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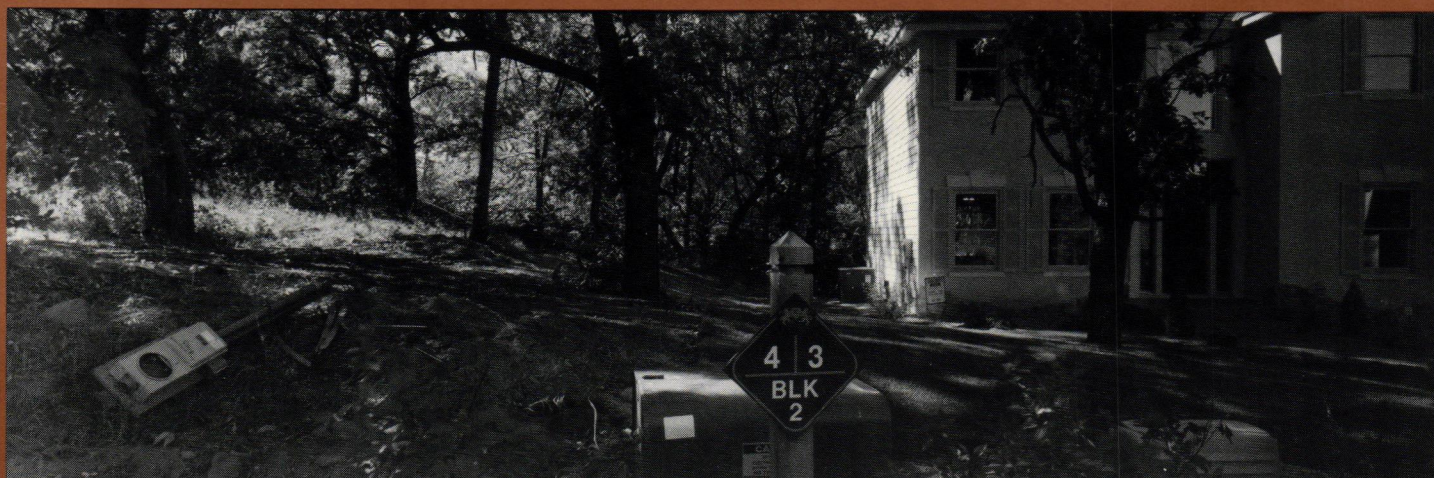

THE DISAPPEARING SUBURB
Issue 26 – Fall 1992

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ART HISTORY

Edited by **Marcia Pointon**
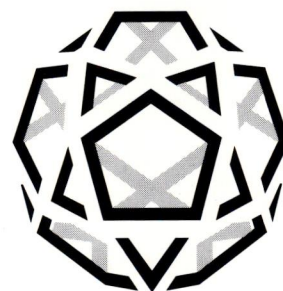
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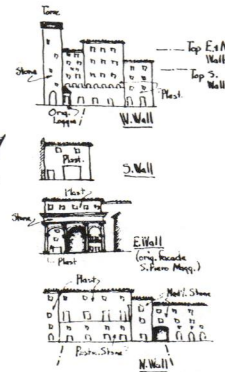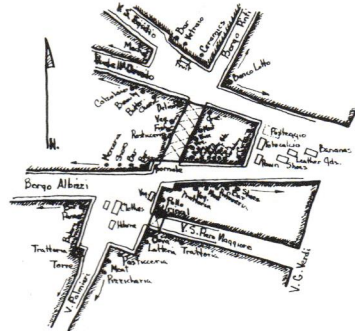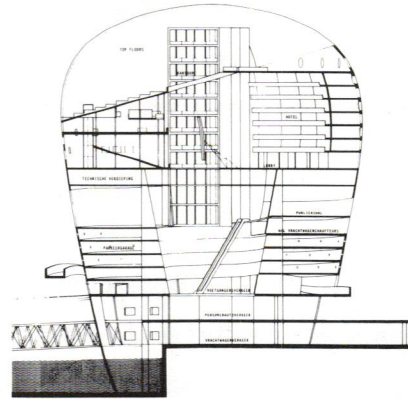
Front cover: *Filling in the Subdivision*, Apple Valley, Minnesota, 1990 and 1991; The Suburban Documentation Project.

Back cover: Tyson's Corner is a fast-growing East Coast office center; it was the rise of such "exurbs" that pulled the majority of office space out of downtowns in the 1980s. (From *The 100 Mile City*.)

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Richard Ingersoll

The Disappearing Suburb

Cities have become impossible to describe. Their centers are not as central as they used to be, their edges are ambiguous, they have no beginnings and apparently no end. Neither words, numbers, nor pictures can adequately comprehend their complex forms and social structures. It is even difficult to refer to them as cities anymore since they defy the physical and political finitudes of *urbs* and *civitas* that for centuries have been the basis of a theory of the city. It's almost as if Frank Lloyd Wright's 1932 tract against the metropolis, *The Disappearing City*, has been vindicated, and the diffusionary proposal of Broadacre City has become the de facto ideology of urbanism.

In the United States, there are now as many people living, working, and entertaining themselves in the ambiguous nether-city of the urban perimeter as there are in the cities' recognizable cores. Mass access to independent transportation and increasingly flexible communication and production technologies have helped eliminate certain spatial dependencies that previously bound cities into coherent fabrics. The decentralization of the historic core, however, has led not so much to the disappearance of the city as it has to the disappearance of the suburb.

Robert Fishman, in his superb history of Anglo-American suburbs, *Bourgeois Utopias* (New York: Basic Books, 1987), was probably the first scholar to propose that the suburb, as a semirural residential district dependent on a center city for jobs, goods, and culture, was becoming an anomaly. He suggested that the current scattering of offices, industries, shopping centers, and even cultural facilities on the urban periphery has led to a situation that could only be described as "technoburb." Joel Garreau, in his popular chronicle of ex-urban development, calls such areas

"edge cities" (reviewed in this issue, see page 12). A drastic reorientation of urban life toward the polynucleated suburban sprawl is occurring faster than it's being registered. Not only does it have immense implications for design and society, but it serves as a favorite, alarmist, fin-de-milliennium topic.

Although speed of access is a major design feature of the suburbs, once accessed they are not easy territory for the uninitiated to navigate because they lack a clear sense of hierarchy, linkage, and reference points. As a subject of study, suburbs have not attracted much attention for analogous reasons. But now that demographics and economics show there is power out there, researchers finally have a mandate to chart the reclusive other-half of the modern city. Following up on the formidable social research of *Crabgrass Frontier* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1985), Kenneth T. Jackson's authoritative history of the

1950

1980

Rapid urban growth: Houston metropolitan area in 1950 and 1980. A planned subdivision of Houston, Sharpstown is indicated as point S. (From *Making a Middle Landscape*.)

suburbanization of the United States, Peter G. Rowe, the newly appointed dean of Harvard's graduate school of design, has tried in *Making a Middle Landscape* to address the morphological and typological spectrum of the design of suburbs. It is an ambitious treatise that helps visualize the very familiar but elusive anatomy of sprawl. The middle landscape, neither urban nor rural, is an aesthetic and social condition that is difficult to bring into focus because of its own historical irresolution. Rowe's approach is to establish the historical circumstances, in particular those after World War II, to examine the typological developments, and to propose a creative synthesis. The book is amazingly straightforward about a topic that is easily prone to kitsch treatments, and while the parts may not add up to the whole to which it aspires, it remains a valuable source, with a nearly encyclopedic bibliography. It is a good complement to, though certainly no substitute for, Jackson's text.

In the first part of the book, Rowe compares the development of Framingham, Massachussetts, a small town near Boston's Route 128 Beltway, with Sharpstown, a planned subdivision in Houston. While Framingham, site of one of the first shopping malls in the country, absorbed the ad hoc sprawl of shopping centers, office parks, and developer homes in the 1950s, Sharpstown, the product of a single developer, was plotted out in regular "printed circuit" patterns on either side of a newly completed freeway. Both suburbs initially attracted white middle-class homebuyers but, after thirty years, they've become more economically and racially mixed. The acquaintance with these real suburbs as places and not just concepts allows the second chapter to encounter a series of general questions about suburbia: "Monolith or diverse social entity?" or "Wasteful fragmentation or pure democracy?" "Private commodity or public good?" "Monotonous conformity or individual comfort?" "Placelessness or
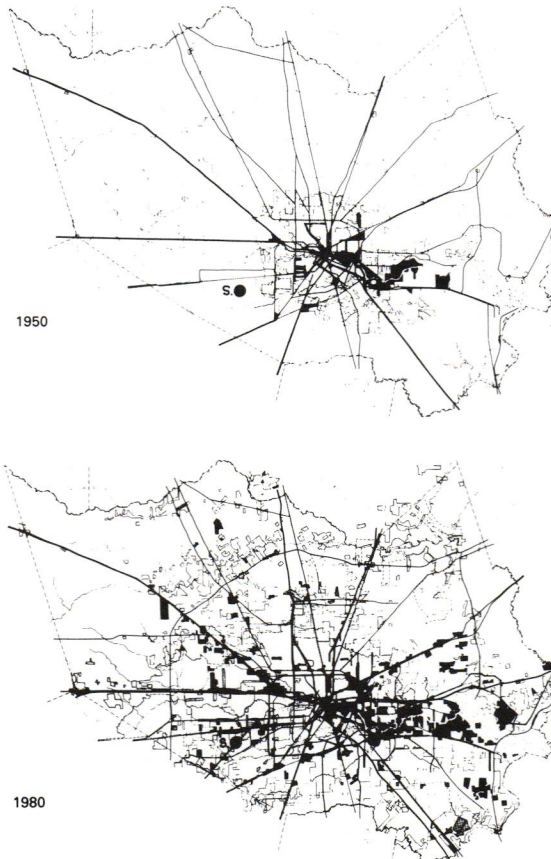
place?" The answer to all these questions is, unfortunately, usually both, or else contingent on the individual's choice due to the author's relentless desire for objectivity. So while in theory the suburb can be accused as being racist, classist, and anti-social, in practice there is also evidence that allows for contradiction.

The most useful sections of Rowe's book are those on building types: the house, shopping centers, corporate estates, and roadways. The suburban single-family house is probably the most maligned but least understood artifact of the modern city. Rowe treats it almost the way a realtor would, limiting his discussion to six categories: the bungalow, colonial revival, ranch, figured compact plan, zero lot line (which includes condominiums), and "contemporary" house. He suggests that the house type will persist even after it has outlived the social unit on which it was based because of the conservative nature of the real estate industry. The impact of automobiles and television on this building type is barely acknowledged, nor is any attention given to the resurgence of enclaving in the organization of suburban space. So, while attentive to plan arrangements and styles, the discussion in general falls short of conveying the true value of the single-family house.

The chapter on shopping outlines the various ways to accommodate suburban retail with parking. Rowe describes and analyzes the strip, the shopping village (like Kansas City's Country Club Plaza of 1922), the pedestrian mall surrounded by parking lots (such as Shoppers World in Framingham, 1951), and the enclosed mall (such as the Galleria in Houston, 1970). The chapter on the suburban corporate office isolates types based on factory layouts, college campus design, courtyard concepts, systems modules, and castle-like hierarchies. Again, the author's commitment to taxonomical explication in these two chapters deflects the reader from the historical reorientation of ur-
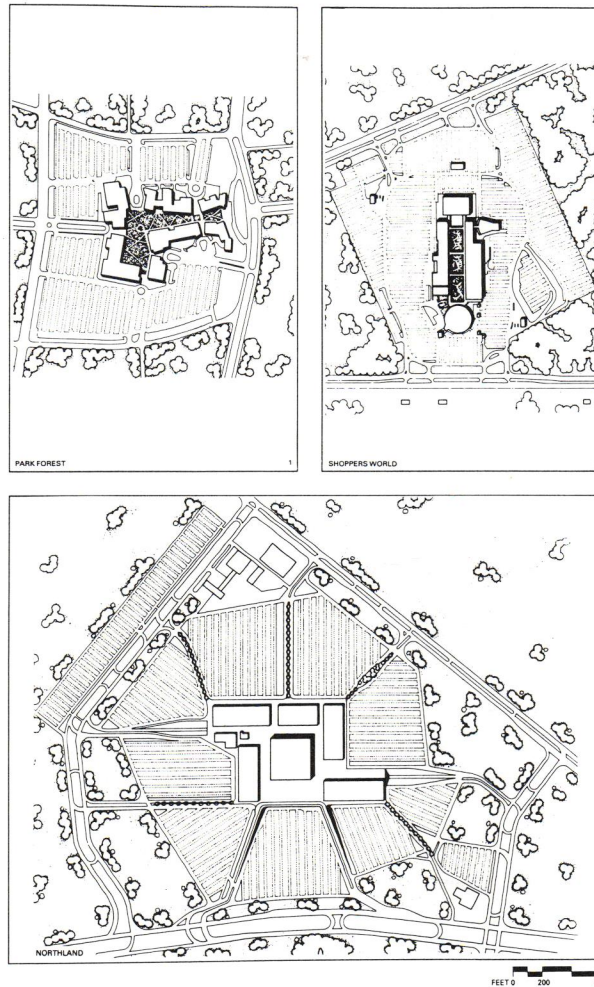
Open automobile-oriented pedestrian malls. (From *Making a Middle Landscape.*)

ban functions which they facilitated. The best chapter by far is the one on roadways, the functional ingredient that makes the diffused city possible. If there is a single artifact that is memorable or gives shape to the periphery it is the paved road. Whether a limited-access freeway or a cul-de-sac of a subdivision, the roadway, which no longer has the public function of the street, is nonetheless the last truly public agenda of the suburbs. The beautifully landscaped parkways of New England, most of them the work of Gilmore D. Clarke, who should be elevated into the pantheon of good design, convey the essence of a suburban pastoral ideal within reach of the metropolis.

The final section of Rowe's book concentrates on a theory of modern pastoralism as the source of design poetics. A vague objective of making the design of individual houses or projects correspond to a larger sense of a garden is put forth with methods borrowed from modern art, such as juxtaposition, scaling, and reordering. Whereas most critics have trouble accepting the suburb for what it is and would like to convert it into a more comprehensible urban condition, Rowe is more acquiescent, arguing for an "elaboration" of the middle landscape from within that phenomenon. Unfortunately the whole text lacks the polemical sparks that Reyner Banham and Robert Venturi generated twenty years ago when they revelled in the pop-ness of suburbia. The field will certainly be more accurately defined through Rowe's book, but I doubt it will inspire much change.

The middle landscape, whose national heritage is outlined by Leo Marx in *The Machine in the Garden* (which Rowe fails to cite as the source for the title of his book), has a parallel history in Rowe's country of origin, Australia, and is currently being replicated wherever there is a high rate of automobile ownership. The reproduction of the American model of development makes the topic doubly important—both culturally and politically. Events such as the construction of single-family suburban homes to attract settlers to Israel's contested borders or the appearance of gated enclaves on the edges of Milan, Madrid, and Zurich beg for political interpretations. Rowe's apolitical and nonpolemical approach, which approximates the blandness of the environments catalogued, may seem fair but ultimately does a disservice to the subject. The underlying ecological inefficiencies of suburban sprawl, for example, even if nonpolluting vehicles are introduced tomorrow, make the form of the polynucleated, sprawling city an intensely political matter where there can be no middle ground.

Awareness of the middle landscape is essential to an interpretation of the United

States, where there is the greatest degree of home ownership in the world. Europeans recognize the issue immediately. One of the most recent returns to Tocquevillian reflections on America is André Corboz's *Looking for a City in America*. It is actually a modest fifteen-page essay that has been inflated by the Getty Center (this is the first of a series of "occasional papers from Los Angeles" that goes under the rubric of "Angel's Flight") into a book-priced booklet, text sandwiched between sixty pages of handsome *film noir*–style black-and-white photos of Los Angeles by Dennis Keeley. The resulting product is a tantalizing but slightly awkward marriage of form and content. Corboz, who is Swiss but taught for many years in Canada, is one of the more thoughtful urban historians of our time and his method is to question assumptions rather than define norms. His text is infused with historical observations and subtle ironies:

> The corresponding American ideal of the individual home is both quintessentially petit-bourgeois and excessively expensive to service. Yet what is most important to emphasize is that precisely this execrable ideal motivates the most lucid planners in their urban projects. Twenty years ago, Americans were described as alientated

Los Angeles, photographed by Dennis Keeley; 1992. (From *Looking for a City in America*.)

for this reason. Two-hundred and fifty million alienated people living in a single country would be problematic indeed.

In observing the American middle landscape, he urges the reader not to find it desirable or spiteful or kitsch, but rather to abandon comparing of it to the European 19th-century city with which it shares no basis. He quotes Jürgen Habermas: "Our concept of the city is associated with a specific way of life that has been modified to such an extent that as a concept it cannot survive the change." To think otherwise would be to ignore the transformation that is engulfing all urban areas of industrialized countries with similar decentralization—in particular the proud cities of Europe.

The "peripheralization" of urban functions has led to what Mel Webber long ago theorized as the "urban realm," a despatialized city where major economic, social, and political activities, affected by high-speed information techniques, are no longer reliant on propinquity. By far the best written and most insightful presentation of the current urban realm—one that accounts for the social and political essence of the phenomenon without losing sight of its formal developments—is Deyan Sudjic's *The 100 Mile City*. Sudjic, a British critic who writes frequently for the *Guardian* and other architecture magazines, brings a truly critical dimension to what Rowe and others have rendered somewhat harmless. His theme is the intersection of power with the production of the environment.

He begins with the observation that there are five major cities in the current global system: Paris, London, New York, Los Angeles, and Tokyo. In many ways these control and command cities are more like each other than they are like the cities of their respective nations. Each stretches out over immense territories, at roughly one hundred miles in diameter, and claims hegemonic financial and cultural functions. As they decentralize they become more central in global terms. Sudjic limits his discussion mostly to these five cities in exposing the diffused city's transformative programs, such as new industrial technologies, new

museums, shopping centers, airports, freeways, housing, theme parks, and historical preservation.

Sudjic is the ideal new architectural critic because he addresses the practices that produce the city, neither condemning nor promoting the individuals or works involved. He has proven that architecture is much more interesting than it is allowed to be when kept within the narrow confines of aesthetic, technical, or programmatic criteria. At the beginning of the book he stalks the most underrepresented characters in the story of modern architecture: the developers. He intrepidly reports on the mercenary behavior of Olympia & York, developers of both the Canary Wharf project in London and New York's Battery Park City, while exposing the political processes that facilitate their activities. The carefully described schemes, scams, and collusions add resonance to the author's insistence that "commercial developers are in business to respond to opportunities. They are not interested in, or equipped for, planning cities. Yet that is just what they are doing by default." Architects, in his view, have the unenviable role of either being messengers for the changing conditions of modern life, or becoming scapegoats because they have conveyed the message. In a theoretical discussion of urban form, Sudjic glances at nostalgic visions of Ebenezer Howard and Camillo Sitte, as well as the unsentimental propositions of Baron Haussmann and Le Corbusier, before settling on Jane Jacobs, who, more than anyone else, set an agenda for urban appreciation during the last thirty years. Going back to her privileged neighborhood in Greenwich Village, Sudjic finds that the qualities so beloved in those streets no longer match the desired social reality. It is an elegant rebuttal and reminder that nostalgic visions lead to a sort of social entropy.

There is a lot of news in *The 100 Mile City*, and it must be taken a bit on faith as there are no footnotes. The book seems to have been assembled with the speed of an instant replay, as it deals with many projects completed in the year of its publication. The
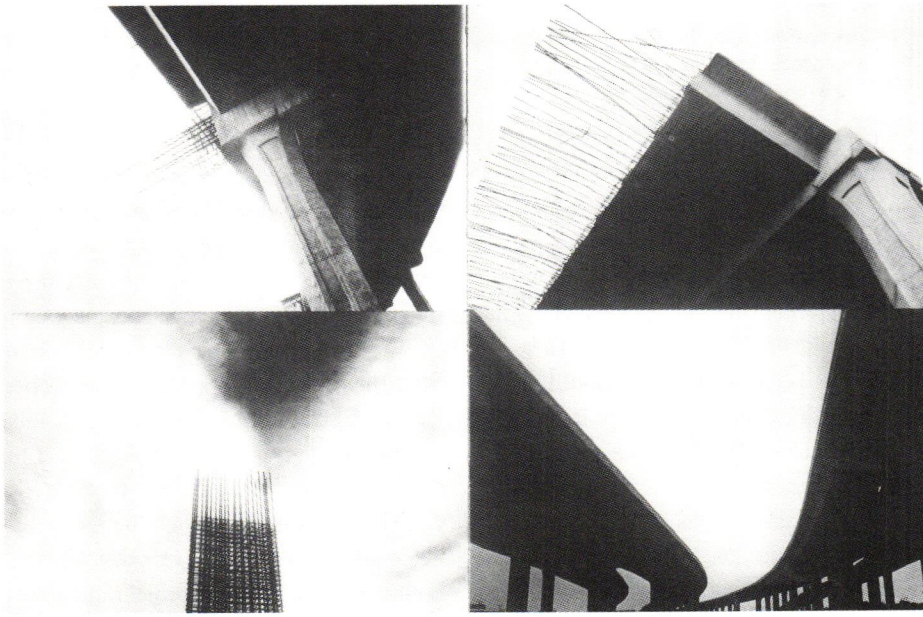
Los Angeles, photographed by Dennis Keeley; 1992. (From *Looking for a City in America*.)

stories of the conversion of all major port cities to container facilities during the last thirty years, and the rapid changes of production sites for industries that were once central to the city, such as newspapers, are well known but have never been so artfully connected to the fate of urbanism. Likewise, the dismantling of the housing policies of the welfare state during the 1980s is dutifully outlined with thought-provoking digressions about indenturing mortgages (the average thirty-year-old American pays 44 percent of his or her income toward mortgage), gentrification, and displacement. To present the museum as the "surrogate for public life" is perhaps not the most original observation, but the case studies of Paris, Frankfurt, and Los Angeles are fresh and exciting evidence. The chapter on airports as the new public space of the city, both as gateway and piazza, provides a disturbing analysis of the increasing independence of conventional social activities from conventional space. While too much has been pouted about the Disney effect of simulations as desired substitutes for urban reality, it is an inescapable aspect of the new urban realm and Sudjic treats it with remarkable erudition. He discloses how Disney inherited the mantle of city planning and then supplies an excellent description of what are

essentially modern pilgrimage sites that contain reverential homages to the lost city.

The hundred mile city is where suburbs have ceased to be suburban and the whole urbanized territory can be seen as an immense force field reacting to human mobility and real estate possibilities. The dynamics of global economic competition have led to disposable cities and expendable parts of cities, which generate great waste and tragic displacement. Highly planned environments, such as Battery Park City, do not necessarily result in better environments than minimally planned downtown Houston, but corporate-organized spaces in Los Angeles fare no better than the state-determined La Défense in Paris. One minimum advantage that a city can achieve is a commitment to an efficient transportation infrastructure. Paris, Tokyo, and Frankfurt are shown to be good examples. According to Sudjic, "Both in terms of movement across a city and the quality of life within it, the nature of a civic transport system is the starting point for building a sense of civic cohesion." To rely on a myth of community embodied in the traditional Jane Jacobs– or Seaside-like street in the age of an information-based culture is to completely ignore the paradox of decentralization that favors

the stronger attractions of privacy and mobility.

Although Sudjic's concluding statement—"The only plausible strategy is to attempt to harness the dynamics of development to move things in a direction that you want"—does not live up to the power of his analysis throughout the rest of the book, it is indicative of the touchy moral dilemma of the late 20th-century city. Whether it is second-person singular or plural, the question of who is the "you" begs for commitment: if "you" is Donald Trump, the outcome might be more spectacular but less humane than if the "you" is Deyan Sudjic.

The splendid photographs by Phil Sayer are stark, subjective visions of the disjointedness of the new urban realm, revealing the glitz, grit, unwieldiness, and fragility of late 20th-century urban environments. Like Rowe's middle landscape, Sudjic's hundred mile city has a certain inevitability to it, from both the producer's and consumer's points of view. It is thus somewhat unassailable because it is no longer a matter of built environment but of a culture, or way of life. His text does not contain a platform for reform but supplies subtle insights into the social and environmental costs of the new urban realm as well as reservations about the delusions of historicist resistance. While the destiny of the city is beyond any individual's control, an awareness of the consequences of forces and forms so brilliantly detailed in this book intimates how the players in the game of city-making should act as the suburbs briskly disappear into a greater urban realm.

Steven Moore

Variations on a Theme Park: The New American City and the End of Public Space

MICHAEL SORKIN, EDITOR

Andres Duany and Elizabeth Plater-Zyberk: Towns and Town-Making Principles

ALEX KRIEGER, EDITOR, WITH
WILLIAM LENNERTZ

Seaside: Making a Town in America

DAVID MOHNEY AND KELLER
EASTERLING, EDITORS

Some time after the middle of this century, Americans lost their positivist view of the future. The erosion of urban civility and the collapse of the myth of industry left a reality that is increasingly difficult to confront. Such periods of upheaval are not new in American history, and in response to the attendant social chaos, there is a recurrent demand for an architecture of simulation that conjures up an invented, but reassuring past.

The colonial revival of the late 19th century can be interpreted as the self-conscious "mythification" of our Anglo-Saxon heritage to counteract the change brought by mass immigration and the industrialization of cities. In simulating the architectural styles of the colonial period, the new class of industrial managers could affirm their allegiance to preindustrial cultural values, and simultaneously repress the multicultural social reality upon which the industrial economy depended. Then, as now, architecture plays a game of distorted mirrors.

But the technology of the mirrors has changed the way we see. In our search for a new urban paradigm—the Clean City—our vision is affected by new modes of electronic representation, allowing the collapse of geography and the editing of history in ways never before conceivable. Because human experience increasingly takes place

in the dematerialized space of television and computers, many have come to prefer the simulation of reality to the difficulty of experience in the real world. Predictably, Americans formulate versions of utopia out of the lost centers of our past, and build them on the periphery.

In *Variations on a Theme Park,* editor Michael Sorkin and his collaborators do not propose a new model for the postmodern city; rather they offer "cautionary" essays about the emerging conditions of the city. These dystopian warnings are a description of the future, rather than a prescription for it. The book succeeds brilliantly in demanding a confrontation with such a destiny. Sorkin is to be commended for attracting so many voices to his subject.

Several of the book's eight authors provide important insights into the role architecture has played in the deformation of history. Perhaps the most valuable of these is Christine Boyer's analysis of 19th-century "simulated landscapes of consumption." In shopping arcades, exhibition halls, and the precinematic panoramas that decorated many public spaces, she finds "a world of commodities to substitute a world of dreams for that reality." A century later, she documents the same patterns of historic appropriation in the sinister "preservation" of public monuments such as Ellis Island or in the merchandizing of history realized by the festival marketplaces of the Rouse Company at New York's South Street Seaport. Neil Smith also contributes to our understanding of how the social history of a place becomes mythologized through his examination of "urban pioneering" in New York's Lower East Side.

An analysis of how architecture may contribute to the fabrication of social myth is incomplete without a study of methodology. Margaret Crawford's compelling essay on shopping malls reveals through thorough research how the retail strategy of the shopping mall is applicable to the phenomenon of architectural simulation. The marketing

A village near Annapolis, designed by DPZ in 1988; Anne Arundel County, Maryland. (From *Towns and Town-Making Principles.*)

ploy of "adjacency attraction," whereby objects displayed beside each other exchange symbolic attributes, works on a larger scale as well. For example, a Rouse festival marketplace, such as Boston's Faneuil Hall, provides an "authentic" historical context for the merchandizing of contemporary commodities. The propinquity of object and place allows the former to take on the cultural authority of the latter. Conversely, the place is transformed into a commodity. Crawford's alarming contention is that the world at large—museums, historic districts, and public spaces—has assumed the spatial and social structure of the shopping mall.

This accusation encompasses two emerging urban patterns rooted in the mall: the privatization of public space and the spatial exclusion of the poor. Now that the Supreme Court has affirmed the claim of an Oregon mall owner that mall space is private space, we must acknowledge the claim by Mike Davis that "the Olmstedian vision of public space"—whereby collective urban places are a class and race safety valve—is at an end. Likewise, in his excellent "Short History of the Analogous City," Trevor Boddy traces the spatial exclusion of the poor from the Pontevecchio in Florence through the arcades of 18th-century Paris and 19th-century London, to Rockefeller Center and, finally, to the skywalks of Minneapolis. These "surrogate streets" are "class driven" spatial precincts that make being "inside" or "outside" a powerful metaphor for one's social status.

If late-capitalist cities suffer the polarization of spatial segregation, then middle-class culture suffers the spatial compression of geography in electronic space. Sorkin tells us that "television and Disneyland operate similarly, by means of extraction, reduction, and recombination, to create an entirely new, antigeographical space." This view of "Disneyfied hyperspace" shares a great deal with Langdon Winner's portrait of the Silicon valley—a landscape devoid of spatial focus and dominated by the "heroic inventor-entrepreneur" of a computerland whose only "civic" allegiance is to the global flux of electronic capital. Because of

the nongeographical nature of "global" capitalism, Winner suggests that we may have to abandon "place-oriented theories and sensibilities altogether because they have become obsolete."

