.

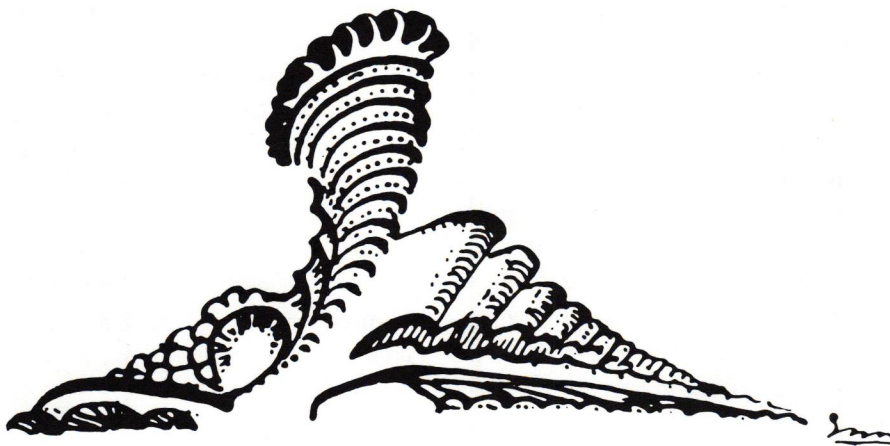
With Mumford as a backdrop, it may be easier to characterize Giedion as a key historiographer and image manipulator of the Modern Movement. "Image manipulator" may sound harsh, yet while Mumford claimed in 1929 (in the passage referred to above) that what was needed was pictures, not verbal outlining, Giedion went out and actually did it. His somewhat surprising introductory note to a little booklet on "liberated living" (*Befreites Wohnen*, 1929) speaks for itself:

It is quite all right if the author, for once, cannot use words in order to say what he has to say, but is forced to express himself visually. That is—in this case—to use lay-out and comparisons (in a positive sense) for clarification rather than comments.... In such a way, the lay-out of images will inevitably appear more concentrated and perhaps for the reader a more sizable survey will result.

A few months before, Giedion had been even more explicit about the group that, he felt, needs to be taken seriously both by publishers and authors of scholarly works: the "hasty reader." In a cautionary note at the beginning of his seminal *Bauen in Frankreich, Eisen, Eisenbeton* (1928)—the book that established him as a pioneer in the



Frontispiece of Giedion's *Befreites Wohnen* (1929). (Photo courtesy of Von Moos.)



Drawing of a factory, Eric Mendelsohn (c. 1914). (Courtesy of von Moos.)

historiography of early modern architecture—he wrote:

The book was edited and laid out in such a way as to make it possible for the hasty reader to grasp the course of the evolution [of building in iron and reinforced concrete in France] from the illustrations, the text serves to provide more detailed information, the notes give additional hints.

Giedion's favoring of the visual over the verbal, while telling a lot about his training as an art historian under Heinrich Wölfflin, may have compromised his academic future in the world of German and Swiss art history. Even the appearance of his books is revelatory. To the academics they must have appeared to be journalism in book form. Giedion sees himself not just as a commentator of the Modern Movement but as an active member of it. This becomes clear from the introductory sentence to *Bauen in Frankreich*: "der Historiker steht in der Zeit, nicht über ihr" ("the historian stands in his time, not above it"). Giedion's point of reference for typography and photography is the Bauhaus, and so the book—which was designed under the supervision of Moholy-Nagy—adopts the format of the Bauhaus-Bücher. Its cover shows a negative print of one of Giedion's beautiful photographs of the Pont Transbordeur in Marseilles, an icon of 19th-century iron constructions.

In *Befreites Wohnen* Giedion clearly shifts away from the formal hygiene of

Bauhaus typography. The cover, based on a photograph of the veranda of a model house of the Swiss "neues bauen," may owe more to El Lissitzky than to anyone else. Concerning the graphics inside, it is hard not to be irritated by what appears to be a highly artificial and crafted kind of informality and primitivism in the use of type, glue, and handwriting. The frontispiece, with its strips of lettering pasted across the page, may be used as an example. What we see is a photograph of the headquarters of the Schweizerische Volksbank at Zurich's Bahnhofstrasse (built as late as 1926!), but what comes across is the general quality of a collage in the style of Kurt Schwitters. The function of this quasi-MERZ-Bild on the subject of Kom-Merz and architecture in Zurich is clear. It has to symbolize avant-garde in the context of the medium of the book, while at the same time it demonstrates the print culture's obsession with fragmentation, signs, and communication in the context of art.

The crudeness of some of the figures is equally strange. That the use of Giedion's handwriting instead of ordinary print would do much to clarify the analogy and difference between low-rise and high-rise *Streifenbau* is anything but obvious. Yet once again the purpose of that didactic mode was not so much didactic as symbolic. It characterized the book as a pedagogical sketchbook in the tradition of Paul Klee. The comparison between Giedion's and Klee's handwriting speaks for itself.

It would be tempting to discuss Giedion's better-known later works in terms of their underlying visual modes and their relative points of reference, especially *Space, Time and Architecture* of 1941 (based on the Charles Eliot Norton lectures given at Harvard in 1938–39) and *Mechanization Takes Command* of 1947—Giedion's answer (if not admittedly so) to Mumford's *Technics and Civilization*. This latter work, probably a more lasting contribution to the story of modernity than even *Space, Time and Architecture*, owes as much to *L'Esprit Nouveau* as to the Sears Roebuck catalogue. But the most important eye-openers for Giedion's perception of 19th-century "ruling taste" were undoubtedly the collages in the *romans illustrés* (illustrated novels) by his friend Max Ernst.

With Ernst but also Klee, Léger, Duchamp, Calder, and Picabia on his mind, Giedion unraveled the mass cultural enigmas of the early industrial age. Mumford was quite enthusiastic. In 1941 he had reviewed *Space, Time and Architecture* as "a very exciting piece of work." On *Mechanization Takes Command* he wrote a few years later, in his characteristic generosity:

[This book] should cause American architectural scholars again to blush, for their lack of curiosity and zeal has once more forced this European critic to explore a rich store of material that lay at their feet, waiting for a prospector to stub his toe on it. ... With great pertinency Giedion has salvaged and appraised some extraordinarily interesting material.

Perhaps it was the pathetic last chapter on "Man in Equipoise" that broke the ice. Here Giedion makes his plea for an organic equilibrium between technics and nature, machine and life. We do not know whether he merely ignored Mumford's analogous ideas on biotechnics expressed more than a decade earlier. Mumford wrote: "From my standpoint, these concluding observations are pure gold."

After that, there were occasional contacts between the two authors, friendly but rather distant. And that should be no surprise given their different outlooks on the

modern world, so easily grasped from the visual organization of their books. Above all, Mumford never abandoned his visceral distrust of Le Corbusier.

From the time I read the first edition of his *Vers une architecture*, I knew that we were, by reason of our different temperaments and education, predestined enemies: he with his Cartesian clarity and his Cartesian elegance, but—alas!—with his Baroque insensitiveness to time, change, organic adaptation, functional fitness, ecological complexity.

Giedion, on the other hand, the secretary general of the CIAM (Congrès Internationaux d'Architecture Moderne) remained a lifelong ally in Le Corbusier's battle for the victory of modern architecture.

Another worm in the bittersweet apple of their friendship was their equally divergent evaluation of Erich Mendelsohn. Mendelsohn's name, as is well known, does not appear in Giedion's book. To the degree that *Space, Time and Architecture* was designed as an apology for Gropius's work and the Bauhaus, architectural expressionism inevitably appeared as a mere incident on the fringes of the "New Tradition." Giedion writes that

Faustian outbursts against an inimical world and the cries of outraged humanity cannot create new levels of achievement. They remain transitory facts—however moving they may be—and not constituent ones.

He continues with a rather poorly veiled aside on the work of both Bruno Taut and Erich Mendelsohn:

The expressionist influence could not perform any service for architecture. Nevertheless it touched almost every German worker in the arts. Men who were later to do grimly serious work in housing developments abandoned themselves to a romantic mysticism, dreamed of fairy castles to stand on the peak of Monte Rosa.

He goes on (knowing that the initiated will inevitably spot Mendelsohn's Einstein tower in Potsdam, 1922, as the attack's target): "Others built concrete towers as flaccid as jellyfish."

Yet the two crucial issues at stake are Mumford and Giedion's utterly different perceptions of the socioeconomic interests at work behind the looks of buildings and settlements, past and present. Needless to say, the two attitudes are complementary. It is intriguing that Mumford himself should provide us with a key to the problem, in a letter to Giedion, written in 1963, and also that he should use the word "objective" in an equivocal way considering that for both men (but especially for Giedion) the photograph had always been an essential medium of communication:

I have always been conscious of our parallel interests and objectives: our divergences are like the differences between two eyes in binocular vision, or sometimes between "near" and "distance" lenses in bi-focal glasses.

While Mumford's eye reaches out for the distant views, Giedion's is most penetrating when he puts on the "near" glasses. Mumford's books—starting from *The City in History*—abound in aerial views, whereas Giedion's abound in closeups, technical details of patent-drawings (in *Mechanization Takes Command*), or revealing surface patterns in ancient buildings (in his last books on Mesopotamia, Greece, and Rome). Very appropriately, the theme of Eugen Zeller's beautiful and highly symbolic 1931 drawing of Giedion in his living room, together with his friend the photographer Hans Finsler, a copy of *L'Esprit Nouveau* on the table before him, seems to be the enigmatic fixation of the naturalist-art critic upon the grotesquely enlarged detail of a human eye and ear.

As a historian of architecture and urban design, Mumford never abandoned the critical focus—and the moral outlook—of the social critic. A medieval city or an industrial landscape of the 19th century is never merely a formal achievement in his eyes, but first of all a mirror of social life and an instrument of class struggle. Even the picture of an ocean liner in *Technics and Civilization* offers a pretext for Mumford to comment on the class struggle. Mumford, like Giedion (and virtually any ideologue

of modern architecture) pays his tribute to the ocean liner's "cleanness and strength," but then, in the caption to his illustration, he points out that:

In its inner arrangements, with the luxury and space of the first class contrasting with the cramped quarters ... of the third class, [it] remains a diagrammatic picture of the paleo-technic class struggle.

Wladimir Majakowsky had put it in somewhat cruder terms (*My Discovery of America*, 1925):

The first class vomits where it pleases, the second upon the third, and the third upon itself.

Social history and class struggle hardly occur either in *Space, Time and Architecture* or in *Mechanization Takes Command*, and Mumford did not fail to note it—such as when he wrote (in his review of the former book):

The weakest part of Giedion's book is his handling of modern city development, particularly his failure to understand the historic significance of the future importance of Ebenezer Howard's conception of the garden city.

In fact, where Giedion tends to surrender to his fascination with bold technological innovation and radical technocratic planning campaigns, Mumford lets the social historian speak. On the subject of modern highway design Giedion wrote, next to a picture of the Hudson River Parkway in New York, whose curving lanes disturbingly resemble the outlines of the eye and ear on Zeller's drawing:

Riding up and down the long sweeping grades produces an exhilarating dual feeling, one of being connected with the soil and yet of hovering just above it, a feeling which is nothing else so much as sliding swiftly on skis through untouched snow down the sides of high mountains.

For him, this experience, while recalling the slopes of the Swiss alps, was nothing less than the alleged "space-time-conception" of modern physics and of cubism translated into real life: America seen as

enacted modernity—Mumford in turn, more and more detached from the aesthetic temptations of the Machine Age (but on the other hand perhaps not entirely from those of his own Ruskinian or Emersonian outlook), insisted that the exhilarating drive along the highway will end in an ecologic catastrophe. His violent reaction (especially in an article Mumford wrote as early as 1958) to the urban blight caused by those same traffic arteries heralded in Giedion's *Space, Time and Architecture* marks the beginning of a growing ecological awareness among American intellectuals.

As if he felt that his aesthetic bias needed some explanation, Giedion wrote (in a letter addressed to Mumford) in 1948:

Please do not misunderstand me. I am not hovering exclusively around aesthetic problems. I do not regret that I spent three months to note the story of the vacuum cleaner or another two months to give an account of the Yale lock. But whenever I had to deal with complicated technical methods or the meaning, for instance, of nineteenth-century interiors, modern art proved a most valuable key to their understanding.

He is right—speaking as he is from within modernity; but Mumford, looking out from his sociological control room would have been equally right if he had replied that class struggle and social history may also offer valuable clues for the understanding of modern art.

NOTES

The present article is a summary of two studies on Mumford and Giedion that will be published soon along with the necessary illustrations in *Lewis Mumford: Public Intellectual*, Thomas P. Hughes and Agatha Hughes, editors (Oxford University Press) and in the annals of the Giedion conference at the ETH in Zurich (1989), to be published in 1991.

1. Donald L. Miller, *Lewis Mumford: A Life*, (Weidenfeld & Nicholson, 1989) and Sokratis Georgiadis, *Sigfried Giedion. Eine intellektuelle Biografie*, Zurich (Institut für Geschichte und Theorie der Architektur, 1989).

Jane Morley

STRETCHING A “CANVASS OF POSSIBILITIES”: ON THE SUBJECT OF LEWIS MUMFORD

Since the publication of his first book in 1922, Lewis Mumford has been the subject of a vast body of published criticism and critical scholarship in a variety of disciplines. Anyone familiar with Mumford's work can see the symmetry in this, because he is one of the 20th-century's most prolific critics and scholars. Despite almost seventy years of consideration by critical readers and academic specialists, however, there remains a “canvass of possibilities” in Mumford's life and work waiting to be filled in.¹

That he has been a pivotal figure in many disciplines and areas of discourse—architecture, city and regional planning, literary criticism and history, American studies, and the history of technology—is



Santa Maria della Salute, pen-and-ink drawing by Lewis Mumford (1953). (Courtesy of the Mumford Art Collection, Monmouth College, West Long Branch, New Jersey.)

due almost entirely to the influence of his major books: *The Golden Day* (1922), *Sticks and Stones* (1924), *The Brown Decades* (1931), *Technics and Civilization* (1934), *The Culture of Cities* (1938), *The City in History* (1961), and the two volumes of *The Myth of the Machine* (1967 and 1971). It is not surprising, therefore, that much of the existing secondary literature on Mumford consists of critical readings of his books, and some of the most interesting are contemporary reviews. Thousands of reviews of his books were published in daily newspapers, magazines, and scholarly journals; considered collectively, these reviews reveal the “social construction,” or negotiated meaning, of the book under review. The individual responses to Mumford's books—often written by practitioners prominent in their fields—provide insight into the subsequent influence of the book. Oppositional points of view on the same book (and Mumford was always controversial) reveal schisms in a particular area of discourse. Perhaps no other 20th-century author provides better access to the intellectual cross-currents arising from the modern concern with the human-made environment and technology. Two examples should suffice to illustrate how his writing effected discourse.

When *Sticks and Stones* was published in 1924, skyscrapers seemed a done deal, although there were voices of dissent among architects, critics, and historians of architecture. Count among these dissenters Lewis Mumford, whose disapproval of the skyscraper was contained in *Sticks and Stones*, and rested largely on its lack of human scale and its detrimental effects on society (overcrowding) and the city (congestion). The book reviews express some of the other main themes of dissenting opinion. Architect Frederick L. Ackerman, writing in the *Journal of the American Institute of Architects* (1924) and clearly critical of the “business principles” behind skyscrapers, observed that Mumford had neglected an important economic factor: the introduction of credit economy and the rise of absentee ownership. “What might have been the outcome ... under a totally different set of

institutional auspices would be a matter of speculation.” Other reviewers revealed their aesthetic concerns about the skyscraper; architectural historian Fiske Kimball—who shared Mumford’s dislike of the skyscraper—sarcastically attacked his sociological, rather than aesthetic reasons for disapproval, “import sociological judgments into the field of art and the rest is easy.”²

Technics and Civilization appeared ten years later, at a time when worldwide economic depression had caused many people (including Mumford) to question the assumed beneficence of industrial capitalism and technology (an assumption Mumford would later call “the myth of the machine”). Contrary to this were unabashed technological enthusiasts, dinosaurs from the “Age of the Heroic Inventor,” who clung to the belief that technology was the solution to almost every problem. Reviews of *Technics and Civilization* reflect the crosscurrents of this debate about modern technology. In the *Partisan Review*, David Ramsay faulted Mumford for neglecting class struggle and the revolutions in labor and social relations concomitant with the revolution in technics. Stuart Chase, his review brimming with his own enthusiasm for the “technological imperative,” wrote, “Mr. Mumford not only accepts the machine, he glories in it . . . an unprecedented freedom is [his] promise.” Buckminster Fuller, another technology enthusiast, praised Mumford for his “complete and provocative” account of where technology has been and where it may be heading, “the dynamic equilibrium about to emerge.”³

In the past few years, there has been a great deal of scholarly interest in Mumford. An interdisciplinary conference on Mumford was held in 1987 at the University of Pennsylvania (home to the collection of his manuscripts and correspondence), and the papers have just been published.⁴ This book contains some of the best work done so far on Mumford, evaluating him as a historian of technology, advocate of regionalism, cultural critic, and moralist.

The first step toward an integrated understanding of Mumford appeared in Donald



“Fortieth Street on Rainy Day,” drawing by Lewis Mumford (1916). (Courtesy of Jane Morley.)

Miller’s biography, *Lewis Mumford: A Life* (Weidenfeld & Nicholson, 1989), although in her *New York Times* book review Ada Louise Huxtable called it “problematic . . . Mr. Mumford does not yield easily, or even very interestingly, to psychobiography.” In his *Atlantic* review, Paul Goldberger wrote that “the problem is that Lewis Mumford’s work is more interesting than his life.”⁵

A writer of Mumford’s productivity, it seems, would have no time for an interesting life, but there is even more to it than that. Strong ambition and a sense of significant, if not inevitable, purpose kept him at it. In his close study of *The Autobiographical Writings of Lewis Mumford* (University of Hawaii Press, 1988) Frank G. Novak observes, “Beginning early in his life, his writing began to assume progressively greater importance. . . . This perhaps helps to explain the relative paucity of biographical information after 1940 contained in the three primary autobiographical works. After this point, his energies, interests, and identity became almost completely absorbed in his work.”

Recently, a number of cultural historians, historians of technology, and urban historians have tried to put Mumford’s work into a perspective broader than biography.

Casey Blake argues in *Beloved Community* (University of North Carolina Press, 1990) that Mumford joins Randolph Bourne, Van Wyck Brooks, and Waldo Frank as one of the “young American” critics whose wide-ranging assault on modern industrialism called for cultural and self-renewal through a communitarian alternative—called by Bourne “the Beloved Community”—to industrialism’s bureaucratic culture and to liberal and socialist politics. In his examination of Mumford’s contribution to this alternative, Blake reevaluates his early architectural writings: “These works show Mumford working his way out of the dead end of idealist thought by reconceiving its goal as . . . an aesthetic project . . . new social myths had to start in the medium of artistic form rather than in the utopian milieu of abstract ideas.”

John Thomas, a cultural historian, has observed that by taking this position, Mumford placed himself firmly in the “adversarial tradition” of the 19th century with writers such as Whitman, Thoreau, Melville, and Frederick Law Olmsted. To his “adversarial cultural vision,” Mumford was able to fuse the idea he spent his entire life working out, “the regional reconstruction of the modern world.” To him this was the best solution to the problems arising from economic, industrial, and urban development, but to Thomas, this was a distinctly antimodernist impulse.⁶

Yet, historian of technology Thomas Hughes has argued that throughout his life, Mumford consistently and thoughtfully faced up to the “hallmark of modern times”: technology. In Mumford’s writings, Hughes has traced his changing attitude toward technology—his initial enthusiasm, then ambivalent optimism, and finally, deep pessimism. Hughes observes that Mumford has been one of modern technology’s most sustained critics and prolific historians.⁷

Mumford was also a historian and critic of the modern city, and its emergence and problems are major themes in his writings. In urban historiography Mumford has earned an important place, and urban historians must deal with his writings in their own. In *America Becomes Urban* (Uni-

versity of California Press, 1988), Eric Monkkonen observed that Mumford's broad conception of the city has made it more comprehensible to urban historians, but his critique of the modern industrial city was more aesthetic than humanist: "He didn't care whether there was running water or indoor plumbing or adequate living space; his main concern was how [cities] looked." Furthermore, by presenting "his reactions as historically objective ... [Mumford] managed to create an ahistorical past and an equally unrealistic planning goal." Some of Mumford's planning goals for New York City have been examined by city planner David Johnson in his recent study of the 1929 Regional Plan of New York and Its Environs. According to Johnson, Mumford's criticisms of the plan do indeed indicate his aesthetic sensibility, but they also indicate the social and political commitments of one who sought to change the realities of the city and to provide new images of a humane community. As such, Mumford was not a "meliorist," but rather a "progressive" reformer, because of his strong desire "to remake the basic structure of society."⁸

Mumford's reformist vision has not been judged so tenderly in *American Scholar* by intellectual historian Wilfred McClay, who has argued that his critiques have always been ambivalent and unhelpful: "Mumford began his career seeking new social forms more adequate to the needs of human beings. He ended it calling for new human beings, who were willing to accept a change 'of the whole organism and the whole personality' so that they might be worthy of the new modes of social organization he envisioned."⁹

McClay also maintains that "Mumford's palpable influence has in the end been so slight." Perhaps this is true for some academicians and writers, although for others of a different (in most instances, political) orientation, it is certainly not the case. Recent interest in his writings has been, in Casey Blake's estimation, "astonishing" among historians, sociologists, ecologists, urban planners, and architects, as well as a

new generation of feminists, communitarian radicals, and advocates of green politics who find in his more political writings a like mind. With Blake I share the conviction that "the best outcome of [this] ongoing Mumford revival would not be the creation of Mumford specialists ... but rather the assimilation of his insights into new cultural languages, new acts of insurgence against the given world."¹⁰ I hope that this issue of *DBR* will hasten this assimilation.

There is one last, largely unexplored "canvass of possibilities"—the collection at Monmouth College in West Long Branch, New Jersey, of over three hundred pencil and pen-and-ink drawings and watercolor paintings by Mumford. The collection includes sketches and portraits of teachers, friends, family members, and his wife, Sophia; self-portraits; cityscapes of New York, London, and Paris; and landscapes of the area surrounding his home in Dutchess County, New York. In *Sketches from Life* (1982) Mumford revealed this lifelong avocation: "Long before I responded to buildings as practical or symbolic constructions, I was jotting down my visual impressions of rooftop watertanks, sheetiron cornices, spindly tenement fire escapes." Indeed, he was clearly a visual, as well as verbal thinker, fully able to record pictorially the same sensitive observations expressed in his writings. These works illustrate Mumford's own "picture-mindedness," a characteristic he described in *Art and Technics* (Columbia University Press, 1952) that he felt humankind shared. For him, sketching and painting was a form of self-renewal, but he did not seem to believe that his own work, like great "mature" art, was capable of "directly energizing and renewing those who come into contact with it." Perhaps his drawings and paintings do not have quite this power, but one cannot help feel in them the same broad, humanistic vision of life that so empowers his writings. I believe they enhance, if not complete, this vision.

NOTES

1. The phrase "canvass of possibilities" is taken from Mumford's *The Conduct of Life* (New York: Harcourt, Brace and Co., 1951), p. 5.
2. Fiske Kimball, *New York Herald Tribune Books*, October 26, 1924, pp. 3-4.
3. David Ramsay, *Partisan Review* 1 (June-July 1934): 56-59; Stuart Chase, *New York Herald Tribune Books*, April 29, 1934, p. 7; Buckminster Fuller, *Nation* 138 (June 6, 1934): 652.
4. Thomas P. and Agatha C. Hughes, eds., *Lewis Mumford: Public Intellectual* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1990). The subtitle is derived from Russell Jacoby's valuation of Mumford as one of the last "public intellectuals," a writer who addressed an educated, general audience about important issues of conscience rather than problems valued by the academy. See Jacoby, *The Last Intellectuals: American Culture in the Age of Academe* (New York: Basic Books, 1987). Historian Thomas Bender has called Mumford a "civic intellectual" who practiced a "journalism of ideas" (Mumford's own phrase to describe serious writing for the public); see Bender, *New York Intellect* (New York: Knopf, 1987) and "Architecture and the Journalism of Ideas," *DBR* 15 (Fall 1988): 47-49.
5. See also the reviews by Robert Wojtowicz in the *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians* 49 (September 1990): 351-52, and Robert Westbrook in the *Journal of American History* 77 (September 1990): 716.
6. John Thomas, "Lewis Mumford: Regionalist Historian," *Reviews in American History* 16 (March 1988): 158-72 and "The Uses of Catastrophism: Lewis Mumford, Vernon L. Parrington, Van Wyck Brooks, and the End of American Regionalism," *American Quarterly* 42 (June 1990): 223-51.
7. Thomas P. and Agatha C. Hughes, "General Introduction: Mumford's Modern World," in *Lewis Mumford: Public Intellectual*, pp. 3-14.
8. David Johnson, "Regional Planning for the Great American Metropolis: New York between the World Wars," in *Two Centuries of American Planning*, Daniel Schaffer, ed. (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1988).
9. Wilfred M. McClay, "Lewis Mumford: From the Belly of the Whale," *American Scholar* 57 (Winter 1988): 111-17.
10. Casey Blake, "Lewis Mumford: A Biographical Introduction," in *A "Canvass of Possibilities": A Research Guide to Lewis Mumford*, Jane Morley, ed. (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, forthcoming).

Thomas Bender

AMERICAN GENESIS

THOMAS P. HUGHES

THE REAL THING

MILES ORVELL

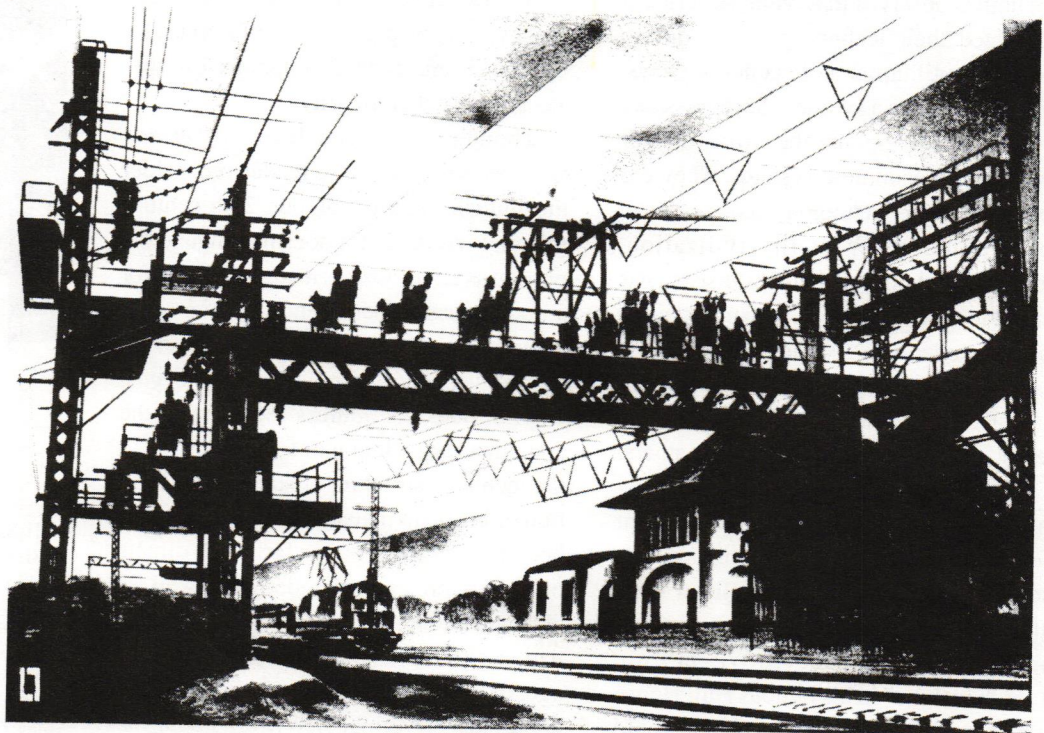
For me, reading these two books recalls George Santayana's famous address to the Philosophical Union at Berkeley in 1911. In "The Genteel Tradition in America," Santayana criticized a dispiriting division in American culture between thought and action, art and business. This split, he observed, "may be found symbolized in American architecture: a neat reproduction of the colonial mansion—with some modern comforts introduced surreptitiously—stands beside the skyscraper. The American Will inhabits the skyscraper; the American Intellect inhabits the colonial mansion. The one is the sphere of the American man; the other, is all genteel tradition." Except that they ignore completely the issue of gender in their effort to define American culture, authors Thomas P. Hughes and Miles Orvell might have taken this statement as the charter of their respective books. They are both attempting to rethink the relations of technology to culture, of the authentic and vital energy of making and using things to the cultural perception of man-made things in America.

The Real Thing: Imitation and Authenticity in American Culture, 1880–1940, by Miles Orvell, a professor of English and American Studies at Temple University, is a book that is by turns exciting and frustrating. Orvell offers a rather large thesis to organize disparate material from elite and popular culture in the fields of architecture and design (especially interior design), photography, and literature. He seeks to establish "imitation" and "authenticity" as categories of

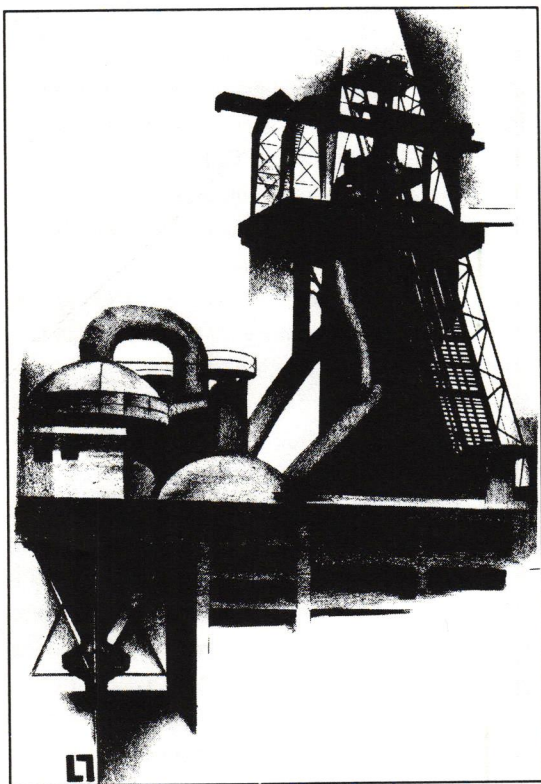
American culture, and his thesis is that the 19th-century American faith in the machine favored its ability to manufacture "a credible simulacrum." In the 20th century, he argues, this interest in replication was challenged by a counter-cultural effort to create "authentic" works, "themselves real things." He acknowledges that the ideal of authenticity is a minority ideal (probably an elite ideal, I would suggest), but he identifies it with such notable figures as Lewis Mumford, Alfred Stieglitz, Walker Evans, Gustave Stickley, and James Agee.

As a general thesis this argument is plausible and compatible with dominant interpretations of American modernism (I think of Hugh Kenner's *A Homemade World*), and I found his phrasing of the thesis often intriguing. But I also found it disturbing when he apparently conflates "objectivity," "reality," and "authenticity." Even more important, and disappointing, as the book proceeds there is little development of either the categories or the thesis. Yet one continually appreciates the clever insights into American culture that populate his pages—even if they offer little to the development of his thesis.

Thomas Hughes, Mellon Professor of the History and Sociology of Science at the University of Pennsylvania, has written an illuminating book, though it too at times loses its thesis and slides back into rather set pieces of conventional history of technology. But at its most ambitious, *American Genesis: A Century of Invention and Technological Enthusiasm, 1870–1970*, presents the history of American technology as the making of modern culture. Hughes goes beyond inventions and particular technologies to *systems* of technology and to the cultural metaphors and meanings thus generated. Americans, he argues, have not simply led the world in patents and inventions. Their greatest invention has been the creation of technological systems that fundamentally altered the material constitution of society. Hughes, whose previous work includes the fine study, *Networks of Power: Electrification in Western Society, 1880–1930*, clarifies the special importance of electrification in the shaping of the modern sensibility. He insists that electrification exceeded in significance the more easily imaged mechanical factory of the 19th century and the assem-



"High Voltage—Cos Cob," Louis Lozowick (1929). (From *American Genesis*.)



"Corner of a Steel Plant," Louis Lozowick (1929). (From *American Genesis*.)

bly line in the 20th, an argument that finds support in the case of architecture.

Hughes observes that while Americans celebrated their technology, they did so usually in utilitarian and economic ways. Or they used it as a symbol of progress that in turn would symbolize the virtues of their political and economic systems. They did not grasp their technology as a *cultural* contribution to Western civilization. American technology, Hughes insists, was central to the definition of both modernization and modernism—something, he shows, that was widely understood by a variety of reformers in Weimar Germany, by V. I. Lenin, and by Le Corbusier, among others.

Hughes notes that it was European architects, not Americans, who brought American technological vocabulary into the discipline. Wright and Sullivan were influenced by Darwin, and they used biological metaphors (and even Wright's use of the "machine" in his famous Hull House lecture lacked the sense of system it would later acquire). Hughes writes that Walter

Gropius and Le Corbusier "were less obviously affected by Darwin but deeply influenced by the production philosophies of the American Frederick W. Taylor and Henry Ford."

After announcing his big and exciting theme, Hughes moves to four more or less conventional chapters on the history of technology. But the book gradually extends its reach beyond the lab to society and culture and to places outside the United States. The book begins to consider impacts on various fields (including architecture and design), and it explores the international response and receptivity to American technology. Only when one enters the international discourse on the meaning of American technology and its transformation of the material circumstance of modern life does one get an adequate perspective on a phenomenon that, with our continuing Eurocentrism in matters of culture,

we are loath to see as significant in cultural terms. Save for Lewis Mumford in the 1920s, the cultural meaning of our technology was grasped only after Gropius, Le Corbusier, and Sigfried Giedion, Europeans all, gave it credibility.

Though an uneven book, *American Genesis* will make any reader reconsider the human creation of our 20th-century material world. Yet it does not engage the present as effectively as it might. Except for a nod toward Robert Venturi's comments about signs and symbols in a postindustrial, electronic era in *Learning from Las Vegas*, Hughes does not address the issue of the contemporary relation of form and style to the technical structure of society, the relation of image to material systems. Orvell's book presses these issues farther. It directs our attention to postmodern (as well as "Deconstructivist" modern) design's fascination with the commercialization of image, of the look of things mystified with a good deal of verbiage. Writing about the new technology of photography, Oliver

Wendell Holmes observed that "form is henceforth divorced from matter." Is the modern circumstance a realization (how seriously proposed one cannot tell) of Holmes's suggestion in the 1860s? Both of these books raise questions about this issue from a historical background, not from semiotic preoccupation with signs and signifiers, nor from any poststructuralist theories of representation. They provide the historical materials needed to theorize and assess our contemporary circumstance.



AMERICAN GENESIS: A CENTURY OF INVENTION AND TECHNOLOGICAL ENTHUSIASM, 1870–1970, Thomas P. Hughes, Viking, 1989, 530 pp., illus., \$24.95.

THE REAL THING: IMITATION AND AUTHENTICITY IN AMERICAN CULTURE, 1880–1940, Miles Orvell, University of North Carolina Press, 1989, 382 pp., illus., \$14.95 paper; \$37.50 cloth.

Luis Fernández-Galiano

NEW HISTORY IS GROWING OLD

François Dosse's *L'histoire en miettes* and Gertrude Himmelfarb's *The New History and the Old* were written from ivory towers of intellectual observation as different as Paris and New York, and by people from very different ideological and generational backgrounds. Nevertheless, these two books coincide in their diagnosis of the "new history": it is growing old. They both agree on emphasizing the hegemonic character which has developed in the academic world, and the degree of institutional power that this character implies as well as the risks inherent to its historical and geographic oligopoly. However, they do not see eye to eye on the corrective therapy that they promote, in spite of the fact that more similarities exist between them than would be expected from the differences in style and mood.

François Dosse, a young French historian linked to the French magazine *Espaces-Temps*, tells with fascination and objectivity the inevitable ascent of the "Nouvelle Histoire" from the foundation of the *Annales d'Histoire Economique et Sociale* by Marc Bloch and Lucien Febvre in 1929 to the Duby, Le Roy Ladurie, or Le Goff of today, and through the great intellectual and organizational figure of Fernand Braudel. In the process of consolidation, in which new history systematically absorbed other disciplines—economics, sociology, geography, anthropology, ethnology, psychology—Dosse sees the risk of a non-stop fragmentation of history, parallel to the fragmentation of contemporary society, and its dissolution into case studies, becoming ever farther from the humanist and global ideal of Bloch, Febvre or Braudel.

It was that same *histoire en miettes* (crumbled history) to which Pierre Nora

referred when he significantly chose the name "Bibliothèque des histoires" for his Gallimard collection: minute and plural. Dosse, on the other hand, feels closer to Pierre Vilar who writes that "any new history deprived of totalizing ambition is a history that has aged prematurely," and proposes a renovation of the aging new history based on the will of globality and the recuperation—against the unmovable

in the United States, such as feminist history or ethnic histories, but loathes to a greater extent the sabbatical pilgrimage of American historians to Europe, where they flock to the Parisian sources of the *Annales* and the British sources of E. P. Thompson's or Eric Hobsbawm's social history.

According to Himmelfarb, the eclipse of old history—fundamentally political and narrative—alters our sense of the past, emptying it of any sense when it minimizes the role of the political institutions and intellectual traditions that have configured it. By quoting renowned *annalistes* like Marc Ferro and François Furet, she critiques new history's inability to account for the great landmarks of national history, such as the *Risorgimento Italiano* or the French Revolution, and suggests that a new generation of historians, perhaps bored with "the daily life of common people" and the "long-standing structures" of geography and demographics, could find a renewed interest in the "drama of events, the power of ideas and the dignity of individuals—not only in trivial things, but in things that really matter."

Does this signify there will be a return to global history, to political history, to "historicizing history" (history that wants to convert everything into history)? It is difficult to know.

One can only observe that the aging new history is being challenged by a comeback of narrative, of storytelling, of multiple histories.

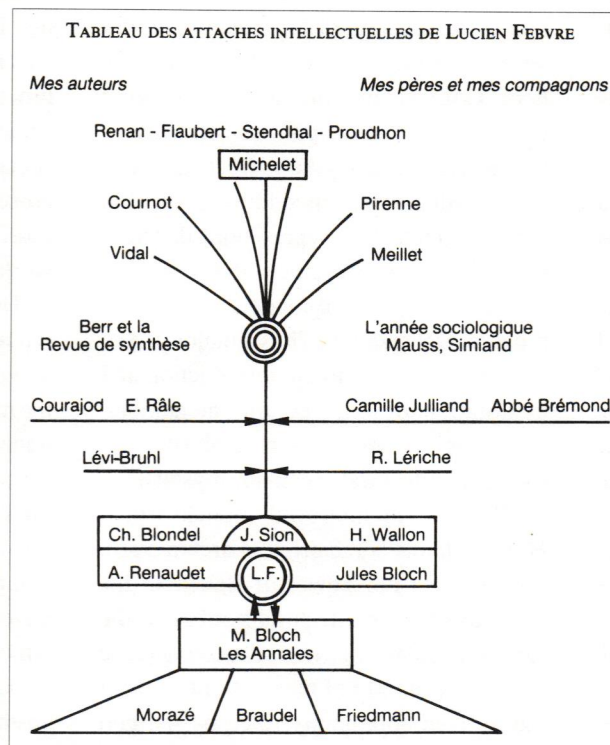


Diagram of the intellectual sources of Lucien Febvre. (From *L'histoire en miettes*.)

time of ethnological history—not only of the *durée* (duration), but also of the *bête noire* of the *annalistes*: the *event*.

Gertrude Himmelfarb, a veteran American historian who specializes in the Victorian era, compiles in one volume ten of her own articles published during her last decades, in which she satirizes all versions of the "new history," from the social and the Marxist history to the history of mentalities, the psychoanalytic or the quantitative, lamenting caustically that its present predominance has pushed political, constitutional, diplomatic and intellectual history into oblivion. She also deplores the emergence of native varieties of the new history

L'HISTOIRE EN MIETTES: DES "ANNALES" À LA "NOUVELLE" HISTOIRE, François Dosse, Editions La Découverte (Paris), 1987, 270 pp., 120 FF.

THE NEW HISTORY AND THE OLD: CRITICAL ESSAYS AND REAPPRAISALS, Gertrude Himmelfarb, Harvard University Press, 1987, 210 pp., \$20.00.

Daniel Barbiero

AGAINST ARCHITECTURE

DENIS HOLLIER

The first thing to strike the reader of *Against Architecture* is that the book is not “about” architecture, at least not directly. And yet architecture is undeniably the book’s main concern. Although Denis Hollier does not discuss many concrete examples of building, let alone formulate a comprehensive theory of how to build, he nonetheless stimulates thinking about architecture. *Against Architecture* may not be “about” architecture as such, but it *is* about the idea of architecture, and the ideas that arise from architecture.

It is fitting that a book based on the writings of Georges Bataille—one of France’s more unorthodox writers and critics of the interwar period—should be concerned with, but not about, its topic of choice. The same sort of ambivalence—an ambivalence of and about literary form—permeated Bataille’s work, and a similar ambivalence pervades this book. Thus Hollier has not written a book “about” Bataille, but rather a book concerned with some of Bataille’s basic ideas. *Against Architecture* is not a critical evaluation of Bataille as an author and a thinker; instead, it is an often fragmentary collection of variations on themes found in Bataille’s critical writings. And one of those themes is architecture.

One of Hollier’s intentions is to work through Bataille’s writings in order to apply them to a critique of the architectural way of imagining the world. This notion of the “architectural imagination,” the ability to conceive of the world as if it were an edifice, or a rigid structure, built as an ordered and hierarchical system, is derived directly from an entry titled “Architecture” that Bataille wrote for the *Documents* dictionary. Bataille’s basic belief was that architecture is the “ideal soul of society, that which has the authority to command and prohibit.” This observation culminates in the conclusion that architectural monu-

mentality, facilitated by its “static” forms, imposes a kind of bondage, which, Hollier comments, provides a metaphor for the structure of the world as it appears to the architectural imagination. *Against Architecture*’s real concern, then, is with architecture as a metaphor.

In a section titled “The Architectural Metaphor,” Hollier declares that, metaphorically speaking, architecture is the “system of systems” in that it provides a model for any kind of organization of material. Drawing on Bataille elsewhere in the book, Hollier claims that architecture is not only the systematic application of structure to material—that is, the perfect model of organization—but, in addition, specific types of architecture, representing different possibilities of structure and function, provide metaphorical models for specific types of organization. Thus a major part of the text is devoted to the introduction and exploration of architectural metaphors, providing the book’s foundation (if I can use an architectural metaphor myself).

The first architectural model, which Hollier claims is the original architectural metaphor, is the Tower of Babel. In his view, this first architectural symbol, as the expression of the sacred, is a meeting place and thus a “unifier of men.” It orders them into a fixed community ruled by the god whom it claims to house. Although Hollier takes the Tower of Babel from Hegel rather than Bataille, the method of analysis, by which a building type is turned into the symbol of the enforcement of authority, derives from Bataille. In addition, Bataille provides the book’s other two most important architectural metaphors—one of which is the cathedral.

Hollier’s discussion of the cathedral as a metaphor takes place under the fitting subtitle “Summa Theologica.” The summa was a type of encyclopedic text that flourished in the High Middle Ages, and was supposed to contain everything that was known—by grace of revelation, of course. The summa, like the universal histories and thesauruses to which it was related, found an equivalent in the cathedral, the very structure of which was intended to repre-

sent the supremely ordered relations that were believed to pervade all of creation. Just as nature was supposed to be, in the words of Latini’s *Tesoretto*, for example, a “vicar” of God, the cathedral was intended to be, in turn, the vicar and mirror of nature: like nature, the cathedral was an encyclopedia of marvels, or *mirabilia*. Hollier acknowledges the status of the cathedral as a stone summa, but from there quickly concludes that the cathedral is thereby “caught up” in the enforcement of the theology it was intended to reflect. This claim allows him to equate the doctrinal function of the cathedral with its role as a prop for the social and historical milieu in which it arose, and to conclude that the cathedral is, therefore, the perfect embodiment of worldly authority.

Hollier’s interest clearly is in the governing authority that supervised the construction of the cathedrals, and whose power the monumental authority of the cathedrals upheld and justified. Certainly, the cathedrals were meant to do just that. Yet Hollier does not consider a paradoxical aspect of the cathedral’s peculiar appearance, a paradox that derives from the doctrine that gave the cathedral its distinctive form, and which affected its projection of authority. Its design was meant to embody the doctrinal aesthetic that demanded *de materialibus ad immaterialia transferendo*—loosely, the signification of the immaterial by the material. In practice this required a building of delicate form that seemed to vanish into expanses of colored light. The way that its masonry dissolves into colored light enhances the distinctly peculiar monumentality of the cathedral: with its vast fields of space and light, the cathedral projects a kind of self-dematerialization entirely consistent with the period’s conceptualization of authority deriving from an invisible source.

Yet the cathedral’s dematerialization leads to an interesting paradox in its potential projection of architectural authority. By dematerializing into a field of luminosity, it is conceivable that the cathedral appealed not only to official Church doctrine, but to a preexisting, popular countertradition of

the marvelous—it would, for example, appear rather like Giacomino da Verona's descriptions of Jerusalem as an otherworldly city of glittering wonders. In so doing, however, the cathedral would go over the heads of the institutional authorities of both church and state, and appeal directly to a perhaps unarticulated or underarticulated countertradition that nonetheless would be understood by those inside the cathedral—thus undercutting the intentions of the institutions wishing to project domination. The cathedral, as a locus of *mirabilia*, thus could be the source of mixed, and perhaps even contradictory, meanings; if so, this would allow for some reservations in regard to the centralized control over knowledge that Hollier grants the Church institutions of the time, and which he sees embodied in the cathedral. For the cathedral's capacity to embody both the institutional authority—which, after all, had it built—and an experience of *mirabilia* that the institutional authorities could not control directly, points to the deeper problem inherent in any attempt to extract a single, durable meaning from an architectural construction. As it is, the cathedral contained meanings that reflect the inconsistencies, or what we might call the at-oddness, of a period that was out of sync with itself.

(It is interesting to note in connection with the cathedral that Bataille's first published text, "Notre-Dame de Rheims" of 1919—which Hollier reproduces in its entirety—called for the rebuilding and restoration of a cathedral ruined by shelling in World War I. The reverence for architectural monuments evidenced in the essay was not, of course, a sentiment Bataille would maintain for long.)

If, for both Bataille and Hollier the cathedral provides the metaphor for monumental authority, a different kind of construction, the labyrinth, provides them with a kind of countermetaphor. Hollier takes the metaphor of the labyrinth from Bataille's 1936 text of the same name. The overall quality that Hollier derives from Bataille's labyrinth is that of ambiguity: an ambiguity in which the distinction between inside and outside is confused, in which open and

closed, leaving and entering, are confounded. In Hollier's appropriation of the labyrinth, it seems, architecture as such—and especially as a metaphor for the assertion of authority through the ordering and organization of space—has no clear jurisdiction. If architecture cannot enclose space and persons without ordering that space and those persons into the rigid relationships of inside/outside, open/closed, then it cannot impose its authority.

With the labyrinth, as Hollier describes it, we come to the stated purpose of his book, which is to set architecture against itself. For Hollier, the labyrinth is more than an architectural structure, it is the model of language. (Here, it is interesting to note, Hollier finds himself dependent on a metaphor drawn from architecture.) For, following Hollier, the maze of words, like the labyrinth, is a place where "sense is always threatened but nonsense is never triumphant." No unitary meanings, in other words, can emerge from the labyrinth of language. It is here, in the fragmentation of meaning, that Hollier formulates his alternative to the monumental authority of architecture.

According to Hollier, the critique of architecture can be accomplished by a "polyphonic deconstruction" and "multiple writings," the fragmentary nature of which presumably would prevent the appearance of the singular order represented by the monument. Certainly, Hollier puts this principle into practice in the structure of his book, which tends to proceed in a zigzag manner that is exemplary of Hollier's refusal of what he undoubtedly would consider a hierarchical ordering of material. To remain with a metaphor drawn from architecture, Hollier's writing is to hierarchical order what the ruin is to the imposing edifice. Paradoxically, though, the ruin does not undermine architectural authority so much as it makes possible a counterauthority. In a sense, the ruin contains the memory of the whole structure, the intact monument. The fragments of the ruin allow us to imagine something that, while no longer present, was once present: a whole, imposing building dominating a space that is now a field of

rubble. Yet it is precisely the rubble that gives witness to the edifice that is no longer there.

To be fair, Hollier understands this paradox governing the relation between the ravaged part and the whole from which it was wrenched. To return to his use of the labyrinth as a metaphor for a kind of anti-architecture, we find him asserting a mutual implication of labyrinth and pyramid (this latter building type, like the cathedral, appears as a metaphor for architectural authoritarianism). From the one arises the other, and back again, in a sort of perpetual oscillation—though Hollier prefers the image of a "caesarean" operation in which the monument is ripped from the ruins of its own belly.

Ultimately, Hollier's book is built on a paradox. Architecture does indeed provide the metaphor for order, system, and hierarchy, but it is a metaphor with a built-in instability, probably because buildings themselves do not submit to simple interpretations. Thus it is all the more surprising that he is satisfied with a one-dimensional interpretation of the cathedral. In any case, it is in the nature of metaphor—which describes one thing in terms of another thing which it is not—to open out to a certain ambiguity of interpretation. Metaphors operate in a play of similarity and difference; thus to claim that architecture is a metaphor for authority is to bring out that quality of architecture that is indeed authoritarian—and yet to say that architecture is a *metaphor* for authority is also to say that architecture is *not* authority.

Interestingly, Hollier does wrest a resting point from what might threaten to be a perpetual oscillation between the openness of the labyrinth and the hierarchy of the monument. The last "caesarean" has the monument ultimately "carried away on the river of time." But time makes buildings into ruins, and from the ruin the monument rises once again, this time as a shade—or a metaphor.

AGAINST ARCHITECTURE: THE WRITINGS OF GEORGES BATAILLE, Denis Hollier, translated by Betsy Wing, MIT Press, 1989, 170 pp., \$19.95.