Into this dystopian portrait of a disembodied urban future rides the heroic team monographed in *Andres Duany and Elizabeth Plater-Zyberk: Towns and Town-Making Principles*. The book includes five essays, presentations of thirteen projects by the firm DPZ, and a section devoted to the codes that are central to the DPZ urban design methodology.

If this work has a central purpose, it is to provide an antidote to the kind of postmodern placelessness described by Sorkin and Winner. To this end, the DPZ formula is utopian in the limited sense that it offers an alternative "urban" model to the spatial and social disintegration that exists in, say, Southern California. Based upon an idealized form from the past—the small town—the DPZ program is consistent with the history of American mirror games.

The heroic stature of the "neo-traditionalist" movement is confirmed by three of the contributors to this book. In his foreword, Peter Rowe credits Duany and Plater-Zyberk with "almost single-handedly" relocating the discourse on American cities, while Vincent Scully states that they have created the most "powerful and popular

The prototypical suburban alternative, Seaside, Florida; designed by DPZ 1982. (From *Seaside: Making a Town in America.*)

movement in architecture in the past two hundred years." Leon Krier goes even further in claiming that "the small town philosophy of the TND (traditional neighborhood design) is not just an architectural paradigm, but a social synthesis." Such accolades from respected authors are hard to discount. However, if we apply the insights of Sorkin and his colleagues to the DPZ formula, one suspects that such improved suburbs have become a viable model, not because their urban morphology promotes an economy anchored in an ecological situation—adjacency to natural resources, strategic location, etc.—but because *place*, in the new world order of communications technology, no longer matters. Business happens in electronic space, not in the street. Thus these new "traditional neighborhoods" simulate a 19th-century spatial order and maintain the 19th-century social order of exclusion, yet rely upon the electronic collapse of distance and a global economy to support the myth of small-town community. This observation, however, does not discount the valuable critique that TND planning principles make of American automobile culture.

In his excellent essay, "Since (and Before) Seaside," Alex Krieger manages to place Duany and Plater-Zyberk within the historical predicament to which they respond: "We admire one kind of place—Marblehead, Massachusetts, for example—but we consistently build something very different from the far more familiar sprawl of modern suburbia." Krieger leads us through the evolution of "a binary world of city *or* country" to our current condition of occupying "the middle landscape" which thus destroys the historical distinction between those opposing conditions. His brief history leads us to a consideration of the central contribution of DPZ: the rediscovery of the "type," and the resulting urban and architectural codes which govern the building of their settlements.

Krieger recognizes the tension that exists between the urban code (which regulates the public realm) and the architectural code (which regulates the articulation of indi-
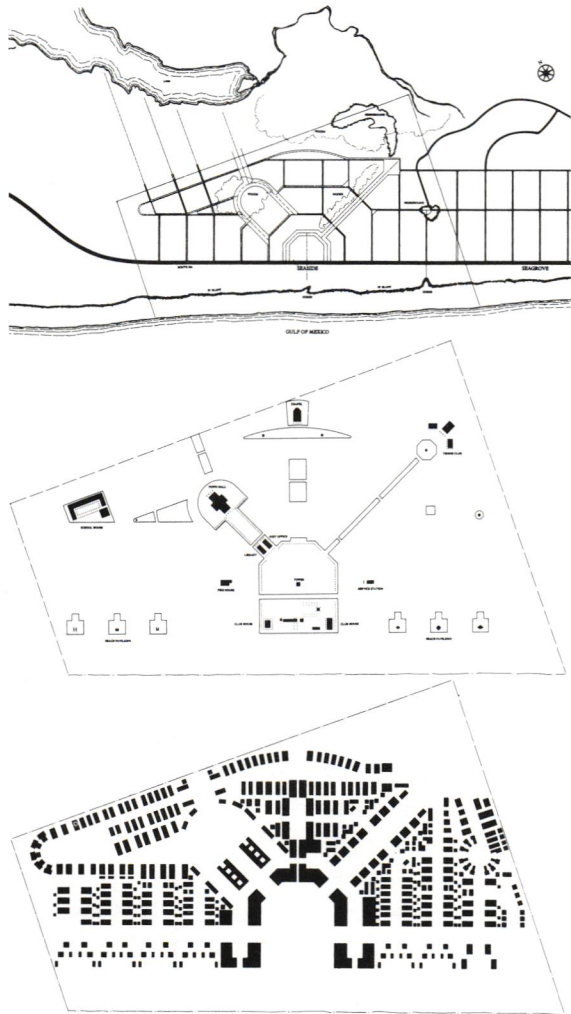
The planning of Seaside: the drawings depict the site's existing conditions (top); major public buildings such as school, town hall, and chapel (middle); and private buildings, which may be homes, shops, or offices (bottom). (From *Seaside: Making a Town in America*.)

vidual buildings) in stating that "Duany and Plater-Zyberk chart a perilous course between principle and caricature, relying upon representation [of literal historic building types] to entice their clients to commit to the [urban design] principles." While Krieger clearly admires DPZ's pragmatism, we are left with his disdain for architectural imagery that "would make fine greeting cards." The reader wants to ask, To what degree does the architectural code contribute to the "theme park" character of places like Seaside? The goal of TND planning principles is to create pedestrian-scaled urban spaces, formed by building types that reflect local patterns of dwelling. The problem seems to arise in the definition of the type. The determinants of type are found in both cultural and ecologi-

cal conditions; the DPZ strategy seems to rely far more on the stylistic or cultural determinants of form than on the ecological situation. Thus, we are presented with simulations of style rather than interpretations of place.

Both Scully and Patrick Pinnell review the significance of the building type in DPZ's work. But where Scully uses his discussion to uncritically cheerlead an attack on modernism, Pinnell provides a thoughtful distinction between a rigid platonic deployment of the type, and an Aristotelian model—practiced by DPZ—which is more flexible to localizing influence. But if, as Pinnell claims, DPZ's intent is to mediate the universal authority of the institution and stimulate new forms of human agreements which spawn institutions, why do they insist upon rendering churches and municipal buildings in their master plans as literal replicas of 19th-century conventions of authority? One wishes that Pinnell would turn his impressive understanding of typological method toward this contradiction in the work.

After praising DPZ's contribution to the pragmatic realization of better suburbs, Krieger finally challenges DPZ to apply their considerable insights about town-making to "those thousands of towns . . . already built but languishing." "Civilizing the suburbs" is necessary, but one implicitly understands that this work is not an adequate substitution for sustaining real cities.

In a companion book by a different publisher, *Seaside: Making a Town in America*, there are too few examples of this quality of constructive criticism. This beautifully photographed monograph of DPZ's most popularized project provides four essays, lengthy interviews with Duany and Plater-Zyberk, as well as documentation of forty-eight individual buildings. Both in format and content the book is dangerously close to obscuring the genuine contribution Seaside has made

to urban discourse in favor of celebrating the project as an architectural spectacle.

Kurt Andersen's enthusiastic essay is typical of the tone of the book in proposing Seaside as "the American planning paradigm," a "kinder, gentler" model for the future which portends "a return to hearth and home." In each of the essays, there is a mildly defensive tone that attempts to deflect criticism from the left (i.e., Sorkin and his colleagues), but never grapples with the substance of their concerns. Instead we get revealing passages such as, "Of course Seaside is fundamentally an exercise in nostalgia, seeking (like practically every other suburb in the country) to indulge middle-class America's pastoral urges. The miracle is that (unlike practically any suburb in the country) it manages to conjure the good old days impeccably, solidly, jauntily, even profoundly."

The welcome exception to the tone of the text is Neil Levine's excellent essay on the cultural politics of the modernist strip window. While Levine does connect his analysis of the proprietary "gaze" of modernism to the typological design strategy of Seaside, his essay is out of place here. In the end, Levine, like Krieger, cannot resist the need to challenge Duany and Plater-Zyberk: "In spite of [the criticism of historicizing nostalgia], the town-planning strategy is quite often acknowledged as a valid return to sound, community-based principles that should really only be evaluated if and when they are applied to more 'serious' purposes than a mere vacation resort." Sorkin and his colleagues might agree.

VARIATIONS ON A THEME PARK: THE NEW AMERICAN CITY AND THE END OF PUBLIC SPACE, Michael Sorkin, editor, Noonday, 1992, 252 pp., illus., $15.00.

ANDRES DUANY AND ELIZABETH PLATER-ZYBERK: TOWNS AND TOWN-MAKING PRINCIPLES, Alex Krieger, editor, with William Lennertz, Harvard University Graduate School of Design, 1991, 120 pp., illus., $25.00.

SEASIDE: MAKING A TOWN IN AMERICA, David Mohney and Keller Easterling, editors, Princeton Architectural Press, 1991, 265 pp., illus., $39.95 (cloth); $24.95 (paper).

Paul Walker Clarke

Edge City: Life on the New Frontier

JOEL GARREAU

Landscapes of Power: From Detroit to Disney World

SHARON ZUKIN

Joel Garreau and Sharon Zukin could be standing side by side on the same sidewalk and they would be in two different cities. Indeed, the two are not even within the same universe of discourse.

The publicity for Garreau's *Edge City: Life on the New Frontier* purports that it is a Baedeker of peripheral urbanism in America. The book is less than that, but such a guide to these environs is not needed as much as a critical, integrative analysis. Unfortunately, *Edge City* is neither. It is, however, an introduction to those realms epitomized by Tysons Corner, Virginia; Meadowlands, New Jersey; Buckhead, north of Atlanta; the Houston Galleria; the Camelback Corridor outside Phoenix; and the Bishop Ranch in California. Nationally, there are over two hundred suburbanly located but urbanly dense, white-collar office and shopping developments that correspond to Garreau's five-part definition of an "Edge City": "Has five million square feet or more of leasable office space . . . 600,000 square feet of leasable retail space . . . more jobs than bedrooms. . . . Is perceived by the population as one place. . . . Was nothing like 'city' as recently as thirty years ago." Garreau describes at length a landscape hitherto untouched by the popular press and portrays it as a landscape of optimism, the appropriate environment for a society propelled by automobiles.

It is to Garreau's credit that he recognizes the penetration of these real estate developments into the social, political, legal, and moral dilemmas of contemporary America. Each chapter of *Edge City* discusses one metropolitan periphery but thematically encompasses a social issue. Thus northern New Jersey with its Woodbridge, Bridgewater, Meadowlands, and other conurbations provide grist for Garreau's argument that edge cities are the urban realms of the future, that CBD's (central business districts) are relics, and that, despite new technologies of transport and communication which could evenly disperse populations, edge city densities are created in response to innate human needs for social contact. The Boston area provides Garreau the opportunity to discuss location theory and the limits to growth inherent to an edge city. Detroit, of course, elicits a discussion of the automobile and its effect on real estate development. Atlanta raises the issue of race and class while the perimeter cities of Texas evoke America as melting pot. The existence and operations of shadow governments, including their subsidy and maintenance of suburban autonomy, informs the description of the outreaches of Phoenix. The Los Angeles basin is delineated in terms of community and neighborhood, terms Garreau recognizes as seemingly amorphous in this context. Urban construction in the hinterlands of the San Francisco Bay Area generates a discussion of the culture and quality of both life and environment. The final chapter discusses Washington, D.C., Garreau's home turf, and the costs of what may be destroyed so that these speculative ventures can be created. These encapsulations are not fair equivalents of the breadth of Garreau's discussions. Nevertheless, while the reach of his observations is valid, his grasp of these issues is poor and his reporting is facile if not outright cavalier.

The faults of the book can be assessed by three criteria: stance, methodology, and vision, each not exclusive of the other. Garreau proclaims his stance in the introduction: *"Edge City* is hardly a theoretical work. I am a reporter, not a critic." So the book ensues, as if any reporting is without bias or criticism and as if urban descriptions can legitimately be formulated and communicated without any underlying theory of the complexities that constitute a city, its growth, or even its original formation.

Garreau finesses any requirement of a historical perspective. "Edge City's problem is history. It has none." While Garreau effectively argues that the white-collar constructions of recent decades are unique in many aspects, the economic engine that generated them—land speculation—is certainly not recent and examples that precede his ahistoric chronology, such as Clayton on the edge of St. Louis, are much in evidence. Operationally, it is not clear what distinguishes edge cities by Garreau's definitions from earlier linked settlements such as Camden relating to Philadelphia; Oakland and San Mateo relating to San Francisco; North Charleston to Charleston, South Carolina; Moorehead to Fargo, North Dakota; or Covington to Cincinnati. No history? American metropolitan regions have long been polynucleated. The very existence of suburban cities (yes, an oxymoron) stems from the late 19th century when the power of annexation of many American cities was eliminated and their boundaries made permanent.

Edge City is likewise bereft of any geographical, economic, political, or social context with which to measure the purported virtues of these new "cities." To describe the full measure of any edge condition, the center must also be analyzed. Garreau's comparisons with the center city are minimal and superficial. His urbacity allows little comment about public policy decisions that have evolved over periods of time preceding and concurrent with his edge cities. These decisions are responsible for concentrating the poor in center cities and the wealthy—and the creation of much wealth—across the legal fences that define the suburbs. Garreau makes no comment on the savings and loan fiasco that was a critical ingredient in the overbuilding of these urban perimeters. Similarly, while he heralds individual choice facilitated by the automobile, he does not detail the extensive subsidies that the U.S. government bestows upon such transportation. His stance obviates any need for self-consciousness or critical questioning of facts, statistics, or statements. *Edge City* is saturated with as-

sertions that break the narration because they are unsubstantiated, too facile, or simply unquestioned. For example, he writes, "[The] landmark structure [of these new urban areas] is . . . the suburban home with grass all around that made America the best-housed civilization the world has ever known"; "[Edge Cities] have already proven astoundingly efficient . . . by any urban standard that can be quantified"; "The automobile results in Raymond Chandler's Los Angeles."

One recurring and seldom challenged theme is that the real estate market is self-correcting and is an equitable agency of choice. "Place these dreams in a market system that is responsive to what people feel is rational to trade off in time and money, and what you get is Edge City." And then: "The most important aspect of the automobile is that it shifted the balance of power from centralized modes of organization toward the individual." And on: "The power of shadow governments derive from the idea that subjecting oneself to them is a voluntary act. When a family chooses to buy a particular home, it is legally presumed that they fully understand what such an association really means to their lives"; "[The developers'] unshakable observation was this: if they gave the people what they wanted, the people would give them money"; "If you don't like the ties that bind you to others—for even the most ephemeral or transitory reasons—you can and may leave."

Geographer David Harvey wrote, "The rich can command space whereas the poor are trapped in it." While this is not evident to Garreau, he has one moment of doubt: "The issue . . . that is central to Edge City is whether the market is an efficient way for people to communicate what they really want, or whether it is a debased and degrading caricature of humanity that leaves out everything that is valuable about the human condition." Without this last statement, which is nestled deep within a book that is almost jingoistic in its praise of America and the choices of its marketplace, I would have wished upon Joel Garreau an eternity spent in the poorer quarters of the center city, selling door-to-door what the market promotes as flesh-colored band-aids.

Another shortcoming of the book is its methodology. Garreau paints an image solely in black and white; shades of gray emerge only with distance. A statement or testimony in one paragraph may be contradicted by another on a subsequent page or chapter: "It is not uncommon for the black middle class in many, though not all, neighborhoods to lag behind the white middle class in several indices." But then on the next page he writes: "Yet the third of black America that is fairly described as suburban middle class is becoming indistinguishable from whites of the same class." Or, to cite another example: "Architects were lucky if they got to choose the skin of the building," followed by "It was not so much that these designers [architects] had been banished from playing a role in the major decisions about Edge City. . . . They had banished themselves." While the preceding statements may, arguably, each be true, they do not mesh. Garreau expends no energy to find any greater understanding from these seeming contradictions. His may be the strategy of Rashomon (the protagonist of Akira Kurosawa's classic film of the same name)—the testimony of witnesses unencumbered by corroboration—but it makes it no less infuriating to read.

Equally disturbing is the limited cast of witnesses. Without exception, they are all middle class; some upper class if the wealth of the developers is the benchmark of such caste. A working-class voice is completely absent from *Edge City*. Yet those offices have to be cleaned, those kitchens of chic restaurants staffed, the linen of those hotel rooms changed, and the verdure of those glass atria tended. Where are these participants of edge cities? Their domiciles are not located, their commutes not measured, and their satisfaction not plumbed. The book itself is as parochial as the landscape it describes. What Garreau assembles is a middle-class vision of classlessness. The chapter on Atlanta and the suburban presence of a black middle class comes close to endorsing class exclusion in light of token, racial integration. Actually, the whole book, though at times quarrelsome with the possibility, serves as a legitimation of suburban autonomy and exclusion.

Finally, *Edge City* fails for its lack of synthesis and vision. Garreau insists that edge cities should not be prejudged by what is only their embryonic stage. "It took Venice five hundred years to become what it is today. Our new Edge Cities are works in progress. . . . Time is of the essence in city building. Give Edge Cities time." If only Garreau were correct, but the opportunism, the exclusiveness, the construction premised on short-term cash flow rather than longevity, the lack of coordination based on any urban vision, and the footloose nature of capitalist investment all conspire against any such conclusion. By his analogy and timeline, East St. Louis is now almost halfway to becoming the Venice of its destiny.

The stance of a reporter, as Garreau might define the term, is not the attitude of Sharon Zukin, author of *Landscapes of Power: From Detroit to Disney World*. She does not need to state she is a critic; every paragraph crackles with that inclination. Whereas Garreau describes similar, dense suburban environments as primary manifestations of a changed American lifestyle that is the result of individual choice, Zukin's mission is to analyze and understand the momentous changes themselves. She is undeterred by the mythologies of the marketplace and is expert, even eloquent, in dissecting them. For her, the change that has convulsed our urban geography is not the consequence of individual choice. Rather, powerful and elite interests shape the spaces we inhabit and traverse. Zukin attempts to fathom what are the means, legitimations, and consequences of the current urban metamorphosis from industrial to cultural capital. *Landscapes of Power* is a vigorous integration of economic, cultural, political, and distinctively spatial analysis that is a forceful and sustained condemnation of the continuing and escalating inequality and discrimination inherent in recent urban transitions—transitions contemptuous of the

common good and precipitated by private profit. Documentation of change is not Zukin's sole intent; her bias is that analysis be instrumental to liberating possibilities. "The spatial consequences of combined social and economic power suggest that landscape is the major cultural product of our time. . . . A search for individual autonomy is, therefore, a search for landscape's structural rules."

The search begins with a broad discussion in the opening chapter, "Market, Place and Landscape." At first the terms of this chapter's title seem insufficiently defined but a second reading allays that impression. The particular deftness of Zukin's prose is manifest in descriptions that depend on semantic ambiguity for comprehensive grasp yet hinge on semantic precision for insight. She productively oscillates from parochial to global, from the particular to the general. "The concept *landscape* . . . connotes a contentious, compromised product of society. It also embodies a point of view. . . . A landscape mediates, both symbolically and materially, between the socio-spatial differentiation of capital implied by *market* and the socio-spatial homogeneity of labor suggested by *place*." Whereas culture and economy are traditionally perceived as distinct constructions, Zukin here initiates a recurrent theme of *Landscapes of Power,* that the two fade into one another in immeasurable degrees. This theme is developed further in "Creative Destruction: The Inner Landscape," the second chapter, a brief but cautionary discussion of postmodernism:

Postmodernism suggests a[n] . . . accommodation with the culture of market transactions. It decorates the city with legible, local, "friendly" emblems of economic power while real economic structures are more abstract, more influenced by international flows, and less likely to be understood as they appear in public view. . . . A historically new part of the symbolic landscape is a postmodern anxiety over whether cultural authority derives from autonomy from market forces or, conversely, from market power.

Zukin does not add much to the raging debates on postmodernism itself, but that is not her ambition. Postmodernism allows her to argue that, while cities have evolved from places of production, the new urban landscape increasingly relies on image consumption.

The production of urban images is the initial subject of the third chapter, "The Urban Landscape," a continuation of the discussion of postmodernism, and not just the postmodernism of architectural images but the postmodernism of architectural practice. Specifically, Zukin reveals the economically critical role of "superstar" architects who "mediate the leveling of local and regional distinctions by transnational economic investment." "Signature" or "trophy" buildings fuse the cultural value of architecture with the pecuniary value of land and land improvements. Signature designs have a dual corporate value: they are identifiable corporate images and they are investments that can be liquidated profitably, as Citicorp recently demonstrated in New York. "The rise of the superstar architect today reflects market competition. It indicates the desire by major corporations to recoup value from long-term, large-scale investments in product development—their buildings. The superstar architect is produced by the same market conditions as the superstar rock group and TV anchor. . . . They are valued for their ability to connect commerce and culture."

Zukin is not attempting to prove the obvious, that architectural "form follows finance." Rather the third chapter fugues from describing singular "trophy" buildings to assessing their collective impact: urban centers reformulated as zones of visual consumption. Architectural products mediate economic power by simultaneously forming, and conforming to, standards of market-driven investment, production, and consumption. As with any investment, the reduction of risk is a paramount concern, thus control is an implicit factor in the reformed urban landscape. The interior atrium and wintergarden have become design clichés that secure a hermetic autonomy from the "chaos" of the street. The aged and diminished public institutions of train stations, marketplaces, and waterfronts are resurrected as shopping emporia. Indeed, shopping has become the exalted means of experiencing urban culture in what amounts to a Reaganoid evocation of Jane Jacobs—an activity that is divorced from the very sidewalks Jacobs cherished and that is performed under a constant, Orwellian surveillance that would make that urban woman contemplate homesteading in West Virginia. The ensemble effect is the privatization of public realm: "Today, urban places respond to market pressures, with public dreams defined by private development projects and public pleasures restricted to private entry."

Five chapters of *Landscapes of Power* are depictions of changed or changing American places. The first is Weirton, West Virginia, a com-

Market Culture   Market / Place   Service Economy

old townhouses and lofts

architectural restorations   avant-garde art, restaurants

downtown "scene"

replicas, Victoriana, chintz   local real estate

"landmark" districts

magazines   travel, credit, retail sales

expansion of central business district

circulation of ideas, personnel   new office construction

landscape of nouvelle cuisine

The interacting circuits of economic and cultural capital that underlie gentrification. (From *Landscapes of Power*.)

pany town. The second is the industrial city Detroit. Both these passages focus on the negotiations and manipulations that fostered the reorganization of the steel industry in each locale. These are extended descriptions of Employee Stock Ownership Plans (ESOP's) by which wage concessions and reinvested pension funds secured blue-collar employment but consolidated the control of financial institutions. Zukin is convincing in detailing how ESOP's are equivalent to a corporate colonization of private benefits. The implicit lesson is that landscapes are not simply *affected* by institutional maneuvers surrounding them, but landscapes *are* those machinations. However, regarding a physical landscape, these chapters do not transcend the general depictions of the "rust bowl." There are no evocations of the landscape of daily life that Zukin achieves in other chapters. It is clearly not home turf. A bracing contrast is Mike Davis's vehemently melancholy depiction of his post-Kaiser, steel-mill hometown of Fontana, California, in *City of Quartz: Excavating the Future in Los Angeles* (New York: Verso, 1990).

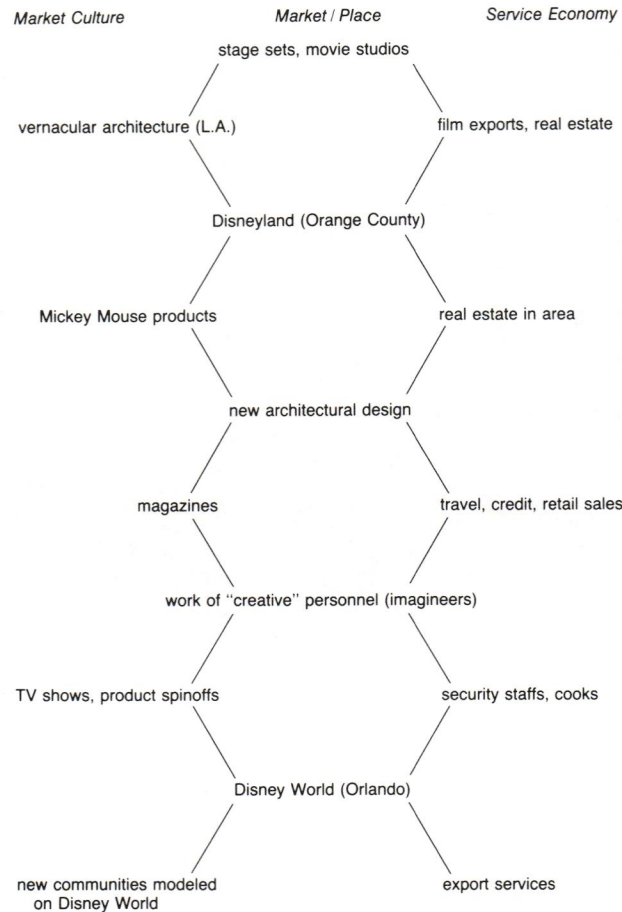In the subsequent chapter, Zukin is more adept at describing Westchester County, New York, an amalgam of deindustrialization in Yonkers and the suburban, corporate gentrification of White Plains and beyond. As with Weirton and Detroit, there is an extended depiction of the financial and political contingencies that were precipitated and manipulated in the suburban extension of corporate power, but distinctively, they are coupled here with the physical realm of those power relations. White Plains is briefly listed as an edge city by Garreau. Amazingly, in one paragraph, Zukin colonizes the mentality of *Edge City* and places it within a broader social critique:

> If this [suburban] landscape was marked at all as a landscape of power, it was surely the power of individuals in America to make their own destiny. Yet continued development of the suburbs tes-

Market Culture	Market / Place	Service Economy
	stage sets, movie studios	
vernacular architecture (L.A.)		film exports, real estate
	Disneyland (Orange County)	
Mickey Mouse products		real estate in area
	new architectural design	
magazines		travel, credit, retail sales
	work of "creative" personnel (imagineers)	
TV shows, product spinoffs		security staffs, cooks
	Disney World (Orlando)	
new communities modeled on Disney World		export services

And the circuits that underlie Disney World—the embodiment of a set of cultural goods and services that articulates a mass-production system within a service economy. (From *Landscapes of Power*.)

tified to the presence of large-scale, bureaucratic economic power. The suburbs grew by the efforts of major real estate developers and financial institutions, the federal government, and national corporations. Their economic power created not only corporate suburbs but also "corporate malls" and "corporate strips." Much maligned for their standardized architecture and "decentered" social life, commercial strips and shopping centers are nonetheless significant liminal spaces. They are both public and private—privately owned, but built for public use. They are both collective and individual—used for the collective rites of modern hunting and gathering, but also sites of personal desire. They are, further, liminal spaces between the intimacy of the home, car, local store and the impersonal promiscuity of chain stores, name brands, and urban variety. Shopping centers, moreover, are both material and symbolic: they give material form to a symbolic landscape of consumption. Their imagery seduces men and women to believe in the landscape of a homogeneous mass consumption by

masking centralized economic power in individual choice.

Zukin's powers of observation are at their finest in "Gentrification, Cuisine, and the Critical Infrastructure: Power and Centrality Downtown," a portrayal of the gentrified areas of lower Manhattan, an area with which she is intimately acquainted. Indeed, her eye for detail recalls the best of Jane Jacobs. Here, erstwhile industrial loft buildings are gentrified for residential use. The artisan homesteaders and their quickly appropriated lifestyles, developers, government subsidies, and financial entrepreneurs—which collectively fomented this redevelopment—are also the subjects of Zukin's previous book, *Loft Living: Culture and Capital in Urban Change* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1982). She examines the evolving urban consciousness that helps substantiate and legitimize such gentrification. These center-city neighborhoods are distinct from the edge cities where the new landscape is radically distinct from what previously existed. In the lower Manhattan of industrial lofts, physically little appears changed. Numerous cultural forces engaged not to build an entirely new landscape but to impose a new perspective on the existing one. Architects, preservationists, restaurant critics, unemployed actors working as waiters explaining the delights of nouvelle cuisine (years of vocal training focused on perfectly enunciating *radicchio*), and numerous other protagonists all constitute the critical infrastructure: cultural mediators who serve to appropriate the designation of neighborhood as a market-defining process rather than a place-defining one. Gentrification, coupled with the aforementioned cadre of interlocutors, promulgates a corresponding consciousness that legitimizes the reclaimed urban ground. This was one thesis of David Harvey's *Consciousness and the Urban Experience* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1985), a laborious, historical analysis of how the material

Epcot Center, Disney World, Orlando, Florida; 1990. (From *Landscapes of Power*.)

realities of daily life are the formative roots of urban consciousness, a work that lacks the vivid contemporary descriptions of urban life that Zukin provides. While she has neither the depth nor the burden of Harvey's Marxism, her insights are no less radical.

Zukin's final case studies are Miami and Los Angeles, in the chapter "Disney World: The Power of Facade/The Facade of Power." The premise of these cases is that theme parks such as Disney World and television shows like "Miami Vice" help construct and disseminate a new perspective by which real urban landscapes are experienced and judged. Furthermore, the formation of this new urban consciousness serves larger relations of capitalist power. While the premise is quite viable, the chapter is weak; speculation overwhelms interpretation in an otherwise highly commendable book. This shortcoming is the rupturing of a fault that permeates the entire tome. Zukin never defines, or discusses in isolation, the term vernacular, which she employs intermittently throughout the book, and in this chapter, constantly. A sampling: "These cities stun because of their unique ability to abstract an image of desire and reflect it back through the vernacular"; "[Disney] wanted to project the vernacular of the American small town as an image of social harmony"; "Mapping the

social control of a market economy on vernacular images required the resources of large corporations"; "Walt's . . . ability to abstract the desires of the powerless from the vernacular of Main Street and the Midway, and project them as a landscape for mass visual consumption, mapped a new vernacular image of a postmodern society"; "Disney World represents a macro-level landscape of social control, however, vernacular architecture scales it down to the micro-level of individualized domestic consumption"; "'Classic' vernacular architecture in Los Angeles and Miami has traditionally taken the form of single-family houses"; "While for [Frank Gehry] the fish is a personal symbol, for viewers it exemplifies the fantasy vernacular in public places. . . . Gehry's works and career constitute the quintessential Los Angeles vernacular"; "As [Henry] James foresaw, the vernacular constitutes a powerful control over sociability when it is mapped upon a landscape of consumption."

Zukin's careless use of the word vernacular might have been addressed in the early pages of the book, along with a caveat regarding the book's title. What must be said is that *all* landscapes are landscapes of power, even the vernacular landscape. Zukin mistakes power for solely capitalist power when she states, "Considered in the

context of property markets, even a vernacular can become a landscape of power." Consider as a counterexample the pueblos of the Hopi, which constitute a vernacular landscape that is an integral mechanism of their egalitarian society. That landscape is both a product and an agent of the Hopi culture. Unfortunately, that culture is now encapsulated within a capitalist economy, but that vernacular still has power for the Hopi. Similarly, the neighborhoods of the working class and the urban poor may possess powerful identities for their residents. The individual in America is not without power, but the fact remains, as this tome clearly argues, that he or she is overwhelmed by the dominance of the marketplace. Where is the expressive opportunity for resistance? If this book is a search for landscape's structural rules in hopes of empowering a legitimate attempt for individual autonomy, where else can that individual autonomy be expressed but in the vernacular—the collective, physical communication of local identity and true community?

Zukin is eloquent in her conviction that landscape embodies a consciousness, a point of view. So, likewise, does the vernacular constitute a consciousness. This is why her chapter on Disney World, Los Angeles, and Miami is so frustrating. She does not distinguish a vernacular landscape generated by the collective discourse of a community over time from its cartoon simulacra on Disney's Main Street. Style, image, and commodity are confused for vernacular. Admittedly, the definition of vernacular may be disputed, but it is essential to distinguish the social processes that generated the landscape under deliberation. If the vernacular has validity, it is because this contested ground is, or was at one time, a sincere expression of community. Disney World appropriates, and profits by, this validity because of the American nostalgia for a sense of community. Gentrification is another appropriation of vernacular, the usurpation of the semblance of neighborhood but not necessarily the reality of it. Any treatise on vernacular should distinguish the authentic expression of community from the ersatz. Late in this chapter,

Zukin writes, "We don't really know what underlying structure the landscape of Miami represents. How people live in a service economy or an international banking center is still not completely understood." An attempt to achieve such an understanding, given Zukin's agenda to link space and time to cultural criticism, would have made vernacular more central to the analysis and would have given this chapter, and the ones on Weirton and Detroit, greater luminosity. How does a community or a family cope with massive job layoffs, when the car is repossessed or the mortgage foreclosed? The sad but necessary responses are the roots of contemporary vernacular.

The final chapter, "Moral Landscapes," is a reprise of book's assertions but concludes that there are no easy solutions. The lessons of Weirton and Detroit illustrate that corrective action is limited by the overwhelming importance of borrowed capital. The reconstruction of a viable, egalitarian economy requires coherent moral values. Zukin closes with a tempered prescription of forming an agenda in terms of public value, an agenda self-consciously aware of *whose* perspective should dominate the process. She is quite candid that this is a vague proposal. An equally candid response is, How could it be otherwise? Liberating possibilities are much like landscapes themselves, conditions still pending.

Landscapes of Power may be a less than perfect indictment of the capitalist relations of space, but, nevertheless, it is thought-provoking throughout, at times brilliant, and a serious and important contribution to urban description and theory. Zukin's labors are commendable and her book cannot be dismissed. If only the same could be said for *Edge City.*

EDGE CITY: LIFE ON THE NEW FRONTIER, Joel Garreau, Doubleday, 1991, 546 pp., $22.50.

LANDSCAPES OF POWER: FROM DETROIT TO DISNEY WORLD, Sharon Zukin, University of California Press, 1991, 326 pp., $24.95.

Albert Pope

Tokyo Storm Warning

The sky fell over cheap Korean monster-
    movie scenery
And spilled into the mezzanine of the
    crushed capsule hotel
Between the Disney abattoir and the
    chemical refinery
And I knew I was in trouble but I thought
    I was in hell . . .
what do we care if the world is a joke?

—Elvis Costello, "Tokyo Storm
    Warning"

Rem Koolhaas's 1978 book, *Delirious New York,* is rarely considered an argument for urban revival. It does, however, stand as a product of its time, as one amongst a number of polemics that emerged in the 1970s with regard to established urban models. Leon Krier's medieval city, Aldo Rossi's neoclassical city, Steven Holl's alphabetical city all developed positions against the inadequate performance of the contemporary city presumed to be driven by modernist discourse. Koolhaas's metropolis was no different in unabashedly blasting modern urban theory while proclaiming the ultimate relevance of a lost form of urbanism. The call at the end of the text for a revival of "Manhattanism" and its "fictional conclusion" reeks of a nostalgia for the architecture of the 1920s. As with so many of the other models slated for revival, "Manhattanism" became potent precisely at the moment of its impossibility. It was the irretrievable dimension of the model, like the unquestionable virtues of the recently dead, that made it so attractive as to be immune to the historical and political realities of the half century since its full flourishing.

As the Office for Metropolitan Architecture, led by Koolhaas, has since sought to overcome these retrospective tendencies and extend the "culture of congestion" to meet present realities, another more significant "fictional conclusion" has been written for *Delirious New York.* A group of four recent publications stands as that conclusion, marking a substantive translation of metro-

politan-era urbanism into the "post-architectural" world of the contemporary city. These publications document, for the first time, the extraordinary change in direction that OMA and Koolhaas have made in their recent work, which both abandons and extends the metropolitan research.

The publications are diverse in format, if not in content. Each document presents essentially the same work from diverse perspectives. The work includes projects produced by OMA since 1982, culminating in a significant series of competitions dating from 1989. They fall roughly into three categories: built projects (the National Dance Theater at The Hague, a housing settlement at I-J Plein, Amsterdam North); a series of large-scale planning proposals (Parc de la Villette, Paris Expo 1989, the new town of Melun Senart, Lille, France); and a series of proposals for massive buildings (the City Hall at The Hague; Sea Trade Center at Zeebrugge, Belgium; National Library of France; and Center for Art and Media in Karlsruhe, Germany). The presentation of the projects in these new publications range
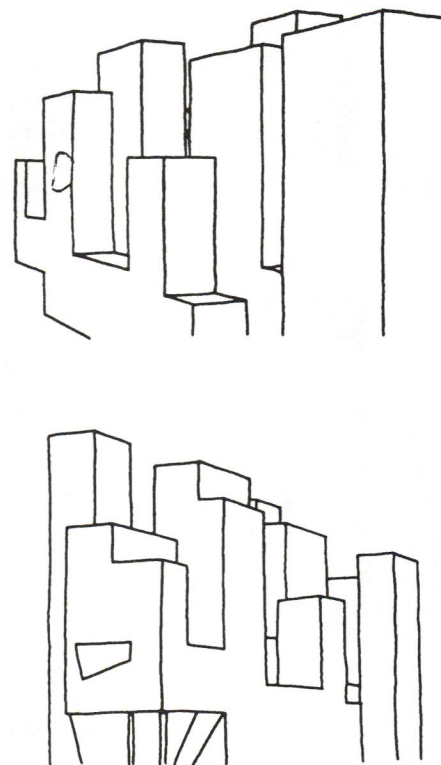
Study for facade setbacks, city of The Hague; OMA, 1986. (From *Rem Koolhaas–OMA.*)

from the theoretical to the purely graphic. They include *Rem Koolhaas–OMA*, a monograph of fourteen built and unbuilt projects with introductory essays; *OMA: 6 Projets* and *Lille*, two "flip books" covering seven projects and project descriptions associated with the 1990 exhibition in Paris; and *Rem Koolhaas: Conversations with Students*, a small pamphlet published by Rice University transcribing a public lecture by Koolhaas and a series of informal discussions.

The most important of the four in terms of a comprehensive overview of the post-delirium work is *Rem Koolhaas–OMA*, edited by Jacques Lucan, first published by Electa in 1990 in French and Italian, and now in English by Princeton Architectural Press. It presents a selected group of projects produced over the past decade as well as a series of three introductory essays and seven short essays by Koolhaas. The

introductory essays reevaluate the New York research in terms of the firm's current work. They tend to be both uncritical and obscure, in marked contrast to the highly critical and unapologetic work they introduce. The best essay is by Lucan, who emphasizes the complicated relation of Koolhaas's work to themes of the modern movement. The short essays by Koolhaas are remarkable in their density and clarity, as they rough out the recent course changes made by the firm.

The two catalogs documenting 1990 exhibitions are the most interesting as books. They challenge the banal and reductive format of architectural publication by being banal and reductive. Both *OMA: 6 Projets* and *Lille* document competition projects that each involved relentless repetitive structures, bands, grids, and repetitive floor plates, all registered layer by layer, floor by floor, to make for proto-animation "flip

books." The idea is ingenious in its placement of emphasis on the banal repetitive structures that inform the projects, while simultaneously questioning the commodity status of architectural publications. (The 510-page *6 Projets* takes about five minutes to "read.") Flipping through the layers of La Villette or the remarkable sequence of plans and sections of the National Library—each drawing only a fragmented frame—yields a crude animation, a counterfeiting of movement that strangely animates each project. The written texts, all in French, are only incidental to the publication.

The publication from Rice is an extended discussion of most of the projects documented in the other publications. Aside from the short essays in the monograph, it is the closest transcription of the post-delirious work. In both formal and informal discussions, Koolhaas describes the key projects, cites the significant references, and establishes a theoretical framework for the recent work. Always at pains to make connections to the metropolis, the arguments, while often labyrinthine, are compelling.

RETROACTION— THE URBAN MAELSTROM

"It is a catastrophe."

—Le Corbusier, upon arrival in New York City, 1935.

What perhaps distinguishes *Delirious New York* from all the other revivalist theories of its time is its peculiar method of observation and analysis, called "Retroaction." It was the stated interest in the retroactive method that ultimately enabled Koolhaas to extend his early research of New York into an analysis of the postwar contemporary city.

Delirious New York was a polemic against architects' and urbanists' portrayal of the contemporary city as lacking order, and thus as an empty and meaningless (i.e., unplanned) condition. In writing what he called a "retroactive manifesto" for Manhattan, Koolhaas proposed a theory based on the positive reading of an existing urban condition—a celebration of largely neglected phenomena—aggressive urban real-
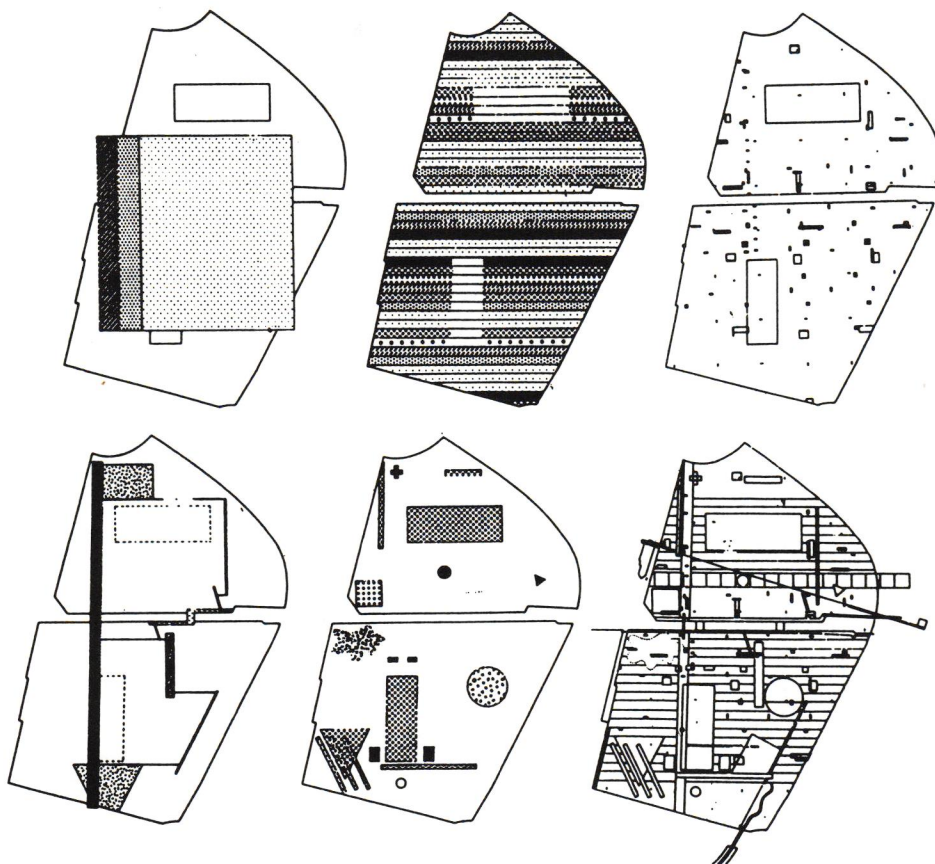
The total program surface (built, covered, and open) is projected onto the site, each drawing focusing on a different element of the park—from major categories such as gardens and playgrounds, to the confetti-like presence of kiosks, refreshment bars, and picnic areas; Parc de la Villette, Paris; OMA, 1982–83. (From *OMA: 6 Projets*.)
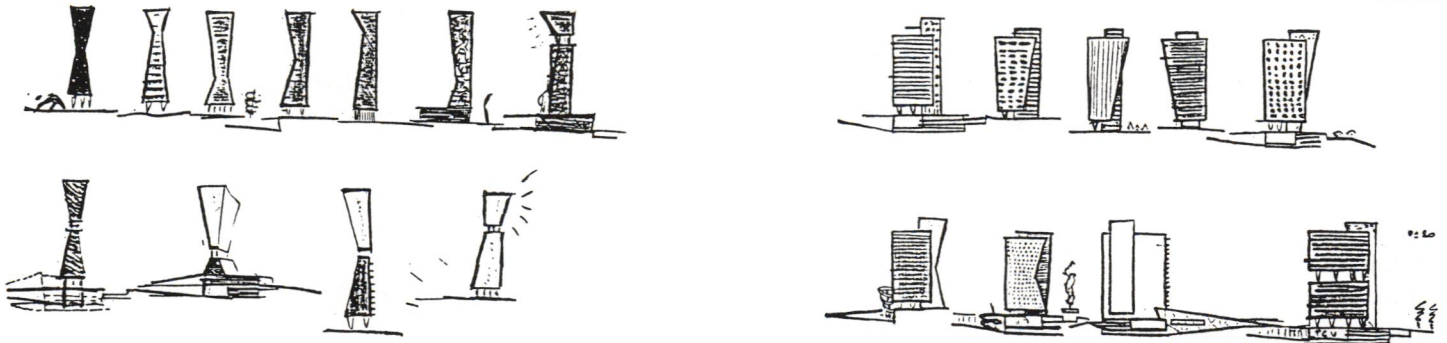
Sketches of towers for the International Business Center in Lille, located between Paris and its suburbs, and the site of a TGV station; OMA, 1989. (From *Rem Koolhaas–OMA*.)

ism totally at odds with the utopian or nostalgic projections of traditional urban discourse. Remarking on retroaction in *Rem Koolhaas–OMA*, Koolhaas states, "If there is a method in this work, it is a method of systematic *idealization*; a systematic overestimation of the *extant*, a bombardment of speculation that invests even the most mediocre aspects with a retroactive conceptual and ideological charge." Retroactive logic rescues the anonymous, unplanned, and accidental from the exclusive and preemptive logic of conventional urbanism.

Beneath the strategy of retroaction lies a radical departure from conventional urban thinking, both premodern and modern. Retroaction as a basic premise is indiscriminate with regard to its interest in planned or unplanned phenomena. In the case of *Delirious New York*, there is a clear bias for those aspects of the city that lack premeditated or intentional design. Manhattan was celebrated as being propelled by fundamentally "unconscious," unplanned forces that architects can witness, study, even respect and embrace, but ultimately never control. Being subject to such forces, in ways akin to natural phenomena, the architecture of the city is read as the *residue* not of design intention but of those urban forces that operate beyond reproach.

Koolhaas has frequently referred to the forces propelling the contemporary city as a wave, and to architecture (as well as the urban subject) as being propelled by something that can never be significantly influenced. Understanding the city as catastrophe and as chaos, as the seat of an infinite

density and complexity, has an obvious appeal for architecture and urbanism as well as other disciplines. Referring to Marshall Berman's *All That Is Solid Melts Into Air* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1982), Koolhaas describes these forces as a kind of maelstrom to which we, as architects, can only submit. Under a retroactive analysis, unplanned intentions often eclipse planned intentions, indicating that the greatest interest of the city develops largely as a result of insensible forces—of some invisible urban maelstrom. Because they are not the product of direct intervention, these forces have traditionally been dismissed or are left unconsidered by a discourse predicated on design intervention.

Koolhaas's recurrent interest in the Berlin Wall is instructive. The division of Berlin resulted from an intense political, economic, and ideological storm that raged throughout postwar Europe, finally taking dramatic architectural form in Berlin. Seen against the brutal division of the city, the intentions of architects—their capacity to methodically intervene in the city, such as the plans of Le Corbusier, Hans Scharoun, Alison and Peter Smithson, and Rob Krier for Friedrichstadt—appears practically negligible. The wall, while standing, represented a brutal measure against which even the best of design intentions could not avoid comparison. It is the tragically complex circumstances of its existence understood against the simplicity and singularity of its result (it is simply a wall) that has made the Berlin Wall a representative intervention of the contemporary city. Koolhaas's outra-

geous retroactive interpretation of the zone created by the wall "as a park run through with a Zen Sculpture" is, in this regard, significant. Through retroactive analysis, the complex social and political space is brought within the scope of architectural concern, its lack of intention notwithstanding. The return of this type of political and ideological production of space does not, however, come without cost.

If, as both Koolhaas and Le Corbusier have suggested, the city is the result of some catastrophe, then the question remains if catastrophe is the occasion for reform (as it was for Le Corbusier and other conventional urbanists, both nostalgic and utopian), or the occasion for celebration (as it was for Koolhaas in *Delirious New York*). Responding positively to the forces beyond intervention may ultimately amount to bargaining with the devil. Investing the residue of an unplanned, uncontrolled process with a (positive) conceptual and ideological charge amounts to a direct attack on conventional notions of urban planning and control. It is, in fact, a celebration of the very forces that preempt conventional efforts at intervention. The inability to order—an inability to plan and design in the conventional sense—opens some new and rather difficult if not (professionally) treacherous discursive territory.

Before addressing the obvious problems posed by such a position, it is no surprise to find the author of *Delirious New York* continuing to promote it. More than a spirited submission to the exigencies of development, OMA's new work is mounted as a se-

ries of positive new steps. Architecture must be "divested of duties it can no longer fulfill" in order to take on opportunities neglected in an outmoded compliance with conventional notions of urban intervention. Acknowledging chaos, engaging the urban maelstrom, and abandoning the pretensions of forecast and control lead Koolhaas to "rediscover planning" and to open the possibilities of "a post-architectural modernity."

THE POST-ARCHITECTURAL METROPOLIS

The transition from the retroactive study of Manhattan to the "anti-Manhattan" of the postwar contemporary city is accomplished through the dogged pursuit of the forces of urban development. Departing from the earlier studies, these forces are associated not with a specific type of urban architecture but with an entirely different aspect of the city—the program or event. The event becomes the critical locus of urban or metropolitan investigation, and architecture is understood merely as a residue of the event. This significant shift in emphasis is described most precisely in a short essay written in 1985, "New York/La Villette" (reprinted in *Rem Koolhaas–OMA*), and in the project for Parc de la Villette itself. In these works the metropolis is redefined, remarkably, as a case beyond architecture, as a condition divorced from any manifestation in built form. One remark is key:

> The genius of Manhattan is the simplicity of [the] split between appearance and performance: it keeps the illusion of architecture intact, while surrendering wholeheartedly to the exigencies of the metropolis; architecture is carried by the forces of the Grosstadt as a surfer is carried by the waves.

The split between appearance and performance, between architecture and event, establishes a heightened interest in the urban program and its characteristically unpredictable and unstable

nature in the 20th-century city. This is the real and substantive subject of the city. Referred to by Koolhaas as "programmatic instability," the urban event is the crucial quotient of urban research, and it is that aspect of the metropolis, freed from its built manifestation, that can be readily translated into the contemporary urban condition. The meaning of the metropolis is no longer bound up in Rockefeller Center or the Downtown Athletic Club, the Waldorf Astoria or Coney Island, but in the events that precipitated them.

The event emerges as key to the postwar condition, not as a matter of preference or choice, but as a response to the apparent dissipation of the postwar city and the dematerialization of its architecture. The powerful architecture of the metropolis was dissolved, literally, in the glass wall of the corporate slab. But while it has dissolved, it has not

Study sketch, Lille; OMA, 1989. (From *Rem Koolhaas–OMA*.)

disappeared. Its unprecedented energy, while dissipated and suppressed in the postwar city, persists as a programmatic conception. And while its force no longer produces a spectacular residue (such as Manhattan), it survives, nevertheless, in more obscure, less noticeable, often nonarchitectural traces. The task for OMA, it seems, is not to fix on the residue as a source for specific architecture, as was done in the appendix of *Delirious New York*. Koolhaas may express an admiration of the architecture of Disneyland, La Défense, and even Tokyo, but the point is not to revive any historical form of urbanism; it is instead to respond to the urban dynamic in the absence of specific residue, in its invisibility, like a windstorm otherwise lacking sufficient material to reveal its powerful but invisible force.

In releasing the idea of the metropolis from its material manifestation (or recognizing that today this is already the case), OMA suggests that the role of architecture in the city is to be drastically changed. Understanding architecture as merely the material residue of the more significant "urban event" calls into question even the most basic of conventional strategies. Architecture is understood not only as a residue, but a residue that is innately in conflict with the dynamic of the event. The built environment must necessarily defer to programmatic instability in order to allow its free unfolding. In a characteristic remark, Koolhaas describes architecture as a potentially oppressive force: "Where there is nothing, everything is possible. Where there is architecture, nothing [else] is possible." Programmatic instability is a characteristic to be cultivated, and that cultivation often implies the neutrality if not erasure of architecture, as well as a priority placed on its free reign in a "post-architectural" void. This void is strictly defined against architecture. Koolhaas writes, "Only through a revolutionary process of erasure and the establishment of free zones, conceptual Nevadas where the
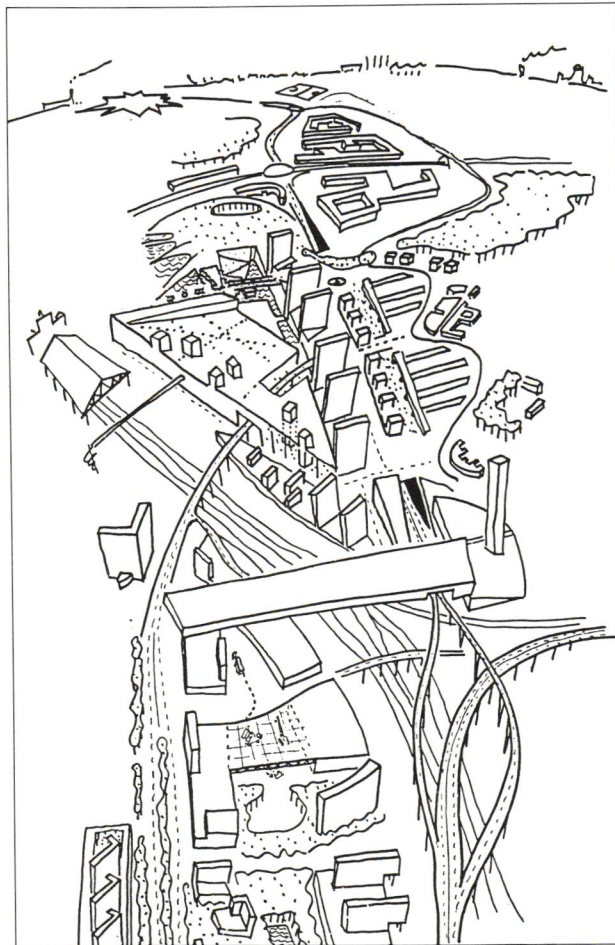
laws of architecture are suspended, will some of the inherent tortures of urban life—the friction between program and containment—be suspended."

If architecture is in part responsible for the "inherent tortures of urban life" then its absence emancipates. To paraphrase Koolhaas, "too much architecture, not enough beach" implies a potential liberating aspect of the metropolitan void. The vacant grid, the ruined city, Central Park, Ludwig Hilberseimer's Midwest, the zone now left empty by the Berlin Wall, all qualify as OMA's conceptual Nevadas. Truly, the revenge of the sixties wrought the material excesses of the seventies and eighties; programmatic instability divests architecture of its object fixation, its autonomous morphology, and replaces it with some sort of inexpressible potential invested in the program. "What [Parc de] la Villette finally suggested was the pure exploitation of the metropolitan condition: density without architecture, and a culture of 'invisible' congestion."

It doesn't take a great leap of the imagination to understand that "programmatic instability" is another name for chaos, the urban maelstrom, the uncontrollable forces that propel the development of the contemporary city. Rather than structuring the instability, ordering it or bringing it under control, architecture must submit to the potential of the urban program, promoting its free play in the post-architectural void. The idea is roughly analogous to the survival of a boat in a storm—better to untie the boat and let it be carried by the turmoil than to tether it too tightly and have it crack up against the fixed form of the dock.

Two projects best demonstrate both programmatic instability and the subsequent cultivation of the void. Descriptions of the 1989 competition for the new town of Melun Senart outside of Paris summarize the themes:

[Melun Senart] developed in a deliberate surrender—a tactical maneuver to overturn a defensive position—this argument: if the built can no longer be controlled, it is rather the control of the void that should
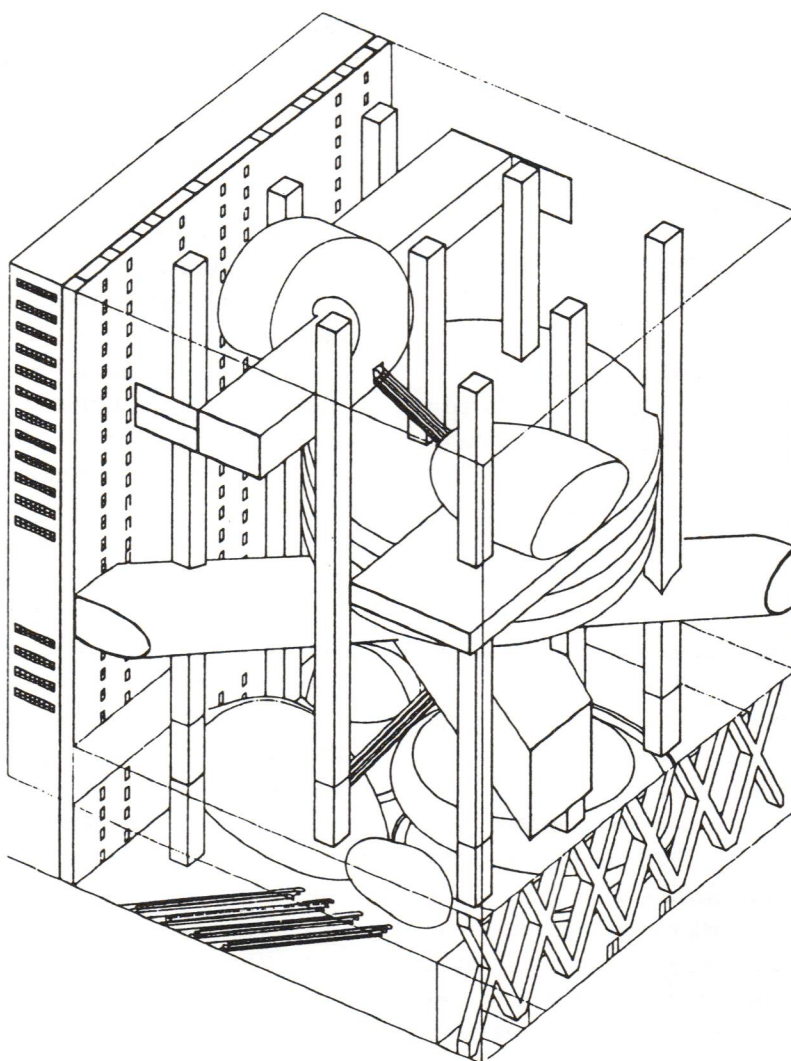
National Library of France, Paris; OMA, 1989. (From *Rem Koolhaas–OMA.*)

be sought—a new aesthetic of the city and new expectations follow from this idea.