Diane Favro

READING ANCIENT ROME

Plutarch wrote that "the city is a living thing." Most modern research on ancient cities, however, tends to examine urban environments either as inanimate stage sets for political events or as the aggregate of individual structures. Only in rare instances have authors analyzed classical cities, considering the interaction, and life, of urban components. William MacDonald bridged this gap in his synoptic examination of Roman imperial cities, *The Architecture of the Roman Empire, Volume II: An Urban Appraisal* (Yale University Press, 1986; reviewed in *DBR* 14).

While the interdisciplinary connection of cultural, architectural, and political information on past urban environments is difficult for any period, the task is exacerbated for antiquity. More complete syntheses and examinations of Rome's urban environment exist for other periods. A good example is Richard Krautheimer's *The Rome of Alexander VII, 1655–1667* (Princeton University Press, 1985).

In addition to historians, art historians, and architectural historians, archaeologists and classicists also study ancient cities. As a result, research too often becomes compartmentalized by scholarly specialization as well as territoriality; synthesis is limited. Furthermore, such fragmentation promotes diachronic studies examining a single building or complex over time, rather than synchronic analyses of urban environments at a particular moment. This situation is especially frustrating for modern architects interested in the relationships between urban elements (scale, sequencing, lighting, etc.), the experiential as well as conceptual impact of urban components, and such all-encompassing issues of urban management as traffic circulation. Even the physical form of Rome, that most studied of cities, had not been examined holistically for a specific period in antiquity. Earlier books cover Rome during extensive time periods or focus on the sociopolitical context rather

than the physical form, for example, Leon Homo's invaluable though poorly illustrated study of imperial Rome—still unavailable in English—*Rome impériale et l'urbanisme dans l'antiquité* (Editions Albin Michel: Paris, 1971), and the politically oriented account of the city by Henry Thompson Rowell, *Rome in the Augustan Age* (University of Oklahoma Press: Norman, 1962).

Thus, much anticipation preceded the publication of Mary Taliaferro Boatwright's monograph, *Hadrian and the City of Rome*. Not only does this work focus on a single era, but it deals with the emperor most admired for his architectural astuteness. Hadrian himself is believed to have helped design the Pantheon, the Temple of Venus and Rome, his mausoleum in the capital, and the villa at Tivoli. Citing Lewis Mumford's observation that a city is both a collection of architectural forms in space and the container and transmitter of culture, Boatwright sets two goals: to undertake a detailed topographical examination of Hadrianic Rome and to understand more fully Hadrian's principate. She begins with a clear and extremely thorough discussion of source material and existing research on Rome and Hadrian. The first chapter examines the possible motives for Hadrian's personal interest in the capital and his extensive improvements in municipal administration. The following chapters proceed roughly chronologically with the analysis of Hadrianic interventions in Rome's various geographical regions. In the section on imperial residences, Boatwright correctly includes the villa at Tivoli as an integral part of Hadrian's official stage of activity. Particularly useful are the final chapter, which deals with controversies over the numerous missing and misidentified Hadrianic buildings assigned to the capital, and the catalogue listing of the Hadrianic buildings in Rome with their measurements, materials, current state, and a brief list of ancient references.

Boatwright's scholarship is impeccable throughout. She has a thorough knowledge of the sources and makes a convincing case for Hadrian's direct involvement in urban

undertakings. Citing ample evidence, she documents intense urban construction in the capital from Hadrian's earliest days as princeps until his death. Boatwright plots his interventions throughout the city, identifying concentrations in the urban center and in the Campus Martius to the north. At times, however, she blurs the line between projects specifically undertaken by the emperor and those existing under his principate. The reader may also doubt whether Hadrian was as concerned about preserving urban housing as the author states.

Boatwright broadens the discourse on Hadrianic architecture to encompass the entire city, updating the extensive research on the emperor's projects and providing clear, perceptive, and extremely well-documented interpretations of controversies on their placement, identification, dating, and form. However, she does limit her exploration of Rome's topography to only one aspect, making her analysis largely two-dimensional and historical rather than spatial and experiential. While Hadrian appears throughout as full-bodied, the city itself does not come to life. Though the author recognizes that the "consideration of the effect any building had on the fabric of the city is generally lacking in evaluations of Hadrianic architectural style and construction," her own work does not fill this lacuna. The disinterest in the visual and spatial impact of Hadrianic buildings on an urban scale is evidenced by the illustrations. While individual monuments, in particular sculptures, are well represented with familiar images, visual material for the city itself is poor. Significantly, the city plans do not include topographic lines, thereby limiting analysis of spatial relationships.

The publication of *Hadrian and the City of Rome* in paperback implies a wide audience, yet it is difficult reading for non-specialists. The author assumes the reader is familiar with Rome's buildings and streets from all periods. Though mentioned in the text, these reference points are not included on the plans, leaving the uninformed reader at a loss. Readers interested in the archae-

ology and history of Hadrianic Rome will find this book a valuable resource, but architects and planners looking for information about urban form or experience will be disappointed.

John E. Stambaugh addresses a more generalized audience with *The Ancient Roman City*. The text is highly readable and concise. Especially appreciated are the crisp three-dimensional drawings by Elizabeth H. Riorden, though their effectiveness is limited by awkward labeling and the lack of directional arrows. Easy to use and affordable, this paperback will benefit students and those interested in the cultural context and history of Rome and select Roman cities. Nonetheless *The Ancient Roman City* is disappointing on two levels. First, despite the author's claims, the methodology is traditional. In the preface, Stambaugh acknowledges the value of new approaches to the study of ancient cities, including semiotics and cognitive mapping. He proposes to explore the Roman city as a continuity of fabric, form, and function, but does not always follow through. Second, the content is predictable and familiar.

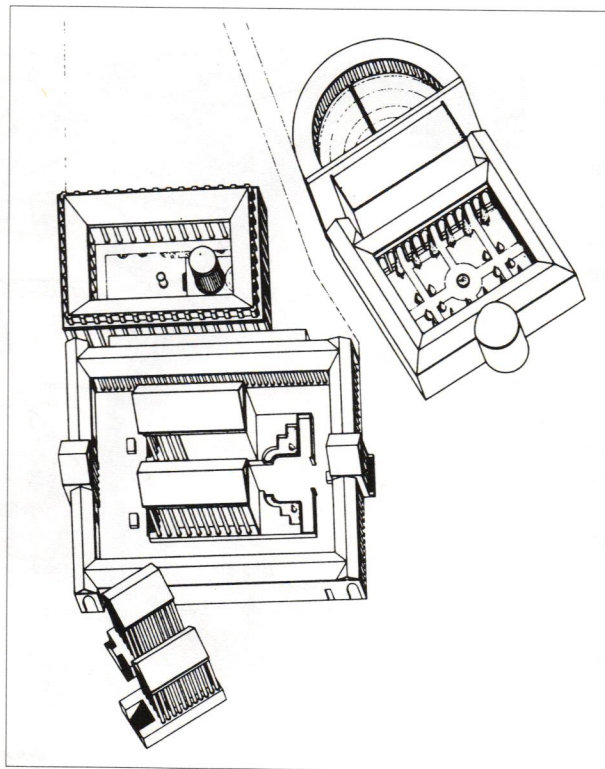
The Ancient Roman City is not, as stated, the first concise survey of Rome throughout antiquity; it is merely the first in English. The text is succinctly presented in the conventional format with minimal updating of known data. The first five chapters explore the evolution of Rome from a small cluster of villages in the eighth century B.C. to a declining imperial capital in the late third century A.D. In each chapter, period information on the city is presented with a loosely attached coda of superficial experiential analysis. The following nine chapters look at specific aspects of urban life, from population and government to services and housing. The last six examine Roman town planning and specific cities in the empire. No clear motivation is given for the limited selection of five well-known cities—three in Italy (Ostia, Pompeii, Cosa), one in Gaul (Arelate) and one

in North Africa (Thamugadi)—which leaves large sections of the empire unrepresented. The book ends abruptly, with no conclusion or evaluation. Readers learn much about the history and social context of the Roman city, yet without a fuller description of the city's physical form, they cannot experience the living past as promised.

Study of the ancient city has further been confused by the reissue of several previously published works. Publishers have discovered the profit in repackaging early works as richly illustrated coffee-table books. Into this category falls Rizzoli's reissue of two essays by H. P. L'Orange in *The Roman Empire: Art Forms and Civic Life* (1985). The first essay, "Art Forms and Civic Life in the Late Roman Empire," was published in Norwegian in 1958, with an English translation in 1965; the second, "The Floral Zone of the Ara Pacis Augustae," appeared originally in 1962. Both essays were important when first released and still have value, yet significant contributions have been made during the

last thirty years. The new introduction by Antonio Giuliano does not update the content and in fact obscures the early dating of the original pieces. Visual presentation is everything. The essays are overwhelmed by the lush photographs, which fill an enlarged format (over 150 illustrations, 29 in full color). The sharp, seductive new photographs of buildings and architectural details by Giacomo Pozzi Bellini, and especially his sumptuous color image of Trajan's Markets on the cover, imply the text deals extensively with architecture. In reality, both essays emphasize sculpture. The primary essay focuses on portraits as a reflection of the late-antique zeitgeist, with a less-detailed discussion of architecture. Furthermore, the high quality of the illustrations belies the sloppy treatment of the text. Typographical errors abound. The question of audience arises, since nonspecialists will have difficulty with the untranslated Latin passages, yet scholars are already familiar with the essays. The photographs are generally common in subject and do not add to any scholarly discourse, and there is no index. In effect, this is a down-and-dirty republication aiming only at the consumer's eye. Despite the reference to "civic life" in the title, the book has little to say about the life and experience of the ancient city.

The Rizzoli book can be contrasted with the Italian publication of Rudolfo Lanciani's *The Ruins and Excavations of Ancient Rome*. Published originally in English in 1897 and reissued in 1967 and 1979, the text has surprisingly been unavailable in Lanciani's native Italian, as is true for several other of his publications from the late 19th century. The new translation, *Rovine e Scavi di Roma Antica* (1985) by Edizioni Quasar is faithful to the original. The editors wisely chose to make high-quality reprints of the original illustrations rather than adding modern images. As a result, the book preserves the flavor of the revered original text. Active as archaeologist, topographer,



Aerial perspective, southern Campus Martius, Rome (first century B.C.). (From *Ancient Roman City*; drawn by Elizabeth H. Riorden.)

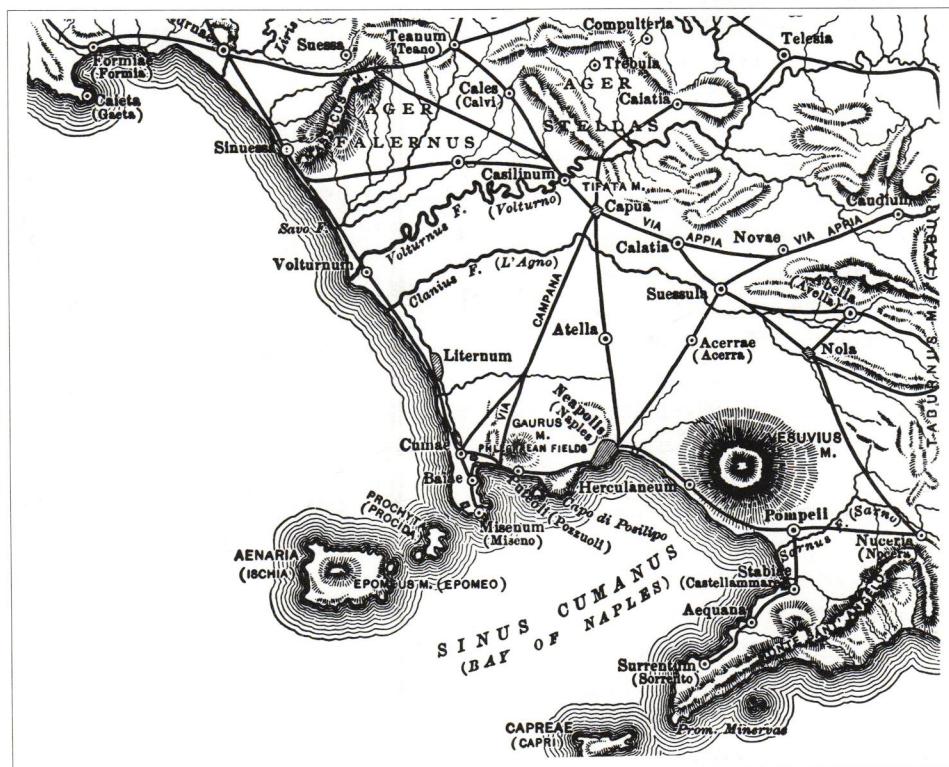
Rome fascinates. Her ancient ruins beg to be brought back to life. Thousands of pages have been written about the city, yet ancient Rome remains inanimate. Individual studies examine the archaeology, history, topography, and society of the ancient city. Period-specific guidebooks re-create the approximate relationship between ancient buildings. Needed now are synoptic, experiential considerations of ancient Rome. The appearance of city biographies for specific periods is a move in the right direction. Similarly, new reconstruction drawings depicting environments in three dimensions enhance the experiential understanding of vanished urban environments. Today researchers of Rome have a stimulating challenge before them. By combining secondary literary and pictorial images with the physical remains and an astute awareness of architecture's unique spatial and sensory properties, 20th-century historians have the capability to reanimate the ancient city. Only through the analysis of cities as "living things" can we fully understand past urban environments, or hope to improve those of our own age.

THE RUINS AND EXCAVATIONS OF ANCIENT ROME, Rudolfo Lanciani, Bell Publishing, 1979 (Italian edition: ROVINE E SCAVI DI ROMA ANTICA, Edizioni Quasar, 1985), 617 pp., illus., \$28.00.

LAWRENCE RICHARDSON, JR.

Instructors face a number of problems in teaching the architectural history and urban theory of ancient Rome. The documented history of the ancient city spans some thousand years: where should the chronological limitations be set? The Romans freely synthesized the influence of widely diverse traditions found within the empire: how should the geographical boundaries be determined? In addition, major monuments are frequently known only through reconstructions based on scant archaeological remains and classical literary sources: how can their physical force be evoked in the classroom? Most daunting of all, little has been published in English, either scholarly or popular, that is appropriate for use as a basic text for college-level courses. While

In *The Ancient Roman City*, John E. Stambaugh provides an accessible, affordable study of Rome and other ancient cities. The book was originally designed to accompany his courses at the Intercollegiate Center for Classical Studies in Rome, which may explain its easy adaptability to classroom use. It is divided into three main sections. The first five chapters chronicle the history and topographical development of Rome from its origins through its development during the Republic, to its transformation into a world capital under Augustus, and its continued growth, refinement, and ultimate decline in the imperial period. The second section consists of nine chapters that characterize the urban life of the city. Useful information about demography, civic government, public and private services, housing, social and religious life, and public spectacles is presented in a coherent, factual manner. The final section's six chapters explore the theory and practice of Roman urbanism, using case studies of



Map of the Bay of Naples, showing ancient sites and roads. (From *Pompeii*.)

cities from throughout Italy and the empire as illustrations.

Stambaugh proposes to apply distinctively different approaches to urban history—topographical, historical, demographical, institutional, and semiotic—in order to understand the Roman city as a continuity of fabric, form, and function. While the author's strategy introduces various methods to the nonspecialist, full references to the most recent studies exemplary of these different approaches (with their frequently differing interpretations) would clarify their range and make the text even more valuable. Similarly, controversies of identification and theory could be indicated in the notes without detracting from the exposition of the text. (The discussion of such monuments as Hadrian's Villa, for example, does not include the latest ideas.) Also, although the photographs are frequently well chosen, many are muddy; the plans and line drawings clearly rendered, but are not clearly identified. Orienting the images consistently to the north and clearly keying them would increase their usefulness.

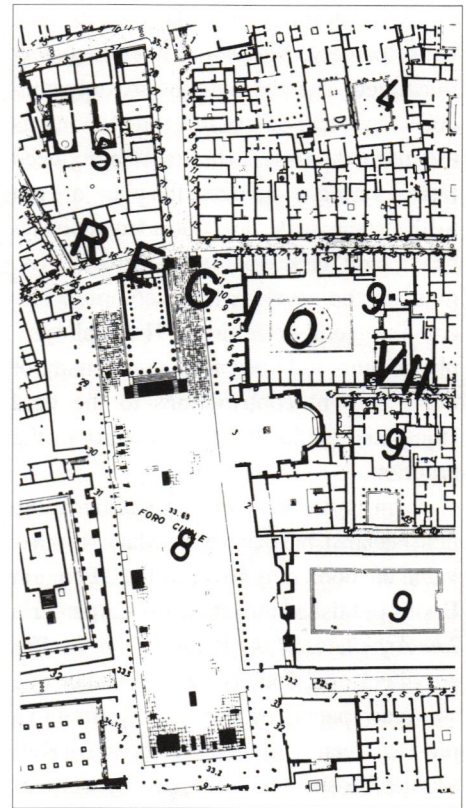
Stambaugh's text is straightforward and objective, if rather uninspiring. The field currently demands specialized investigations with a specific frame of reference, be it a particular methodological approach or theoretical bias. As Diane Favro notes, some scholars have called for "experiential" approaches to antiquity. Yet there is also a need for purely functional synoptic works around which a teacher can build a course. *The Ancient Roman City* synthesizes a vast body of material and manages to introduce different approaches without compromising its usefulness. The teacher can use this book as a primary text without having to refute an author's idiosyncratic opinions; controversies can be relegated to additional readings on a syllabus.

At first glance, Lawrence Richardson, Jr.'s *Pompeii: An Architectural History* appears to be similarly designed for use as a college text. A closer reading, however, reveals an extremely eccentric volume. Pompeii is the oldest archaeological site

still under excavation. Since 1748 the discoveries there have profoundly informed our understanding of ancient Roman life. Yet, traditionally, this primary source for the architectural history of antiquity has been treated as a curiosity, its buildings considered atypical, provincial, or a hybrid combination of Greek and Roman elements. Richardson shares the current scholarly attitude and properly argues that Pompeii was in constant contact with Rome and responsive to Roman changes in style, developments in engineering, and the uses of space. Richardson states that he will present the architectural record of Pompeii as his evidence for this view.

Following a preface and introduction, the book opens with a chapter on the historical record, an excellent discussion of the history of the city, its site and geographical character, and its plan and infrastructure. Richardson's book is then divided into the four major chronological periods followed by most scholars: the Tufa Period (200-80 B.C.), Roman Colonization (80-30 B.C.), Julio-Claudian Building (30 B.C.-A.D. 62), and from the Earthquake to the Eruption of Vesuvius (A.D. 62-79). Within each period the author discusses important examples of different building typologies: public architecture (theater, baths, temples, etc.), houses (mostly from the well-excavated Region 6), villas, and tombs. The organization is therefore fragmentary, and works against the synthetic view for which Richardson strives. Nevertheless, some of these pages represent the best presentation available in English of carefully documented archaeological material otherwise buried in foreign journals and obscure field reports.

Richardson's interpretations of the evidence, however, are frequently idiosyncratic and highly personal, and the unwary reader is given little indication of their peculiarity. Just one example among many demonstrates this frustrating problem. On the east side of the forum, between the macellum and the Temple of the Genius Augusti, stands a great apsidal hall. Most scholars have followed August Mau and



Plan of archeological Region 7, Pompeii. (From *Pompeii*.)

identified it as the Lararium of the City Gods. While Richardson does cite Mau, his references are to the second German edition of *Pompeji in Leben und Kunst* (Leipzig 1908), rather than to Francis Kelsey's excellent English translation, a standard work reprinted as recently as 1982 and available in most college libraries. Richardson rejects the traditional dating of other scholars, citing such factors as the "boldness of the architectural concept." Further, he dismisses the evidence of postearthquake repairs as "unimportant" and "a minor change in design made during construction." Richardson states that the building was a public library, citing the library of Celsus at Ephesus and the library at Timgad as analogues. And yet, as with other comparanda in this book, the non-Pompeiiian monuments are neither verbally described nor visually illustrated, thereby weakening the authority of Richardson's controversial assertions.

The overall quality of an architectural monograph depends as much on the quality

of its illustrations and plans as its text. Unfortunately, *Pompeii* is not adequately illustrated. The photographs are only general views, and do not illustrate the points the author discusses in his text. Reproduced from a variety of sources, the plans are not to the same scale, are not adequately labeled, and lack orientation arrows. The glossary, however, is fairly complete and contains good definitions. The bibliography is short and does not include many of the important contributions to the field stimulated by the 1979 anniversary of the eruption.

Such issues may seem pedantic to the nonspecialist, but they vitiate whatever other value the book may have. In 1970 Penguin Books published the late Rhys Carpenter's *The Architects of the Parthenon* in its *The Architect and Society* series. Today one still reads papers by students referring to a pre-Periklean "Kimonian Parthenon of Kallikrates," a speculation floated by Carpenter in that one forum, but which has never gained acceptance among his colleagues. With Richardson's *Pompeii* we again face the problem of a distinguished scholar presenting highly eccentric interpretations of the material in an attractive, accessible format. Beginning students and educated amateurs will be unaware of such idiosyncrasies, and insufficient footnotes make it difficult for the scholar to trace poorly documented assertions.

Richardson's work will certainly stimulate discussion. He has been associated with this Campanian city throughout his long career, and brings an unparalleled knowledge of its monuments and historiography to this impressive work. A complete architectural history of Pompeii is an admirable endeavor, but a serviceable one has yet to be written.

THE ANCIENT ROMAN CITY, John E. Stambaugh, Johns Hopkins University Press, 1988, 416 pp., illus.; \$38.00 cloth; \$13.95 paper.

POMPEII: AN ARCHITECTURAL HISTORY, Lawrence Richardson, Jr., Johns Hopkins University Press, 1988, 448 pp., illus., \$49.40.

Sam Gruber

FLORENTINE NEW TOWNS

DAVID FRIEDMAN

Florentine New Towns is the most significant contribution to the study of medieval Italian urbanism since Wolfgang Braunfels published his pioneering *Mittelalterliche Stadtbaukunst in der Toskana* in 1953. Braunfels persuasively argued and extensively documented the existence of widespread urban planning during the Late Middle Ages, especially in Florence and Siena. Despite its impact among scholars, however, Braunfels's work did not dispel more popular notions concerning the physical nature of the medieval city and the urban awareness of its medieval citizens. One still frequently hears attributed to 15th-century architects and planners ideas of town organization and building that were in fact common to the 13th century, and in some cases even earlier.

In fact, over a thousand planned new town foundations or town extensions were created throughout Europe in the Later Middle Ages. These were founded by emperors, kings, counts, and communes. Pierre Lavedan and Maurice Beresford have made the history of the new towns of France and England, particularly the bastides, fairly well known. But many of the new towns were in Italy, and these have remained, for various reasons, relatively obscure. Significantly, the Italian foundations were mostly in the regions (Tuscany, Lombardy, and Veneto) most familiar to Renaissance architects.

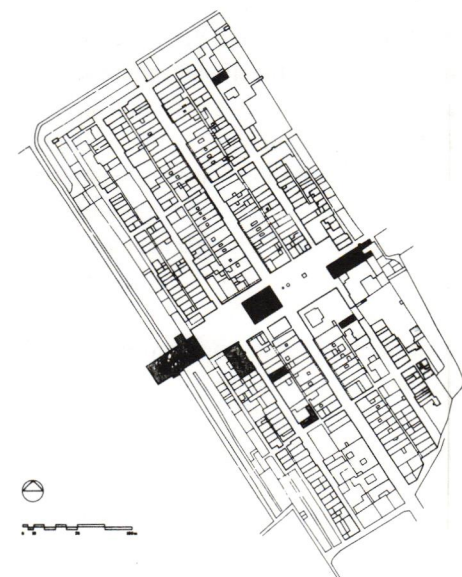
As David Friedman's new book makes clear, the planning process of these new foundations involved geographic, military, political, and economic factors, and in some cases engendered broader cultural and political debate. He focuses on just a few towns of the Florentine countryside. These are, however, firmly dated to the late 13th and early 14th century, and are possibly the best-documented foundations in all of Italy. The towns of San Giovanni, Castelfranco di Sopra, Terranuova, Scarperia, and

Firenzuola, and the unexecuted plan for Giglio Fiorentino, are discussed to convincingly convey how extremely calculated these towns' births were, but also how absolutely unexceptional their existence was, save for certain refinements, in the political, economic, demographic, and architectural climate of the time.

These are not unknown foundations. Since Braunfels's book, they have been discussed in a variety of contexts by Enrico Guidoni, Italo Moretti, and others. This study is different, however, because Friedman views the entire process leading up to the acceptance and implementation of the remarkable grid-plans from a medieval perspective, rather than from the aesthetic or political vantage of our century. The urban theories of the Modern Movement play no part in Friedman's analysis.

Friedman successfully captures the intellectual and technical climate that produced these achievements in town planning. Chapter 2 ("Plans") presents the morphology of the town plans individually and as a group. Chapter 3 ("Models") vigorously traces the plan typology across Europe, exploring plausible political circumstances that substantiate similarities between seemingly disparate town sites.

The towns exhibit two basic plan types. The first plan type, typified by San Giovanni,



Plan, San Giovanni (c. 1800s). (From *Florentine New Towns*.)

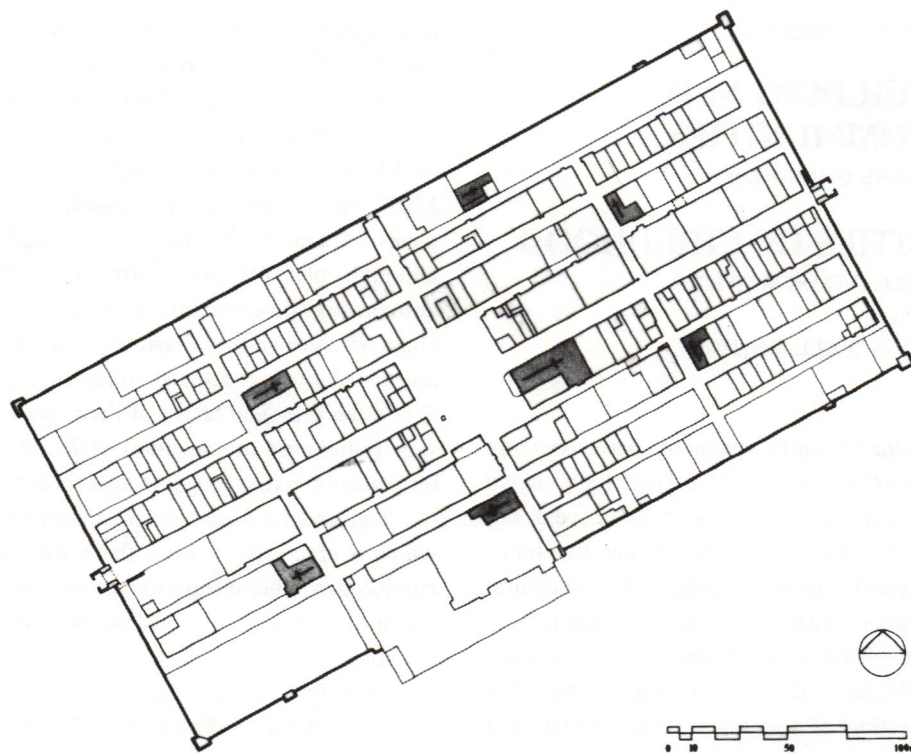
consists of a rectangular site with a long main axis road running through the center, flanked by slightly narrower streets. In the center of the town, interrupting these long streets, is a town square, extending the entire width of the town site. Buildings face the streets and back upon narrow alleys that divide the house lots.

The second plan type, typified by Terranuova, has a smaller, almost square piazza in the center of the plan, with a secondary axis running through it. As at San Giovanni, long streets run straight through the town, but they are intersected by shorter cross streets, which create smaller blocks and increased circulation.

These designs were influenced by a variety of sources. The San Giovanni type has parallels in Carinthia in lower Germany, where a number of towns with long rectangular open squares at their centers were founded in the first half of the 13th century. Friedman suggests that these market towns, located on major trading routes, would have been known to many Tuscan travelers. Variants of the German plans are found in town foundations of Tuscan Lucca of the mid-13th century, such as Pietrasanta, and these directly influenced the Florentine plans. The Terranuova plan type has models closer to home, particularly in the plan of Lombard Borgomanero, an early 13th-century foundation of Novara.

Friedman adeptly compares seemingly similar plans to identify urbanistic innovations. He reveals that different circumstances lead to similar urban forms. On paper, particularly in plan, these can appear related, but in conception, planning, and use they are so different as to constitute totally separate plan types. In looking for sources for the Tuscan new town plans, Friedman in effect writes a primer on all medieval Italian—and much of medieval European—orthogonal town designs.

Perhaps the most valuable parts of this book, however, are Chapters 4 (“Geometry”) and 5 (“Planners”). Remarkably readable discussions of medieval mathematical and geometric education and practice identify the processes, and by extension, the likely sources, of the geometri-



Plan, Terranuova (c. 1800s). (From *Florentine New Towns*.)

cal basis for the new town plans. At San Giovanni and Terranuova the size of blocks appears to have been determined by a system based on trigonometry.

Reports of actual individuals involved in the planning and building process and their association with other building projects of the Florentine commune provide a reasonably full profile of the profession of medieval surveyor and planner. Friedman has written an important chapter in architectural history, which also exposes us to the roots of the architectural profession that would flower in the Florentine Renaissance. An image of the master urban planner for republican communes can now stand beside the master mason of the cathedral workshops.

Chapter 6 (“Colonies”) covers the political and religious organization of the new colonies, and gives readers a sense of the life led in these newly planned foundations. The chapter is also essential to allow architectural historians to translate the grid plans, so often reproduced in repetitive series, into real centers of life. Though primarily concerned with plans, and then some with architectural works, Friedman does attempt

to unite the medieval city studied by the architect and architectural historian with the city known to the economic and social historian.

In the last chapter (“New Towns and the Urbanism of the Florentine Merchant Commune”), Friedman considers aspects of urbanism in Florence itself, particularly the laying out of streets and the creation of new neighborhoods. Although it is clear the urbanism of the new towns was tied to development in the mother city, unfortunately the last chapter is not linked so closely to the rest of the book.

In almost every other way David Friedman has produced a study full of insight, information, and even anecdote. The book’s brevity, clear prose, and organization make it both enjoyable and easy to read. Generous in number and superior in quality, the plans, drawings, and photographs clarify and amplify the text, as well as stand as a useful reference on their own.

FLORENTINE NEW TOWNS: URBAN DESIGN IN THE LATE MIDDLE AGES, David Friedman, Architectural History Foundation and MIT Press, 1989, 373 pp., illus., \$45.00.

Ellen R. Shapiro

BUILDING NEW COMMUNITIES

DIANE GHIRARDO

CITIES OF CHILDHOOD

STEFANO DE MARTINO

AND

ALEX WALL, EDITORS

Diane Ghirardo's engaging book, *Building New Communities: New Deal America and Fascist Italy*, begins with this caveat: her study falls somewhere between two traditional disciplines, history and architectural history. Indeed, the text is so replete with complex analyses of the social, economic, political, and urbanistic forces behind the creation of these government-sponsored communities that it is difficult to place this book in any one of the more traditional areas of scholarship. Throughout, Ghirardo avoids discussing buildings according to traditional architectural categories, preferring a comparative analysis of the nonstylistic aspects of these new communities. She points out, for example, that both Italy and the United States shared similar reactions to economic emergency and social unrest during the Depression years, and that both countries had to deal with agricultural and industrial crises and their attendant poverty and unemployment. This perceived similarity is the basis for the author's comparison of the building campaigns sponsored by two radically different political systems.

The book is divided clearly into discussions of the Italian and American building programs. In a chapter devoted to new communities in Italy, Ghirardo discusses the thirteen New Towns founded *ex novo* in the period 1928–1940 as stages for political propaganda of enormous value to the Fascist state. Here, as elsewhere, the author skillfully interprets the archival material, including even the dietary habits of the new settlers. But given Ghirardo's claim that the creation of the New Towns in Italy was fostered in large part by consciously

antiurban propaganda, it is odd that she does not mention the unofficial but vociferous antiurban campaign of the ultraconservative Strapaese movement beginning in the 1920s. The invective of Strapaese leaders Mino Maccari and Leo Longanesi in the pages of their mouthpiece, *Il Selvaggio*, although not an official government stance concerning modernism, was certainly characteristic of attitudes widely held in the more conservative sectors of Italian society. While the principal target of their attacks was Rationalist architectural style, their movement spoke in broader terms about the political and social dangers of urban life, which is precisely the issue that Ghirardo emphasizes in her discussion of new communities built in Fascist Italy and New Deal America.

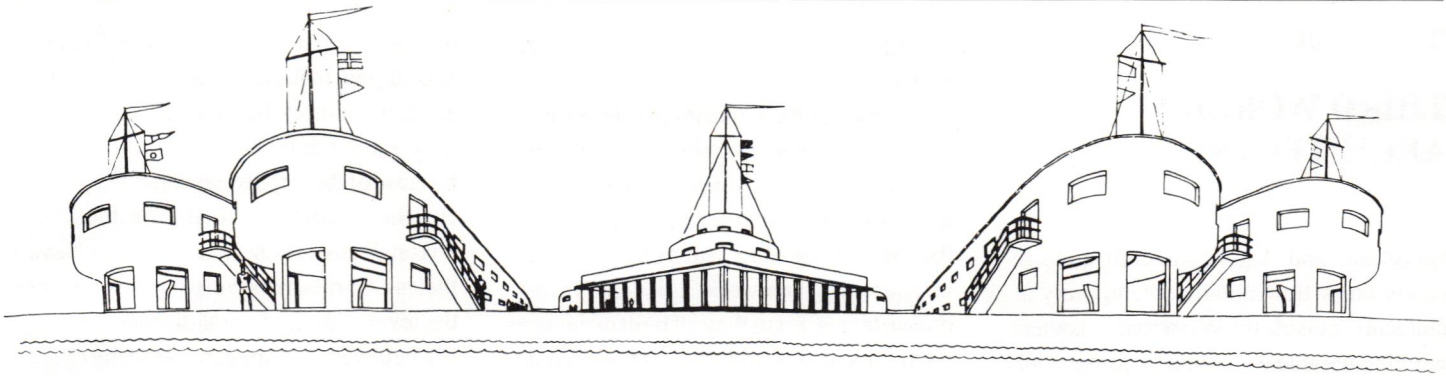
Certainly Ghirardo's greatest contribution in the chapter on Fascist New Towns is the elevation of Mussolini's birthplace, Predappio, to the status of a New Town. She carefully unfolds the fascinating story of Predappio, whose transformation was the brainchild of Mussolini himself. The metamorphosis of Predappio from sleepy village to a small town of some architectural and political pretension is convincingly related to Pope Pius II's ventures at Pienza in the 15th century. In addition to this

important discussion of Mussolini's birthplace, Ghirardo sets forth the complex sociopolitical factors behind the founding of the New Towns in the reclaimed swamplands of the Agro Pontino, including an account of the almost forced change in mentality of the settlers from wage earners to sharecroppers. As elsewhere in the book, the author defends her skirting of the stylistic issues by claiming that the purely architectural results in these new communities in both Italy and America were generally undistinguished. Indeed, Ghirardo speaks more about urban planning policy than she does about architectural style, preferring to discuss hierarchical order and controlled vistas to the exclusion of a sustained discussion of the fascinating stylistic discourse that took place in Italy throughout the years of the Fascist regime. Nonetheless, her overview of Italian New Towns, from those in the Agro Pontino to Sardinia and Italian East Africa, is an important contribution to the literature on this topic.

The discussion of American New Towns is equally well conceived. Ghirardo vividly describes the American programs, including cooperative homesteads, greenbelt towns, and migrant camps. Interestingly, the author sees the American government at this time assuming authoritarian control



Metal shelter, Westley Migrant Camp, San Joaquin Valley, California; photo by Dorothea Lange (1939). (From *Building New Communities*.)



Perspective, Colonia Marina XXVIII Ottobre, Cattolica; Clemente Busiri-Vici (1932). (From *Cities of Childhood*.)

over the settlers in the new communities. Some of the conclusions she reaches are startling: for instance, the degree of supervision and loss of privacy and autonomy of the settlers in the American towns was even greater than that experienced in the Italian towns. Through an analysis of the mechanisms of settler selection, cooperative ownership of land or farm industries, and the propaganda goals of the government in the creation of these communities, the author describes the many forces behind such initiatives, as well as the reasons for their failures. Again, the reader may wish for more discussion of the role of architectural style, which is passed off simply as vernacular blandness. Nonetheless, Ghirardo argues the urbanistic reasons for the success of the Italian New Towns and the failure of their American counterparts. Even more significant, the book elucidates the extensive parallels between the New Deal and Fascist new communities, which include the attempted ruralization of urban citizens and the relative control that each government exercised over social patterns, racial attitudes, and even sexual mores.

Ghirardo often breaks new ground in emphasizing the nonarchitectural forces that influenced the design of these communities. One of the book's most telling conclusions is that both New Deal America and Fascist Italy considered these communities as propaganda tools intended to create an image of government capable of solving crises of enormous economic and social magnitude. Furthermore, both governments deliberately employed certain urbanistic and social means to discourage the growth of progres-

sive political ideals. Ghirardo illustrates her discussion with excellent visual documentation, including photographs by Dorothea Lange and Walker Evans, that take on a compelling new resonance in this context. While some readers may object to the absence of a sustained consideration of architectural style and the broader aims of cultural policy, *Building New Communities* should be lauded for its successful analysis of the complex forces behind the creation of new communities like Arthurdale, West Virginia, and Littoria in the Agro Pontino, and their relationship to the higher agenda of political propaganda.

A more narrowly focused but equally compelling study of Italian architecture in the interwar period is *Cities of Childhood: Italian Colonie of the 1930s*, the catalog of an exhibition held in 1988 at the Architectural Association in London. This stunning book, whose format recalls that of *Casabella* in the 1930s, centers on the state-run *colonie*, or summer camps, that populated the coasts and mountains of Italy. Conceived in the 19th century, the *colonie* saw their greatest growth during the Mussolini years. The Fascist government allocated vast sums of money to the *colonie* and allowed architects free reign to design some of the more radically modern buildings sponsored by various government agencies.

Adding to the pleasure of reading this catalog are the photographs of both the buildings and their users, the thousands of working-class children whose daily rituals, from mass gymnastics to sun therapy, are dramatically illustrated. In addition, the catalog thoroughly treats individual *colonie*,

in photographs, project descriptions, plans, elevations, and site plans of the major retreats throughout Italy. Interviews with some of the protagonists of the period, including Lodovico Belgioioso and Giulio Pediconi, as well as reprints of relevant essays from the 1930s and 1940s, balance critical essays that offer new interpretations of this building type. Worthy of note is Michele Anderle's essay on the reclaimed area of Calambrone, which, he argues, took its theoretical foundations from the *Futurist Manifesto of Aero-Architecture* (1934). Eduardo Paolozzi offers a personal account of life in the *colonie* in his essay, "Wonderful World," a moving memoir of the social dynamics and architecture of a retreat in Cattolica on the Adriatic Sea.

Overall, *Cities of Childhood* transcends the limitations of a catalog format, and offers the reader a splendid study of the architectural, urbanistic, social, and economic concerns that defined the enormous initiative of the *colonie*, comprising more than thirty-eight hundred buildings. This book is a welcome addition to the growing body of literature on Italian architecture of the Regime years.

BUILDING NEW COMMUNITIES: NEW DEAL AMERICA AND FASCIST ITALY, Diane Ghirardo, Princeton University Press, 1989, 223 pp., illus., \$35.00.

CITIES OF CHILDHOOD: ITALIAN COLONIE OF THE 1930s, Stefano de Martino and Alex Wall, editors, The Architectural Association (distributed by the Princeton Architectural Press), 1988, 88 pp., illus., \$34.95.

Zeynep Celik

THIRD WORLD ARCHITECTS

Europeans and Americans until quite recently knew little about contemporary architecture outside the Western hemisphere, with the notable exception of Japan. Only in the last two decades did professional journals begin publishing articles on recent projects and buildings from the non-Western world. Since the 1981 founding of the journal *Mimar*, with its attractive format and superb illustrations, architecture in developing countries has been brought into further professional focus. A parallel trend was the debut of lushly produced monographs on individual Third World architects, originally published by *Mimar* (with the support of the Aga Khan Award for Architecture) and now published and distributed by Butterworths Architecture. The series so far includes the architects Charles Correa of India, Hassan Fathy of Egypt, Geoffrey Bawa of Sri Lanka, and Sedad Eldem of Turkey.

Having already used the terms "non-Western," "developing countries," and "Third World" interchangeably, I feel obliged to comment on the confusion in the terminology and its connotations. The deconstruction of this terminology is a helpful reminder of cultural biases, the limitations, and the implications lodged in the words. The civilizations in question are categorized according to what they are not (*non-Western, undeveloped*) and categorically placed within a hierarchy (Oriental, Eastern, third, developing). Everything is juxtaposed, and the world is divided into clear and simple spheres. But cultures and societies are not abstract, oppositional, static, and sealed units; they are multilayered, dynamic, complex entities that engage in a great deal of crosscultural exchange. Trinh Minh-Ha summarized the problem of the First World/Third World fallacy eloquently: "No system functions in isolation. No First World exists independently from the Third World; there is a Third

World in every First World and vice-versa."¹

In spite of the enormous differences in their ideological and philosophical commitments, one of the threads that connects the Third World architects reviewed here is the striking degree to which the First World is reflected in their work. This comes across on two levels. First, they all built residences for the local upper classes, who often adhered to Western values. This does not necessarily translate into the use of Western architectural styles, as currently there is a return to tradition, reinterpreted and filtered through Western culture, among many non-Western elites. Except for Hassan Fathy, these architects also designed luxurious tourist facilities, corporate offices, and high-budget government buildings. Second, as members of the elite and as products of Western (Correa, Bawa, and Eldem) and Western-style (Fathy) educational systems, they belong to a hybrid, crosscultural reality that is manifested in their architecture and that makes it unique.

The first book in the series is on Charles Correa (the second edition is substantially revised), a familiar name to the American architectural scene. Educated at the University of Michigan and MIT, Correa taught and lectured at many American universities and was elected an Honorary Fellow of the AIA in 1979. English-language architectural journals have published articles on his buildings since the 1960s. Correa's work has almost become synonymous with Third World architecture, in part due to the demonstrable pride he takes in being a Third World architect. Correa's numerous articles and two books, *Form Follows Climate* (1980) and *The New Landscape* (1985), deal with various problems of architecture and urban design with specific references to India, but addressing Third World issues globally. In several articles, he also gives a valuable critique of Le Corbusier's work in Chandigarh from an insider's point of view.

When Correa discusses the work of Le Corbusier and (to a lesser degree) Louis Kahn, he reveals a crucial aspect of his own philosophy: the importance of asking questions. He sees Corbu and Kahn as

having a tremendous influence on the Third World and making a fundamental difference, not simply because of the buildings they built there, but, more importantly, because of the "right questions" they asked. He then criticizes them for the many "wrong" answers they have given. Nevertheless, Correa maintains that they changed the level of architectural discourse. Correa is a believer in change, because, he claims, change promotes growth. Although he studies the architecture of the past and reinterprets its solutions, he refutes a static understanding of history, which would lead to mimicry. Instead, he argues: "At its most vital, architecture is an agent of change. To invent tomorrow; that is its finest function." And, "only a decadent architecture looks obsessively backward."

For Correa, the excitement of inventing the future in the Third World lies in the potential of its rich building traditions. It offers balanced ecosystems, recycling of waste products, a participatory building process, appropriate lifestyles, and indigenous technology. Correa's buildings attempt to synthesize these merits. In response to climatic conditions, he merges outdoor and indoor spaces, using open colonnades, courtyards, verandas, and terraces; he incorporates rooftops as platforms into his open spaces and through his syntheses engages in a dialogue with topography and landscape. His goal is to establish climatic control using the very form of the buildings. By working with the section, the plan, and the overall shape, he provides a powerful critique to the customary insertion of "climate control devices."

Correa's design repertoire ranges from museums, cultural centers, memorials, offices, and government buildings to tourist facilities, single-family houses, mass housing, and sidewalk design. In all of these, the architect refers to a "kit of basic elements" and experiments with these elements in various combinations according to the specific requirements of a particular socioeconomic framework. One striking and controversial example is his proposal to transform Bombay pavements into sleeping platforms for the homeless. These

platforms, two meters wide and half a meter high, would be used by hawkers during the day, thereby freeing the pavements for pedestrians. In the evening municipal workers would wash the platforms (via water taps placed every thirty meters) to prepare for the nightcomers who would sleep here. Of course, this is not a solution to the problem of homelessness, but a minor recompense to bring some comfort to the different users. Rather than solving the problem, this plan would have emphasized its seriousness by making it visible, by actually "building" it architecturally into the urban landscape. The strength of the design is in its daring statement of the problem.

Correa plays a heroic role reminiscent of that of the European avant-garde (among them his own hero, Le Corbusier) in the 1920s and the 1930s: the architect as an agent of social change. Following their model, he asks many questions (most of which are beyond the realm of built form) and tries to answer them on many fronts, getting involved in public and political affairs, and writing and lecturing widely. His didacticism carries a lyrical tone. A widely quoted passage on "living patterns" exemplifies Correa's style:

In Asia, the symbol of enlightenment has never been the school building, but rather the guru sitting under a banyan tree; and the monumental temples of south India are experienced not just as gopurams or shrines, but as a movement through the great open-to-sky spaces that lie between them.

The introductory essay to *Charles Correa* by Sherban Cantacuzino is an intelligent, concise analysis of Correa's ideas and architecture, but does not clarify the importance of Correa's work among his peers, as a leading figure of contemporary world architecture. The essay is followed by Hasan-Uddin Khan's descriptive presentation of Correa's key buildings and projects. This is supplemented by a chronology of works, a biography, and a bibliography of publications both on and by Correa. The final section, "Transfers and Transformations," by Correa himself, is an

exposition of his work in terms of historical continuities and changes.

Perhaps even more so than Correa, the Egyptian architect Hassan Fathy represents Third World architecture to Westerners. His buildings define a particular and, once again, proud architectural image for the Third World, based on Egyptian rural prototypes and traditional materials and construction techniques. Fathy's romantic vision of peasant culture, together with his concern for climatic appropriateness, found a great appeal in the United States and Europe from the 1960s on; numerous articles were published on his work in American and European journals, and his two books, *Architecture for the Poor: An Experiment in Rural Egypt* (1973) and *Natural Energy and Vernacular Architecture* (1985) are on the reading lists in many architecture schools. The American fascination with Fathy culminated in the late 1970s with a commission in Abiquiu, New Mexico, for an American Muslim community's mosque, school, and student housing, in the very same style he had developed for the Egyptian countryside. His powerful influence can be traced throughout the Third World from Algeria to Mali in the work of Abdel Wahed el-Wakil, the El-Miniawy brothers, Ramses Wisa Wassef, ADAUA (Association for the Development of Traditional African Urbanism and Architecture), and André Ravereau—among numerous others. Although Fathy received several international awards and titles such as the Aga Khan Chairman's Award for Architecture (1980), the Gold Medal of the Union Internationale des Architectes (1984), and Honorary Fellow of the AIA (1976), and represents contemporary Egyptian architecture to the rest of the world, he remained marginal to the building activity in Egypt.

Fathy's serious assessment of vernacular architecture goes back to the late 1930s—a remarkably early date. His argument against the homogenizing power of modernism was that cultures are not interchangeable, but possess a "cultural authenticity," with variations in psychological, physical, and physiological needs.

Good architecture, he maintained, must address the individuality of cultures, as well as the individuality of its users and the natural environment. Anticipating Paul Ricoeur's views on the "subtle destruction, not only of traditional cultures ... but also of ... the creative nucleus of great civilizations and great cultures,"² he asked:

International architecture, is it not international ill-respect of art and international loss of culture? Because to my mind the best definition of architecture is one that is the outcome of the interaction between the intelligence of man and his environment in satisfying his needs, both spiritual and physical.

Nonetheless, Fathy shared with modernists the belief that the architect could bring social reform and improve the living conditions of the ordinary person. His aesthetic affiliation with the rural vernacular likewise echoed the modernist movement. Fathy argued that the rural vernacular offered excellent examples of "light constructions, simple, with the clean lines of the best modern houses." His designs relied entirely on the limits of traditional building materials and construction techniques, hence he did not employ color or surface texture, but emphasized the importance of volume, forms, and fenestration to determine the overall aesthetics. In his refusal to decorate, he reversed Adolph Loos's famous theorem: Fathy's peasants do not decorate, because they are the true representatives of high culture.

Fathy's reaction to internationalism led him to polarize cultures, this time emphasizing the "otherness" of the West and presenting it as a threat. I believe that an examination of the process through which Fathy reached this position would have been valuable in the context of the monograph by James Maude Richards, Ismail Serageldin, and Darl Rastorfer. He himself traces his love of the countryside to his childhood, but does not have much to say about his westernized education, his European experiences, and his early practice. Rastorfer writes in *Hassan Fathy* that "little is known, and no record exists, of the first fifteen years of his career." In the book,

there are two small photographs of the Baroque-detailed Monastery House in Giza (c. 1950), inspired from the Ottoman upper-class residences on the Bosphorus. Dating from the 19th century, these mansions display a curious blend of local architecture and European forms. How does an architect who is so moralistic about purity allow himself to repeat this hybrid, urban, and upper-class style? Do other buildings by Fathy record similar contradictions? Why do the critics shroud this period when it should be easy to document? An inquiry into these matters would not trivialize the work of a great architect, but, on the contrary, lead to a better understanding of Fathy's development as an architect and as an intellectual.

Unlike Correa, Fathy stated that "change is not always for the better." Tradition did not mean stagnation; there were cycles in tradition, and some of these cycles were still extant—for example, breadmaking and brickmaking. The clearest tradition was in village architecture; the goal of the architect should be to continue the tradition and, further, provide it with new momentum. Fathy's own architecture, then, is aimed not at originality, but at the pursuit of tradition. His work, however, does not just mimic, but filters indigenous architecture through his own aesthetic sensibilities, juxtaposing and reorganizing key forms and spaces.

The most important are the square domed unit, the rectangular vaulted unit, the alcove covered with a half dome, the loggia, and the courtyard. The material is mud-brick throughout—not only of cultural value, but also cheaper to produce.