. . . It was exciting to rediscover planning through projects such as the Parc de la Villette, the Universal Exposition, or Melun Senart, in which questions beyond the strict domain of architecture could be initiated and developed. These projects are in fact quite far from architecture in the strict sense; they deal with "nothingness." Where architecture answers, by definition, each question in the form of built substance, we tried in these projects to find forms of programmatic and organizational manipulation which could create cultural conditions "free" of architecture. The most recent project in this series is the plan for Melun Senart, where the thesis of a city organized around its voids—a kind of post-architectural modernity—is tested.

In the planning project for Melun Senart, as well as its architectural counterpart, the remarkable 1989 competition for the National Library of France, the post-Manhattan themes come together in what could be argued as the more substantive conclusion of the metropolitan episode. In these projects the bands and bubbles of vacancy are aggressively asserted against a recalcitrant mass beyond real control (embodied by information explosion, and speculative development, for example). Here a "highly charged nothingness" cuts through mundane fixtures creating pockets of an unsubstantiated potential. These are pockets of programmatic energy, the very programmatic potential that propels the life of the city. Ultimately the idea is simple. Chaos invades entropy.

TOKYO STORM WARNING

The angel would like to stay, awaken the dead, and make whole what has been smashed. But a storm is blowing from paradise; it has got caught in his wings with such a violence that the angel can no longer close them.

—Walter Benjamin, "Theses on the Philosophy of History," *Illuminations*, 1973.

In a 1991 competition for the redevelopment of La Défense, OMA produced a project whose intention was simply the recovery of an urban tabula rasa. In a series of charts, the life expectancy of each building in the development was plotted, resulting in a schedule for the evacuation of the site. Given the quality of recent construction in La Défense, that schedule proved to be astonishingly short. In less than twenty years, the majority of the site would be erased, creating a metropolitan void, a conceptual Nevada, adjacent to the center of Paris. For all of the characteristics already ascribed to "the void," the tabula rasa is now perhaps the most significant.

One is struck by the simplicity of the proposition: the possibility of a fresh start, a "new innocence," shown latent in the compromised construction of the contemporary city. The tables revealed that, owing to the short life span of the buildings, the contemporary city is distinct from any other in that the possibility of a new beginning is just below the surface. This is a palpable characteristic, perhaps *the* salient characteristic, of the contemporary city. Flying in the face of the largely discredited notion of the tabula rasa, the project is, in effect, a substantial recognition that one cannot *not* have the potential to begin again.

However, before embracing (or re-embracing) the tabula rasa latent in the "the void," it is important to return the discussion to the urban storm and its chaos. While the tabula rasa may be considered a critical aspect of the modern legacy, embracing chaos comes from an entirely different world which, for lack of a better term, must be labeled postmodern. As discussed above, the retroactive method aggressively seeks to dismantle the basic planning and design intentions of orthodox modernism. Submitting to the urban dynamic, the maelstrom beyond control, implies not another way to intervene in the architecture of the city, but the impossibility of a meaningful intervention at all. It represents a willful and enthusiastic surrender to all that modern architecture and planning attempted to control or deny. While garden variety "deconstructivists" pursue *retardataire* representations of chaos, debris, and indecisiveness, Koolhaas is methodologically courting these decidedly postmodern qualities, flirting with the dissolution of basic instrumental prerogatives (planning being not so much reinvented as finally eclipsed).

The wedding of the tabula rasa with chaos theory produces a poignant irony ("post-architectural modernity") not lost on Koolhaas. In observing chaos as most clearly demonstrated in the Japanese city, he notes that in Japan, chaos has already become an object of consumption: "Where intelligence meets masochism, chaos has rapidly become the dominant leitmotif of architecture and urbanism." He goes on to remark, "How profound or pathetic is the discovery of chaos as a new inspiration? Chaos is only beautiful or interesting in as much as it represents the *end of all deliberate intervention*. Among all the borrowings of this decade, chaos is the most paradoxical."

This paradox must of course be acknowledged in Koolhaas's own work. Before embracing the outrageous possibilities of conceptual Nevadas it would be well to remember that the category could (must) be expanded to include the work of the Royal Air Force and the V-2 on Berlin and London. It could also include the holes that "redevelopment" blasted into the heart of every American city. Is the "metropolitan void" to be understood as an unmitigated violence against urban culture, or as a tabula rasa, a necessary fresh start? Given the polarities of chaos and utopia, we seem to be suffering from a confusion of opposites. Was the Berlin Wall a savage dismemberment of the city, or "a park run through with a Zen Sculpture?" (Which do you want it to be?) This is the paradox that Koolhaas insists we reckon with.

In this regard the persistent metaphors of an urban storm, of an architecture of debris and residue, begin to take on new associations. There is little doubt that the wreckage piling up under the feet of Walter Benjamin's "angel of history" amounts to our urban legacy. Despite the protests of a generation of postmodern architects, the storm blowing in from paradise has not abated. Koolhaas is clearly suggesting that we face the other direction and veer into the storm. Unlike his contemporaries who reproduce the pile of debris, Koolhaas modestly suggests that while we may be unable to stop the pileup, we can perhaps manage a simple clearing, whether a tabula rasa, beach, redevelopment zone, or a "runway for angels," a moment's lucidity emerging from the present urban condition, which, while perhaps uncontrollable, may at least be seen and celebrated for what it is.

REM KOOLHAAS–OMA, Jacques Lucan, editor, Princeton Architectural Press, 1991, 175 pp., illus., $42.50.

OMA: 6 PROJETS, Patrice Goulet, editor, L'Institut Français d'Architecture and Editions Carte Segrete, 1990, 510 pp., illus., $36.00.

LILLE, Patrice Goulet, editor, L'Institut Français d'Architecture and Editions Carte Segrete, 1990, 301 pp., illus., $26.00.

REM KOOLHAAS: CONVERSATIONS WITH STUDENTS, Lynn Fitzpatrick and Doug Hofius, editors, Architecture at Rice, 1991, 81 pp., illus., $5.00.

Alexander Tzonis and Liane Lefaivre

"Thinking in forms as well as words": Kevin Lynch and the Cognitive Theory of the City

On October 13, 1952, a foreign-looking man, standing alone next to the Church of San Lorenzo in Florence is taking notes or perhaps sketching under the clear bright sky. As he looks about it is apparent that he is less interested in Brunelleschi's building than he is in people, who mill around or stop to talk to one another. He watches the passing vehicles, the surface of the surrounding walls and pavement, the stalls of the vendors, the abandoned vehicles.

Four hours later, we encounter the same man as he emerges from the Biblioteca Medicea Laurenziana, where he has just visited an exhibition of Leonardo da Vinci's drawings. He takes out his notebook and jots down: "A wonderful fusion of art and science, thinking in forms as well as words."

After a few days the man makes the following entry in his notebook, dated October 26:

> Need to think of basic questions to ask Florentines to evoke their reaction to their physical city, as: sketch a map, or panorama; what do you think of first; where would you prefer to live; where do you go in free time, or to meet people; ... what changes would you make; what is your local section and how would you recognize it, etc.
>
> Perhaps one thing I can do here, besides evaluating the Italian cities is to clearly evaluate the problem, and develop a technique of analysis which, tested here, can then be employed at home.
>
> Also to formulate my ideas of city planning education.

The man is Kevin Lynch (1918–1984), a young professor from MIT, on an educational year-long trip to Europe supported by the Ford Foundation. The lines are taken from his fascinating travel journals, which are included in the voluminous collection of Lynch's writings, *City Sense and City De-*

sign (1990), edited and compiled by Tridib Banerjee and Michael Southworth. In these lines we have the beginnings of a new urban theory, the theory of the "image of the city."

The interest in Lynch's work remains undiminished. His writings, most of them published by MIT Press, continue to be in constant demand and reprinted frequently. His name appears regularly in studies about architecture, urban design, cultural criticism, anthropology, and spatial psychology. His concept of "cognitive mapping," which is both verbal and pictorial, has become a key methodology found concurrently in the writings of postmodernist Marxists and cognitive scientists. The posthumous publication of two books, *City Sense and City Design* and *Wasting Away* (1990, also edited by Michael Southworth), makes us even more painfully aware of his absence.

Lynch began his intellectual career at Yale, which he attended on the advice of John A. Holabird Jr. of Chicago. Soon afterward, critical of the overwhelmingly Beaux-Arts tradition of the program, he dropped out and joined Taliesin from 1937 to 1938. Attracted to the technological spirit

of his times, he then enrolled at the Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute to study civil and structural engineering, a knowledge which he felt Frank Lloyd Wright lacked as much as his Yale mentors. Without obtaining a degree, he went to work. One of his first jobs was at the highly successful office of Paul Schweicker, which he eventually left to join the army.

Soon after returning from the war, instead of pursuing a career in architecture, Lynch graduated in 1947 at the age of twenty-nine from the city planning department of MIT with a bachelor's thesis titled "Controlling the Flow of Rebuilding and Replanning in Residential Areas," indicative of his eventual path toward research, writing, and teaching about the city.

Lynch's shift away from the architectural profession and toward environmental studies can be explained as the outcome of a curious, restless, rebellious intellect. But it was mostly a consequence of events and personalities that influenced him in the postwar years, and the heated debates about the city that were then taking place. The postwar period opened with a brief episode
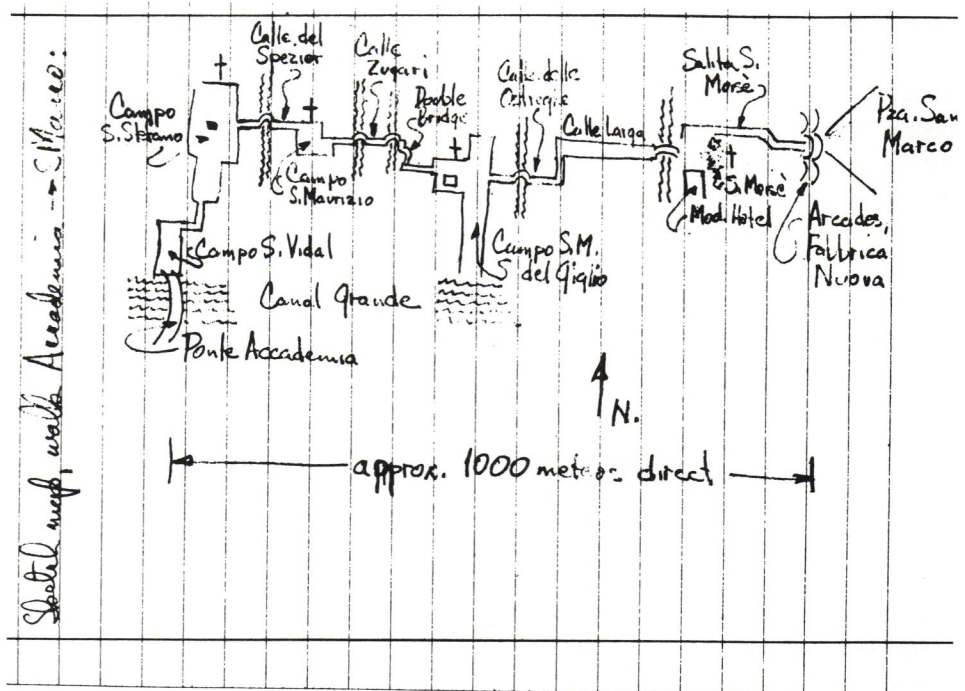
"Sketch map, walk from Accademia to San Marco" in Florence, from Kevin Lynch's travel journals, dated April 19, 1953. (From *City Sense and City Design*.)

The urban pattern of Florence, from Lynch's "notes on city satisfaction"; 1953. (From *City Sense and City Design*.)

of visionary thinking, followed by the conformist solutions of suburbanization, highway construction, and, with some delay, urban renewal. This phase, unique for the unprecedented scale and aggressiveness of the chaos, was, in turn, followed by a phase of crisis and anxiety, breeding a sense of an urgent need for a new theory for coping with the man-made environment. The 1950s was a decade of crisis, but also of challenge, dominated by the writings of Lewis Mumford.

In this context a number of new interdisciplinary academic workshops about the city emerged in American universities, in particular, in the academic world of Cambridge, Massachusetts. One of these workshops was the Joint Center for Urban Studies of MIT and Harvard, an organization whose "participants have included scholars from the field of anthropology, architecture, business, city planning, economics, education, engineering, history, law,

philosophy, political science, and sociology," according to the center's brief. There, Lynch carried out his first major investigation, and the research led to the publication in 1960 of *The Image of the City*, which was instantly recognized as a classic.

In the introduction to *The Image of the City*, Lynch acknowledges his debt to his colleagues at the Joint Center. Among them, particular gratitude goes to the director of this research project, Gyorgy Kepes. Kepes is important because he provided a link between the purely American, pragmatic, and empiricist environment in which Lynch existed, and prewar European aesthetic modernism in art as well as city planning.

The preoccupations of *The Image of the City* are born earlier, in the pages of Lynch's travel journals (1952–1953). In these journals, he tried to record, through both lengthy verbal observation and innumerable sketches—which, interestingly, include a number of maps and sequential

views—everyday life in the great historical sites of Italy. He describes monuments, utilitarian or humble structures, vehicles, objects, vegetation, people, the air and sky as components interwoven into one system. Contemplating these elements, he groped for a new "theory of urban form," an analytical model for representing the "perceptual form of the city," or what he called its "sensuous or sensory quality." Some ideas underlying the travel journals are developed more explicitly in his "notes on city satisfaction," written almost at the same time. The city is broken down into a small number of experiential elements: "space" (and, related to it, shape and lighting), "orientation" (as it is affected by street pattern and landmarks), "middle distance picture" (explained as "characteristic views seen in one fixing of eye, a head slightly above horizon, most often obliquely across the space"), "eye level detail," "floor" (which included visual as well as tactile texture), "color" (including stains and dirt), "continuities and discontinuities of coverage," "traffic," "noise" (the clatter of walking on pavement, factory whistles, bells, gun shots), "smells" (of food, flowers, sewage), "warmth and attachment," and "human activity."

As an overall text, the diaries seem a Sisyphean project, as Lynch catalogs exhaustively the minutiae of the city landscape. One is reminded of the equally obsessive and fascinating documentation of the Tokyo district by Wajiro Kon in the 1920s.[1] *The Image of the City* deals only with a few of the issues that are implicit in the journals—primarily those that have to do with visual aspects, circulation, and orientation in the city. The narrowing of the scope, however, did not diminish the fact that the book was daring and successful.

Seen from the perspective of the overcultivated, "continental" 1980s, or read after a page of Aldo Rossi's *Scientific Autobiography* or a scene from Bernardo Bertolucci's *1900*, Lynch's *Image of the City* may initially seem to lack depth. The memory-maps of the city he discusses relate to an individual's lifetime. There is no history; there is no culture.

Indeed, from an early age, as one of his letters (dated September 21, 1936) to Frank Lloyd Wright shows, Lynch was rather impatient with history courses at Yale: "After one course in the history of architecture and a look at the work being done there, I think it is academic and stifling." In his journals, he is often equally dismissive of many Renaissance monuments of Italy; there is a leveling attitude, a flattening of cultural and utilitarian artifacts in *The Image of the City*.

But the flatness is only apparent. Lynch's thinking does have depth—artistic, scientific, and philosophical. At moments, these diaries project scenes of life that are as absorbing as an Italian neo-realist film or an American film-noir. His documentary studies, with their seeming naïveté, are similar in spirit to Vittorio De Sica's *Bicycle Thieves* (1948) or, closer to home, Jules Dassin's *The Naked City* (1948). In Florence, for example, he writes:

> At 8:15 this is occurring: street sweepers at work with their bicycle carts. One or two hand market carts still moving in. W. side almost empty, except for passers-by and knot at newsstand. I [am] the only loiterer.

> Girls in white school uniforms going SW. One small boy carried playfully by thin mother—only small child in square. Horses are restless . . . women walk straight past stands, men pass more casually . . . a cart in motion with pots flying . . . an umbrella repairman with his box strapped to shoulder passes by chanting.

The feeling of the passing of time is dramatic. Everything moves—people, machines, patterns of light and shadow, clouds, the moon.

Despite the extremely natural character of these travel journals, Lynch did not aim to develop a scientific technique for creating "objective" descriptions "from the outside" as Charles Darwin did in his *Voyage of the Beagle*. Lynch tried instead to discover an empirically grounded methodology to represent the urban environment as its *users* capture it from within, to reconstruct their cognitive maps of the city.

The enigma Lynch wanted to unlock through a new theory of design in *The Im-*
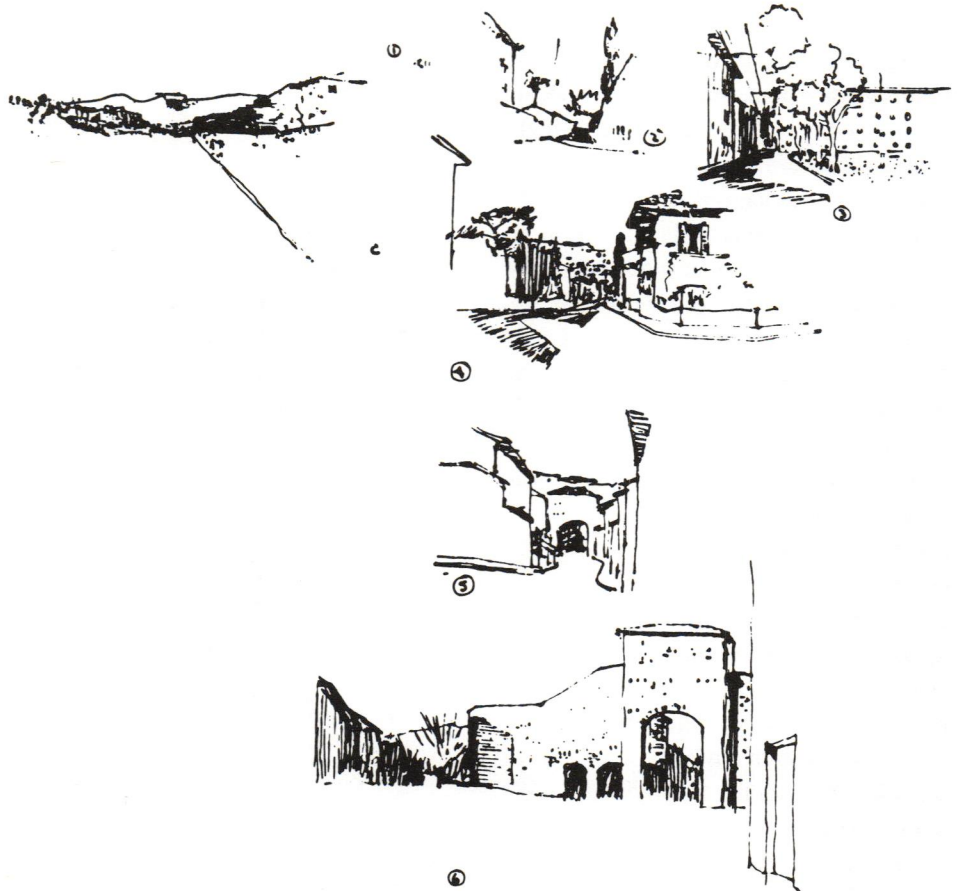
Lynch's drawings of sequential views of Florence from the south; 1953. (From *City Sense and City Design*.)

age of the City overrode problems that architectural historians had been addressing, with their focus on objects of high culture. This new attitude is clearly expressed in the pages of his early journals, in which he refers to Hazel Avenue, the tree-bordered street in a mixed but stable neighborhood of apartments and single-family houses on the north side of Chicago near Lake Michigan—the place where Lynch grew up. He talks of the sense of familiarity and "home" that this neighborhood gave him, the same feeling he found inhabitants of Florence and Venice shared, something that had more to do with the psychological quality of the place than with its dimensions of culture.

The approach could have easily dissolved into a kind of sentimental populism, with anecdotal, piecemeal results, a fate that beset many of the empirical sociologists of the period. But Lynch's categories were ultimately the outcome of an absolute obses-

sion with reality, the kind that moves great scientists to tirelessly hypothesize, test, and revise. It is what led Lynch to formulate the rigorous theory found in *The Image of the City*. In this theory, the "well-formedness" of place was the result of a happy relationship between the cognitive structure of the inhabitant's mind and that of the "lived-in" environment that lead to successful recognition, memorization, and navigation of the city and its parts.

Through its underlying assumptions, methodology, and new expressive means (both linguistic and figurative), *The Image of the City* marked a break from the doctrinal propagandistic/artistic modernist literature on cities, dry historical urban research, and traditional studies based on stylistic or aesthetic criteria, all of which Lynch dismissed as "unanalyzed residuum." "Image" and "cognitive mapping" were the categories that were meant to help supersede the more traditional theories of the city.

Image is an 18th-century concept that emerged from the Picturesque movement. English essayist and poet Joseph Addison used it, and already it transcended a high-culture definition of order, assuming psychological connotations. During the 19th century, image finds a place, both in art criticism within the Romantic movement and the young science of psychology. But when the book was written, the idea of "image" was held in low esteem by most behavioral scientists, who were preoccupied with aspects of perception which could be subjected to strict experimental control. Image, which occurs inside the mind, was considered beyond scientific research because of the difficulty of observing and measuring it. Lynch ignored all these objections, not only out of an outsider's naiveté but also compelled by what he felt was the profession's need to cope scientifically with the visual order of the environment.

In his paper, "Reconsidering *The Image of the City*" (1985), Lynch gives the impression that his study of psychology and anthropology was very informal. The book itself, however, reveals a massive and systematic coverage of literature accompanied by an extreme sense of selection and direction. His immediate source of inspiration was John Dewey's emphasis on experience as well as "transactional" psychology, forerunners to Lynch's participatory theory of the environment. Moreover, the key idea of cognitive mapping contained in *The Image of the City* had already been developed by the psychologist Edward Tolman in 1948, who had shown how animals could form spatial representations from environmental cues and optimize their behavior in finding food. Lynch did not refer to Tolman's study in his book, yet in all probability, he knew about it through Kepes or through colleagues or publications in Cam-

bridge, which was pregnant with ideas at that time. Lynch should, however, be recognized for the great originality with which he combined this notion with anthropological studies on "purposeful mobility," introducing it to the field of human cognition as well as to urban design theory.

It was only in the early 1970s that image once again became an accepted subject of scientific investigation, as a result of experiments by several psychologists who succeeded in developing a rigorous scientific methodology to investigate mental images. During the 1980s the research on spatial

One of Lynch's several "Space, Motion and View" diagrams, which attempts to show the sense of motion and space, and experience of surrounding objects; 1964. (From *The View from the Road*.)

thinking was joined with developments in artificial intelligence and machine-based simulation of pattern recognition, spatial memory, problem solving, and "navigation," and Lynch's notion of cognitive mapping became a frequent reference in this developing literature. As these studies find their way today to a cognitive theory of design, the significance of Lynch's contribution becomes even more indisputable than ever. We are just beginning to suspect the possibilities that his pioneering method offers.

Though Lynch was extremely aware of the scientific importance of his discoveries, he was, nevertheless, frustrated with their abuse by the design profession. In "Reconsidering *The Image of the City*," he comments on how designers rushed to the book, scanned it superficially, then reemerged carrying what they thought to be recipes for practice. He deplored that the concepts of the book, such as cognitive mapping, image, paths, edges, district, and nodes, had been reduced to mere formalistic elements affording more pleasure to the designer than the user. He complained that his categories were being used merely as a new jargon, superficially appropriated by designers, and that the book's most important conclusions—the necessity of a scientific, empirical, cognition-based methodology in design and the imperative of user-based design process—had been obscured.

Lynch's obvious interest in developing a cognitive approach to design to enhance users' ability to control their environment did not protect him, surprisingly, from frequent accusations of being a conservative thinker during the turmoil of the 1970s. His analytic rigor was called positivistic and reductive; his focus on image was seen as an attempt to bias planning toward formalistic aspects; and his linkage of visual cues in the city with orientation performance was dismissed as an expression of utilitarianism.
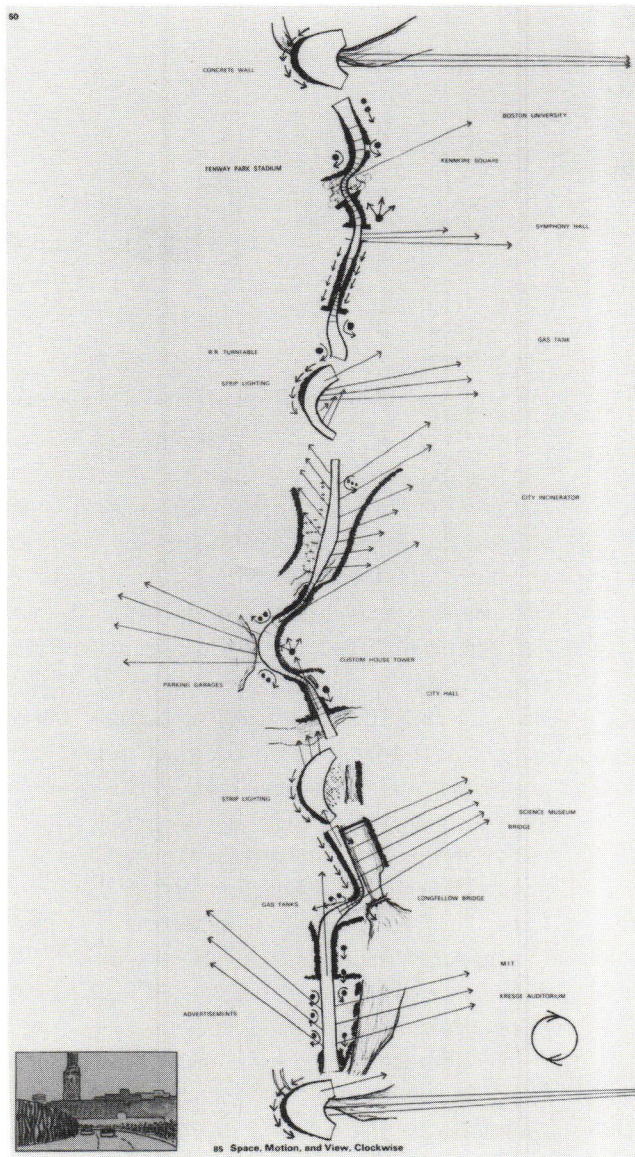
During the 1970s, Lynch devoted most of his writing and research activities, consciously or accidentally, to overcoming these criticisms. Increasingly, he addressed broader issues: in 1976 he published *Managing the Sense of a Region* in which most of the methodology found in *The Image of the City* is expanded to apply to the regional scale. Issues of time and activity grew increasingly important in his work.

Already in *The View from the Road*, published in 1964 and coauthored by Donald Appleyard and John R. Myer, the dimension of time had assumed an important role. The book is a fascinating attempt to cognitively map the experience of a highway ride. The authors explain their program: "We became interested in the aesthetics of highways out of a concern with the visual formlessness of our cities and an intuition that the new expressway might be one of our best means of reestablishing coherence and order on the new metropolitan scale." As with his previous book, Lynch develops a representation system, both verbal and pictorial, that is the result of a transaction between the object—highways—and the "people's reactions to them."

A masterpiece of typography and layout, the book tries to simulate in its shape, graphics, filmic sequence of shots, and choreographic-like notations, what the authors call "space-motion-view diagrams," the experience of the view seen by someone traveling along the road. This new notation was developed parallel to other similar ones such as Thiel's sequence-experience notation.

Time plays just as important a role as space does in *What Time is This Place?* (1972), Lynch's favorite book by his own account. In this study, it must be admitted, as in *View from the Road*, Lynch's approach to time was ultimately visual. As in the case of the 18th-

century Picturesque theoreticians, time is treated as a means through which space-complexes relate to each other sequentially. Also the approach of early 20th-century modernist designers, Lynch probably inherited it through Kepes, whose influence on the notations of *View from the Road* is obvious. Lynch, on the other hand, treats time in a more sophisticated way than Sigfried Giedion, continuing to acknowledge the Picturesque approach as well as the cinematographic one. Time is mapped pictorially in his studies, but in the end he ignores aspects of time cost, time budget, and time distances that planners on the West Coast or the Regional Science Department at the

"Space, Motion and View" diagrams, clockwise and counterclockwise, which demonstrate the separateness of the two experiences. The same objects are seen differently from other directions, and relate differently to other landmarks; 1964. (From *The View from the Road*.)