Hassan Fathy is a pioneer in promoting user participation in the design process. In his essay, Serageldin describes the various methods by which Fathy involves the peasants in the design of their own houses and community buildings. The resulting "individual attention to each building" represents his humanistic reaction and challenge to the impersonal universality of mass housing. There was another level to the participatory process: the architect had a chance to educate the common people about the value of their own traditions. He stated, in a rather patronizing tone:

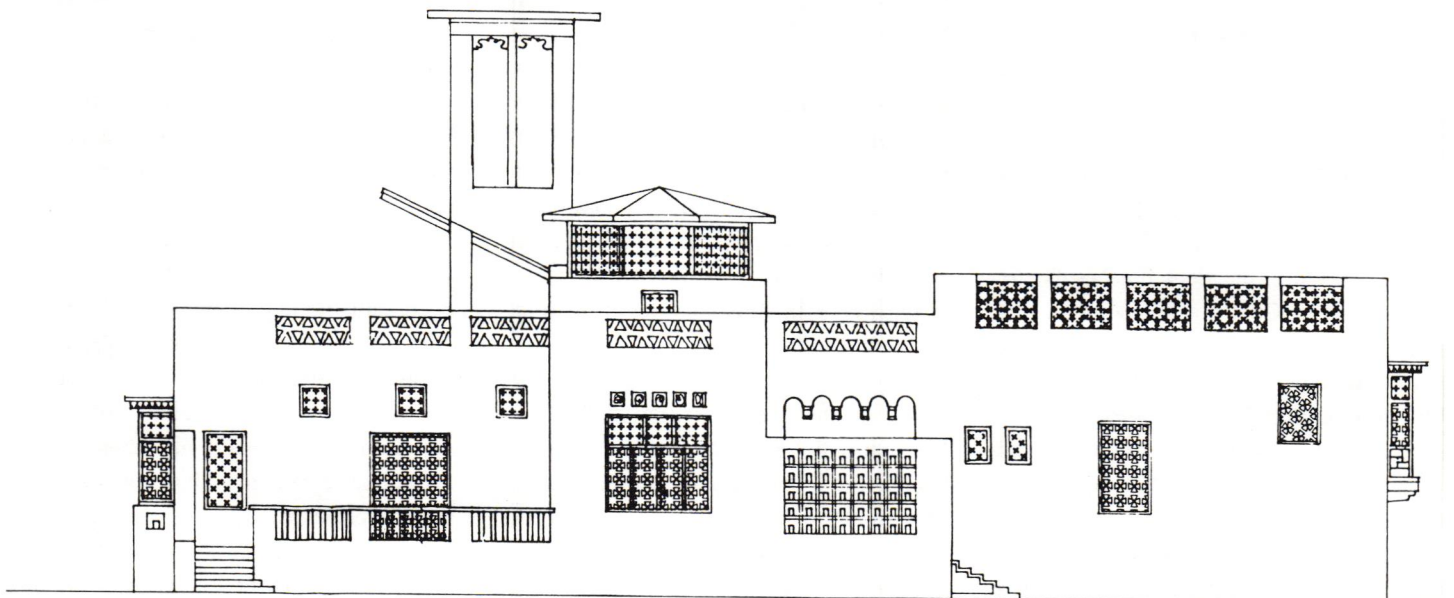
Like all people, peasants are awed by authority and importance, and when told what they ought to want, they do their best to comply. And even if the peasants really wanted ugly buildings, it would be our duty as architects to guide them toward an appreciation of beauty, and certainly not, by pandering to their taste, to lend our authority and approval to itThe architect is in a unique position to revive the peasant's faith in his own culture. If as an authoritative critic, he shows what is admirable in local forms,

and even goes as far as to use them himself, then the peasants at once begin to look on their own products with pride.

Fathy's paternalistic romanticism is particularly clear in his views on Egyptian women. His architectural analogy to women's role in society reflects his attitude:

The inward-looking Arab house, open to the calm of the sky, made beautiful by the feminine element of water, self-contained and peaceful, the deliberate antithesis of the harsh world of work, warfare, and commerce, is the domain of the women[It has] a womanly inwardness, a trembling liquid femininity.

In the houses of the village of New Gournah (1948), Fathy did not provide for indoor plumbing. Instead, he placed storage jars on rooftops, which would have to be filled by women from the public pumps. The public well was a traditional setting for socializing and should not be substituted for improved amenities and basic comforts. Besides, women's bodies complemented the picturesque imagery of the village: "It is hard to imagine a village in Egypt without its black-robed women, erect as queens, each with her water jar carried nonchalantly on her head, and it will be a pity to lose the sight."



Entrance elevation, Abdulrahman O. Nassief House; Jeddah, Saudi Arabia; Hassan Fathy (1980). (From *Hassan Fathy*.)

New Gournia is the clearest expression of Hassan Fathy's ideas. Each house was designed around a courtyard and groups of houses around a square that acts as a community courtyard. Fathy's repertoire of domed and vaulted rooms and alcoves is used in different ways to give each house its individuality, resulting in an irregular site plan. The movement pattern (from the private to the public) was elaborately worked out with great sensitivity to the hierarchy of spaces. The principal community buildings—the mosque, the craft center, the village hall, the theater, and the permanent exhibition hall—are around the main square. Fathy's agenda included a plan to revitalize the economy by means of tourism (the village is on the route to Luxor) and the development of traditional crafts. It was a utopian vision where "people would be happier, healthier, more comfortable, and more secure" and, like so many other utopias, its success was limited. Nevertheless, New Gournia became a valuable laboratory. When he wrote about the project in his *Architecture for the Poor*, Fathy did not focus on the actual "success" of New Gournia, but elaborated on the process of design and construction, as well as the application of his utopian visions into architectural and urban forms.

In *Hassan Fathy*, Richards locates Fathy in an international context, Serageldin evaluates his architecture with particular reference to Egypt, and Rastorfer discusses his philosophy and his architecture. These essays are brief, but informative and multidimensional. They look at the architect and his work from many angles, successfully conveying his ideas (scattered throughout numerous publications and lectures, extending over a very long period of time), and analyzing them with references to his built work. A comprehensive portrait of the architect is completed by carefully selected quotations from Fathy (originally published by Renata Holod and Darl Rastorfer in *Architecture and Community*, 1983), and a chronology of his works—both built and written. There is a sentimental, if awkward, section of "appreciations," where the architect is acknowledged by those who have

learned from him and share his visions.

The Sri Lankan architect Geoffrey Bawa is less known in the West than Fathy and Correa. Because Bawa believes that "architecture cannot be totally explained but must be experienced," he does not write or lecture much. Further, he does not like to talk about his work: "When one delights as much as I do in planning a building and having it built, I find it impossible to describe the exact steps in an analytical or dogmatic way." Perhaps Bawa's reluctance to verbalize results from not having a social program and not attempting to reform society through his architecture, unlike the architects discussed above. His clients in general are from well-educated, cosmopolitan, urban upper classes, and Bawa does not address the crucial Third World problems, such as mass shelter, urbanization, rural planning, resettlement, and so forth. Yet, his contribution to Third World architecture is seminal, because he searches for a new architecture, one that synthesizes the past (of all historical periods) with modern forms and methods.

As Brian Brace Taylor points out in *Geoffrey Bawa*, the beginning of Bawa's career corresponds to the end of the heroic period of modernism. Bawa's architecture parallels the critical trends initiated by Aldo van Eyck, Giancarlo De Carlo, Louis Kahn, Charles Moore, and Robert Venturi. He combines historical references freely and comfortably with modernism, sometimes simply by recycling salvaged parts from old buildings into his own architecture. His cosmopolitan background allows him not to be limited to a particular period, but to include the classical and the colonial, as well as the vernacular and the modern into his repertoire. Bawa's buildings fit with ease into the architecture of Sri Lanka. An island along major trade routes, Sri Lanka has a long history of adapting to outside influences. Its architectural heritage includes Buddhist, Hellenistic, Roman, Indonesian, Chinese, and Arab traditions, as well as more recent Dutch, British, French, German, and Italian influences—a legacy of the colonialist period and the Dutch East India company.

Bawa's buildings exploit the maximum possibilities of the site. Architecture and landscape are inseparable in his designs; the right placement of a building on a site is a major concern, as is the careful framing of views. His priorities are found in delicate site plans, which pay as much attention to landscapes as to architectural design, and in beautiful sections through the sites. The play of light and shade in every space is carefully balanced and further accentuated by the juxtaposition of different kinds of materials, as well as the use of the reflectivity of water in shallow basins—both indoors and outdoors. In the interweaving of the inside with the outside, climate is always addressed sensitively. In some cases, like St. Bridgett's Montessori School in Colombo, the inside and the outside are not separated, but a wide roof provides shelter from the sun and the rain, giving the impression of being under a "wide and splendid tree."

Bawa does not explain his architecture by a set of clear and rational principles. He argues instead that good design cannot be guided by rules, because it is a product of "part emotion, part thought." The critical point in the design process is when the architect steps "from the relative security of known and learnt things, into the world of intuition, inspiration, talent, gift—almost sub- or super-conscious."

Taylor's intelligent essay, appropriately titled "A House is a Garden," places the architect within an international context, tracing some of the leading themes of his work. It is followed by a short statement by Bawa himself. The bulk of the book is composed of case studies, presented with high-quality photographs and Bawa's exquisite drawings; the text is kept to a minimum. Barbara Sansoni's brief summary of the Sri Lankan background, a chronology of Bawa's work, a biographic outline, and a bibliography complete the book.

The most recent book in the series is on Turkish architect Sedad Eldem, probably the least known of the four in the West. Unlike the homogeneity observed in Fathy's work, Eldem's architecture ranges from Internationalist style to direct derivations

from the vernacular fabric of Istanbul. Contrary to Correa's well-articulated concerns for Third World issues, Eldem addresses upper-class tastes and programs. And finally, unlike the introverted Bawa, who believes in intuition and who does not elaborate on his design principles, Eldem is a teacher, researcher, and historian. Among his scholarly work, the Turkish house type studies stand out in their search for the intrinsic values of the Turkish house and in their attempt to address contemporary issues based on historical precedents.

In their idealized and abstract organization, the many upper-class villas Eldem designed for the shores and hills of the Bosphorus are products of his typological approach to the Turkish house, but do not display a concern for context. Indeed, his more recent villas, monumental in scale, required substantial excavations into the hills of the Bosphorus (which had to be buttressed by immense concrete walls). Many trees had to be cut, irreversibly disrupting the landscape.

As pointed out in the essay by Sibel Bozdoğan, Eldem's career is connected to the ongoing debates concerning modernism, regionalism, rationalism, historicism, and eclecticism. A chronological survey of his work displays an array of influences. Frank Lloyd Wright's impact (through the Wasmuth papers) can be traced in his vision for a series of "Turkish houses" on gridiron suburban lots. His training under Le Corbusier and Auguste Perret in Paris and Hans Poelzig in Berlin is evident in his modernist designs of the 1920s and 1930s. Turkish statism and nationalism of the 1930s and the 1940s led to his search for a "national" architecture. He then experimented with rationalism from the 1950s to the 1970s. Yet, throughout his career, the reinterpretation of regional history and the concern with maintaining a link to tradition form a continuing thread. He is best known for his unique contextualist experiment in the Social Security Agency Complex in Istanbul (1962–64), the building that won Eldem the 1986 Aga Khan Award for Architecture. In a well-preserved neighborhood in Zeyrek, against the silhouette of the

Byzantine church of the Pantocrator in the midst of an intact fabric of wooden residential architecture, the complex is broken into several volumes along an internal "street." The volumes are articulated in relation to the background, using an architectural vocabulary developed from both the residential and monumental architecture of the past. Their massing provides interesting views to and from the old neighborhood.

Bozdoğan argues that all the labels (nationalist, regionalist, historicist, eclectic, and so forth) attributed to Eldem's buildings do not explain his work, but rather "the historical/cultural context in which such discursive categories are produced and reproduced." She sees the "constant" in Eldem's work as the "rationalist/idealist sensibility," and the effort to construct a "recognizable, repeatable, and communicable" architectural discourse. His choice, then, is not to "create," but to reinterpret and to "construct." For Bozdoğan, Eldem is a "critical modernist," who uses the past to construct the future and who uses the future to understand the past.

The book is divided into five sections. The foreword by Hans Hollein is a general text without a message which disrupts the otherwise carefully integrated contents. No doubt it has been included to give the book a larger exposure in the West by association with a familiar name (Hollein was also on the Master Jury which gave Eldem the Aga Khan Award). Suha Özkan's essay, "Echoes on Sedat Eldem," locates Eldem's work within the historical framework of the profession in Turkey and traces his impact on younger generations. A third essay, "Modernity in Tradition" by Sibel Bozdoğan, forms the bulk of the book and discusses Eldem's buildings (in a loose chronological format) according to themes, such as "The Turkish House Reappraised," "Early Dialogue with Modernism," "In Search of Nationalist Architecture," and "Rationalist Discourse." Bozdoğan's essay is thorough and thoughtful, with an outstanding contribution in its diachronic explorations: Eldem's work is analyzed here with reference to contemporary practice at large. Bozdoğan also compiled part four,

"Chronology of Works," covering the period between 1931 and 1986. The last section is the "Profile of the Man" by Engin Yenil. It includes an essay on Eldem's roots, his profession and role as an educator, and the main influences on him. It is followed by a biography, a bibliography, and a glossary. Together, these essays give not only an excellent profile of the architect and place him in an international context, but also reveal a great deal about contemporary Turkish architecture. Nevertheless, the book suffers from having four authors, whose texts sometimes overlap and repeat information.

The four monographs in the Architects in the Third World series are invaluable in their careful exposition of four very important architects, and present texts of a generally high quality in a consistent format, with book designs and illustrations of superior quality. They have been prepared in order to honor architects who have struggled throughout their careers to improve the quality of architecture in their respective countries, which may explain the lack of critical evaluation in the texts. Indeed, the slightest criticism is followed by an apology, leaving the reader with an entirely laudatory, but therefore incomplete, presentation.

NOTES

1. Trinh Mihn-Ha, "Of Other Peoples," *Discussions in Contemporary Culture* (Hal Foster, ed., Seattle: Bay Press, 1987), p. 138. For further discussion on the topic, see the pieces by James Clifford and Virginia Dominguez in the same volume.

2. Paul Ricoeur, *History and Truth* (C. A. Kelbley, translator, Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 1965), p. 276.

CHARLES CORREA, Hasan-Uddin Khan, Butterworths Architecture, 1987 (first published 1984), 176 pp., illus., \$45.00.

GEOFFREY BAWA, Brian Brace Taylor, Butterworths Architecture, 1986, 182 pp., illus., \$45.00.

HASSAN FATHY, J. M. Richards, Ismail Serageldin, and Darl Rastorfer, *A Mimar Book* (distributed by Butterworths Architecture), 1985, 172 pp., illus., \$45.00.

SEDAT ELDEM, Sibel Bozdoğan, Suha Özkan, Engin Yenil, Butterworths Architecture, 1987, 176 pp., illus., \$45.00.

Albert J. Schmidt

MOSCOW 1900–1930

SERGE FAUCHEREAU, EDITOR

RUSSIAN ART NOUVEAU

ELENA A. BORISOVA

AND

GRIGORY STERNIN

That the world of art and intellect was astir in *fin de siècle* Paris comes as news to no one. That art and ideas produced a storm of equal or greater intensity in old Russia, both before and after 1917, raises eyebrows. Apart from certain renowned figures—such as Stravinsky, Chekhov, Gorky, Pasternak, Kandinsky, Chagall, Malevich, and Eisenstein—the story of Russian creativity at the turn of the century is not well known in the West. More surprisingly, it has received comparatively little attention from Russian specialists (excepting John Bowlt and S. Frederick Starr). Inside the USSR, Stalinists hounded artists and suppressed their art when it did not mirror proletarian culture.

Now all this is changing. Both from within and without the Soviet Union there is a renewed appreciation of the many facets of modern art in Russia, including design. The 1979 “Paris-Moscow 1900–1930” exhibition at the Pompidou Center in Paris provided the initial impetus for this new climate. The two books under review represent the latest attempts to rectify this short supply of information. Both of these essentially coffee-table books abound with illustrations of paintings, costume and set design, architecture, and cinema and are intelligently written, if occasionally awkwardly translated and transliterated. With some qualifications, each will find an audience among design professionals, Russian specialists, and a perceptive and well-informed reading public.

Serge Fauchereau’s *Moscow 1900–1930* is based on the landmark Pompidou exhibit. Fauchereau touches on some themes covered by Camilla Gray a generation ago (*The Great Experiment: Russian Art 1863–1922*, 1962) and successfully removes Moscow from St. Petersburg’s shadow. Compared

with Borisova and Sternin’s *Russian Art Nouveau*, Fauchereau’s book spans a longer period, contains more text, and is more inclusive in its subject matter. There are separate chapters, understandably superficial, on the arts before and after the revolution, literature, theater, architecture and town planning, music, and cinema—each by a different author. The charm of the book is enhanced by rare photographs such as ones of Red Square in 1910, of Chekhov and Tolstoy, and of young Rachmaninoff and Shaliapin. Reproductions of Malevich and Kandinsky paintings, Meyerhold or Moscow Art Theater costume designs in brilliant color, and the Vesnin brothers’ and Tatlin’s architectural designs in black and white typify the diversity of the volume’s contents. In all, there are 295 illustrations, of which 83 are in color.

The 1987 French edition of *Russian Art Nouveau* was the first work devoted exclusively to this topic in a language other than Russian. Although other Soviet scholars have dealt with the subject in the USSR over the past two decades, Borisova and Sternin are the most highly regarded authorities.

Russian Art Nouveau is a gorgeous book bursting with pictures—many in color—of paintings, graphics, sculpture, glass, porcelain, jewelry, silverware, ironwork, and

architecture. The section of full-page architectural illustrations and the chapter headings in Art Nouveau type style are stunning. The treatment of the houses of Fedor Shekhtel with their imposing exteriors and magnificent interiors—their beautifully crafted hardware, stained-glass windows and lamps, wooden furniture, carved stone fireplaces, iron railings and grilles, and mosaics—encapsulates the best in Art Nouveau design.

The authors plausibly argue that Russian Art Nouveau had both indigenous and foreign antecedents. They discern origins in works of the artists in Abramtsevo and Talashkino, the aesthetics of the World of Art movement, the Tolstoian rejection of the same aesthetic notions, and the Russian appreciation for Puvis de Chavannes frescoes, the Nabis artists, Viennese Secessionists, and Toulouse Lautrec posters. This recognition of Western influence would never have occurred in the pre-*perestroika* era.

As in most works of this sort, Fauchereau and Borisova and Sternin are uneven in providing scholarly accessories. The former contains neither footnotes nor bibliography; the latter includes bibliographic citations and an appendix of artists’ biographies. Fauchereau’s illustration captions are unusually detailed and helpful, while Borisova and Sternin may confuse the reader by not clearly relating the illustrated examples to the text. Both books have reasonably good indices.

These two books, an exhibit in pictures and color, accentuate one of the great paradoxes of the arts in this century—that a country whose artists burst with creative energy and who often were in the vanguard of revolution should with their art have been devoured by that revolution. The art world described in these volumes, destroyed by Stalin, will not easily be revived even in the freer era of *glasnost*.



“Design for the offices of the Leningradskaya Pravda newspaper,” Moscow; Alexander and Viktor Vesnin (1924). (From *Moscow 1900–1930*.)

MOSCOW 1900–1930, Serge Fauchereau, editor, Rizzoli, 1988, 275 pp., illus., \$65.00.

RUSSIAN ART NOUVEAU, Elena A. Borisova and Grigory Sternin, Rizzoli, 1988, 400 pp., illus., \$95.00.

Judith Wolin

THE RETURN OF THE REPRESSED: RUSSIAN CONSTRUCTIVISTS

One of the most curious aspects of the history of 20th-century architecture is the strange disappearing act of the Russian Constructivists. From Sigfried Giedion's *Space, Time and Architecture* (1941) to Reyner Banham's revisionist *Theory and Design in the First Machine Age* (1960), the Russian contribution to the development of modernism is scarcely mentioned. Not until Kenneth Frampton published *Modern Architecture: A Critical History* in 1980 were Russians mentioned by name in a general survey and their works illustrated side by side with their German, Dutch, and French counterparts. By that time the silence had been broken on both sides of the Iron Curtain. In Moscow, the discussion concerning the preservation of postrevolutionary buildings and drawings opened up during the Khrushchev "thaw" and consequently Western architects could enter the Soviet Union, see the work, and begin the scholarly labor of piecing together the history of the 1917–32 years and their relationship to events in Europe during the 1920s.

Camilla Gray's *The Great Experiment: Russian Art 1863–1922*, first published in 1962, is now a classic. Anatole Kopp's *Town and Revolution* (1967), and Vittorio de Feo's *USSR 1917–36* (1963), despite some factual errors and unlovely production, did outline the basic chronology and the most important characters in the architectural arena. The publication of these "early" books stimulated great interest in the Constructivists and prompted a flood of more handsomely produced monographs on Lissitzky, Melnikov, Tatlin, Vesnin, Rodchenko, and Stepanova, along with facsimile reprints such as *Architecture for a World*

Revolution, Architecture Vivante, and Chernikov's *Construction of Architectural and Machine Forms*. Christina Lodder's *Russian Constructivism* and the catalogues of the George Kostakis collection and other major exhibitions have been offered to the public. Each new book fills in some detail, and the social and intellectual relationships between various individuals and groups become clearer. Certain facts are repeated *ad nauseam*, but a few, scattered through the various biographies, provide clues to the mystery of the suppression of Constructivism not by Stalin, but by the Western Europeans who were indebted to it.

Wassily Kandinsky, a founding member of the "Blue Rider" group of German Expressionist painters, was forced by the war and the revolution to return to Moscow from 1917 to 1922. He lived in the same building with Alexander Rodchenko and Varvara Stepanova and participated with

them and their Futurist/Suprematist/Productivist friends in several important artistic and pedagogical enterprises; his pedagogical program was soundly rejected, however, by his younger colleagues. In 1922, El Lissitzky (student of Kasimir Malevich) organized an exhibition of postrevolutionary art, which he brought to Dusseldorf and Berlin, where it was exhibited in "Proun rooms" of his design. In Berlin, he met Walter Gropius and Laslo Moholy-Nagy.

Late in 1922, the work of both Gropius and Moholy-Nagy swerved suddenly from the primitivism of their Expressionist period to a new vocabulary of abstract geometric forms and mechanistic imagery similar in its elements to those displayed in the Lissitzky show. The Expressionist Johannes Itten was fired from the Bauhaus faculty and Moholy-Nagy and Mart Stam were hired. Gropius invited Kandinsky to return to Germany. Naum Gabo, never in political sympathy with the artists of the Russian Left, also returned to the West and founded his own, apolitical Constructivist movement.

In the following decade, much published material testifies to the exchanges between the Russians and the West: a *Bauhausbücher* by Kasimir Malevich; the great attention given to the Soviet pavilions at the Exposition of Decorative Arts in Paris of 1925; an exchange exhibition of Vkhutemas and Bauhaus student work; a special issue of *Architecture Vivante* and other articles published by Jean Badovici; correspondence between Le Corbusier and Moishe Ginsburg as well as visits to the Soviet Union by Le Corbusier and Frank Lloyd Wright; an expedition to the provinces of the USSR by Hannes Meyer and Mart Stam to plan new industrial cities. Le Corbusier, Breuer, and Gropius participated in important Russian architectural competitions.

As political harassment of the Bauhaus by the German right inten-



Cover for the magazine *Kino-fot*, no. 3; Varvara Stepanova (1922). (From Stepanova.)

sified in the early thirties, an exodus of the architectural avant-garde began. Gropius, Mendelsohn, Moholy-Nagy, and eventually Mies van der Rohe emigrated to England and America, where they were given important institutional positions and, in the 1950s, major commissions. The Iron Curtain partitioned Europe and McCarthy's "red scare" tactics dominated American politics. Blacklists of writers, artists, and professors tainted by association with Communists or communism destroyed the careers of many talented people.

This was the climate in which modern architecture was being sold, stripped of its socialist associations, to an American public inclined to be sympathetic to functionalism for its own good capitalist reasons. Not only would the instatement of Russian Constructivists in the official pantheon of modern architecture have tainted the whole enterprise with an unpleasant pinkish hue, it might also have tarnished the mythology of the "modern masters" (especially the German ones) and their exclusive and superhuman power to communicate with the Spirit of the Modern Age.

The delayed fame of the Constructivists has meant that the new crop of books now available has been produced by a generation of authors and editors less enamored of heroic rhetoric and more careful about their research than their predecessors. The three books under review here, *Vesnin*, *Stepanova*, and *Leonidov*, each contain thorough chronologies, biographies, and documentary appendices. The archives have been thoroughly combed for reproducible material, from process sketches to family photographs. Rizzoli has invested heavily in large, color reproductions of Alexander Vesnin's work, including paintings, stage sets, and architectural presentation drawings. Vesnin is presented as the model Constructivist—experimental plastic artist, daring technician, and political agitator all in one. S. O. Khan-Magomedov, the author, has been the most notable Soviet scholar of the Constructivist architectural scene for more than two decades; he was among the first group of historians to press for the rescue and restoration of the buildings of



"Man on a Propellor," woodcut, Varvara Stepanova (1922). (From *Stepanova*.)

Melnikov, Ginsburg, and the Vesnin brothers in Moscow.

Varvara Stepanova, by her grandson, Alexander Lavrentiev, is most engaging. Because Stepanova's career moved with astonishing speed from painting to textile design, theatrical design, poster, magazine and book design, each chapter shows a fresh aspect of her talent. Stepanova was also pivotal in the Moscow art world as a founder and assiduous secretary of Inkhuk (the institute where fundamental discussions concerning the nature of postrevolutionary art were held), a teacher at the Vkhutemas, stage designer to Meyerhold, partner to Rodchenko, and close friend to Mayakovsky, Popova, and many other members of the artistic avant-garde. She was willing to debate ideas in print and to test her rhetoric in actual factory production of textiles and books. The reproductions of her work are good and plentiful; there are translations of important documents in an appendix at the rear. Great care is taken to describe the nature of the collaboration between Rodchenko and Stepanova; a picture emerges of her own strength and interests as well as the help the two provided to each other. For any teacher looking for materials concerning women artists, this publication is essential reading. Not only is it a complex representation of one

very productive and influential woman, it also introduces many women in an artistic movement already noted for the visibility and leadership of its feminine cadres.

Ivan Leonidov never fits well into categorical schemas that attempt to make generalizations about Constructivism in either art or architecture. Yet all his teachers at the Vkhutemas agreed that he was their most talented student. His vision was so free, so ephemeral, so optimistic that it made the work of his visionary teachers seem leadenly pragmatic. He was constantly accused of proposing impractical solutions, but his embrace of technology was firm and enthusiastic. This book, which includes many personal anecdotes and family photographs as well as high-quality reproductions of all his projects, is an affectionate and respectful portrait of his work and personality. It frankly exposes his naiveté yet still asserts his priority in the development of several architectural ideas that we most frequently associate with Le Corbusier.

These three new books, taken together, represent a thorough and multivocal, (if belated) history of the Constructivist movement. The record has been set straight. Nevertheless, the critical and theoretical implications of the work are rarely confronted in the monographs; discussion of them must be found in the pages of the journal *October*, which for more than ten years has published challenging articles on art theory and politics, using the Russian experience as a touchstone.

In the wake of this flood of print has the Vkhutemas supplanted the Bauhaus as the emblematic institution of modernism? It would be unfortunate to substitute one oversimplification for another. More than one (or two) flags are entitled to fly in the vanguard of 20th-century art.

ALEXANDER VESNIN AND RUSSIAN CONSTRUCTIVISM, S. O. Khan-Magomedov, Rizzoli, 1987, 224 pp., illus., \$55.00.

VARVARA STEPANOVA, Alexander Lavrentiev, MIT Press, 1988, 190 pp., illus., \$39.95.

IVAN LEONIDOV, Andrei Gozak and Andrei Leonidov, Rizzoli, 1988, 216 pp., illus., \$60.00.

E. Perry Winston

A TALE OF TWO CITIES?

"It was the best of times; it was the worst of times." Paris before the Revolution? No; San Francisco in the 1970s. To Anne Vernez Moudon, author of *Built for Change, Neighborhood Architecture in San Francisco*, it was a time of change: "Americans were recapturing older inner-city neighborhoods rather than fleeing from the urban ills into the suburbs. They were transforming houses and entire blocks, not for speculation and absentee ownership, but for their own use."

Chester Hartman, in *The Transformation of San Francisco*, had a darker view of these changes: "Behind that dramatic infusion of steel, concrete, and glass lurk more profound changes that threaten to destroy what the city has been for one and a third centuries.... Diversity is disappearing; niches where idiosyncratic residential and commercial life can flourish are becoming hard to find; segregation by neighborhoods, classes, and races is increasing."

Moudon and Hartman are talking about the same city and roughly the same time period, but they provide different points of departure for those pondering the directions future development will take in San Francisco. This issue is even more in the forefront following the earthquake of October 1989 and in anticipation of the land rush for the Bay Area military bases to be closed as part of the "Peace Dividend."

Both books deal with changes in San Francisco over the past forty years; the first concentrates, with singular energy, on the spatial structure of a selected neighborhood and its transformations over time. The second examines the social, economic, and political forces acting within another San Francisco neighborhood and on the city as a whole. Both authors believe that the vitality and variety of this unique city depend upon the ability of neighborhood residents to have effective input into the changes happening within and around them. Nevertheless, the two works present two sharply

contrasting concepts of what that involvement might be.

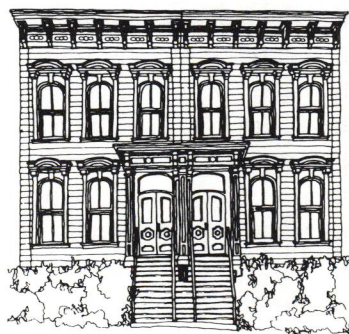
Moudon's book revolves around a study she undertook in 1976 with students at the University of California at Berkeley and later at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. The initial purpose was to examine urban residential architecture that could easily accommodate reuse by different kinds of residents. Having selected a 60-block area around Alamo Square in San Francisco, Moudon and her group soon expanded the study to look at the tight relationship between residential building types and city form and how changes in building types affected city form over time. By examining floor plans of hundreds of buildings and their positioning on lots and blocks, Moudon's group devised a system of spatial structure based on five scales: the city as a whole, the street grid, blocks, buildings, and the individual room. They also looked at how various elements within each scale were combined, and proposed rules to explain their size, shape, and location in space.

The book's first section presents the history of early settlement in San Francisco and Alamo Square, and how the original street grid and land subdivision systems were established. The next two sections develop these spatial structures for each of three time periods: 1899, the 1920s, and the 1960s. Moudon tracks the evolution of the typical residential building from the single-family Victorian house on a long narrow lot, through the emergence of the Edwardian apartment house on aggregated lots, to the "anonymous" modern apartment building in block-sized developments. Copious

photographs and detailed graphics illustrate the components of these three "building traditions": room arrangements, location of apartments within the building, facade composition, adaptation to the hilly terrain, and location within the block and lot.

Having developed a methodology for describing the structure of urban space, Moudon shows in the fourth section how it could be used prescriptively as a planning and design tool. For instance, the elements and rules of defining a particular spatial structure could serve as design guidelines for a new neighborhood or town. Incorporated as part of a planning code, these guidelines could help promote continuity between an existing environment and new construction within it. Based on her own ideas about what constitutes "good" building and city design, Moudon makes recommendations for shaping the planning code to guide developers in this direction. In a lengthy epilogue, she presents selections from the work of three architects that show both the effect of San Francisco's recent planning codes on new residential development and how they fit into the existing mix of building traditions.

This book is a good case study of incremental change in a residential neighborhood over time. The elements and rules composing the system of spatial structure are presented clearly in textual, photographic, and graphic form for each of the three time periods. Moudon describes well the creative tension in San Francisco between the "hard" street grids, laid out inflexibly over the hilly terrain, and the "soft" nature of the Victorian building stock, which adapts to the hills, lot sizes, and internally to different groups of residents. She also fleshes out the abstract provisions of the planning-code changes enacted in the city in 1978 to deal with some of the undesirable effects of the 1960s "building tradition." The book fulfills the author's stated purpose as a consciousness-raising device for architects and planners; the cumulative effect of the copious, if somewhat repetitive, graphics is to sensitize readers to the components of San Francisco's residential fabric. As such, it invites comparison with



François Loyer's *Paris: Nineteenth-Century Architecture and Urbanism* (Abbeville Press, 1988), which examines the system of urban space created by the apartment buildings and *grand avenues* of Hausmann's time. Loyer's analysis of the residential facade systems contributed to the recent revision of Paris building codes encouraging contextual treatments of new development.

Nevertheless, in trying to be many things—architectural case study, urban design methodology, neighborhood history, and developers' pattern book—Moudon's book somehow ends up as less. First, there are numerous inconsistencies in the author's architectural analysis. In one instance she states that the reduction of exterior wall exposure in modern apartment units is due to the "need to bring daylight to most of the dwelling spaces." Reducing exterior exposure would not help bring daylight to the units; the real reason is given later in the same sentence: the "need to control costs." In another place she states that in modern apartments "rooms typically house only one activity," while many of the contemporary floor plans presented show entryways doubling as circulation space, kitchens and/or living rooms also used for dining, and studies that can be used for overnight guests.

Second, Moudon's analysis of building form is weakened by generalizations that lead to self-contradictions. Her tenacious effort to focus on the purely spatial aspects of urban history seems to leave her with a set of analytical blinders; she holds onto conclusions even after the field data show otherwise. For example, she states rather dogmatically that "it becomes obvious that modern residential buildings will not lend themselves easily to a range of changing patterns of inhabitation." Yet only one page earlier, she more reasonably says that "modern buildings have not had the opportunity to prove their capabilities" for adaptive reuse. Later, the author forgets her own definition of "resilience" in residential buildings: "Variety and change can ... be accommodated without major disruption of the physical space." She presents several schemes drawn up by her students for ac-



Diagram of planning concepts intended to conserve the stepping of buildings with the slopes, San Francisco; Daniel Solomon (1977). (From *Built for Change*.)

commodating modern programs within the same Victorian building shell. Each of these schemes, however, involve major relocation of walls and plumbing stacks, hardly something that avoids "disruption of the physical space."

Moudon really tangles herself up with the density issue. Pointing out that the shallowness of modern buildings results in less "effective" (i.e., less dense) block coverage, she calls for increased density by developing the interior of blocks with small town houses, citing as further justification "the demand for smaller residential territories." However, the figures she provides to show a decrease in density are for square feet of built coverage per block, while other figures in the book show clearly that square feet of space per dwelling unit are actually decreasing (i.e., becoming more dense) in modern multifamily developments. In addition, her call for increased block coverage would limit direct access to open space from each dwelling, advocated earlier in the book, as well as create a need for more off-street parking and access roads, further decreasing available open space.

The question of what constitutes "quality environments" or "good design" brings up a third weak point: the narrow spectrum of much of the material presented in the

second half of the book. Basing her selection of the new residential developments shown in the epilogue on "deeply felt views on what San Francisco's form and residential environment should be," Moudon reveals her preferences for smaller and denser dwelling units, smaller families, and middle- to upper-income residents.

Only six of the forty recent residential developments presented by Moudon in the epilogue have family-sized (three-bedroom) units. A majority of the 463 dwelling units are studios and one-bedroom units, inappropriate for families. The author points to the 1978 figure for average family size in San Francisco (2.14 persons) to show the need for small apartments. Nowhere in the text, however, does she mention the possibility of these small families expanding either by births or by relatives moving in. Whereas earlier in the book Moudon praised the generous spaces in Victorian houses as one reason for their capacity to support different family sizes, the dwellings shown in the epilogue display little real "resilience." The examples she points to have little to do with potential changes in family size; replacing the only bathtub with a shower to provide six more square feet of closet removes a fixture needed by infants and the elderly.

Even though Moudon mentions that approximately half of the new housing units built in 1984 were sponsored by public agencies, she includes only one example. Since she cites San Francisco's rich population mixture as one of the city's strengths, one would have expected her to have selected projects aimed at a broader spectrum of income groups. There are several examples of low-income housing developments by the many nonprofit housing organizations in the city that embody the spatial qualities the author advocates as well as or better than most of the buildings shown. She gives no reason for confining her examples to the work of three architects other than that they have "built repeatedly over the past decade." For a book reflecting ten years of research, the depth of analysis is rather shallow when compared with, for example, Loyer's work produced over the same time period.

Finally, in a study supposedly focusing on physical change in a selected neighborhood, Moudon's treatment of the urban-renewal program that affected a quarter of her study area is inexcusably weak. To explain why these blocks were demolished while others in the Alamo Square area were not, Moudon points to the demise of the light manufacturing factories in the area, leaving the "existing residential uses ... too weak to remain." Does she mean that the building stock was irreparable? Why was infill housing not considered for the former manufacturing lots while the existing stock was rehabbed *in situ*? In contrast to her detailed analysis of development decisions elsewhere, the author's explanation is vague: "There is a point in mixed-use neighborhoods when pressures for new development can no longer be resisted because the cohesiveness of the neighborhood has been destroyed." By "cohesiveness" does she mean the physical fabric (the empty factories) or the social fabric? There is no sense of the political, social, and economic forces that displaced 13,500 people in the Western Addition. The event seems to have happened by divine decree: "Urban renewal programs assembled the land and brought forth a new architecture."

The only hint that such a wrenching change did not go so smoothly is a brief remark buried in the introduction: "Special interest and ethnic groups protested the development of large housing complexes." Her choice of the pejorative term "special interest groups" instead of "neighborhood groups" and "residents" used elsewhere may indicate why this topic is not treated in more depth.

For a glimpse of the messy human drama behind some of the changes glossed over in Moudon's book, the reader must turn to Chester Hartman's fascinating investigation, *The Transformation of San Francisco*. Although it concentrates on a different San Francisco neighborhood, South of Market, the dynamics behind the urban-renewal program that transformed that sector were the same ones operating in part of Moudon's Alamo Square study area. The heavy-handed application of these programs has been cited as an example of the folly of rational state planning and of public-sector interference in free-market dynamics. Hartman's book undermines these myths and reveals who actually controlled the "public" agencies and for what ends.

The author began this book as an update of his 1974 case study, *Yerba Buena: Land Grab & Community Resistance in San Francisco* (Glide Publications), of the huge urban-renewal project south of the original downtown office district. He retained much

of the material from the earlier work, continued to narrate the project's glacial progress up to 1984, and expanded the scope to show how the various forces involved in Yerba Buena continue to interact on other recent development issues in San Francisco. Using a style alternating between that of an investigative reporter and a mystery writer, Hartman covers the project's huge scope seemingly without missing a single detail (there are 35 pages of footnotes). Hartman makes no pretense of being an impartial bystander; he lived in San Francisco from 1970 to 1980 and at one point was a party to one of the many lawsuits filed against the project. Nevertheless it is doubtful that anyone without this unique combination of professional experience and personal involvement could have produced such cogent analysis (or such spicy footnotes) from this complex process.

The initial chapters introduce and set the stage for the Yerba Buena Center (YBC) project. Formally initiated as a proposal in 1961, it covered 86 acres, displaced several thousand residents and more than seven hundred businesses, involved countless lawsuits and public hearings, used up several hundred million dollars of public and private monies, consumed several urban-design schemes and political careers, and after 29 years is still not complete. Nevertheless, it has served its original purpose: a "blockbusting" wedge for the expansion of the downtown financial center across the physical and psychological barrier of Market Street to the area known as South of Market.

Hartman describes the regional allocation of business activities after World War II by the powerful Bay Area Council, an organization made up of the largest corporations in the area and itself derived from the wartime Metropolitan Defense Committee. San Francisco was programmed to cede to Oakland its position as the area's major port in favor of solidifying its position as the area's administrative, financial, and entertainment hub. To fulfill this role it would need to expand its small downtown office area. The first step in this transformation of an urban district would be the



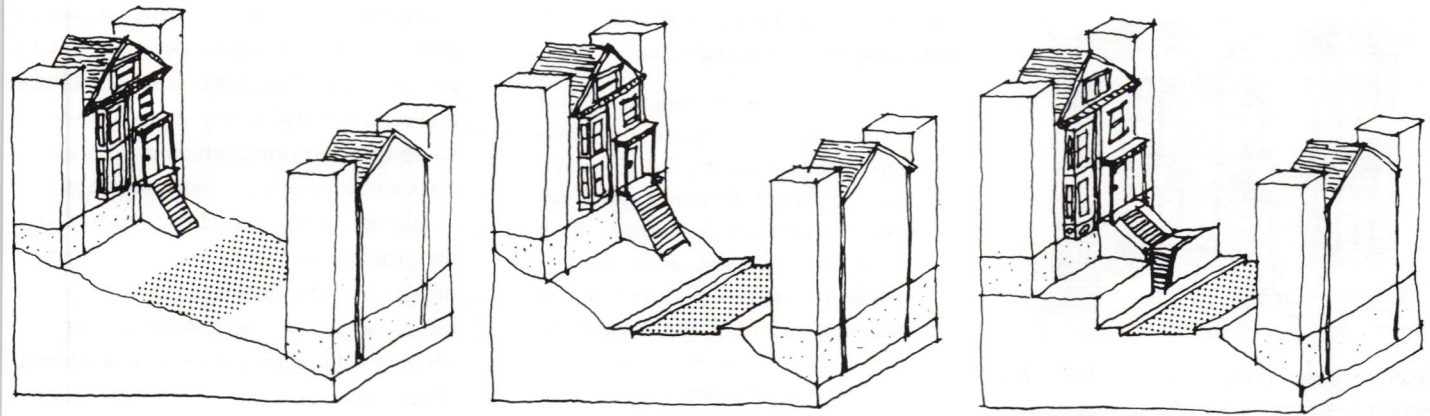


Diagram to show how grading often created land bases on one side of the street and sunken built bases on the other, San Francisco (1976). (From *Built for Change*.)

acquisition of an initial large tract just across Market Street from the existing downtown area, removal of the tract's occupants, and finally its demolition. An operation of this size would require a legal, financial, and political base of operations, and the federally funded urban-renewal programs offered the ideal vehicle.

In his description of the "larger forces," the players who would bring about this expansion, Hartman adeptly traces the guiding hand of the private sector behind the actions of the public, quasi-public, and civic groups involved in the urban-renewal process. For example, virtually all of the members of the Blythe-Zimmerman Committee, which donated \$25,000 in 1955 to the City Planning Department for an "objective" analysis of the produce-market situation, were on the executive board of the Bay Area Council. This committee also provided the initial funding for the San Francisco Planning and Urban Renewal Association (SPUR), which was set up to generate public support for urban renewal, especially for the redevelopment of the "most blighted area" of the city, South of Market. SPUR soon became the local Citizens' Advisory Committee required by federal urban regulations for local approval of redevelopment plans. Throughout the rest of the book, Hartman shows how the overlapping roles played by powerful people and their allies helped move along a project that generated sizable opposition from the neighborhood residents.

Much of the book's first half describes this resistance, which coalesced around a

series of lawsuits over two main issues: adequate housing for the displaced and the financing of the public facilities in YBC. Once acquisition, vacating, and demolition of the neighborhood's residential hotels began in 1967, the results of several surveys indicated that the displaced residents were having great difficulty finding decent and affordable replacement housing. As the result of urban-renewal clearance in other parts of the city (including a corner of Moudon's study area in the Western Addition), the supply of low-rent housing was decreasing just when more people than ever were being forced to relocate. That this displacement was not an accidental side effect of the urban renewal program becomes evident in one of several juicy quotes used by Hartman. SPUR's "Prologue for Action," published in 1966 as Yerba Buena was receiving approvals from the board of supervisors, states:

If San Francisco decides to compete effectively with other cities for new "clean" industries and new corporate power, its population will move closer to standard White Anglo-Saxon Protestant characteristics.... Selection of a population's composition might be undemocratic. Influence on it, however, is legal and desirable for the health of the city. A workable though changing balance of economic levels, social types, age levels, and other factors must be maintained. Influence on these factors should be exerted in many ways—for example, changing the quality of housing, schools, and job opportunities.

Finding no redress with local or federal renewal agencies, TOOR (Tenants and Owners in Opposition to Redevelopment), representing the 4,000 residents living in the project area, filed suit. They obtained a landmark injunction from a federal judge halting all demolition and further relocation until the San Francisco Redevelopment Agency (SFRA) provided decent, safe, and affordable housing for the displaced. Negotiations eventually resulted in commitments by the city and SFRA to provide at least 1,900 units of permanent, subsidized low-rent housing units to replace the 4,000 that had been destroyed; 400 of these would be in or adjacent to the Yerba Buena Center project.

The various lawsuits over the financing of Yerba Buena Center were brought by different parties at different times, but all challenged the project as an unconstitutional attempt to encumber San Franciscans with massive long-term debt obligations without seeking voter approval. Hartman clearly shows how the issue of public finances served as a lever to open the way for related demands: greater participation by neighborhood groups in the YBC decision-making process; assurance of jobs for minority residents of the city; and more guarantees that the replacement housing agreed to above would be built whether or not the rest of YBC went ahead.

Once the reader has learned who the players are and has read through Hartman's account of the Yerba Buena Center affair, it is easier to follow the author as he expands on other development and related issues



affecting San Francisco as a whole. He devotes a chapter each to the accountability (and lack of same) of the public agencies in charge of large-scale development decisions (SFRA, Planning Commission), the ongoing housing crisis, limitation of highrise development, and the effects of concentrating a city's economy on tourism. The author concludes with a call for more public awareness of and participation in the earlier stages of the development process.

Hartman's book succeeds on several levels: as neighborhood history, as a case study of large-scale urban development, as an organizing tool, and as a paradigm of the relationship between public interests and private capital in mid-20th-century America. South of Market's place in the physical and economic history of the city is well told. Although the text occasionally becomes too descriptive, more often Hartman makes the important connections between disparate events and people that allow the patterns to emerge. As a case study, Hartman excels (where Moudon fails) in examining the broad array of the forces involved, from the residents, to the unions, public-interest lawyers, media, political parties, bureaucrats, and business groups. Extensive documentation and cross-referencing reinforce his accounts.

Hartman places the changes happening in San Francisco within the larger context of class and economic interests operating within American society as a whole, and this makes his book of interest beyond the design and planning professions and qualifies it as social history. Rather than a large-scale conspiracy, Hartman views the transformation of San Francisco as an example of powerful public- and private-sector actors acting upon their class and personal

interests. In the absence of an active public-development sector in the United States,

the private investment community thus comes to be seen as performing functions in the public interest. Jobs and taxes are needed. Private profit-driven activity can provide these things. With few or no alternatives envisioned as possible, the strong imperative is to take what is offered, try to wrest some concessions in the process, and accept the concomitant social costs.

Indeed, it was only through the efforts of a nonprofit "alternative" such as TOOR that any low-rent replacement housing was included in Yerba Buena. The implication is that more such initiatives from the nonprofit sector might serve the public interest more effectively.

Several weak points, however, will limit the book's impact. First, the level of detail in the text approaches the excessive and certainly makes for heavy going for the reader not already immersed in housing and development politics. As new players and forces enter the main battle around Yerba Buena, Hartman gives such detailed background on these elements that occasionally the main thread of the action is interrupted. Second, despite such extensive background the narrative lacks the personalization that would have cut through the haze of legal detail. Although difficult to do in a study with so many important players, the book would have benefited from some additional fleshing out of the leading characters, as Hartman did with some of the founders of TOOR. Perhaps fewer news quotes and more personal recollections would have helped. Third, some important questions were not asked. Why were the residents of South of Market without adequate voice in the councils of government when the initial decisions affecting their homes were being made? Did the political parties ever discuss the displacement of city residents for the benefit of office workers and tourists? How big a role can nonprofit developers like TOOR (now TODCO) play in future large-scale developments like Mission Bay?

Moudon and Hartman share similar viewpoints on urban transformations. Both

would prefer incremental change stemming from a more pluralistic decision-making process rather than large-scale demolition and centralized planning. Both still see the value of establishing urban design guidelines within which this incremental growth would take place. Moudon, however, sees the problem as merely one of who gets to design the individual buildings composing the urban fabric. Acknowledging implicitly that a direct relationship between residents and the dwelling is no longer always possible with current land economics, she puts her trust in the developers of relatively small-scale infill condominium projects to follow "enlightened" design principles reflected in the examples given in her epilogue. She directs her preferences more at the architect/developer and city planners facing each other during the official approval process than at the neighborhood residents who too often become involved late, if at all, in this process.

It is a long way from preference to policy, however, and Hartman's approach shows what is needed to bridge the gap: effective organized action by residents in and around the areas being developed. With his sophisticated analysis of the power structure behind much urban development and the legal strategies used to counter this power, Hartman provides potent organizational tools for neighborhood groups to play a more active role in planning decisions affecting their own lives. That someone is listening is evident in the current monitoring of the Mission Bay and South Beach projects by coalitions of neighborhood groups in San Francisco. They have presented detailed alternative development proposals of their own, reflecting not only the organizational lessons of Hartman's case study but also the building traditions and urban design principles of Moudon's book.

BUILT FOR CHANGE, NEIGHBORHOOD ARCHITECTURE IN SAN FRANCISCO, Anne Vernez Moudon, MIT Press, 1989 [first published 1986], 286 pp., illus., \$17.50 paper.

THE TRANSFORMATION OF SAN FRANCISCO, Chester Hartman, Rowman & Allanheld, 1984, 372 pp., illus., \$28.50 cloth; \$13.95 paper.

Clare Cooper Marcus

COHOUSING

KATHRYN McCAMANT
AND
CHARLES DURRETT

In 1984–85, the architect-authors of *Cohousing: A Contemporary Approach to Housing Ourselves* spent a year in Denmark visiting and studying examples of *bofællesskaber*, literally “living communities.” These innovative housing developments combine the autonomy of private dwellings with the advantages of community living. They range in size from six to eighty households; each household has a complete private dwelling but shares a common house, which typically contains a dining room with large kitchen, workshops, children’s playrooms, teen music room, guest room, laundry facilities, and so on.

Although partially inspired by experiments in shared living of the 1960s, these are neither communes, nor congregate housing for one age group, nor alternative communities promoted by a charismatic leader. Indeed, there *is* no equivalent in the United States, and so the term “cohousing” was coined by the authors to describe a form of community they found particularly inspiring and which they seek to introduce to the English-speaking world via this handsomely illustrated and very readable book.