University of Pennsylvania were working on.

One might say that Lynch was in many respects prolonging the visual-aesthetic investigations that (again, probably through Kepes) go back to the Bauhaus and László Moholy-Nagy, to John Ruskin, and to the painters of the cityscapes that he had admired so much in the Accademia of Venice when he visited in the 1950s. More directly perhaps, they also go back to his travel journals. But his conclusions were always grounded on experimental intersubjective evidence rather than introspective intuition. This becomes clear in an article he contributed to Gary T. Moore and Reginald Gollidge's *Environmental Knowing* (1976) in which he reflects on the role of graphic descriptions of the environment. In 1981 in *Good City Form*, he continues the discussion about "modes of description" of "city patterns" and the need for "a language." In *Managing the Sense of a Region*, he criticizes his own sophisticated system as "demanding some training" and therefore not very useful for public presentations. This communication is extremely important for Lynch, as the only way in which he could reconstruct the cognitive maps in the minds of the users (including conceptually embodied errors and distortions) and guarantee users' participation in the design process.

Arriving at a visual representation of environmental qualities did arise from a visual bias. There is a long process from the very beginning, documented in his writings, during which Lynch explores alternatives for representing "ambient qualities." His initial basic concepts—such as paths, nodes, edges, and their relations—are expressed, as we have seen, linguistically. However, he is not satisfied with ordinary language representations. Words, even jargon, cannot embody the descriptions he seeks. He mentions mathematical representations as more potent, but
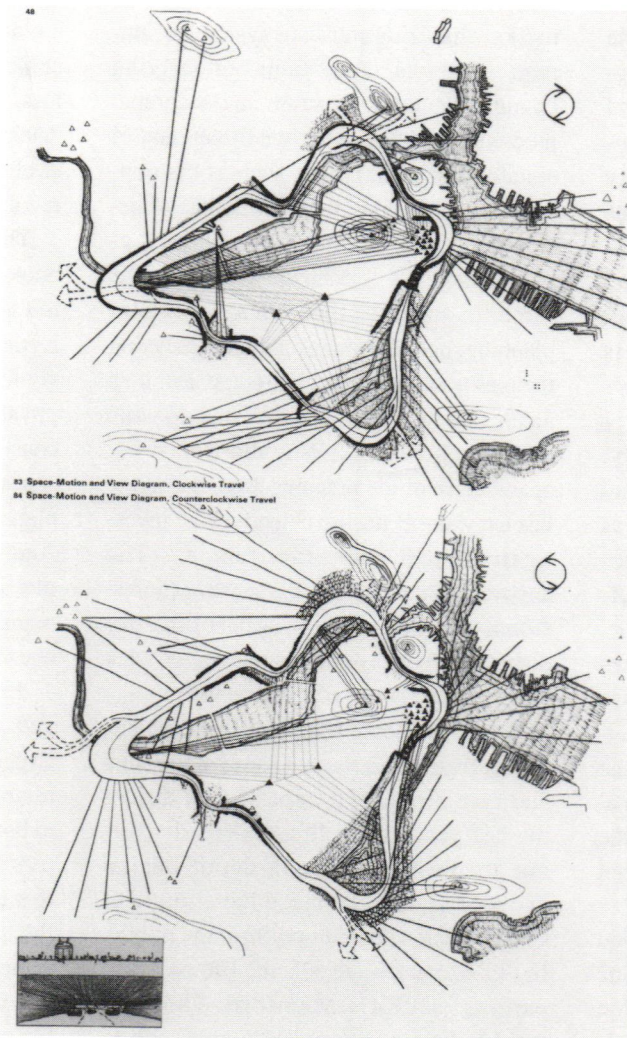
he does not specify why and how they can be applied. Thus, the graphic mapping appears as the only other possibility for complementing linguistically expressed ideas, to "think in forms as well as words." A new notation system appears timidly in the Italian journals and it is only in *The Image of the City* that a complete new visual representation system is applied. At the same time, Lynch was anxious about highly specialized systems that would make the communication with ordinary users of the environment impossible.

Equally visual is his approach to time as a component of the man-made environment. He investigates how in time one perceives and uses space or how in space one conceives the passage of time and dynamic phenomena through visual cues. But despite Lynch's focus on visual elements and cognitive concepts in his writings, until the end of his life, holistic, global, social, and political considerations become increasingly present. *Good City Form* (1981) one of his last synthetic works, displays a strong concern for social and political issues, as well as justice. In the index "justice" has nineteen references and special attention is given to the application of John Rawls's (his contemporary at Harvard) *Theory of Justice* to design decisions. Additionally, frequent references are made to utopian egalitarian and collective projects as well as to the Soviet Union, China, and other socialist countries of that period. All these references are sympathetic, even when he, always regretfully, acknowledges failures within them. Lynch did not hide his surprise and dissatisfaction when he found such alternative political structures leading to the same erroneous practices and dysfunctional products, and he particularly censures the lack of participation of users in the design process in socialist countries.

Equally global and equally preoccupied with issues of social justice is his book *Site Planning* (1984), written in collaboration with Gary Hack. Ironically, current sociocultural postmodernist critics of the city have been employing the concept of cognitive mapping to which they have assigned an ideological, class-conflict meaning never intended by Lynch. This application does not, however, appear to be backed by any empirical work or foundations in cognitive science.

Lynch's social criticism is not polemical. He always employs conversational prose on top of a deeply rationalist methodology. Personal remarks, sentimental side notes, casual observations are not excluded, as is customarily the case in textbooks. There are no hard subdivisions and boundaries in the text that generally give textbooks their skeletal, mechanical appearance, although it was mostly textbooks that Lynch wrote during the last decade of his life. As a result, these are books that one simply cannot put down.

But there are also weak spots. Acute remarks, analyzing intricate systems of human artifacts and their underlying cognitive, cultural structure, are accompanied with an often superficial treatment of equally important issues, such as the optimization and computational models of design. He gives pragmatic issues, such as parking lay-outs or drainage techniques, the same treatment as theoretical aspects of planning, but he is not as good at analyzing them as trade-book specialists are. But then again, one would not need a Lynch to write about such "trivia." Why did Lynch not spend more of the precious time during the last ten years of his life extending the investigations that made him famous? The answer might lie in Lynch's sense of professional responsibility in a participatory democratic society and his reading of what the important issues of the time were.

Lynch possessed, in addition to scientific curiosity and rigor, a sense of urgency and commitment. It appears that during the last years of his life, his priority was not to develop new, in-depth design knowledge, but to change the attitude of the professionals and to inform the public. In this respect, he recalls the life preoccupations of Lewis Mumford. Thus, although there is a *handbuch* approach to *Good City Form* and *Site Planning*, the books ultimately focus on educating professionals and the public alike.

This becomes even clearer in his last papers of the early 1980s, which addressed the threat of a nuclear war, and in his last book, published posthumously by the Sierra Club and edited by Michael Southworth, *Wasting Away* (1990). In this book he tries to confront us with fundamental aspects of reality that our culture has chosen to suppress—dirt, decay, death. Instead of dealing with these realities secretly, mindlessly, and wastefully, as we do now, Lynch urges us to approach them explicitly, knowledgeably, productively.

These are ideas that, again, have their seeds in Lynch's diaries from Italy in which he understood that stains, noise, and refuse contribute to the sensuousness of the scene and to the joy of being a live participant in a place. Lynch did not believe in massive control, extinction of pain, obliteration of loss. He felt that such policies could be as deadening as death itself. Environments that excluded change, incompleteness, even revolutions, were hateful to him.

Despite the numerous, voluminous books Lynch succeeded in producing, there is a sense of incompleteness about his work. Lynch appears to be too much of a designer—eager to have an impact on the physical appearance of the world—to be considered a theoretician. He also seems too obsessed with description, analysis, and explanation to be thought of as an architect. And he frequently appears as a visionary, like John Ruskin, as a moralist and a humanist for whom the built environment is one vehicle to discuss higher values.

In fact, the similarities between Lynch and Ruskin are intriguing. Like Ruskin, Lynch was prolific both in writing and illustrating his books. The visual world is central to both men's work. But this visual preoccupation encompasses a broader universe than that of high-culture objects. His reaction to the "dirty weary stones of the old city [of Florence] . . . their richness of texture and life, and sense of what has gone on and how life carries on in them" (from his travel journals) resounds with Ruskinian thought. As previously mentioned, there is also the common obsession with time, as well as a preoc-

cupation with a transactional interpretation of the environment and everyday people's participation in it. The cognitive approach to image was as fundamental to Ruskin as to Lynch. Finally, Lynch shares with Ruskin the very character of the incompleteness aforementioned. But, for both figures, it is the incompleteness of work in progress, of the creativity of an open system that does not frustrate but invites.

NOTES

1. Wajiro Kon and K. Yosida, *Modernology* (Tokyo, 1986). We are grateful to Toshio Nakamura for bringing this book to our attention.

CITY SENSE AND CITY DESIGN: WRITINGS AND PROJECTS OF KEVIN LYNCH, Tridib Banerjee and Michael Southworth, editors, MIT Press, 1990, 853 pp., illus., $55.00.

WASTING AWAY, Kevin Lynch, edited by Michael Southworth, Sierra Club Books, 1991, 270 pp., illus., $30.00.

THE IMAGE OF THE CITY, Kevin Lynch, MIT Press, 1960, 202 pp., illus., $8.95.

MANAGING THE SENSE OF A REGION, Kevin Lynch, MIT Press, 1976, 241 pp., illus., $10.95.

WHAT TIME IS THIS PLACE?, Kevin Lynch, MIT Press, 1972, 289 pp., illus., $13.95.

THE VIEW FROM THE ROAD, Donald Appleyard, Kevin Lynch, and John R. Myer, MIT Press, 1964, 64 pp., illus., out of print.

GOOD CITY FORM, Kevin Lynch, MIT Press, 1981, 524 pp., illus., $16.95.

SITE PLANNING, Kevin Lynch and Gary Hack, MIT Press, 1984 (third edition), 507 pp., illus., $39.95.

Grahame Shane

The City Shaped: Urban Patterns and Meanings Through History

SPIRO KOSTOF

Anyone familiar with Spiro Kostof's life work will not be surprised at the scope and ambition of *The City Shaped*. His sweeping *A History of Architecture* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1985) exhibited a cosmopolitan pluralism and preoccupation with building typologies enmeshed in society, myth, and ritual, ranging from Stonehenge to the Industrial Revolution, modernism to postmodernism. One of the high points of this history was the fine cross-cultural comparison between Renaissance Venice and the far larger and more powerful Ottoman city of Istanbul, Kostof's place of birth.

These lifelong interests in comparative cultural studies and thematic typologies are extended into the arena of an extensive survey of global urban history in *The City Shaped*. This book is a metahistory that presumes a preliminary understanding of the chronology and dates of urban history, such as that provided in A. E. J. Morris's exemplary European study, *A History of Urban Form* (New York: Wiley, 1979). Kostof's generous overview encompasses many local histories and proposes a supplementary history, a cross-cultural, typological, and atemporal analysis loosely based on three urban patterns identified by Kevin Lynch in

Good City Form (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1981). Lynch's three urban typologies form the basis for Kostof's well-illustrated and well-documented chapters on "Organic Patterns," "The Grid," and the "City as a Diagram." A penultimate chapter on the "Grand Manner" deals with the tradition of the armature of the scenographic street in its various manifestations. The last chapter extends the concept of scenography to the public symbolism of the city skyline, including the corporate skyscrapers of the postmodern city. The companion volume promises further studies of the street armature, the city center, and its relationship to the "city edge."[1]

Kostof's great strength in comparative cultural studies and urban typology is buttressed in *The City Shaped* by urban geography and morphological studies. The chapter on the organic contains fascinating studies of the rules and patterns governing the transformations of the classical Roman grid plan into both Islamic city fabric and medieval European city forms. Drawing on examples from the trade basin of the Mediterranean and Near East, Kostof documents the inversions of the Roman city codes, the infilling of open public space, the creation of new urban poles, the breaking of the grid by diagonal paths, and the enclosure of neighborhoods into systems of cul-de-sacs surrounded by through roads. The overview of this process gives a clear cross-cultural insight into the system of syntactic relationships in the organic city plan, which, while local in its orientation and vernacular in its forms, is far from random and un-
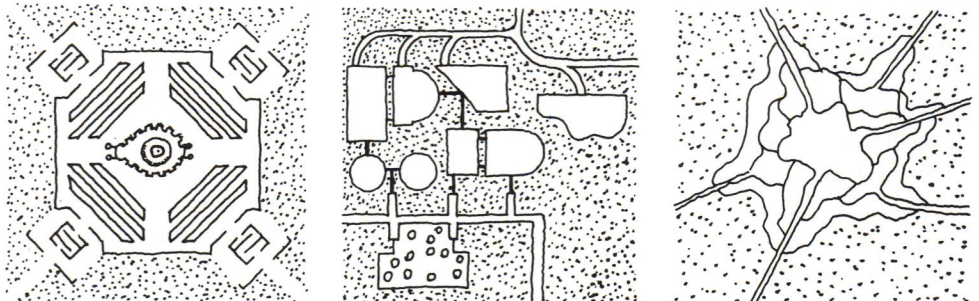
Kevin Lynch's three categories, or "normative models," of urban form are: (left to right) the cosmic city—a spatial diagram of social hierarchy; the practical city—a functional construct of interrelated parts; and the organic city—an indivisible, living organism. (From *The City Shaped*.)
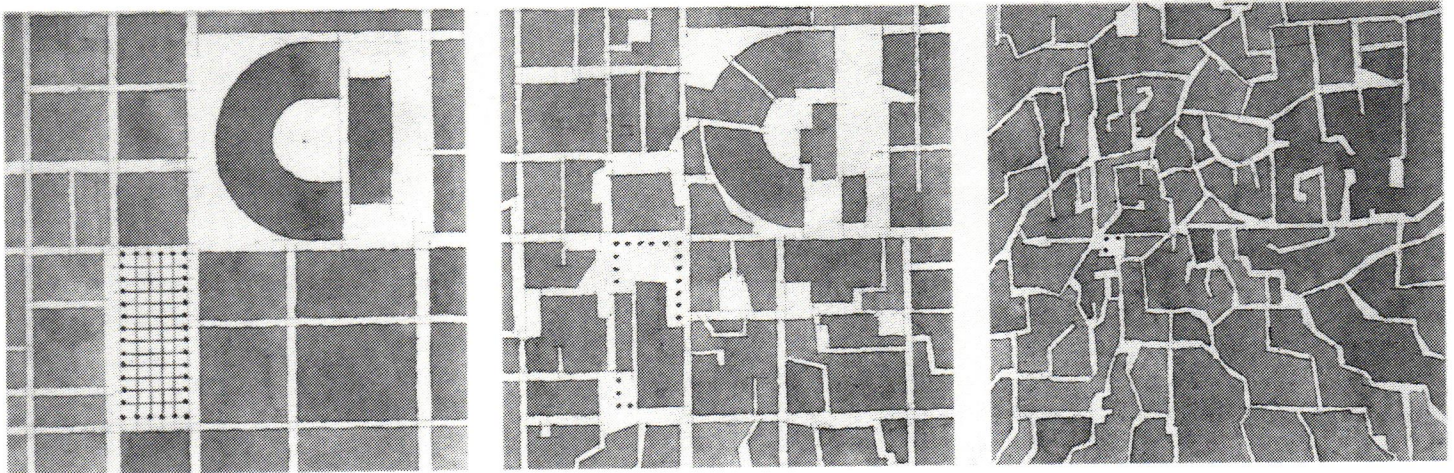
The gradual transformation of a gridded Roman colony into an organically patterned Islamic city: the Roman open-air market and amphitheater (left) are appropriated by the Islamic population for private use (middle); ultimately, the city is transformed into one with minimal public open space (right). (From *The City Shaped*.)

planned. Kostof traces this theme on to the self-consciousness of the Picturesque movement, to Frederick Law Olmsted, the garden suburb, to Camillo Sitte in fin-de-siècle Vienna, to Nazi village planning, and to Gordon Cullen's townscape movement.

The grid provides similar opportunities for comparative cultural and morphological studies. Kostof systematically examines the grid, its edge conditions, the intervals of its streets calibration, the distribution of public space and building, the relationship to the surrounding countryside, and its three-dimensional development. Kostof distinguishes between "closed" or bounded grids and "open" or infinitely extendable grids in an encyclopedic catalog of historical conditions and examples drawn from the cross-cultural application of the grid. This universal catalog includes the ancient Near East and China, the many Greek and Roman grid cities of the Mediterranean basin, English medieval new towns and French Bastide towns, medieval Florentine planned new towns, grid-planned port cities of the European Renaissance, the Spanish Law of the Indies which mandated grid plans in America, the application of Jeffersonian Enlightenment grid planning to rural America and gridded extensions to European cities like Turin and Amsterdam. This catalog is enlivened by sections on grid planning that link to the dynamic of the organic, describing the different subdivision

and internal planning patterns of the street blocks in the Greek city, the Roman city, Islamic and medieval cities, the Renaissance and Industrial Revolution planned grid extensions (such as 19th-century Berlin and Barcelona). The treatment of the grid in the 20th century is limited to supergrids—either the modernist superblock (perimeter blocks of housing, the evolution of the slab block and superblock in Ludwig Hilberseimer's grid city) or the treatment of the supergrids' interaction with the organic tradition in the flexible supergrid of the highway network of Chandigarh or the new English town of Milton Keynes.

The functional plans of the modern movement form a bridge into Kostof's third category, the diagram city, a difficult hybrid that teams preindustrial religious faith with the functionalist faith of the Industrial Revolution (mixing features from Lynch's cosmic and mechanical categories). Kostof again draws from many cultures, stressing the general poverty and transparency of diagrammatic planning, which directly expresses the dominant, centralized, political, religious, or economic power at its heart. Kostof emphasizes the rigorous, dehumanizing regimentation of the individual, drawing examples from garrison towns, Nazi concentration camps and small planned industrial towns, such as Saltaire in England. Kostof distinguishes between grid, linear, concentric, and radio-centric diagrams of

power. This last category is illustrated by the radio-centric schemes for Sforzinda from the Renaissance, the small baroque capital city of Karlsruhe and the utilitarian, functionalist panopticon schemes of Jeremy Bentham from 1800, as well as contemporary plans for ashrams and space stations. Kostof links Michel Foucault's analysis of the power relationships enshrined in Bentham's Panopticon to Ebenezer Howard's radio-centric, functional diagrams of the polycentric modern city region drawn at the beginning of the 20th century. The diagram thus transcends time as Kostof traces the widespread influence of Howard's city-region on planners and traffic engineers of the modern and postmodern city-region, including such surprises as the inversion of Howard's polycentric city diagram in Ralph Lapp's centerless, atom bomb–proof, peripheral city-region of 1949.

There are many overlaps and differences of emphasis between Lynch's mechanical tradition and Kostof's diagram section. For example, Kostof and Lynch both link the radio-centric diagram of Howard's garden cities back to Claude-Nicholas Ledoux's Royal Salt Works at Chaux and the utopian-socialist tradition of Charles Fourier, Robert Owen, and Lord Buckingham. Both Kostof and Lynch encompass the circles and polygons of Arcosanti and Palmanova as mechanical or diagrams. But Kostof lists as diagrams some preindustrial cities catego-

rized by Lynch as cosmic, including cities of the Near East, Asia, and pre-Columbian America. Lynch incorporated the scenographic street as part of this cosmic tradition, while Kostof creates a separate category for the scenographic in his chapter, "The Grand Manner," which begins in earnest with the baroque.

In contrast to these simplistic diagrams of the city-region, Kostof posits the rich, symbolic, public tradition of baroque polycentric city planning involved in Pierre Charles L'Enfant's projection of Washington. Such planning in the "grand manner" provides for the scenographic masking of power that is the theme of the last two chapters. Kostof's scenographic emphasis corrects an oversight by Lynch, who omitted baroque city planning and subsumed scenographic axes in the processional ways of the preindustrial cosmic city. While Kostof makes brief reference to classical antiquity and the work of William MacDonald on the late Roman "armature" streets at Timgad and Palmyra, his emphasis is on Rome and the baroque as origins of the "grand manner." Sebastiano Serlio's stage-sets and Jacopo Sansovino's Venice are cited as early Renaissance applications of the theatrical concept that came to fruition in Sistine Rome and was developed as an overlay to cases such as the regimented grid of 17th-century Turin. Kostof systematically highlights the elements of baroque planning, the control of high points in the landscape, landscape planning, the placement of obelisks, columns, statues, and triumphal arches, the use of flights of steps, straight, standardized streets, tree-lined malls, avenues, axes, the invention of the diagonal and polyhedral street intersections in a great variety of formations, all controlled by monumental public buildings.[2]

Kostof sketches a valuable brief history of the scenographic street in this chapter. Following a path well mapped by Sigfried Giedion in *Space, Time and Architecture* (1941), Kostof traces the baroque street from Rome and Turin to Paris and Versailles, to the garden design of *allées*, boulevards, and avenues, to Napoleon I,

then to Haussmann's Paris and the Beaux-Arts City Beautiful movement in America around 1900. Kostof skillfully illustrates the imperial capitals as well as British colonial capitals such as New Delhi or Canberra. American examples include Daniel Burnham's unexecuted plan for Chicago as well as his built plan for colonial Manila. Kostof's cosmopolitan methodology and global view breaks down ideological barriers to include the powerful appeal of Beaux-Arts baroque planning to Hitler, Mussolini, and Stalin. Well-known examples from Mussolini's Rome and Hitler's Berlin are set against the lesser-known prewar invention of the socialist "Magistrale," a parade street/pedestrian promenade applied in Moscow and Leningrad. The same formula was implanted in many Eastern European and Russian cities after the World War II in a great variety of forms, both Beaux-Arts and modern. In the West this history of the street includes such modernists as Burnham, H. P. Berlage, Eliel Saarinen, and Otto Wagner, as well as imperial, Nazi, and Socialist planning, as predecessors of the "postmodern baroque" of Ricardo Bofill, the Krier brothers, and Andres Duany and Elizabeth Plater-Zyberk.

After this examination of the baroque and Beaux-Arts city, Kostof analyzes the scenography of the city section in "The Urban
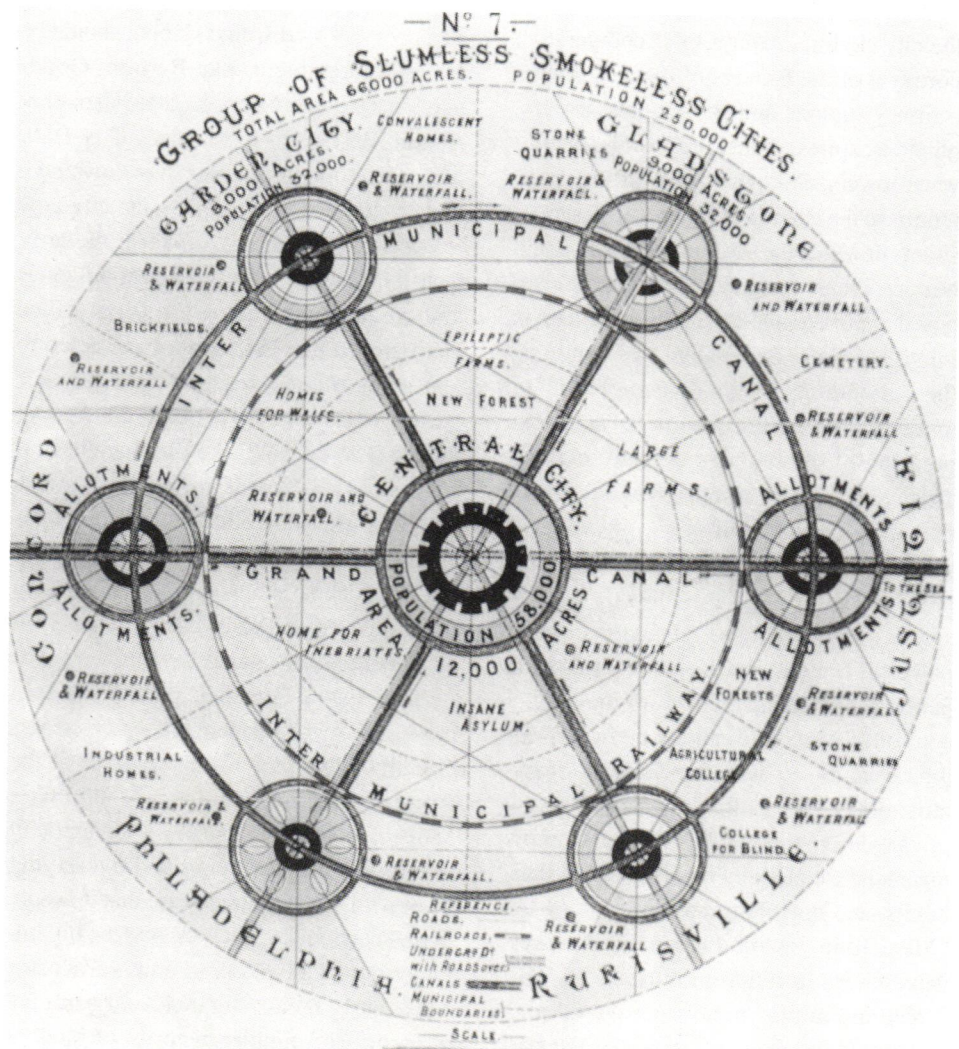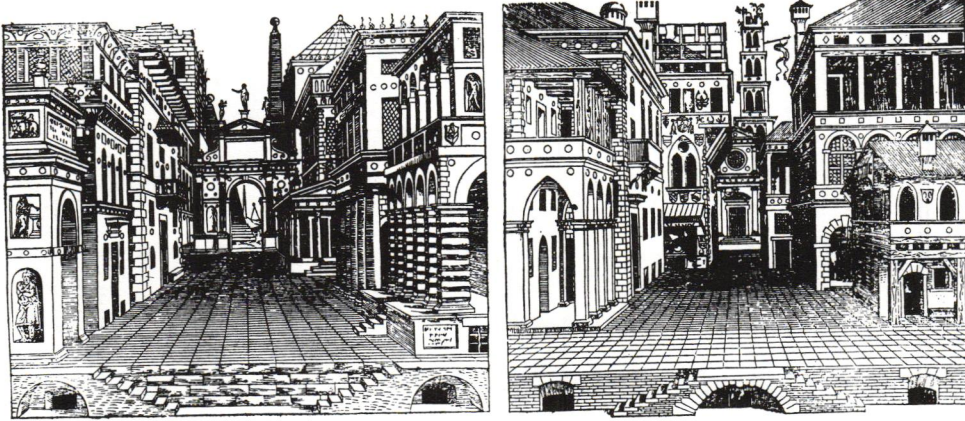

Diagram of "Social Cities" from Ebenezer Howard's *To-Morrow: A Peaceful Path to Social Reform*, published in 1898 and later renamed *Garden Cities of To-Morrow.* (From *The City Shaped.*)

Two of Sebastiano Serlio's street "scenes" for the theater: the "tragic" (left), and the "comic" (right); Venice, ca. 1537. (From *The City Shaped*.)

Skyline," his last chapter. Like Augustus Pugin, the 19th-century English architect, Kostof posits a distinction between the public and private display of corporate power on the city skyline. After a brief comparative portrayal of the features of the city skyline (railway stations and skyscrapers, towers, minarets, spires, domes, city walls, factory water towers, chimneys, etc.), Kostof again returns to the charms of Beaux-Arts compositions in which the skyline of the city could be consciously designed with public (as opposed to private or corporate) symbolism in mind. Despite its prevalence in America, the morphology of the dynamic, secular, modern city receives low marks as an expression of unregulated private interest. This secular city is compared to the slowly changing sacred, religious, or political symbols of the domes and towers that dominated ancient Islamic, medieval, Renaissance, and baroque cityscapes. In a powerful comparison, Kostof contrasts the public corporate symbolism of the strictly controlled Moscow scatter-pattern of wedding-cake towers with the clusters of capitalist office towers in New York built by private corporations. The isolated Moscow towers house publicly owned offices, flats, hotels, and university buildings along the "Magistrale," while the private, market-driven, single-function clusters of Wall Street and midtown have no overall plan and crowd out the street. In either the East or West the Beaux-Arts and art deco sky-

scrapers that modulate their impact at street level are always preferable to the modernist tower-in-park or plaza that crashes brutally into the city. Kostof argues that the *Stadt Krone* or city's crowning symbol should be a public monument, like Bertram Goodhue's Beaux-Arts Nebraska State Capitol or Austin, Parkinson & Martin's City Hall, which for so long towered over downtown Los Angeles (until recently—the city now restricts building heights for fear of earthquakes). Kostof recounts how various cities and communities, from the former East Germany to San Francisco, have acted to cap growth and preserve their historic streets, vistas, and the public symbolism of their "urban image." Like Burnham in Chicago in 1910, Kostof argues that towers should be grouped in Beaux-Arts ensembles around plazas and regulated by strict height limits (which he shows to have been widely enforced across America in 1916, from New York to Chicago to LA).