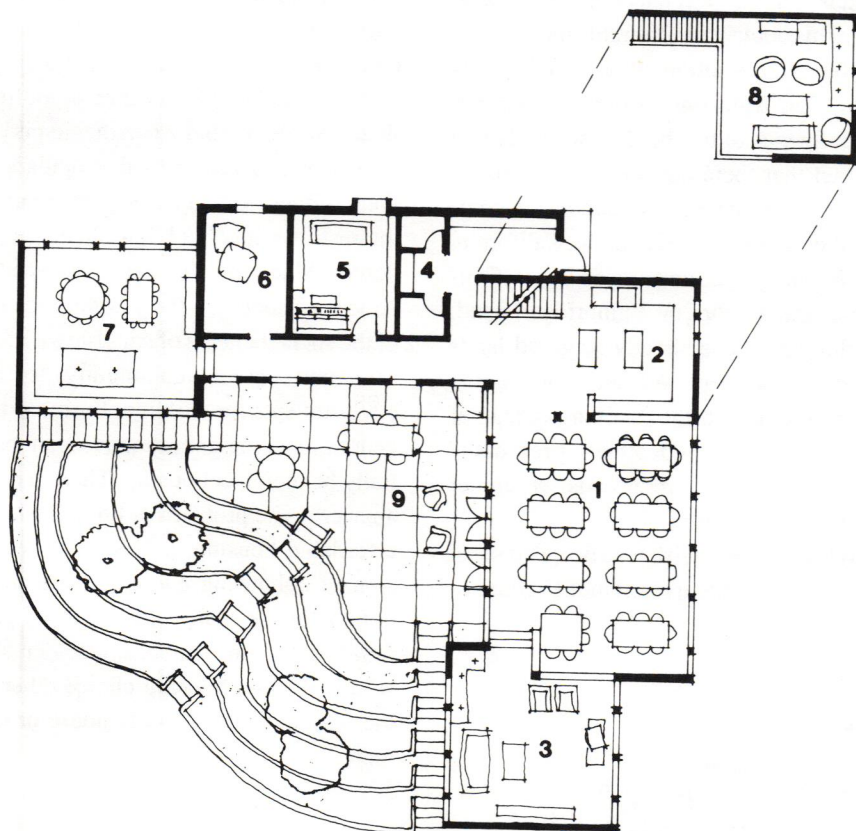
Cohousing is not a particular housing form: in Denmark, some cohousing schemes comprise single-family dwellings, most are of row houses, a few are part of existing high-rise developments. Nor is cohousing a particular legal arrangement: some are privately financed and owned, similar to condominiums in the United States; most have been developed as limited-equity co-ops to take advantage of an index-linked loan pro-

gram instituted by the Danish government in 1981. What these schemes *do* have in common are residents seeking “the social and practical advantages of a closely knit neighborhood within the context of 20th-century life.” After visiting 46 of these communities, the authors conclude that while cohousing schemes vary in size, location, type of ownership, design, and residents’ priorities, all share four characteristics: a participatory design process; design to support a strong sense of community; common facilities to supplement private dwellings; and management by the residents.

Even with the proven success of cohousing in Denmark, developers there hesitate to build without the involvement of the community. Every cohousing scheme has evolved through the efforts of highly motivated potential residents who persevere through the long process of participatory design—and who have become in some sense “a community” before their homes are built. Knowing that the scenario is likely to be similar in this country, where developers are even less likely to promote a social experiment, the authors have wisely aimed their book at potential cohousing residents.

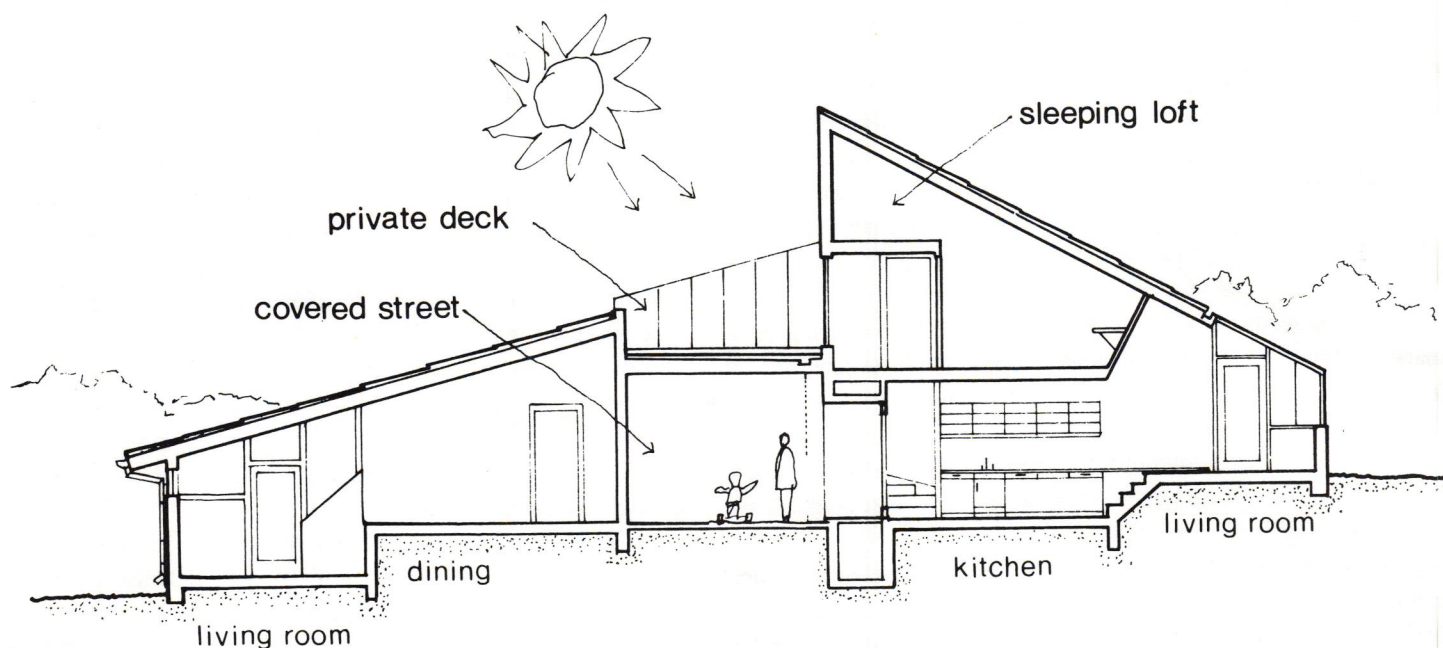
The book is presented in three parts: the first deals with definitions and rationale; the second presents eight case studies of communities varying in size, location, ownership, etc.; and the third discusses the evolution of this concept in Denmark and the potential for translating its philosophy into the context of the United States. It is a very appealing book just to thumb through in a bookstore: attractive type style and page layout, illustrations on every page (many in color), and informative captions. In Berkeley’s bookstores *Cohousing* rarely appears in the architectural section; its appeal is to the general public looking for new housing ideas.

So, what is here for the architect? First, the ideology of cohousing should appeal to designers interested in innovative housing. Second, the book is well illustrated with photographs, house layouts, sections, and site plans. (Some of the site plans, however,



Main Level

Plan, common house at the Trudesland community; Birkerød, Denmark; Vandkunsten Architects (1980). (From *Cohousing*.)



Section, houses arranged along a glass-covered pedestrian street; Jystrup, Denmark; Vandkunsten Architects (1984). (From *Cohousing*.)

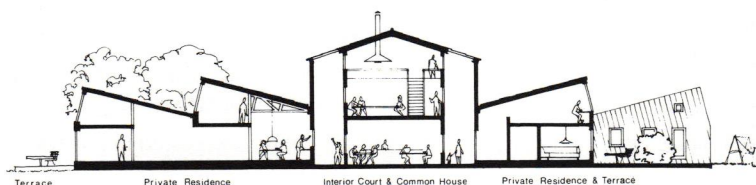
are frustrating because large areas of shared outdoor space were not labeled to indicate function or use, although surely they are a potential locale for community life.) Third, the eight case studies describe the participatory design process with techniques—from checklists to field trips to models with movable parts—that help residents to fulfill both individual and community needs.

In this era of “the global village” it is astonishing that new social and design ideas from Europe and elsewhere take so long to reach North America. Although the first Danish cohousing project was built in 1972, and 42 comparable schemes exist in the Netherlands (where they are known as *centraal wonen*) and others have been built in Sweden, France, and Germany, it seems likely that for most readers, cohousing is a new idea. Architects and planners have all too often looked to Europe for inspiration,

sometimes without adequately assessing critical cultural differences. We cannot transpose an urban form from Siena to San Francisco and expect it to work in the same way. This book is an admirable model of an intelligent translation of a social/design innovation from one culture to another. The influence of this book is attested to by the fact that there are now active groups seeking to build their own cohousing communities in Vermont, Colorado, California, and Washington. One group in Davis, California, and another on Bainbridge Island, Washington, have already acquired lands and drawn up plans. We need comparable volumes looking at the “walking streets” of Denmark, the “pedestrian precincts” (*woonerf*) of the Netherlands, the “mixer courts” of England.

While one may wish for a deeper discussion of the ingrained resistance to commu-

nal life in the United States—the fear of the loss of privacy and individuality, the suspicion of collective lifestyles—such a discussion was not the intent of this book. I agree with the authors that the first cohousing community in this country must overcome many barriers—philosophical, political, financial, legal—but when the first is built, evaluated, and reported in the popular press, there is likely to be an even greater surge of interest than this book has already engendered. Many of the apparent needs in American society—the yearning for some of the social benefits of small-town life, for a greater sense of community, for safer environments for children, for more intergenerational neighborhoods—can potentially be met in cohousing. Though not the answer to the problem of homelessness or affordable housing, a U.S.-modified version of cohousing *could* provide another option for the many one- and two-parent families, single people, and older adults who long for a housing choice other than the standard single-family house or apartment.



Section, foundry renovated as common house and residences; Roskilde, Denmark; Jan Gudmand-Høyer, Jes Edwards, Helge Christiansen (1981). (From *Cohousing*.)

COHOUSING: A CONTEMPORARY APPROACH TO HOUSING OURSELVES, Kathryn McCamant and Charles Durrett, Ten Speed Press, 1988, 208 pp., illus., \$19.95.

Dolores Hayden

BORDERLAND

JOHN R. STILGOE

The vast literature on the United States suburb ranges from broad social histories such as Kenneth Jackson's *Crabgrass Frontier* to specific local evaluations of suburban building such as Sam Bass Warner's *Streetcar Suburbs*, which discusses Boston, and Gwendolyn Wright's *Moralism and the Model Home*, which looks at Chicago. Sociologists like Herbert Gans have studied the Levittowners. Architects have been giving advice on how to build a better suburban dwelling from the days of Catharine Beecher's *The American Woman's Home* of 1869 to the architects represented in the recent *Case Study Houses* catalog, who were active in Los Angeles in the 1940s and 1950s.

John Stilgoe's book is a distinct contribution in this crowded intellectual terrain. In the tradition of John Brinckerhoff Jackson, the cultural landscape historian to whom this book is dedicated, Stilgoe looks at large patterns of dwelling and land use, rather than only at patterns of building. He pushes the origins of suburban development back to 1820 (before railroad commuting,

before streetcars), while many other historians pick up suburban topics only in the 1840s. Stilgoe carries his study through 1939, so this is suburban history before mass suburbanization. He gives special attention to the edges of the city, beyond the urban residential areas and near the rural regions, the "borderland" he calls a "novel and unique landscape." Noting that "women shaped much of the philosophy underlying borderland life in the United States, and they shaped much of the borderland landscape, too," Stilgoe characterizes them as women who "looked not *up* to the city, but down on it."

The book is heavily illustrated with cartoons, advertisements, 19th-century views (from atlases and illustrated magazines), and some plans. Stilgoe's distinctive style (first launched in his earlier books, *Common Landscape of America: 1580 to 1845* and *Metropolitan Corridor*) advances by a clustering of images more than by direct analysis of evidence. "View," "Witch Hazel," "Botanizing," "Shadows," "Parks," "Heights," for example, compose the section "Intellectual and Practical Beginnings." The result is an imagistic portrait of the

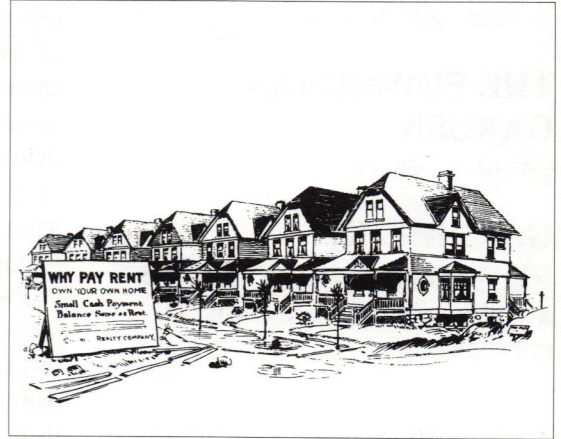


Illustration of row houses; *Everybody's Magazine* (1910). (From *Borderland*.)

habits of a small group of educated, white, Protestant, middle-class residents who chose the very outermost suburbs because they did not want to deal with American central cities or streetcar suburbs.

Stilgoe is strongest when he evokes the pleasures and trials these affluent residents faced coexisting with farmers in the borderland spaces. The book also gives indirect insight into weekend homes in the country for city dwellers, and rural towns where the countrified values of those who work in the city are juxtaposed with those of an older farming culture. *Borderland* is not a social history, where the views of ordinary working-class people are emphasized (such as farm laborers or domestic servants), or a history that considers the political dimensions of suburbanization. It is an evocation of a spatial style. Stilgoe's use of certain types of limited written sources, such as prescriptive literature and fiction, make it difficult to generalize about his insights. This is nonetheless an important book because the author challenges the chronological and spatial limits of earlier suburban history. His indefatigable curiosity and his stylistic experimentation promise the reader an interesting journey at the edges of the urban, and at the heart of our suburban American culture.



Drawing of borderland commuters, fashionable women going shopping in the city, and husbands bound for work; Henry Cuyler Bunner (1896). (From *Borderland*.)

BORDERLAND: ORIGINS OF THE AMERICAN SUBURB, 1820-1939, John R. Stilgoe, Yale University Press, 1988, 353 pp., illus., \$35.00 cloth; \$18.95 paper.

William Lake Douglas

THE EDWARDIAN GARDEN

DAVID OTTEWILL

GARDENS IN EDWARDIAN ENGLAND

ANTIQUE COLLECTORS' CLUB LTD.,
EDITORS

A reasonably comprehensive library of garden history and theory can be built with books printed—or reprinted—in the 1980s. Important scholarship has emerged on historic figures and periods as well as on contemporary gardens and designers. The general public has been introduced to garden history and design theories through popular books that have served the multiple functions of giving practical advice while introducing readers to historic periods and

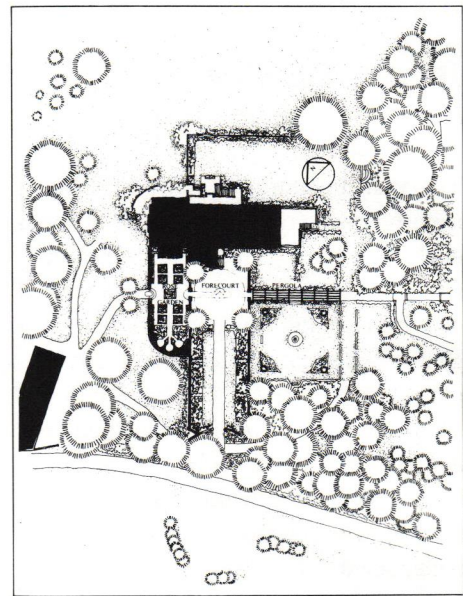
current theories of garden design. Reprints of earlier works add depth and access to current garden-history scholarship. In retrospect, the decade of the 1980s has been a time when we—professional garden designers as well as garden enthusiasts—have seen renewed interest in both garden writing and garden making.

English design traditions have been a major force in the 1980s and nowhere is that more apparent than in the area of garden history, theory, and criticism. It is fitting, therefore, that the decade should end with a new book devoted to a brief but rich period (1880–1920) that has received major attention during the 1980s with both new scholarship as well as with reprints of major garden books of that era.

In England this was a time of domestic architectural eclecticism. Gardens responded with corresponding complexity and contradictions: while layouts were often rigidly “formal” and ordered, plantings were likely to be “informal” and apparently unstructured. (They were, of course, carefully planned, with plant selections and combinations meticulously orchestrated with regard to color, texture, height, and blooming sequence.)

The creativity on both architectural and garden fronts was generated by several phenomena: the accumulation of vast personal fortunes made large estates desirable and consequent design commissions possible; the philosophical question over who best could (or should) design the gardens for the manor house was hotly debated in books and articles; the social uses of gardens increased; and the period's designers delighted in the profusion of exotic flora from the far corners of the Victorian empire.

David Ottewill's *The Edwardian Garden* presents this era with scholarship, clarity, and depth. Relevant social and economic influences are discussed, and important architectural trends are documented. While contributions of well-known

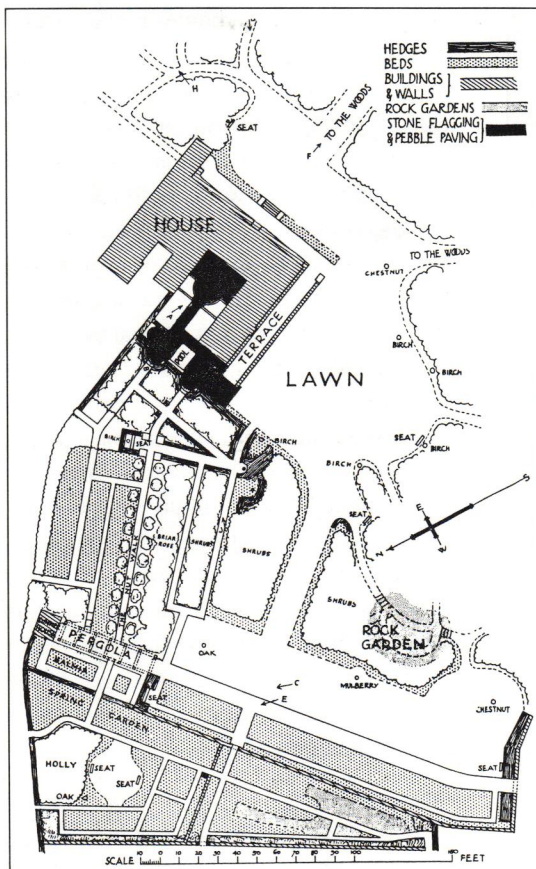


Plan, Le Bois des Moutiers; Varengeville, Normandy; Edwin Lutyens (1898). (From *The Edwardian Garden*; Drawing: Miranda Ottewill.)

designers (such as Sir Edwin Lutyens and Gertrude Jekyll) are discussed at some length, the works of their lesser-known contemporaries (such as H. A. Peto, H. Inigo Triggs, C. E. Mallows, Edward Mawson, and John D. Sedding) are also given. The personalities and their works come to life through contemporary illustrations, writings of the period (this was a time when architects and other designers felt compelled to justify their positions through the written word as well as the completed project), and recollections from immediate family members. Plan drawings are included, either created for this book or taken from older sources. Most of the older plans have indications of scale; unfortunately the newer ones do not, making relative comparisons or accurate determinations of the gardens' dimensions impossible.

The Edwardian Garden is a handsome book, with a generous, almost square format. Kudos to the book's designer Gilliam Malpass: double-page spreads are attractively designed with a pleasing rhythm and variety of illustrations, notable for both their quantity (180 black and white, 125 color) and their quality (with one exception, uniformly excellent).

The book is divided into seven chapters that characterize distinctive styles or influ-



Plan, Munstead Wood; Surrey; Gertrude Jekyll (1883). (From *The Edwardian Garden*.)

ences of the Edwardian era, and a summary chapter that discusses influences from this period on later developments. The chapter on the "Lutyens and Jekyll Garden" comprehensively summarizes their brilliant collaborative efforts, and of particular note is the chapter on the "Arts and Crafts Garden," possibly the definitive essay on this style. The book also provides extensive end notes, a bibliography, and an annotated gazetteer of gardens of the period in England and Ireland arranged by county.

A complement to *The Edwardian Garden* is *Gardens in Edwardian England*, a facsimile reprint of a book that collected sixty-six articles about gardens originally published in the English magazine *Country Life* during the early 1900s. Documenting the architecture, gardens, and lifestyles of those who live in country houses, *Country Life* magazine was (and continues to be) an important source of design-related information. This text describes the histories of gardens and houses as they existed in this period, and the accompanying black-and-white photographs are valuable visual records.

While *The Edwardian Garden* discusses only gardens built (or rebuilt) in this period,

Gardens in Edwardian England includes "gardens old and new," and shows what gardens—whenever they were first built—looked like. Seven gardens are discussed in both books, making possible informative comparisons between descriptions and illustrations of the early part of the century and conditions of today. Being able to see gardens through the lens of the early 1900s helps us better understand that period, and makes an appreciation of current scholarship more complete. While *Gardens in Edwardian England* may not appeal to a wide audience because of its dated text and black-and-white photographs, *The Edwardian Garden* certainly should, with its clear prose and beautiful color images. Further, it should serve as a model of both scholarship and production for future garden histories.

THE EDWARDIAN GARDEN, David Ottewill, Yale University Press, 1989, 230 pp., illus., \$50.00.

GARDENS IN EDWARDIAN ENGLAND, Antique Collectors' Club Ltd., 1985, 295 pp., illus., \$49.50.

Nancy Shatzman Steinhardt

THE CRAFT OF GARDENS

JI CHENG

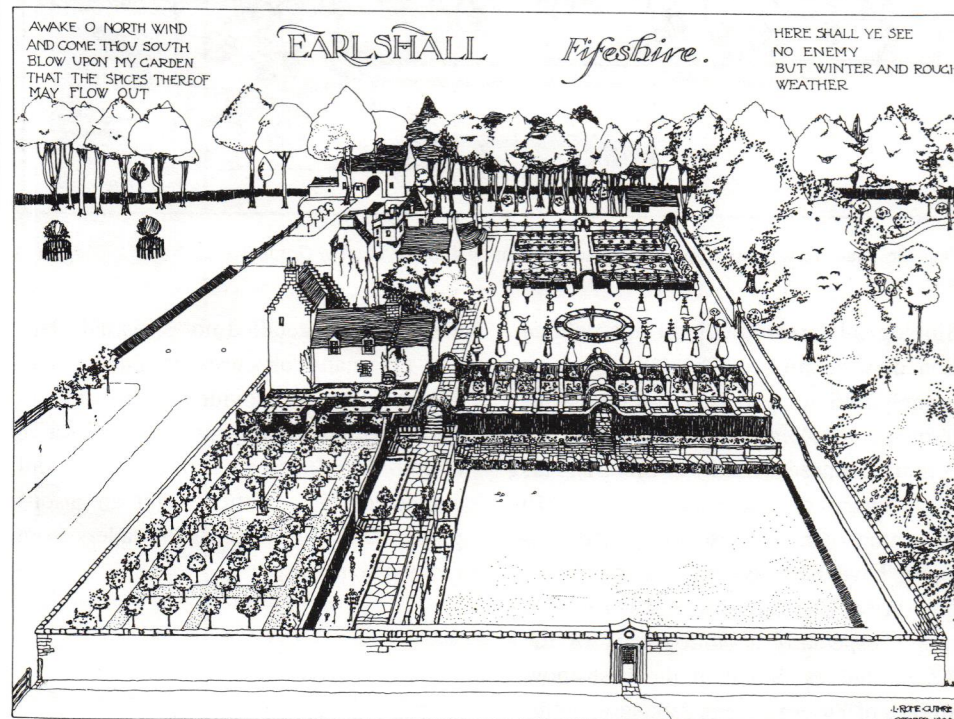
Books on Chinese gardens are published on both sides of the Pacific Ocean almost every year. Indeed, there is a serious audience that not only likes to look at pictures of Chinese landscape architecture, but further seeks to understand how and why Chinese gardens came into being. What has yet to be revealed in most of the literature in English on Chinese gardens, however, is that like Chinese buildings, gardens were subject to rules and standards of design specified in treatises. Alison Hardie's translation of Ji Cheng's 17th-century *Yuan Ye* (Craft of Gardens) brings the most important treatise of Chinese garden design to the Western public's attention in an impressive way.

In the preface, Hardie manages in only two pages to tell the reader what is known about Ji Cheng's life, to place the work into the historical context of late Ming China (1368–1644), and to begin to introduce Ji Cheng, the man. The latter two points are more fully developed in the foreword by Maggie Keswick, author of *The Chinese Garden* (Rizzoli, 1978). This foreword is an excellent introduction to those aspects of Chinese gardens pertinent to Ji Cheng's text. Probably to keep Ji Cheng's work as intact as possible, Hardie's own ideas about gardens are found in the notes at the end of the text.

One of the most impressive features of Ji Cheng's text, as Hardie points out, is its commonsense approach to garden design. Ji Cheng makes specific and general statements such as:

Inner-city sites are not intrinsically suitable for gardens.

For every ten parts of land, three should be made into a pond, of irregular shape so that it is interesting, and preferably made by dredging out an existing stream. Of the remaining seventh-tenths, four should be built up with earth—how high or low is of no importance—and be planted with bamboo in a harmonious way.