The virtual absence of the modern movement in this account of the skyscraper-city highlights one of the problems of the comparative methodology of *The City Shaped*. Kostof introduces his several city typologies, interweaving and overlaying them with such complete ease that it is only in the scenographic sections that the full implications of his method emerge. Kostof consciously breaks the logic and narrative of earlier and simpler histories of modern progress, such as those by Giedion or

Lynch. In addition, Kostof's approach offers an implicit criticism of the capitalist, Eurocentric, commercial orientation of Mark Girouard in *Cities and People* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1985), which linked Istanbul, Venice, Amsterdam, London, New York, and Los Angeles as the foremost global mercantile cities through history. In contrast, Kostof's methodology removes from history the perennial Faustian drive to modernize. The advantage of such a removal is that it allows for a series of global, heterotopic "normative models" which are relatively static and slow to change without the acceleration of the industrial dynamic. The disadvantage is that the internal logic of powerful historical processes, such as industrialization, which at this point has taken on global proportions, is totally dissolved and fragmented into segments of static categories.

The absence of the process of modernization from the methodology of the first volume has brought about some surprising omissions. London, the preeminent city of 19th-century continental Europe, is very poorly represented because of its involvement in the global process of industrialization. The early peripheral and suburban fragmentation of London and its equally early central transformation into a global city (both direct impacts of the modernization) does not feature in this survey. Despite its aestheticism, Donald J. Olson's *The City as a Work of Art* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1986) did a better job in this respect, building on John Summerson's *Georgian London*. Similarly, Kostof's preoccupation with the visual and scenographic in the "grand manner" appears to blind him to the incorporation of the industrial city-machine concept into the typological planning of the Beaux-Arts (as in the countless *grand-prix* competitions for railway stations and Toni Garnier's Cité Industrielle, New York's Grand Central Station, or Saarinen's Helsinki train station and his plans for a periphery of fragmented Beaux-Arts suburbs). It is also curious that Kostof did not include as "diagrams" the
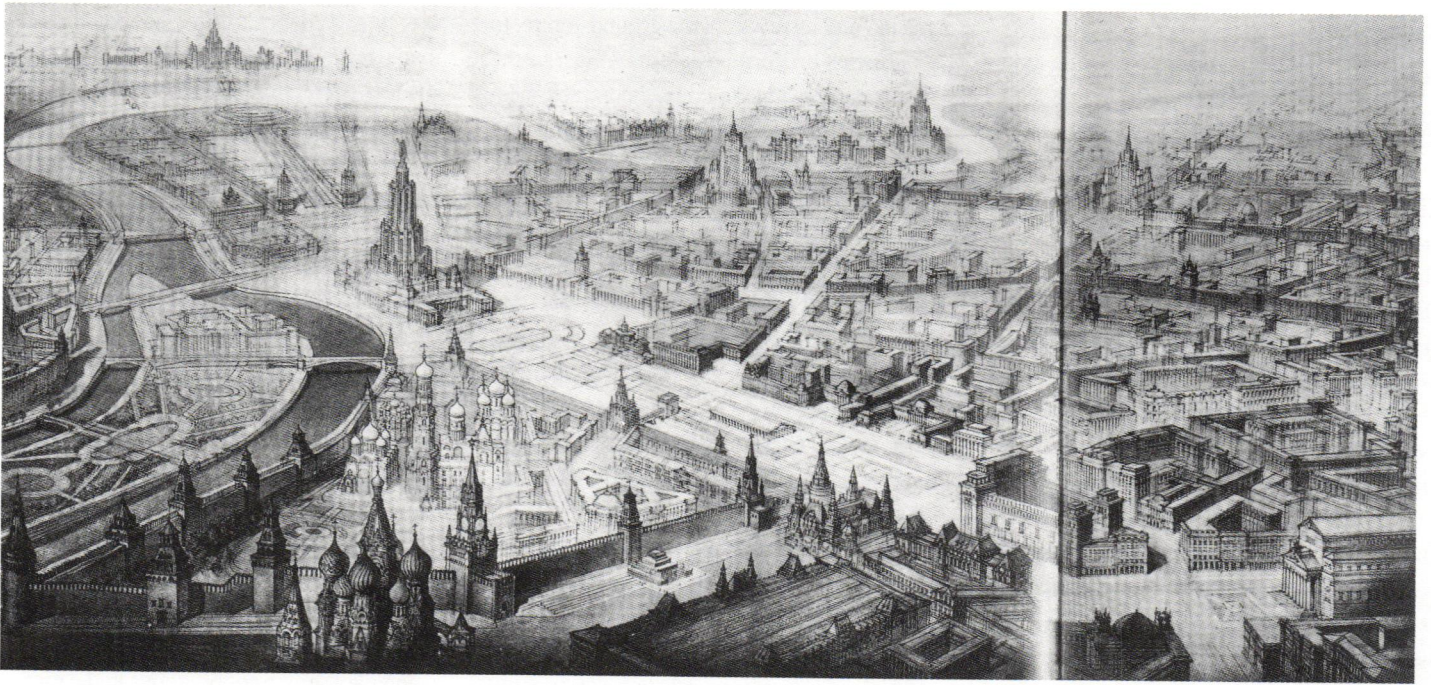
An artist's conception of the reconstruction of Moscow, (ca. 1950), as pictured in the chapter on the urban skyline. (From *The City Shaped*.)

"dumbbell" designs of the shopping mall with its rigid privatization of public space either in the center or periphery of the postmodern city (incorporating the urban "simulacra" by continuing modernization in the communication, media, and information industries). It is not clear if Kostof held back his treatment of industrialization in anticipation of his second volume, the recently released *The City Assembled,* which deals with the distribution of "urban armatures" and building typologies in various patterns across the city center and "city edge."

These few lacuna do not detract from the great value of *The City Shaped* as a single volume, especially its metahistorical and inclusive overall structure. It is inevitable that in such metahistories local microhistories and subsystem logics will get shaved and shaped. Kostof has attempted to be fair and systematic in his treatment of all cultures. Despite occasional arid and didactic passages (when the stress of the task comes through), Kostof maintains a finely wrought balance between Western and non-Western, Christian and non-Christian traditions, capitalist and noncapitalist economies, democratic and nondemocratic societies. His methodology serves his purposes well and provides the reader with a clear, far-ranging history of global urban patterns. In addition, Kostof provides an important short history of a specifically Western invention, the baroque and Beaux-Arts scenographic street. *The City Shaped* is a monumental survey and a visual feast. Kostof makes clear that the accessibility and coordination of his book, its bibliographies, extensive notes, photographs, captions, and diagrams are the result of cooperative teamwork with long-term collaborators. *The City Shaped* stands as a prodigious product of the team's collective effort, as well as a fitting memorial to Kostof's global and inclusive view of history.

NOTES

1. Kostof makes very clear his debt to and transformation of Lynch's categories. Lynch's history began with the "cosmic" city based on faith, proceeded to the city as "machine" including functionalism, and ended with the "organic" category, which he saw as a self-correcting, "ecological" system, incorporating time, growth, and change. Lynch ended by questioning the usefulness of such "normative" theories, as noted by Kostof.
2. W. L. MacDonald, *The Architecture of the Roman Empire II: An Urban Appraisal* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1986), and "Palmyra: On Columns, Streets and Roman Urban Design," *Daidalos* 24 (June 1987).

Grahame Shane

The Urban Text

MARIO GANDELSONAS

The figure-ground has been a useful conceptual tool for architects and urban designers at least since Giambattista Nolli's plan of Rome in the 18th century. Its great advantage is the polarization of the notation of solid and void as black and white, thus easing and enhancing the conceptualization of space. Camillo Sitte revived interest in the figure-ground at the end of the 19th century as a way of representing the old and irregular squares of Vienna, rationalizing the cozy relationship of monuments and vernacular structures. Gordon Cullen's townscape seized on this analysis in the 1950s, using the figure-ground as part of an argument for scenographic sequences and picturesque detail. Critics of this approach included Colin Rowe and the Cornell School (especially Wayne Cooper), who raised the figure-ground and its reversal, the ground-figure, to an abstract art form. Such drawings, to the initiated, were able to convey complex messages about the history of the city (through recognition of the city-plan typologies) and even three-dimensional nuances about the character of spaces. The ground-figure reversal was especially useful for showing overlays and grid collisions (an aspect explored by Peter Eisenman, among others). The drawings always had their limitations: they were planimetric, formal abstractions, and their interpretation was always highly intuitive, at odds with spatial and three-dimensional reality.

But despite these limitations, figure-grounds provided much insight to the structures of cities. Mario Gandelsonas's previous work, *The Order of the American Cities: Analytic Drawings of Boston*, sympathetically reviewed by George Baird in *Assemblage* 3, developed the Cornell School of figure-ground into a new, more three-dimensional drawing technique. The basic change was to give depth to line, so that each line cast a shadow, jumping out of the page. This shadow-projection technique had many advantages: city blocks became three-dimensional, in a repressed bas-relief. The layering that had always been implicit in the figure-ground analysis of the city was made explicit. Different layers could be given different shadows and different line weights, increasing the range of differentiation possible within the black-and-white format. Gandelsonas produced a series of fine plans of the layered fragmentation of Boston and New York, which clearly revealed the dynamics and tensions between the various, layered grids. In addition, Gandelsonas tried to link these dynamic grid interactions to perceptions of movement through the city, in a series of interesting "cinematic" drawings using photographs of buildings in the manner of Kevin Lynch's *The View from the Road*.

The Urban Text attempts to build on this insight, using the computer to analyze four large quadrants of the Chicago grid surrounding the Loop. It includes three short essays by Catherine Ingraham, Joan Copjec, and John Whiteman. Compared to the earlier drawings of Boston, the computer-generated graphics carry very little information, provide little insight into the three-dimensional culture of the city with its tunnels and skyscrapers (see Alvin Boyarsky's "Chicago à la Carte," special issue of *Architectural Design*, 1972), and demonstrate the limitations of the figure-ground technique. Nonetheless, the process of the inquiry does represent an advance in Gandelsonas's research. Differentiation, interruptions, and dislocations are highlighted as an essential part of the Chicago grid, counteracting Cartesian rationality. Various categories of grid interruption are separated out in individual layers and then colored by the computer. Overlays of these various layers produce different readings of the grid, which emphasize combinations of irregularities and the irrational qualities of the city.

With a computer to "delayer" the city, Mario Gandelsonas searches for ways to improve our ability to read the urban fabric; the Chicago River area and its street layout. (From *The Urban Text*.)

THE URBAN TEXT, Mario Gandelsonas, with essays by Joan Copjec, Catherine Ingraham, and John Whiteman, MIT Press, 1991, 95 pp., illus., $14.95.

Commentary by Frank Edgerton Martin

Photography by Christopher C. Faust

Helping Suburbs to Reappear

THE SUBURBAN DOCUMENTATION PROJECT

One of our main goals at The Suburban Documentation Project is to use photography to make the unnoticed visible. We believe that the American suburb is so ubiquitous that its narrow range of housing and design options are rarely questioned in public discourse. We use photography and written analysis to inspire debate over the quality (or lack thereof) of much of the suburban vernacular. One of our strategies is to show suburban growth, familiar and ordinary as it may be, as something that is historically significant and representative of our time; and, for this reason, we donate or sell most of our black-and-white images to museums and archives.

Over the last three years, our work has documented the mass production of medium- to high-priced housing, the advent of historicism in recent suburban house designs, and the waste of open land that characterizes American development patterns. In May of 1991, we exhibited a group of panoramic photographs from the first year of our work. The title, "The Cities of Our Time: Suburban Landscapes of the Reagan Era," was meant not only to be provocative but accurate: we had been photographing the urban growth of our region (Minneapolis, Minnesota) since 1980, and evidence of the historical idealism, heavy consumption and debt, and widening economic disparities resultant of the Reagan decade appeared in our images.

The reactions to our exhibit included fear and a fair amount of anger over the developments we portrayed. Although it's impossible to be entirely objective, we did try to remain as nonjudgmental as possible. Some city-dwellers were offended by our exhibit, as was clear from the comment book: "Why would you ever want to take photos of such horrible places!" and "Why are you glorifying this kind of destruction of the earth?" In particular, the garish contractor-Tudor houses and empty cul-de-sacs were the most upsetting.

These antisuburban responses are typical of the political and geographic distance that separates Americans who live in newer suburbs and those who live in cities. As two people who grew up in the suburbs during the 1960s, we remember the antiurban fears and sentiments of many of our neighbors. Today, even though we live in urban areas, we don't believe that suburbs are inherently bad—and we have slowly come to accept the prospect that our metropolitan areas will continue to grow. In our photography, we attempt to break the spell of familiar suburban landscapes by showing how quickly they are built, and how quickly they grow into neighborhoods and communities.

Landscape change, for better or worse, is imprinted in our memories. Virtually all of the open spaces in which we played as children have been developed, subsumed by single-family houses, offices, shopping centers. Like many Americans of our generation, the suburban landscapes of our memories have not been static. Rather, they are the sites of continuing growth, infill, loss, and change. Unlike most urban neighborhoods and small-town settings, the American urban fringe can become completely transformed within a single generation; consequently, change is painfully apparent to the nostalgic baby-boomer. The communities of our childhoods are changing in many ways, but they are certainly not disappearing when we go "home." What is disappearing is the pastoral horizon, the remnants of the rural landscape that drew many home buyers to the urban edge in the first place.

For example, I remember a particular field with a gambrel-roofed barn near my house in the western Minneapolis suburbs. In a grove of trees, there was a circle of field stones that had been the foundation for a silo. For many years, I rode my bike on a narrow dirt path back and forth through these grasses. Today this former field is adjacent to the two-million-square-foot Ridgedale shopping center—a mall named for the glacial moraine that its construction completely flattened. The field itself is now the site of several smaller shopping centers, a bank that resembles the Governor's Palace from Colonial Williamsburg, and Byerly's, one of the largest and most elegant grocery stores in the country.

In our photographic work, we are documenting our fascination with such historical ironies in American architecture and place ideals—with an open-eyed curiosity that is, we hope, more revealing than the outright cynicism with which many urbanites and design professionals view vernacular suburban landscapes. Such a curiosity is essential if we are to understand the landscapes where much of the housing construction and job creation in this country are now occurring. Whether we like it or not, the suburbs of our time will become an important part of the cities of the future.

Certainly, there are problems with urban sprawl. In the Midwest, the burgeoning urban fringe is completely dependent on the automobile. New neighborhoods often supplant prime agricultural land and ecologically sensitive areas. In human terms, the dispersion of the city only worsens already existing conditions of economic and racial segregation. In our work, we attempt to question the environmental costs of new suburbs as well as their social costs for the inner-city left behind and for the loss of productive farmland.

For the design professions, the landscapes that may be the most familiar in day-to-day life are also the most invisible. While environmental concerns are fashionable in academic design, the social costs of the arcadian edge are often forgotten in such idyllic communities as Davis, California, and Madison, Wisconsin. Architectural and planning discourse often focuses on academic theories of criticism and signature design projects, and ignore the environments in which most people will live in the coming generations. Only about 5 percent of the buildings in the United States are designed by architects—and a far smaller por-

tion of built landscapes are shaped with the help of landscape architects. For every architect, there are several contractors eager to build with their understanding of the "market" and its forces. For every Seaside or other such high-profile planning project, there are a thousand "Wedgwood Parcs" on the fringes of American metropolitan areas.

As a photographer and a landscape architect, we use photography and landscape analysis to, in Michel Foucault's terms, "lift the veil" that conceals relevant questioning. We hope that our documentary images will render the invisibility of familiar landscapes with tangible and even thought-provoking clarity. Our underlying assumption is that Americans will always need homes—and that cities will continue to grow. Thus the essential questions become, Do we have other planning choices that are as yet unexplored? Do we need newer and richer models for neighborhoods and new communities? Artists and historians can help society to question the values, forms, and environmental consequences of the elusive suburb, and can encourage a confrontation with the everyday world that will allow the suburb to reappear.

The Edge of Infrastructure, Eden Prairie, Minnesota; 1990.
In this photograph, we see the effects of ten years of growth and aging in an apartment complex build around 1980. With spruce trees and mowed turf that seem unnatural next to the "prairie," the entire scene reflects human intervention and is composed of plants that are non-native to the region.

The Horizon of Environmental Consumption, Woodbury, Minnesota; 1992. (below)
What was once a sustainable prairie and savanna landscape near St. Paul is becoming a horticulturalist's arcadia, replete with implied gates, imported spruce trees, and the presence of groundkeepers to water and fertilize the new tableau. Though costly to maintain, most new residents in this development rarely question the environmental and financial costs of supporting this landscape, which comes out of their monthly association dues.
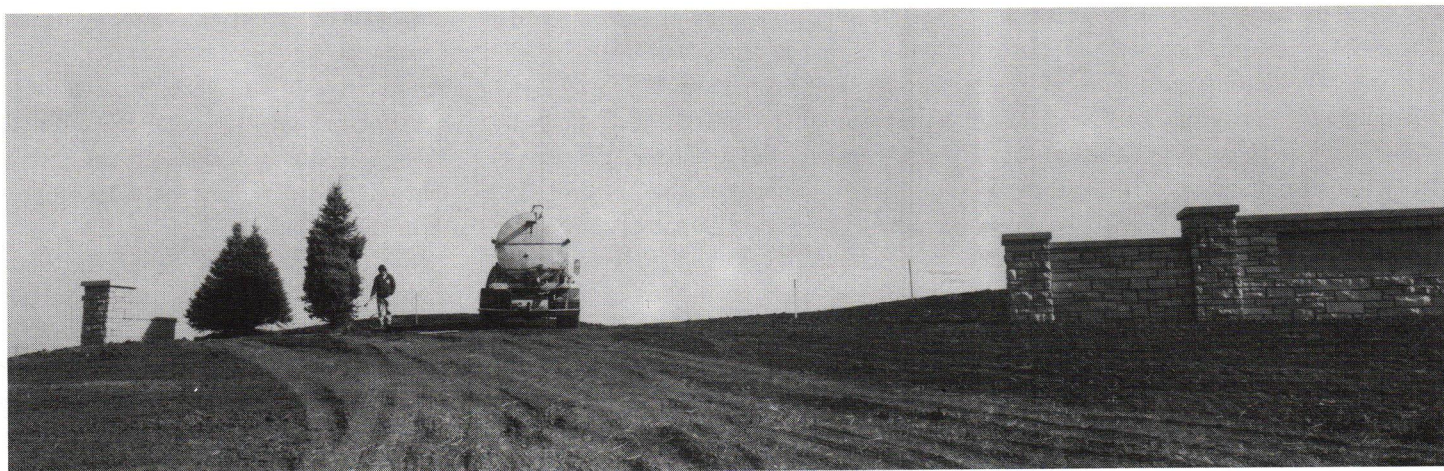
The New Pastorale, Apple Valley, Minnesota; 1992. (right)
Although traditional 17th-century conceptions of landcape implied open, pastoral scenes such as those captured by painters, the meanings of words "garden" and "yard" have long implied an actual enclosure. In this photograph, we see the tension between these two ideas of landscape as one homeowner seeks to demarcate private yard space while others seek the open vistas afforded by large lots. Regardless of lawn treatments, all such new, upscale neighborhoods are filled with gates, signs for home-security systems, and other reminders of private-property rights.

"Dear, why is our basement wet?" Plymouth, Minnesota; 1992. (below)
Developers of new subdivisions create new public spaces and park set-asides by "donating" wetland areas that they are not allowed to destroy (their "philanthropic" aspirations aside). Unfortunately, the clustering of new houses on small lots, while picturesque, poses less visible problems, such as fertilizer pollution of low-lying areas and leaky basements in houses with foundations below the water table.

Eric Sandweiss

Roadside America: The Automobile in Design and Culture

JAN JENNINGS, EDITOR

The Car and the City: The Automobile, the Built Environment, and Daily Urban Life

MARTIN WACHS AND MARGARET CRAWFORD, EDITORS

Let's forgive ourselves if we find the landscape of late-20th-century American suburbia a bit disorienting. Just when we'd learned to see, and even love, the peculiar order beneath what earlier generations had dismissed as the chaos of the industrial city or the cacophony of the commercial strip, along came a tidal wave of look-alike corporate office parks, mansarded all-suite hotels, and stuccoed town houses to throw us for another monstrous, cloverleaf loop from which we have yet to bounce back.

The recent spate of books on post-suburbia suggests that all this is changing, if only because the sheer weight of the verbiage on the subject has generated some plausible models and catchy phrases that allow us to believe that we can begin making sense of the contemporary American landscape (and, most likely, to want to protect it when the time comes for the next round of disorienting change). Still, it is a happy fact that

academic law and order have not yet fully settled on the urban fringe. There remains plenty of room for new sheriffs with new ways of doing business, and nowhere is it clearer than in our efforts to capture that ultimate bad guy of decentralization, the automobile.

The year 1988 saw the convening of two conferences—appropriately, one in Detroit and the other in Los Angeles—devoted to the subject of cars and the automotive landscape. The former, titled "Americans and the Automobile" and sponsored by the Society for Commercial Archaeology, yielded *Roadside America*, a handsome anthology edited by SCA president Jan Jennings. The second, graced with the equally open-ended title, "The Car and the City," resulted in a less picturesque but no less provocative volume of the same name, edited by conference chairpersons Margaret Crawford and Martin Wachs.

From the variety of essays represented in these two anthologies, as well as the intentionally loose thematic frameworks in which the editors have encased them, it appears that "disorientation" may yet remain the most appropriate description of our scholarly grasp of the automotive landscape. From the start readers will feel the absence of any unifying body of questions or previously entrenched, interpretive framework to tie the essays of either book closely together or to clearly distinguish one collection from the other. Instead, judging from their own foreword remarks, the organizers of each conference apparently chose

to leave their editorial doors open as wide as possible, and then waited to see what might walk in. Whether that open-door policy proves a strength or a weakness depends on what you hope to get out of these books.

As a reviewer, I wish I knew more specifically what personal expectations or agendas the editors brought to their task. Crawford and Wachs venture so far as to say that their conference was organized "in efforts to understand how the automobile, the city, and modern life interact," while Jennings offers that she wished "to establish an alliance between the automobile and its impact on culture and the environment." Neither of those broad platforms encourages clear thematic direction, although the editors of both books group their disparate chapters under nominal section headings that lend a semblance of order to what are in fact extremely wide-ranging materials. Variety, not consistency, characterizes the two volumes. Reading them together in their entirety is like trying to read license plates from the median of a busy freeway: you can't possibly catch every one, so it's okay to relax and content yourself with a number here and a flash of color there.

For most interested readers, then, this range and variety may be just what is needed to gain a first idea of the kind of work being pursued in this heavily trafficked field. Each book is full of nuggets of historical research and contemporary speculation on cars and the people who drive them, on the buildings that service them and cater to drivers' needs. Readers will find the editors' broad charges applied to any number of physical settings, from the crass landscape of automotive tourism to the crowded city street, from nationwide networks of trade to the garages of private homes.

Predictably, some of the most compelling prose in both books is reserved for those essays that focus on the fun stuff: the garish American world of roaring V-8 engines, screaming billboards, and thrill-a-minute theme parks. Alan Hess has been polishing and buffing his prose on the subject for years, and it shows in his description, in *The Car and the City*, of the Virgil
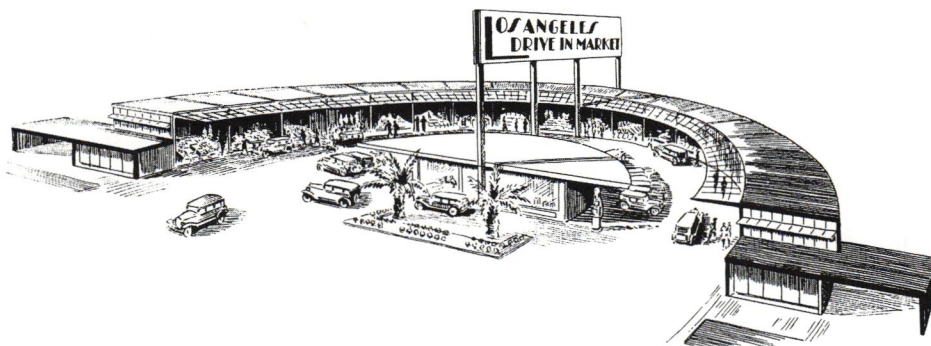
Hypothetical drive-in market in Los Angeles by Richard Neutra, ca. 1928. In the chapter entitled "The Perils of a Parkless Town," Richard Longstreth explains how the necessity for convenient parking helped to shape Los Angeles. (From *The Car and the City*.)
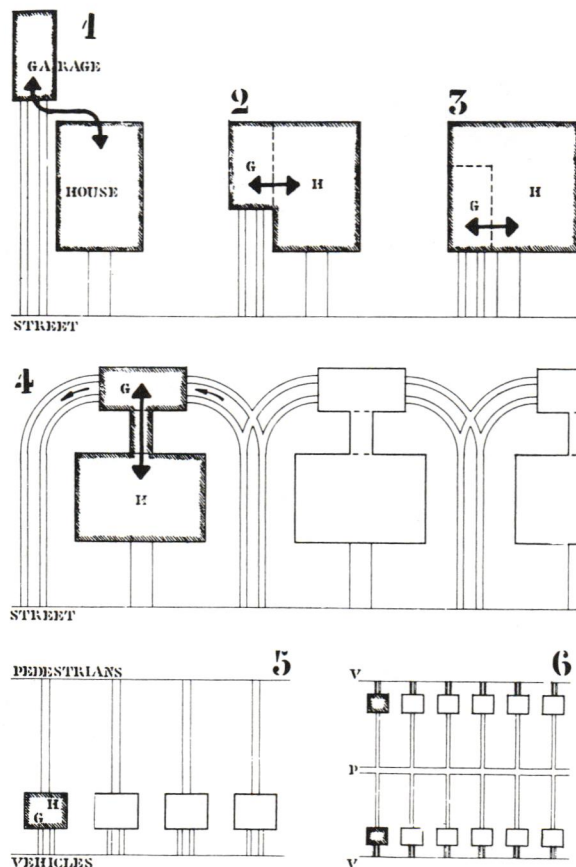
1. Detached garage, an arrangement suggested by the stable which was separated from house for sanitary reasons.

2. Same garage unit attached to house in order to attain convenience of entry. There is no valid reason as in case of stable to separate the two elements.

3. Final step in evolution. The garage is here incorporated in house plan and is most directly accessible from entrance hallway and from street.

4. An arrangement with garage at rear making available entire house frontage for living rooms. Cars may drive into and out of garage instead of backing out to street. One driveway serves two garages.

5./6. A desirable separation of pedestrians and vehicles with grouped houses. Garage entrances face highways. Hall entries for pedestrians and the living rooms front gardens.

The history and proper placement of the garage, according to *Architectural Record*. (From *The Car and the City*.)

Exner–designed Chrysler models of the 1950s: "A grinning chrome grill swept around to become a spear that ricocheted off a point in space to blossom into a door-handle before tapering off into a contrail of ruby red plastic as the car slipped down the road." Crawford's own exposition of Los Angeles's "Fifth Ecology"—a cluster of isolated fantasy environments—presents a familiar postmodern viewpoint on that city, but still captures the darkness and loneliness that persistently breaks through the golden shell of the California dream. In *Roadside America*, essays like Keith A. Sculle's description of the Wigwam Village motel chain, or E. L. Widmer's account of the intertwined history of rock and roll and automobiles, offer a similar joyride for thrill-seeking readers.

Less familiar and less flashy subjects, which in fact constitute the larger part of any landscape, take on a new vibrancy in other essays. In *The Car and the City*, J. B. Jackson continues, as always, to describe ordinary settings—in this case, the urban world of trucks and truckers—in the kind of pointillist detail that endows what might otherwise have been an invisible landscape with the precision and systematic clarity of a model railroad set. Richard Longstreth explains how acknowledgment of the mundane commercial necessity of convenient parking

spaces helped to reshape Los Angeles and other cities. Similar examples from *Roadside America* are too numerous to list in their entirety. Among them, David K. Vaughan's account of the place of automobiles in juvenile fiction enlightens us on an important genre of popular American literature while offering new evidence of the car's conceptual importance in American family life; R. Stephen Sennott delivers a history of the architectural integration of automobile traffic in downtown Chicago that should recast our discussions of both the legacy of the Burnham/Bennett plan and the general problems of early 20th-century commercial architectural development; Gerald Bloomfield compellingly explains the changing national geography of car manufacture, distribution, and sales; and Carol Ahlgren and Frank Edgerton Martin give an intriguing glimpse into the history of one maker of prefabricated metal buildings.

The social and legal context of the automotive landscape provides another major topic that weaves through the two books. Refreshingly, an entire section of *The Car and the City* is devoted to gender issues, although the drift of each of the essays within it—that cars have exacerbated rather than lessened gender-based inequality and stereotyping—will surprise few. Elsewhere in the same book, Sam Bass Warner, Jr., and Melvin M. Webber both present articulate cases for accepting our automotive dependence as an opportunity to promote new systems of social justice. Richard Ingersoll and Daniel M. Bluestone, in *Roadside America*, present the automotive landscape in terms of our broader debate over what kind of society we will be—Ingersoll by investigating "the death of the street" in Houston as one end-point of a tradition rooted in medieval Italy, and Bluestone by examining the changing American conception of roadside "blight" and the effect of moral censure and law upon architects and builders.

As much as their concerns overlap, the two volumes are not without their significant differences. The subject headings that subdivide *The Car and the City*—"The

Garages with a decidedly residential character were once common; Baily and Bassett, 1911. (From *Roadside America*.)

Sebastiano Brandolini

The Atlanti Series

The "Atlanti" family of books, produced by the Italian publisher Marsilio, is growing fast and continuously adding new titles. Monographs of Italian towns or regions whose architectural heritage demands a thorough assembly of photographs, drawings, and surveys, these documentaries aim to freeze images of towns at a given instant in time through aerial photographs, for the purpose of conservation and urban analysis. The photographs in the books provide valuable urban information on everything from rooftops, ground vegetation, pollution, and materials; however, they provide practically no information on aspects such as elevations and interior spaces of buildings, traffic, infrastructures, social groups, or population density.

This series is a popularized version of the "rectified photo maps" portfolio editions (*fotopiani* in Italian). Of course the *fotopiano* existed long before these publications, but always as a territorial-geographical instrument, and never as a means to study urban details such as rooftops. Expensive to produce, *fotopiani* were originally limited-circulation administrative instruments used largely for conservation purposes, and when the area photographed was not subject to continual change. The *fotopiani* are popularized both in the technical sense and in format: technically they contain aerial zenithal views at a constant scale, without optical rectification; format-wise, the portfolios were originally over-sized and intended for a few professionals or libraries, and not for a general audience. When in 1985 the Venice aerial photo-map sold 1,000 copies in just three months, the publisher and the Venice administration realized that a wider circulation should be considered for this and other volumes.

So the Atlanti series turned the *fotopiani* into a marketable product: production costs were lowered and returns raised, and it is now possible to consider publishing urban areas that might change over time.

Car, the City, and Daily Work," or "The Automobile, Families, and Daily Life," for example—suggest, correctly, that the contributors to Crawford's and Wachs's book tend to place the automobile in the context of human behavior and social organization, while the headings in *Roadside America*—"Arts and Literature," "Building Types," and so on—reflect the greater preponderance of essays that consider the car as an artifact of American material culture. *Roadside America*'s larger format, as well as the far-greater proportion of space devoted to illustration, further suit its increased emphasis on architecture and the landscape. My guess is that on the whole, Crawford's and Wachs's book will be more generally useful for students and teachers of urban sociology and planning, while Jennings's volume will find its way into more architectural history and American studies classrooms.

The Car and the City and *Roadside America* share a common and sensible goal: making discussion of the automobile central to our understanding of the changes in the 20th-century American landscape. Like steam power before it, the mechanism of internal combustion lies at the heart of incalculable changes in the manner in which we use and experience the landscape. Motors drive not only our cars but, in a real way, our lives. Given this central place in our history and our future, it is remarkable that we do not have more studies like these. Given the relative lack of such studies, it is perhaps too much to expect that the discussion of cars and culture become more focused and less diffused. But if we really want to understand what's happening in our landscape today, one hopes that these books will serve as preliminary destinations in a much longer journey.

The area of Venice showing Trouchetto and Piazzale Roma (with parked cars), and the beginnings of the Grand Canal with the Santa Lucia railway station. (From *Atlante di Venezia*.)

The volume on Venice is, for many reasons, uniquely beautiful. Almost two hundred photos occupy the right-hand pages of the square book and the facing pages present a map of the same area at the same scale. The two square plates, one in vibrant color and the other in black-and-white lines, describe two separate levels of perception. In *Atlante di Venezia* water gives the plates a stunning reflectivity and three-dimensionality. In the later *Atlante di Roma* cars and parking lots seem to replace water, and the eye easily recognizes the variety of building types of different sizes and ages that compose the urban fabric. It is tricky, but one must resist the temptation to interpret these aerial views as abstract patterns; in fact they are exquisitely realistic, mathematically exact, and leave no space for interpretation. They depict Italian cities with incisive clarity in a way that no architect in the past, even from the highest bell tower or a zeppelin in flight, could see.

The practical irony of such surveys is that, for example, in the case of the historical center of the "eternal city," Rome, all the photographs were taken in less than one hour (between 10:58:48 and 11:43:25, to be precise) and together form a planning instrument whose scope is intended to last over time, and whose effective return will be measurable only many years from now. This is a sophisticated, instantaneous photograph that acts as an encyclopedia. The production of an atlas such as that on Rome is tiresome and slow from an administrative and bureaucratic point of view, but is speedy as far as execution is concerned. In this sense, it differs greatly from two other important survey projects still underway in Europe: *Atlas de Paris,* which focuses on the morphological evolution of Paris over two-thousand years, and *The Survey of London*, which collects multifaceted administrative, statistical, and literary documentation on the different boroughs.

The photo-surveys of Venice and Rome are filled with a sense of responsibility, due to both cities' efforts to preserve urban fabrics that are currently threatened not so much by external forces as by their own internal preservation or "no-new-buildings" policies. These policies proved effective twenty years ago, when Italian city centers resisted the pressures of expansion, and traffic and parking problems were not yet first on the agenda of priorities. Today, however, conservation per se is no longer sufficient as either an objective or as a means to achieve urban preservation. For cities to be preserved, conservation can no longer be the sole strategy; it is also necessary to select what and how to conserve, and, through precise guidelines regarding materials, volumes, and finishes, administrators must eventually consider the possibility of substitution under strict planning control.

The atlases on Venice and Rome are conclusive editorial projects, with a strong emphasis on historic preservation, which explains why the aerial shots covered only the cities' inner areas. Venice has clear physical boundaries defined by water, and the center of Rome, within the Aurelian walls, has equally clear limits. The same will be true, with slight variations, for the other two atlas volumes currently being prepared by Marsilio, on Naples and Seville, the latter making the most of the Expo excitement. In all these towns, the historical center is medium-sized, which ensures a correct ratio between the three factors crucial to determining the success or failure of a photo-survey: the cost of the photographic air campaign, the scale at which the shots are reproduced on the pages, and the final weight and price of the book. Once the ideal ratio of these three variables is recognized, those who produce photo-survey books will find it difficult to move away from cities with medium-sized town centers. The vast centers of Paris or London would require, if photographed at the same scale as Rome, about five volumes; on top of this, small ur-
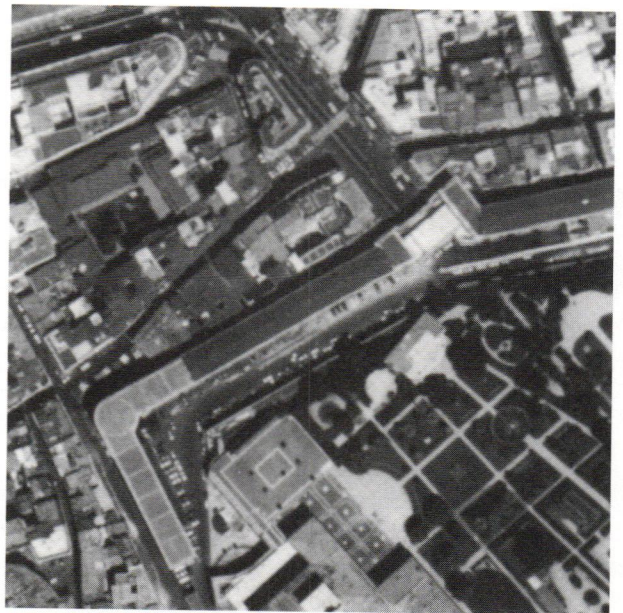
The area of Rome with the Quirinale Palace. (From *Atlante di Roma*.)
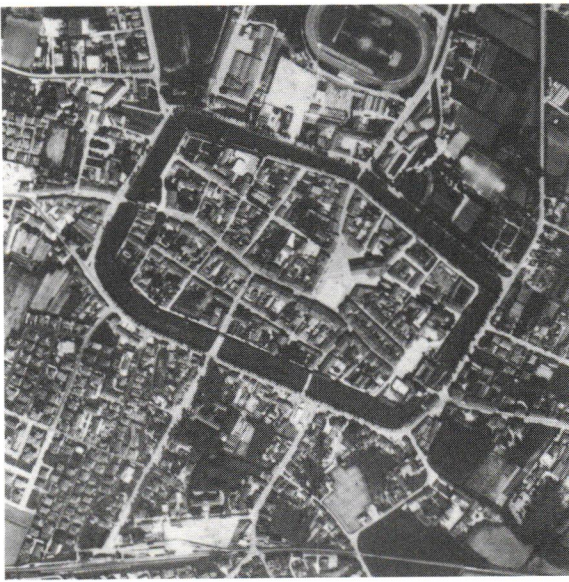
In the Veneto region, the walled town of Montagnana. (From *Atlante del Veneto*.)

ban centers surveyed via this technique would turn out to be too expensive, with insufficient material to compile a complete volume.

These considerations lead to the latest volume, *Atlante del Veneto*, which differs from previous volumes in terms of organization and objectives. Commissioned by the Regione Veneto, it assembles existing aerial shots of about forty small towns in this region. Photos are at different scales and therefore not comparable, while the accompanying cartography shows areas larger than those in the photos and seldom refers to the same moment in time as the photos do. These problems were probably inevitable considering the scattered nature of the editorial project.

While the Venice and Rome volumes arose from the desire to demonstrate a unity of urban intents, the Veneto volume proudly displays the differences in topography, shape, and age between the villages and small towns. This is a large-scale survey of the Veneto region, bordering more on geography than urban history, approaching urban morphology more than building typology. The elements of this survey are no longer the roofs, courtyards, squares, and cars of Rome. Light no longer acts as a source of detailed

information. Instead we read the relationship between towns, landscape, and water courses, the position of army barracks and railway stations, and roads as vectors of development. The fringes of 20th-century residential and industrial expansions are also depicted but do not constitute the focus of the inquiry; rather, they seem to be a source of embarrassment to the scope of the publication.

It is often the historical urban core that determines future growth, and it is this restricted area that traditionally garners the most attention and protection. Even more frequently, architects and architectural design are excluded from this terrain; instead, they are relegated to the vast middle landscape that we know lies beyond the margins of the aerial photographs. Had this uncertain and dynamic zone been shown, the book would have offered a less reassuring or nostalgic message, and would be more honest. Rome and Venice enjoy clear-cut boundaries while the Veneto countryside, especially inside the Treviso-Padua-Vicenza triangle, is an eloquent example of what has been recently termed *città diffusa*: the suburban sprawl of an edge city, devoid of criteria or principles, having neither the ambition nor opportunity to turn into a city.

Recent history and the traumas of growth are sadly excluded from the photos of these books. Basic considerations come to mind: how long it took to build historic centers and how small they are; how short a time it took to build the expansion zones and how vast they are; and how different are the points of view and desires of the urban historian and the professional architect. These books, nevertheless, make available a previously unseen collection of images, so it is a project that breaks fresh and fertile ground. And what's more, it shows great potential to assess evolution over shorter periods of time, say five or ten years. For this reason, the idea should be profitably put

to use in many other Italian regions, as well as abroad.

The success of Robert Cameron's books, such as *Above Los Angeles* and *Above Washington*, makes one dream of a more comprehensive zenithal photo-survey of American cities. As a European architect, I am confident this would give unimagined insights into what the physical substance of the American city actually is. The American city is unstable and fast-paced, and each photo could ultimately resemble a movie still. The difficulty of rectifying different building heights might pose problems. But the stunning aspect of zenithal photo-maps—rectified or not—is that they are analytical and lack perspectival depth; these views do not belong to the repertoire of everyday experience. Like all good analyses, they are essential, please both eye and mind, and open our imaginations.

ATLANTE DI VENEZIA, Edoardo Salzano, editor, with essays by Donatella Calabi, Edgarda Feletti, and Mario Fondelli, Comune di Venezia and Marsilio Editore (American distributor, Princeton Architectural Press), 1989, 420 pp., illus.

ATLANTE DI ROMA, Comune di Roma, editor, with essays by Paolo Marconi, Eugenio Baldari, Bruno Cussino, Luigi Prestinenza Puglisi, Gabriella Maltese, Daniele Tinacci, and Licinio Ferretti; photographs by Aerofoto Consult-Automap and Compagnia Generale Ripreseaeree, Marsilio Editori, 1991, 625 pp., illus.

ATLANTE DEL VENETO, Franco Posocco, editor, with essays by Franco Posocco, Mario Fondelli, Massimo Pasqualin, and Faustino Bettella; photographs by Compagnia Generale Ripreseaeree di Parma, Regione del Veneto and Marsilio Editori, 1991, 254 pp., illus.

Julian Hunt

The Discreet Charm of the Catalan Bourgeoisie: The Memoirs of Oriol Bohigas

"Culture is a fragile phenomenon and the conditions for its emergence are elusive."

—Kenneth Frampton, "Barcelona 1990: In Search of a Laconic Line"

Memoirs by architects are a rare, hybrid literary form, and their value often lies outside the strict limits of the profession when they implicitly question the role of the architect within society. The most famous example of a memoir by an architect is Albert Speer's, and the value of his book has little to do with the profession, except perhaps as as demonstration of the organizational skills intrinsic to it. Another recent memoir is that of Soviet architect Alexander Pasternak, and its appeal lies largely in the depiction of the Dostoyevskian skills needed by an architect in order to have survived in the communist system.

At their best, memoirs serve not only to fill out the historical record of a particular place at a particular time, but also suggest some of those elusive qualities that allow culture to flourish. Oriol Bohigas wrote a great part of his memoirs during the dictatorship of Generalissimo Francisco Franco and it is no coincidence that this experience defined his career. *Dietari de Records I* and *II*, two volumes of a projected three-volume set, cover the recent history of Barcelona and scan the trajectory of Catalan culture from one of its lowest historical points—the fall of Barcelona at the end of the Spanish Civil War in 1939—to its extravagant projection onto television screens around the world as the backdrop to the 1992 Olympic Games.

Extravagant projection is not necessarily a sign of emergent culture. In fact, the inflection point of Catalan culture may have occurred some time before the flaming arrow lit the Olympic torch. Mario Vargos Llose,

who lived in Barcelona in the late 1960s during the first ferment against the sclerotic regime, raised the controversy by suggesting so in a recent visit to Barcelona. But there is no doubt that the real subject and importance of Bohigas's memoirs lies in his description of the emergence of a regional culture despite years of repression and bureaucratic fiat—of particular relevance today as Eastern Europe searches for models of transition and as American policy-makers desperately need new ideas. And Bohigas defines a significant role for architects, after years of diminishing importance: that of mediating political power and the built form of the city.

Bohigas, however, has published his memoirs in the language of his region, Catalan, and to add to the difficulty, he covers a period of history that requires readers to be thoroughly familiar with Catalan history in order to appreciate the quantity of locally significant names and events that compose the complex narrative. In the same way that the American short story was a product of a

Oriol Bohigas, also known as "The Snake Charmer." (From *Dit o Fet: Dietari de Records*.)

busy society with little time for either reading or writing, in his apparently frenetic lifestyle, Bohigas has written his memoirs in snatches of dead time, waiting in airports around the world mostly. Noting place and time at the head of each chapter, he writes in a sophisticated, nonlinear style, weaving a thicket of personalities, leaping back and forth in time, often relating current news items to their historical antecedents. He peoples this convoluted narrative with deft character sketches that give an idea of the complexity, personal dedication, and sacrifice that historical abstractions and analysis cannot convey: for example, the dedication of Bohigas's father, Pere, to the development of institutions devoted to defining Catalan identity, such as the seed collection of what is now the Museu d'art de Catalunya in the Palau Nacional (currently under renovation by Gae Aulenti); the complex and compromising coming to terms with military and political defeat of the Catalan philosopher Eugenio D'Ors, Bohigas's mentor; the search for continuity and resistance to systematic repression through the painfully slow process of consolidation, preparation, and testing of political limits that Antoni de Moragas personified as head of the Collegi d'Arquitectes; and lastly, and yet to be written as a third volume, the coming to power of Bohigas himself.

Yet his writings lack the heavy feel of encomium. An inveterate name-dropper, he has a story to tell about everyone, even foreign architects and their little-known foibles: how Alvar Aalto was being escorted around Vienna by a group of tiresomely enthusiastic students until he discovered the charms of Josef Hoffmann's widow who accompanied them, or of Le Corbusier's difficulties with the hostess and chamberpot in the Sarraz castle during the founding of CIAM. Bohigas is a skilled writer, a natural conversationalist, a *bon vivant*, and, perhaps most importantly, a skillful politician. By the end of the second volume the
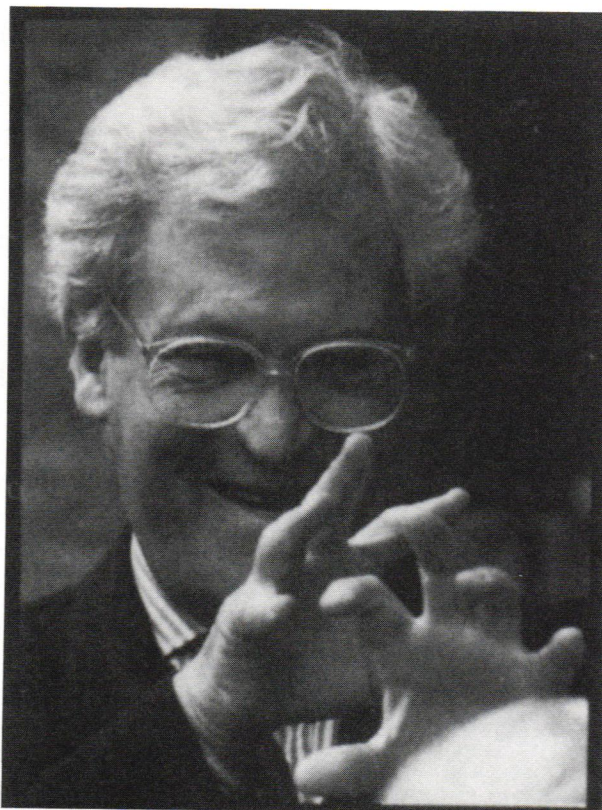
reader gets a sense of a Catalan society and culture that is highly developed, highly self-conscious, idiosyncratic, and still fractured by the civil war.

However, it is permissible and certainly easier to read Robert Hughes's *Barcelona* (New York: Knopf, 1992)—despite his trajectory as the James Michener of social history—and get a tasty, prepackaged idea of the Catalan struggle for identity within the Spanish state; but it does not, as a tertiary source, have the immediacy or the detail of the memoirs of Bohigas in describing the emergence of a regional culture on the periphery of Europe.

Kenneth Frampton may have taken something from this experience of Barcelona and Catalan culture to form his influential 1983 essay, "Towards a Critical Regionalism," in which he outlines a strategy for mediating "the impact of universal civilization with elements derived *indirectly* from the peculiarities of a particular place" [Frampton's italics]. His presence, along with Rem Koolhaas's, on the editorial board of *Quaderns*, a respected architectural journal published by the Collegi d'Arquitectes of Barcelona, marked the reemergence on the international circuit of a body of archi-

tects from a peripheral region of Europe. Likewise, since the early 1980s, Peter Buchanan highlighted the work of new Catalan architects in the *Architectural Review* and Bohigas became known as the municipal architect who helped orchestrate a notable urban renovation long before Barcelona was selected for the Olympic Games. When that selection came, however, it became a calculated excuse for a much more profound and important renovation that will be remembered as one of the most significant urban transformations of this century.

Extremely deep is the well of the past, and Barcelona is an age-old Mediterranean city, so it is difficult to pinpoint the origins of this particular restoration except within the most recent cycle of renovation, stabilization, and stagnation. The first outlines for the remarkable restoration experienced by Barcelona in the 1980s emerged well before the death of Franco in 1975. Sensing the end of the long years of the Franco regime in the ossification and passivity of the state bureaucracy, a process of "infiltration" of professionals and intellectuals began in anticipation of an eventual and significant political change.

At the beginning of the sixties, and through a process that can be seen as a continuation of the influence which organicism exerted on the youngest and most gifted architects of the post civil war period, interest in Catalunya was centered on neo-realist proposals stated during the Italian Reconstruction period, thus differentiating the Catalan experience from the rest of Spain.

The neo-realist approach promoted in the pages of *Casabella-Continuità* and eagerly received in Barcelona, meant, as is well known, a desire to break away from the initial pioneering ideas of modernism in favor of a revalorization of specific, material, and contextual elements which would lead to an understanding of the project as a concrete construction rather than an abstract ideal . . .

The insistence upon the material nature of architectural activity can also be seen as a consequence of the general discrediting of European culture after May of 1968, as well as a presumed shared realist heritage. All proposals that set themselves up as a corollary of cosmically ordered visions and all architectural forms that tended toward the use of reason for the construction of abstract systems of connected rules became discredited.[1]

This tendency toward the traditional Albertian model of architectural activity—in rejection of the positivist Anglo-Saxon, and specifically American models of architectural activity subsumed within economic models—found its personification in Joan Antoni Solans who directed the first reworking of the General Metropolitan Plan of Barcelona during the key transition years between 1966 and 1977. He later became director of municipal planning for Barcelona from 1977 until 1980, and then became general director of urbanism for the regional government of Catalunya. During this time the ground work was laid by the purchase of hundreds of parcels of privately held property for later public use as parks, housing, and schools. At the same time, Solans initiated a form of architectural intervention that gave priority to proposals that were clearly defined and easy to execute over those that were vague and utopian and insisted on the professionalizaton of the

L'Eixample de Barcelona (the extension of Barcelona): Ildefons Cerdà, Bohigas's predecessor; 1859.

Planning Department, which set the model for later municipal administrations. In Solan's words,

> The Administration has to make use of the best professionals in aspects of coordination, inspection, and supervision, functions which cannot be substituted, and still maintain an open vision of the project. . . . The architectural coherence has to be guaranteed by the Administration, and furthermore, I would say, an Administration must have its own architectural expression, in the same sense that its reading would demonstrate the culture at that moment of administration.[2]

But it was not until January 1985 with the publication of Bohigas's book *Reconstrucció de Barcelona* that the final outline for the reconstruction of Barcelona was presented to the public. Extremely different in function and style from his later memoirs, *Reconstrucció de Barcelona* represented not so much an original and personal vision of the future of Barcelona as a well-defined consensus on what had to be done, brought about by years of debate among the city's intellectual and political elite. Based on the Italian model of architectural activity in which buildings and streets are clear instruments in the definition of public life, Bohigas brought together the accumulated wisdom of a collection of analyses which were made neighborhood by neighborhood, assessing the specific needs and characteristics of each. Working from the old center outward to the periphery, each proposal was characterized by a realism (manifest in the drawings) and a sensitivity to the human and pedestrian scale. Even in the design of the beltway, an enormous effort was made to reduce the negative impact of such a large public infrastructure in cases where it was thought the integrity of the neighborhood outweighed the added costs of alternative programs, such as tunneling under the neighborhood. If no alternatives were possible, much effort was put into the design of the neighborhood's gardens, pedestrian bridges, railings, lighting, sidewalks, and crosswalks in a clear policy to not only make the city function as a place of commerce, but also as a place to live. What is most remarkable

about *Reconstrucció de Barcelona*, essentially a political document, is the degree to which these proposals were carried out.

As a resident of Barcelona and a witness to this remarkable transformation, I can say that urban renovation is extremely difficult to understand from the perspective of the ordinary citizen. The work of urban renovation (and its cost) is so vast in scale and time, often buried within the urban fabric, out of everyday view or pushed off into projects to transform marginal and inaccessible land into useful space, that most people only perceive it as background political noise and hellish traffic congestion. And in democratic societies, if these processes are not adequately explained and justified, they often die incomplete, pathological to neighborhood social structures because of their uncertainty. Bohigas understood this instinctively and defined the political context within which it had to work:

> For many years—especially during the years of dictatorship—we affirmed the necessity of a participatory urbanism. And by referring to "participatory" I am referring to two things at the same time: an urbanism based on a democratic political structure that organizes decisions through popular will, and a conditional urbanism, promoted and modeled by the action of neighborhood associations, by entities organized territorially around the problem, and managed by the direct and creative intervention of the social base. . . .
>
> That a city like Barcelona can maintain alive the polemic of how its plazas and streets must be, after the indifference such questions generated before, is an indication not only of how municipal decisions are made now, but also an indication of a growing citizen consciousness, a decided social appropriation of collective space.[3]

While these neighborhood associations were spontaneous mass movements that formed toward the end of the dictatorship in opposition to horrendous urban policies, as documented by Manuel Castells in *The City and the Grassroots* (Berkeley: University of


Aerial perspective of the installations over the Second Beltway, Barcelona. (From IMPUSA–Graphic Files.)

California Press, 1983), today they function as a means of communication between the city administration and the neighborhoods. This link has meant that recent mayoral campaigns have centered on the effectiveness of particular urban renovations in particular neighborhoods. This has meant that the urbanism of the city has, in addition to broad long-term objectives, a detail and quality of execution that is expressed at the pedestrian level in beautifully detailed sidewalks, benches, bollards, lampposts, and an array of urban furniture to which pedestrians respond with a subtle but profound sense of well-being and delight in the beauty of public space. Peter Buchanan has noted

> While the public sphere of so many cities is suffering a progressive deterioration, even deliberate destruction or privatization, Barcelona is struggling to extend and enrich its public patrimony within a framework of respect for the symbolic and spatial qualities of the city.[4]

While *Reconstrucció de Barcelona* may be a political document within the particular
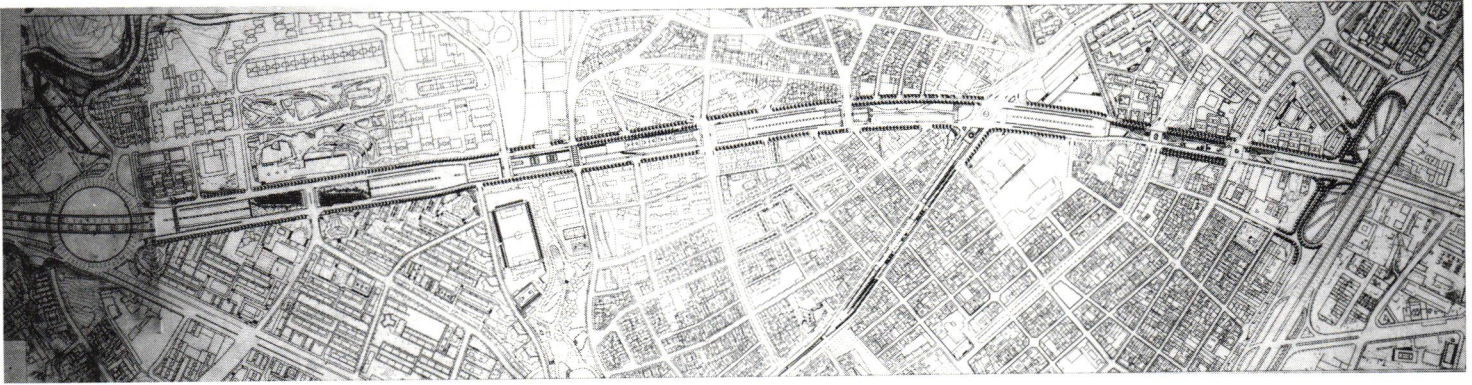
Northeast section of the Second Beltway, Barcelona; 1992. (From IMPUSA–Graphic Files.)

context of Barcelona, it represents a specific and well-defined approach to urban intervention as a process encompassed within the architectural profession and, as such, a reaffirmation of the importance of the profession in the public sphere.

> One of the great things, perhaps the most interesting, that the architectural profession has is the power to intervene in the public life of the city. This capacity of projection within the life of our society, which carries with it an enormous responsibility, is most transcendent in projects given out by the Administration.[5]

A political document it may be, but it might also be characterized by that "discreet charm of sobriety" which translates into faith, into what is clear, sensible, and reasonable.[6]

It is relevant, at this point, to mention that the 1984 Olympic Games in Los Angeles, by comparison, seem a missed opportunity that exposes an intellectual vacuum at the very highest levels of American government; the recent riots underline the results of a shocking absence of urban policies for American cities. Atlanta, home of CNN, Coca-Cola, and the next Olympic Games, offers little hope that it might take this ideal occasion to implement new urban policies. A culture of television, soda pop, and instant gratification makes the complex and long-term issues of urban policies extremely difficult for politicians to even explain, let alone promote and support over the long term. Perhaps Peter Ueberroth should consult Bohigas on how to rebuild the neighborhoods of LA.

Reading Bohigas's memoirs reveals the unique social and political character of Barcelona. Unlike the chaotic and turbulent social structure in LA, the social structure of Barcelona is remarkably stable and unchanging. Except for the brief flourishing of independent neighborhood associations, reform has come from above. Reform, as Bohigas understands it, results from the efforts of responsible and dedicated individuals organized within the social mechanism of the institution. It is curious to note that throughout his memoirs, packed as they are with individuals who made significant contributions to the recovery and consolidation of democratic culture, institutions play an important part. Perhaps it is characteristic of the mind of the architect to associate the institution with its architectural form, the building type.