Perspective of Earls Hall; Leuchars, Fife, Scotland; Robert Lorimer (1900). (From *The Edwardian Garden*; Drawing: L. Rome Guthrie.)

You must search out the unconventional and make sure it is in accord with your own wishes. The trite and conventional should be totally eliminated.

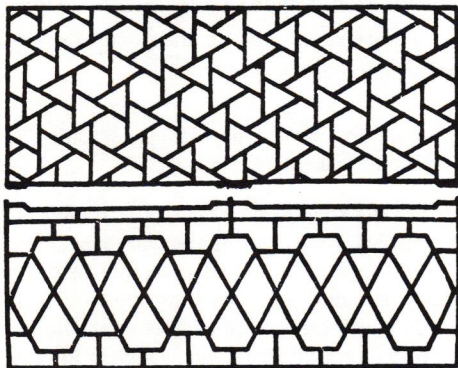
To sum up, the construction of your buildings should be in accordance with the spirit of the times, while their appearance should elicit the appreciation of the most cultivated visitors.

Ji Cheng also explains that in Chinese garden construction there is a division of labor between the craftspeople, even masters or specialists, and the designer, the "person of discrimination." In contrast to this nuts-and-bolts approach are the beautiful prose passages that come forth in Hardie's translation:

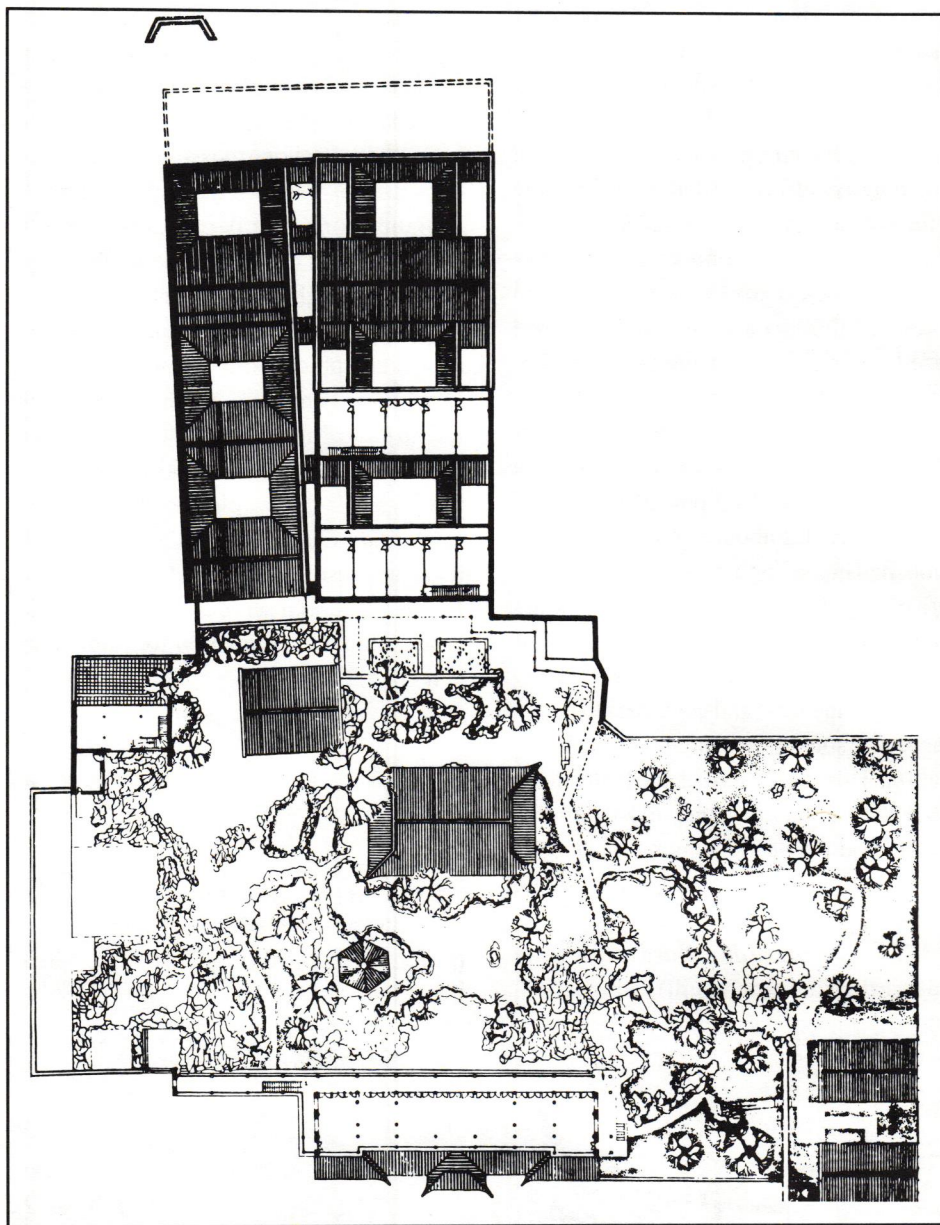
Transplant some bamboos in front of your window, and set aside some pear trees to form a courtyard. The scene is bathed in moonlight, the wind whispers. The moonlight plays quietly over lute and books, the wind ruffles a half-circle of autumn water. We feel a pure atmosphere around our table and seats; the common dust of the world is far from our souls.

In addition to the illustrations for these passages are reproductions of the original illustrations in Ji Cheng's work. Appearing mostly in the Non-Structural and Structural Features sections of the book, Hardie has presented the variations on themes together with such clear English translations and with such a good eye for existing examples in gardens that even a doubtful reader is convinced of the correspondence between the written word and construction in China.

This book is so readable, and the illustrations of gardens and paintings of gardens so appropriate to the text, that the serious



Balustrade designs using "sheets of ice" pattern. (From *The Craft of Gardens*.)



Plan, Ge Yuan; Yangzhou, People's Republic of China. (From *The Craft of Gardens*.)

Sinological research behind this publication may be missed. *Yuan Ye* is an extremely difficult text that combines, as the translator explains in her preface, 17th-century Chinese artisan's terminology and local Jiangsu dialect. Because of the difficult nature of the Chinese original, the book could have been greatly enhanced by a glossary of Chinese terms and by a bibliography, especially a bibliography of East Asian sources. Some of the best-known studies of *Yuan Ye* are in Japanese, including the one by Chen Zhi extensively used by Hardie. Yet they are not mentioned in

the otherwise detailed notes, which identify the many obscure references in Ji Cheng's text and provide occasional illustrations of esoteric terminology. Still, *The Craft of Gardens* represents the successful conclusion of a difficult and ambitious project and it will appeal to readers from many disciplines.

THE CRAFT OF GARDENS, Ji Cheng, translated by Alison M. Hardie, Yale University Press, 1988, 144 pp., illus., \$35.00.

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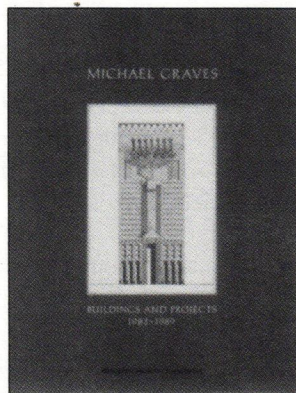
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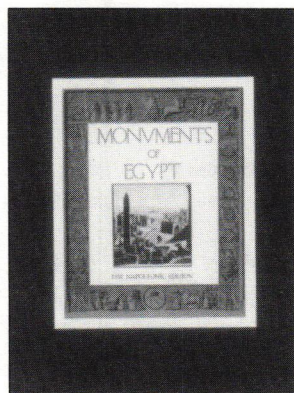
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(Signed) Barbara Oldershaw, Managing Editor

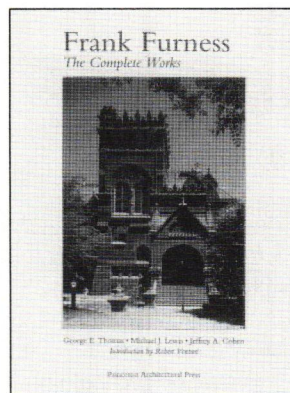
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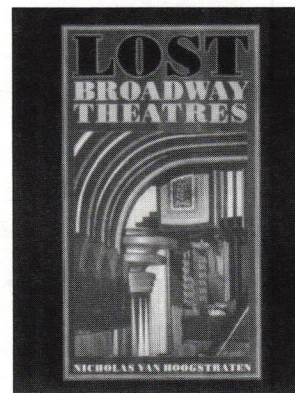
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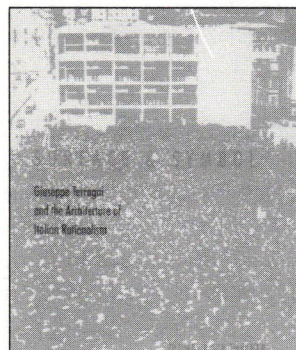
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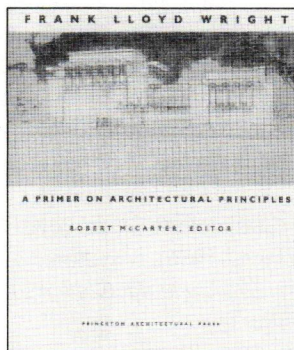
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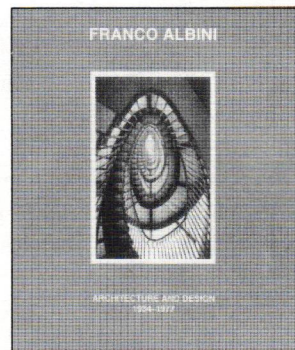
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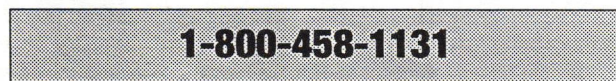
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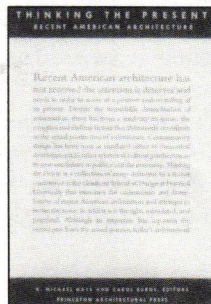
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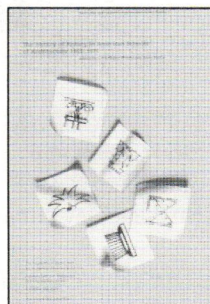
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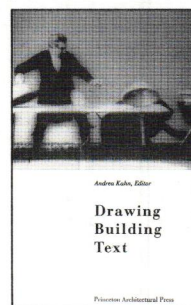
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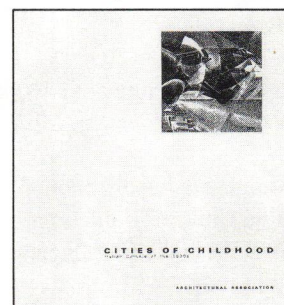
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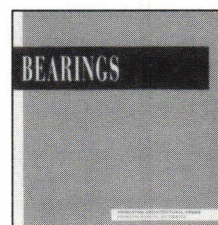
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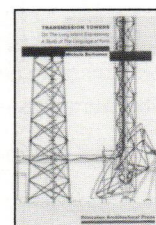
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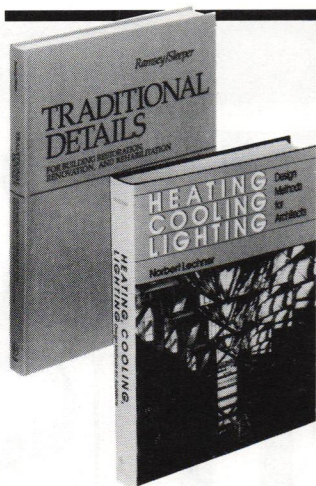
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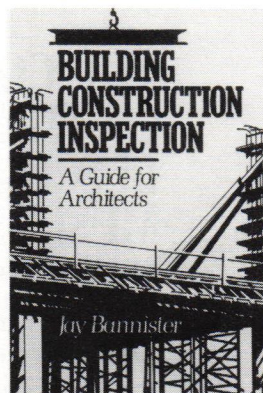
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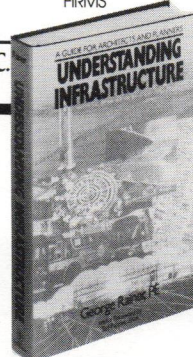
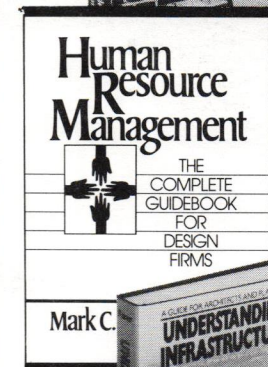
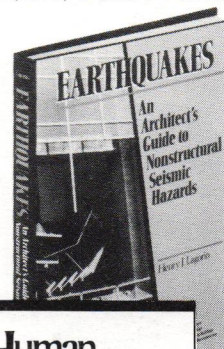
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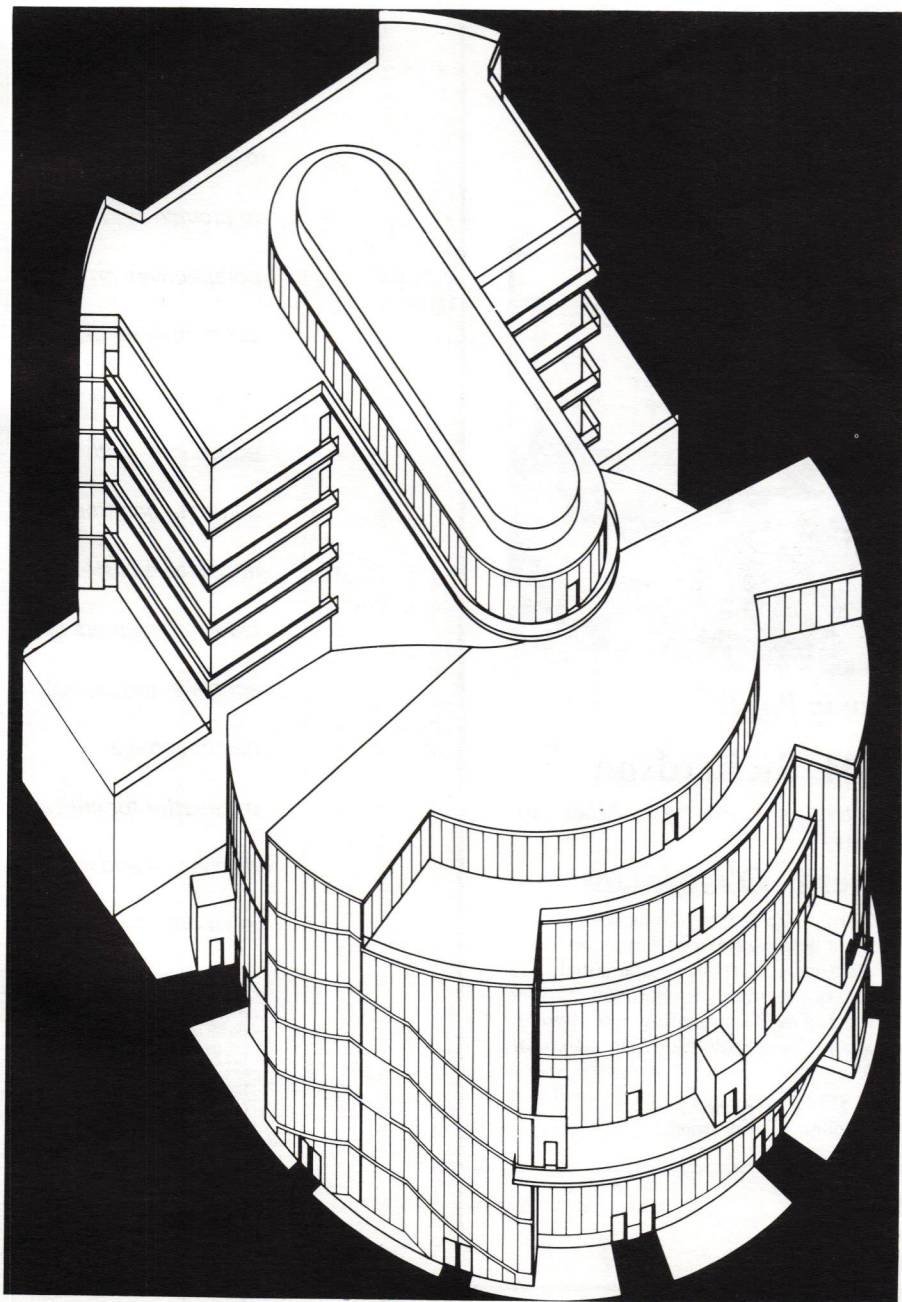
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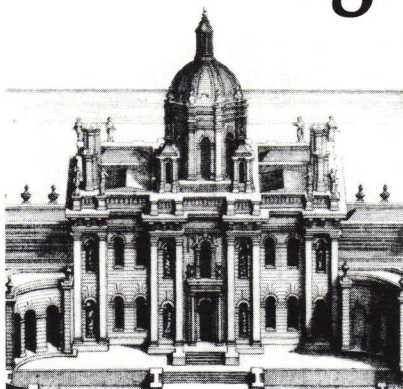
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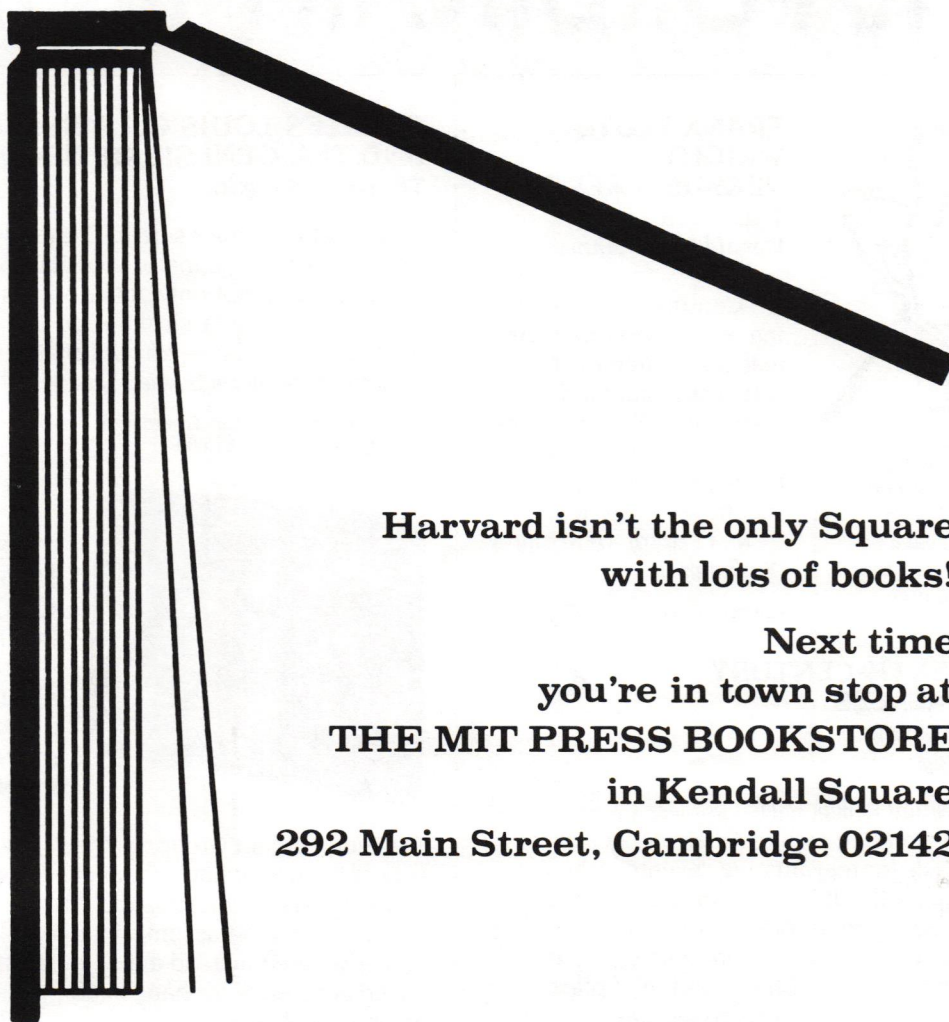
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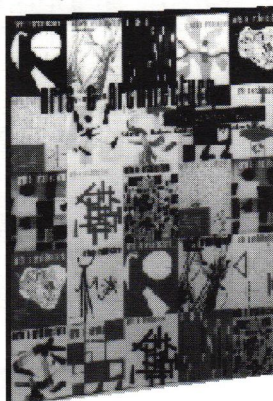
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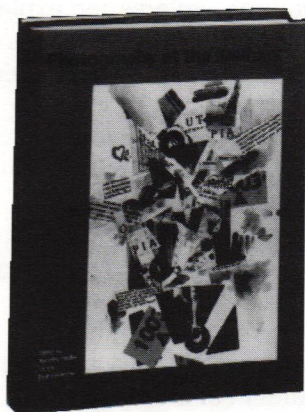
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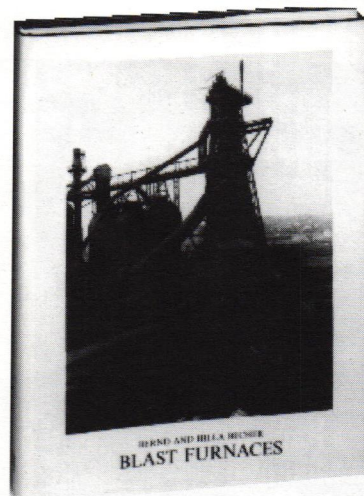
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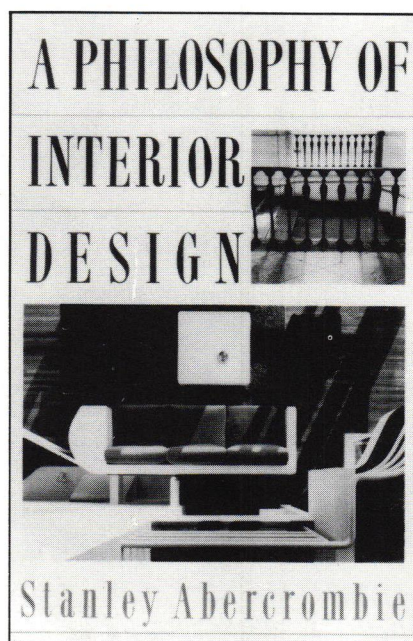
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Chicago... "My client fell in love with a drapery treatment in Casa Vogue", said designer Molly Offerwall, "and asked me

hours trying to identify the products, I substituted furnishings from our local showrooms. My client had a screaming snit fit and

refused to pay. They asked why I didn't call LIMN for help researching the products and questioned my credentials. From now on I'm faxing LIMN at (415) 543-5971 for help with any unidentified

to finish her living room along the same lines. After spending one hundred and twenty billable

furniture products, and I'll let them take care of all the ordering as well."



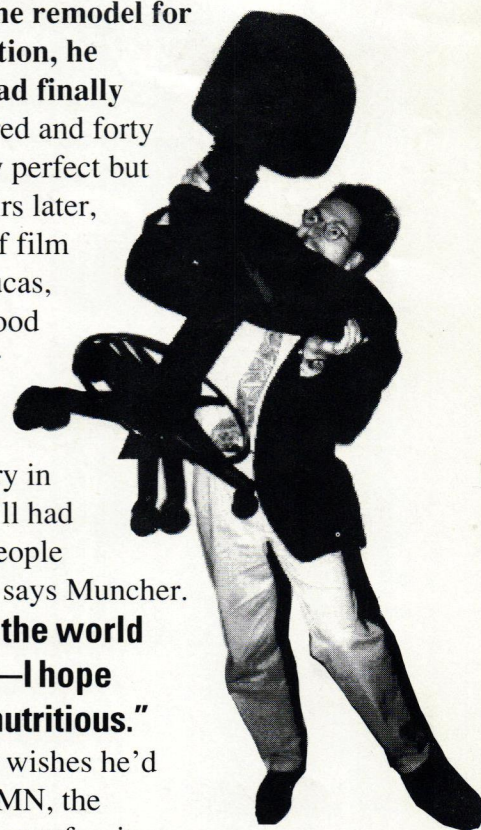
"I'm afraid I'll lose my license."

Architect Eats It In Boston !

Boston... When architect Bobby Muncher landed the remodel for Computer Connption, he thought his firm had finally arrived. One hundred and forty three ergonomically perfect but extremely ugly chairs later, Muncher (brother of film director Michael Lucas, best known for "Blood Orgy of the Leather Girls") asserts that he'll have to start munching upholstery in order to survive. "I'll had no idea computer people could be so picky," says Muncher. **"All I have left in the world are these chairs—I hope**

they're nutritious."

Muncher wishes he'd called LIMN, the contemporary furniture resource in San Francisco, for suggestions.



"My Interior Was Stolen By Aliens"

Santa Fe... Architect Dan Freehand learned the hard way that sophisticated building design can't compete with an interior designer on the rampage. After completing his masterwork, a residence that absorbed seven years of continuous labor, Freehand was approached by several prestigious architecture magazines for a story. But when he returned to the site with a photographer, an unknown decorator had retrofitted the sleek contemporary abode with a pot-pourri of pink lace, puce carpet, and reproductions of the furniture at Hearst Castle. "My reputation is down the drain", said the despairing architect. "I'll never forgive myself for not calling LIMN Company as a resource and supplier of furnishings."

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