As a founding member of Group R, along with Antoni de Moragas, head of the Collegi d'Arquitectes, his partner Josep Martorell, the irascible José Antonio Coderch, M. Valls, Josep María Sostres, Joachim Gili, and Josep Pratmarsó, Bohigas set up a discussion group that functioned as a link between the pre-fascist past and the ideals outlined by the international avant-garde as defined by the banned GATOPAG (Grup de Arquitectes i Tècnics Catalans per al Progrés de Arquitectura Contemporània, founded in 1930). Bohigas went on to subtly modify a sleepy and harmless institution known as the Foment de las Arts Decoratifs (FAD) away from giving prizes for interiors toward build-

ings and public spaces. Today, FAD is one of the most important architectural prizes in Spain. In 1962 Bohigas helped found *Ediciones 62*, the first publishing house to publish exclusively in Catalan. These and other institutions, plus the close constellation of friends and colleagues (whether in opposition or hiding) that populate his memoirs are the same that now form the basis of political power in Barcelona. It is here that the link between architecture, politics, and culture becomes explicit.

But it is precisely here that its fundamental weakness is revealed. Culture that is so organized is an official, didactic culture:

> The dangers of a "state culture"—where self-justifying propaganda eventually becomes the ultimate end of the cognitive discourse—together with a certain amount of stagnation on the part of several of our intellectuals/politicians who are more concerned with backing up traditional certainties than with bringing up new questions, may be the cause of the marginality imposed on those other intellectuals and artists who are more interested in creating a new state of affairs. However attractive it may seem to some sectors, it is nevertheless convenient to remember that marginality is capable of obstructing intellectual output entirely.[7]

This statement by Josep Lluis Mateo may well be a veiled but direct attack against Bohigas himself and his powerful position within the city administration, which dispenses important projects. But the most comprehensive criticism of Bohigas and his policies has been made by the civil

rights lawyer Eduard Moreno and the acclaimed novelist Manuel Vasquez Montalban in their 1991 book, *Barcelona, ¿Adónde Vas?*:

> The position of Bohigas, who had been one of the great critics of Porciolism [the urban policies of mayor Porciol] and who, once in power, immediately understood his position with respect to the economic instruments that they had to transform the city, did not want to be accused of practicing a policy directly socialist, which meant that they had to look for a pact with the existing economic powers. They could not unmake all the barbarities of Franco because that would have meant an incredibly disruptive effort, and then they began with all that minimalist philosophy: to redo the degraded neighborhoods, fixing little by little the services and hanging street signs [in Catalan] to recover the internal signs of identity within the neighborhoods. This meant fixing up the plazas where they could, but with a very minimal plan, recovering what they could of the city; a little here, a little there . . . but without a real plan that would imply a revolutionary and open conception of the city.[8]

Moreno and Montalban go on to argue that the rush to push through significant urban projects under the excuse of the Olympic Games meant that, because the city lacked the financial resources and the power to expropriate land, it had to cede sovereignty over significant proportions of property under its jurisdiction to private interests. The policy of negotiating with entrenched private interests in exchange for public works—based, it seems, on the experience of New York City under policies developed by Jacqueline Robertson—is severely criticized for the loss of public sovereignty over city property. Today, not ironically, New York, the financial capital of the world, is broke.

But perhaps the most subtle and bitter attack against the policies of Bohigas, the city administration, and the social elites comes from the architect and critic Pep Quetglas when he describes a building that epitomizes Barcelona:

> It's a fine building with a stone facade and galleries; the owner must make a good profit from the rents. The entrance doors have columns with sculpted capitals. On one of them there is the portrait of the concierge, guarding the door, bowing, his flat hat in his hand, attentive to any gentleman who may enter. On the other capital we see the concierge's wife, with a broom in her hand and a finger to her eye, busy at her work but not missing even the tiniest detail. Go and have a look if you don't believe me. Will I be able one day to express how I am devastated by this servile solicitude of these serving people in the face of their lords and masters, which I witness everyday around me in flesh-and-blood copies of those stone figures, multiplied in every state, trade, and condition. Their willingness to serve, the natural way in which they adopt the conventions of obedience, their concern to assume the values of a job well done, their instinct to participate, humble and satisfied, in the regulations move me to a point of repugnance I can recognize only as hatred, rancor, shame. "Barcelona" means being impregnated with this seignorial-servile spirit.[9]

This passage could have come out of Elias Canetti's *Auto-Da-Fè* and is a clear expression of the frustration with the rigidity of Catalan society—a rigidity of which Bohigas, from his seignorial position, seems quite unaware.

Despite these criticisms, it is unlikely that Catalan culture, without men like Bohigas, could resist the onslaught of what Frampton calls "universal civilization." Catalan culture does not have the critical mass to be self-sustaining in an increasingly internationalized free market where culture is reduced to information; instead, it is subsidized. Whatever the overall value of Catalan culture, in the field of architecture and urbanism it has gained international importance, and the experience seems to reinforce the idea that architecture flourishes in elitist societies. Bohigas has a right to feel pleased with the results of his efforts. The question remains, however, of what else Catalan culture is known for. The memoirs of Bohigas serve as a reminder that culture is an intimately human and mysterious enterprise.

NOTES

1. Josep Lluis Mateo, "Towards the End of the Century," *Quaderns* 164 (January–March 1985): 39–45.

2. Joan Antoni Solans, "Architecture and Administration," *Quaderns* 164 (January–March 1985): 9.

3. Oriol Bohigas, *Reconstrucció de Barcelona* (Barcelona: MOPU, 1986), pp. 127–28.

4. Peter Buchanan, "Monumentos a una civitas clasico-constructivista," *Barcelona* 1992 (Gili, 1990): 21.

5. Arcadi Pla, "The Administration as Client," *Quaderns* 164 (January–March 1985): 20.

6. Arcadi Pla, *On* 47 (January 1984): 27.

7. Josep Lluis Mateo, "Architecture and Power," *Quaderns* 164 (January–March 1985): 5.

8. Manuel Vasquez Montalban and Eduard Moreno, *Barcelona, ¿Adónde Vas?* (Barcelona: Ediciones de la Tempestad, 1991), pp. 62–63.

9. Pep Quetglas, "Triptych," *Quaderns* 187 (October–December 1990): 98.

Stan Allen

The Artless Word:
Mies van der Rohe
on the Building Art

FRITZ NEUMEYER

"Appearance" belongs also to reality: it is a form of its being; that is, in a world in which there is no one being, it is possible to create a certain, calculable, world of *identical cases* only *through semblance*: a rhythm in which observation and confrontation, etc., are possible.

—Friedrich Nietzsche, "Posthumous Fragments, 1888–1889"

Wasn't it splendid of Mies to invent the lightning?

—John Cage, 1963[1]

"Mies van der Rohe is known as a man of few words," wrote Christian Norberg-Schulz in 1958, summing up the general preconception of the architect. Mies's terse dictum, "Build, don't talk," has been viewed as evidence of an artistic temperament vehemently dismissive of the written word, and of a philosophical orientation characterized by a singular effort to find self-evident truth in things themselves. This view has been largely unchallenged, either by Mies's critics who find in it evidence of the reductive quality of his thinking, or by his advocates who wish to suggest that Mies never succumbed to the slippery temptations of theory.

It is this view that Fritz Neumeyer ably sets out to overturn in *The Artless Word*, published in German in 1986, translated by Mark Jarzombek and issued by MIT Press in 1991. To be sure, Neumeyer does not propose that Mies be understood as anything but a man of few words. The revision Neumeyer suggests is twofold. First, it is necessary to understand the exceptional character of Mies's buildings and projects, set apart as they were from both orthodox modernism and traditional building practice, as the direct outgrowth of deeply felt philosophical reflections. The "double work field" urged by Piet Mondrian (who also

provides the title phrase, "the artless word") implies that the "contemporary artist does not explain his work but he creates clarity in regard to the nature of his work." Second, it is necessary to take seriously and analyze carefully the nature of that philosophical framework, which, in Mies's case, is often reduced to the point of caricature and bland universals. According to Neumeyer, it needs to be situated historically and explored on its own, properly metaphysical terms. Mies van der Rohe, the taciturn son of a German stonemason, emerges as the author of a deep and subtle philosophical position, a highly personal distillation of the intellectual currents of the early part of the 20th century.

Neumeyer begins this revision of the general perception of Mies with a survey of the architect's position in the historiography of the modern movement. He notes Mies's mixed fortunes in canonical histories of the modern movement and the unequivocal attacks in the name of a postmodern "richness." He traces a renewed interest in this traditional modernist to a revived sense of history, citing Aldo Rossi's appraisal of Mies and Adolph Loos: "In their best work history is always present." Perhaps a future historian will note that Neumeyer's book appears at a time of unprecedented interest in theory and philosophy within architectural circles. This having been said, it should be noted that Neumeyer's aims are in fact quite distinct: this is not an exercise in theoretical speculation. Neumeyer himself seems more comfortable with Mies's metaphysical idealism than with the poststructuralism of some of his contemporaries. He does not want to justify Mies to a present-day readership so much as he would like to claim philosophy as rightly within the realm of architectural thinking:

For Mies "the question as to the nature of the building art" was of decisive significance. It led him to search for truth "in the quarries of ancient and medieval philosophy." From this question came the search for a spiritual orientation of architectural truth, without which there could be no clarity in the relationship between essence and appearance, necessity and

possibility, construction and form. The problems of the building art cannot be viewed apart from the problems of being.

Like Mies, Neumeyer works incrementally, covering the same ground repeatedly in an effort to clarify and distill thought to its essentials. The bulk of the book concerns the period from 1921 to 1932, which coincides with Mies's most fertile period of work, in the "double work field." It was during this period that he first defined, and then modified, the philosophical basis for his "categorical imperative of elementary form giving." The 1938 pedagogical program presented for Illinois Institute of Technology was the last major occasion for theoretical work. In the 1950s and 1960s he was pressed by work obligations, and the mythical portrait of the aging, silent master emerged. However, consistent with Mies's ambition to be simultaneously of his epoch and timeless, Neumeyer often substantiates Mies's thoughts from the earlier period with writings or lectures from the postwar American period.

In general, Neumeyer's methods of analysis are careful, rigorous, and conservative. He points out that other critics have taken Mies's reticence as an occasion for elaborating their own viewpoints: "Mies's frugal prose has its own horizon of values, the width of which has tempted others to burden his work retroactively with philosophical speculations"; Neumeyer, however, strictly adheres to available material and its historical and cultural context. Politics and ideology are kept at arm's length. Consistent with this careful, methodical approach, he elaborates on and extends the context of Mies's own writings, notebook jottings, and lecture notes. These sources are traced to and located in the context of contemporary literary and philosophical currents. More speculative is Neumeyer's attempt to reconstruct Mies's reading habits via the underlining and marginal notes in the books of Mies's library.[2] To Neumeyer's credit, he pays attention to the contradictions in Mies's thought and occasionally to the mismatch between his writings and buildings. It is self-evident that this

is a work of extensive scholarship: nearly one-third of the book is composed of an annotated appendix of Mies's writings, many translated into English for the first time. But the book is also a critical document that proposes a reconfiguration of the terms of interpretation. Critics and scholars may, and undoubtedly will, disagree with Neumeyer, but they will have to do so within the framework established by this book—that is to say, with consideration of the traffic between the written word and built fact, the correspondences, mismatches, overlaps, and intersections between thought and execution.

Another contribution of the book concerns the ongoing theory-vs.-practice debates. Neumeyer effectively refutes the myth of Mies as the silent, "wordless" genius, the intuitive operator who was unaware of the complexities of philosophical debate. Mies's famous reticence, Neumeyer shows, was completely conscious. Its basis was not his unwillingness or inability to speak, but his keen awareness of the limits of language. On the other hand, even when Mies was at his most programmatic—during the projects of the early 1920s—he never allowed theory as such to drive the project. He never reduced the built work to an illustration of a theoretical precept. Rather, he turned to the contradictory logic of "executing impulses." Mies turned to philosophy for clarification in a realm that was, for him, philosophical in its implications.

Like many young Germans in the new century looking for a modern outlook—both progressive and spiritual—and a life of intensity and willed freedom, Mies was ambivalently attracted to Nietzsche. Begin-

ning with an "accidental" encounter with "philosophy in a drawing table drawer" (while an apprentice draftsman in Aachen, Mies uncovered a copy of the Nietzschean journal *Die Zukunft*), this "chain of circumstance" continues with Mies's first independent commission, a small residence for Alois Riehl, a professor of philosophy and author of the first published monograph on Nietzsche (1897). "Berlage or Behrens? Hegel or Nietzsche?" is the subtitle of a long chapter in which Neumeyer outlines the intellectual process by which the young Mies came to reject the influence of his mentor Peter Behrens in favor of the Dutch "building master" H. P. Berlage. As the rejection of Behrens indicates, Mies was distrustful of the radical negation of traditional moral codes in Nietzsche's thought. In particular, the overturning of the Platonic dualism of essence and appearance was inconsistent with Mies's instinctual and craftsmanlike regard for "absolute truthfulness and the rejection of all formal cheating." He was looking for a way to reconcile his uncompromising modernity with his deep intuitions of the consequences of architecture's permanence and indisputably concrete presence. Mies, in his public writings and private reflections before 1924, is consistently on the side of essence over appearance, of objective material reality over subjective interpretation. His instinct favors the consistency of law and the absolute, and hence, he is suspicious of art and expression. In short, he chooses Hegel and neo-Platonism over Nietzsche.

Yet that which Mies so passionately rejected had an uncanny habit of returning to haunt him. In an important passage, Mies's dilemma is succinctly described by Neu-

meyer: "Even if Mies in the early twenties tried to extricate himself, by his uncompromising attitude that rejected all will to form as academic and speculative, his thoughts and statements remain ambivalent. In spite of the rhetorical impulse of denial, the executing impulses insisted on perfect form-giving and appearance—and thence on the rights of art." Resolving this contradiction required not compromise but a move to an ever greater abstraction and idealism.

The imperative of "elementary form giving" must therefore be raised to its appropriately spiritual and idealist plane. With this rejection of functionalism, it became necessary for Mies to go "beyond architecture." Francesco Dal Co has underlined the importance of the concept designated by the untranslatable German term *Baukunst*. If architecture "connoted the prevalence of function" and implied "the mechanical conjoining of forms . . . the delimiting of experience within the horizons imposed by necessity," then *Baukunst*, by contrast, "is a spiritual art, a virtuous exercise of invention through the observance of solid laws and customs, and at the same time a dangerous transgression. *Baukunst* shuns the *new* and favors the *good* . . . *Baukunst* is a manifestation of the pertinacity of the spirit, and the freedom it exercises under the law."[3] This statement, paradoxes and contradictions intact, must be taken as axiomatic for the further development of Mies's thought in the late twenties.

The impetus and justification for this turn came from three sources which have previously figured little, if at all, in the critical literature on Mies. The first is Rudolf Schwarz, church architect, writer, and life-long friend of Mies. The notion of a univer-
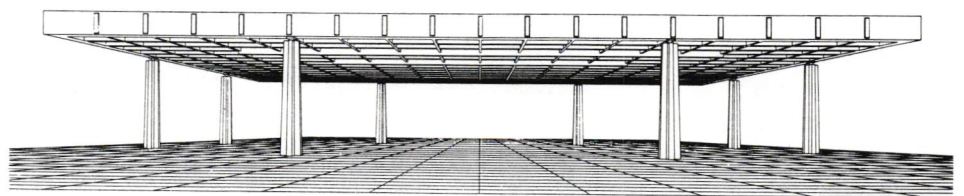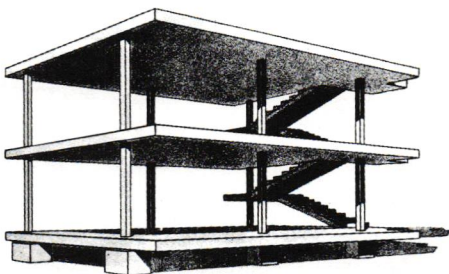
(Left) Domino construction system, Le Corbusier, 1914; and (above) construction system for the Bacardi Office Building, Santiago, Chile; Mies van der Rohe, 1957. (From *The Artless Word*.)

sal space, an open yet directed field, available for complex programmatic accommodation—seems to have had its origin in the work of Schwarz (as well as the spiritual potential of such a space). The second, outlined at greater length by Neumeyer, is the idiosyncratic tract by ex-Bauhäusler Siegfried Ebeling entitled *Der Raum als Membran* ("Space as membrane"). Published in Dessau in 1926 and influenced by the mystical tenets of early Bauhaus master Johannes Itten, the book describes an organic theory of architecture, primal and metaphysical in nature. Unlike Frank Lloyd Wright's populist organic architecture, Ebeling's idea was abstract and idealized. He saw his theories affirmed by the progress of technology that would enable the apparatus of the house to be reduced to a minimum, and allow the perceiving subject unimpeded access to unfolding space, or as Mies himself characterized it, "a transition area for a continuous . . . force field." By displacing the focus from the figure to the field—the negative space "between things"—Mies lays open the ground for his own minimalism as well as sidesteps apparent conflict between the organic ambitions of Ebeling's text and the strict orthogonality of Mies's architecture.

Neumeyer makes a case for the decisive influence of a third source, Italian-born cleric Romano Guardini, whose works Mies probably encountered in 1927. Mies's enthusiasm at the discovery of Guardini's thought was such that he scribbled excitedly across entire pages, highlighting passages with double and triple underlining. Guardini's "double way into the immanent" offered Mies a dialectical means to resolve the conflict he felt —not by compromise or facile synthesis but by recourse to a higher, more elemental form: a "bound duality." "Guardini," Neumeyer writes, "saw it as his task to revive Platonic thought *after* Kant and Nietzsche. . . . Although he believed, along with Nietzsche, that modern man can

Farnsworth House, Plano, Illinois; Mies van der Rohe, 1945–1950. (From *The Artless Word*.)

only find himself after jettisoning all the old symbols and deities, he also held that this new self-recollection had to go hand in hand with a fundamental experience of one's own limitations." The question of limits leads to a reflection on technology and, appealing to the example of the Middle Ages, an idea of an immanent order, "an infinity that emerges from the spirit" intrinsic to nature, science, and material." In place of Nietzsche's notion of a heroic subjectivity locked in tragic combat with objective limits, Guardini proposes self-realization through the immanent objectivity of the technological itself. By submitting itself to the rule of the immanent, the subject is simultaneously dissolved and elevated. Technology must be accepted and mastered precisely so that its life-threatening aspect can be redirected. The subjective is affirmed, Neumeyer notes, but oriented to an objective order.

Neumeyer quotes a miscellaneous note of Mies's: "All possible freedom and yet such great profundity." Such freedom is

won at a cost, and in Mies's case, the resolution of his theoretical position (as expressed in the assured presence of the Barcelona Pavilion and the Tugendhat House which coincide with this period) was followed by a crisis not of his own making. Neumeyer is not alone in reading the projects of the early 1930s as a kind of incremental retreat.[4] In the face of a reality that was rapidly and uncontrollably moving in directions completely antipathetic to Guardinian self-realization, Mies withdraws, nautilus-like: "here also, besides freedom, necessary seclusion." The dialectic of the courtyard houses of the 1930s suggests that a more absolute order, impeccable in its calibration of freedom and orientation, is only to be gained by shutting out an incomprehensible external reality. This is an imperfect solution and is at odds with Mies's best work around the 1930s. It does, however, speak to the difficulty of this period, and points to some still unresolved questions.

One area where we might expect some clarification from a book devoted to Mies's writings would be the complicated question of his relationship to the Third Reich. Richard Pommer, for example, has remarked on the fragile boundary between Mies's idealized language of pure spatial order, and National Socialist aspirations of monumentality.[5] Robin Evans has suggested a "paradoxical" symmetry in the Barcelona Pavilion that smuggles in Mies's aspiration toward order.[6] In fact, Neumeyer is not forthcoming on this topic and the period 1933–38 is dispatched in a slight a page and a half. It is well known that Mies and the National Socialists parted company after 1935 and he, like many others, suffered exclusion, interrogation, and harassment at the hands of the Nazis. A close reading of Mies's writings would seem to uncover his ambivalent embrace of Nietzsche's insight that "architecture is a kind of eloquence of power embodied in form"; or, an alternate reading might suggest that Mies, recogniz-

ing the necessary violence of the architectural act—"pride, triumph over gravity and will to power"—sought, throughout his career, to veil and reorient that power. In speaking about technology, Mies uses terms borrowed from Guardini: "We have to affirm it, even if its forces still appear menacing to us. We have to become master of the unleashed forces and build them into a new order, an order . . . that is related to mankind." In later works, such as the Berlin National Gallery, the means to achieve this are a massive compaction of architectural effect and a correlative restraint, a refusal to configure the void anymore than absolutely necessary. Freedom is achieved only at the risk of an order that asymptotically approaches the dangerous absolute.

"CERTAIN INCONSISTENCIES ARE REMOTELY TOUCHED ON"

Whatever you say, don't say it twice.
If you find your ideas in anyone else, disown them.
The man who hasn't signed anything, who has left no picture
Who was not there, who said nothing:
How can they catch him?
Cover your tracks.

—Bertolt Brecht, from "A Reader for Those Who Live in Cities"

There is an image near the end of Neumeyer's book, a photograph of Mies in his Chicago apartment. An urbane figure in an austere but not ascetic setting, he sits, cigar in hand, surrounded by a few artworks—a Paul Klee painting and a sculpture by Picasso. He sits on one of those pieces of anonymous neoclassical furniture he had recovered with black parachute silk, and stares implacably at the camera, which was likely balanced on the slightly cracked marble shelf in the foreground. Mies was, of course, Brecht's contemporary in Berlin and a figure marked, if in different ways, by the intensity and anonymity of life in that metropolis—by what Georg Simmel called "pure nervous culture."[7]

Looking at this photograph, it is hard not to think that Mies "covered his tracks" as he did everything else, with utmost precision. Surely his writings are an integral part of the "complex form constructed to lay a false trail."[8] In the end, I cannot help but feel that the author of *The Artless Word* has, to some extent, been taken in by this masterful construction. Neumeyer takes Mies "at his word" and looks for exact consonance between ideas and things, words and deeds. He traces a difficult but ultimately successful effort to align the separate but dependent logics of writing and building. Paradoxically, in a book which proposes to revise the very grounds for the interpretation of Mies's architecture, the central myth survives intact. If we give Mies credit, as Neumeyer would have us do, for his wide-ranging literariness and sophisticated philosophical reflection, surely we must allow that his writing, his words, might consequently be far from artless.

If Neumeyer accepts too easily the truth of Mies's utterances, he also anticipates too

Mies in his apartment in Chicago. (From *The Artless Word*.)

readily their reflection in built works. The juxtaposition of a photograph of the Farnsworth House with a quotation from Romano Guardini naturalizes this perfect resolution of idea and reality. But by what model of intentionality could we justify such a close fit, such a perfect mapping of artistic intention to executed work? With the aid of the texts published in *The Artless Word*, we can now begin to reconstruct with some certainty Mies's intentions; but architectural writing, particularly that which claims to "create clarity with regard to the nature of the work," needs to be carefully inspected, its rhetorical devices laid bare, its claims contested. Neumeyer seems to be too respectful toward the double subject—the buildings and the writings—of his book to do so. His Mies would not be paradoxical, equivocal, or deceptive. But perhaps Mies demands more skepticism, or an author's willingness, as Walter Benjamin has defined the task of the historical materialist, to "brush history against its grain."[9] To do so might entail reading Mies's writings not as clarification, but as a carefully crafted mask, constructed according to the same rules of artistic practice that function so deeply in his projects.

In the case of Mies, it is the very "openness" of the work that is problematic. Within limits, it would be possible to juxtapose various texts—such as Simmel, Nietzsche, Marc-Antoine Laugier, Rainer Maria Rilke, Sergei Eisenstein—with photographs of Mies's work and create the appearance of a close "fit."[10] The question is, how can we know where to stop? Moreover, a key aspect of *Baukunst* is the durability of construction over time, which guarantees that architecture will persist beyond the control of the author and the institutions that enabled it. In time, words and things will necessarily be divorced. The architect's creations outlive intentionality. Mies understood this well, which perhaps partially explains his relative silence. Would it be too much to suggest that we continue to be in-

terested in Mies's works precisely because they *exceed* the limitations of their own philosophical bases? The reconstruction sixty years later of one of his most ephemeral works attests to this, and dramatizes the dilemma of interpretation.
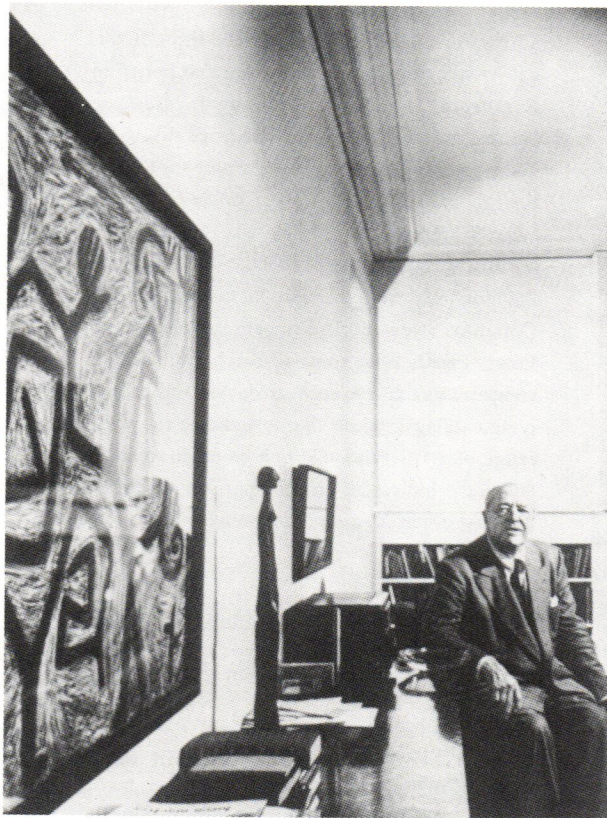
With the publication of this book, a new area of inquiry and speculation has been opened. Anyone with an interest in Mies, in architecture, in philosophy, or in theory should read this book. Beyond its documentary value, the book forces a reconsideration of certain key issues of interpretation. But it is impossible to say therefore that the interpretations offered are definitive. In fact, the questions raised are such that the inexhaustibility of Mies's work is underscored. The persistent enigmas remind us of the necessity to anchor our speculations simultaneously in the historical field and the complex realities of the present, thereby recognizing the contingencies of history's distance.

NOTES

1. John Cage was commenting on the view from 860 Lakeshore drive; cited in Franz Schulze, *Mies van der Rohe: A Critical Biography* (Chicago: University of Chicago, 1985), p. 248.

2. Neumeyer's care extends to an attempt to resolve even the exact number of books in Mies's library. This question is rooted in the discrepancy between Mies's claim of having 3,000 books at the time of his emigration in 1938, and Philip Johnson's dismissive statement: "He had anyway only three books. Not a one had been taken from the shelf in all these years." Neumeyer counts some 800 volumes remaining from his library in America, and comes down on the side of Mies: "He could not have discovered the remaining 30 if he had not read the 3,000" (footnote, p. 348); "The deciphering of a notebook from the year 1928 which is largely filled with excerpts, indicates that Mies not only read but actually studied certain text closely" (p. 33).

3. Francesco Dal Co, *Figures of Architecture and Thought* (New York: Rizzoli, 1990), pp. 263–64; originally published in *Mies Reconsidered* (Chicago: The Art Institute of Chicago, 1986), a shorter and more speculative discussion of the written record of Mies's thought first published the same year as the German version of Neumeyer's book.

4. Schulze, *Mies van der Rohe*, pp. 192–93.

5. Richard Pommer, "Mies van der Rohe and the Political Ideology of the Modern Movement in Architecture," *Mies van der Rohe: Critical Essays*, edited by Franz Schulze (New York: MOMA, 1986), p. 128.

6. "Does this suggest that Mies, who was certainly the master of equivocation, covertly reintroduced the hieratic formation of bilateral symmetry to counteract the freedom and democracy signified by the pavilion's asymmetry? The Trojan horse introduces foreign troops by stealth. This subterfuge fits in with everything so far said about Mies' predilection for conflating opposites, and confirms that a profound authoritarianism lurks just beneath the bright surface"; from Robin Evans's "Mies van der Rohe's Paradoxical Symmetries," *AA Files* 19 (London, 1990): 67.

7. David Frisby, *Georg Simmel* (London: Tavistock Publications, 1984), pp. 36–37.

8. This phrase is from Francesco Dal Co, "Criticism and Design," *Oppositions* 13 (New York, 1978): 4.

9. Walter Benjamin, "Theses on the Philosophy of History," *Illuminations* (New York: Schocken, 1973), p. 257.

10. For Simmel/Mies see K. Michael Hays, "Critical Architecture, between Culture and Form" in *Perspecta* 21 (1984): for Laugier/Mies see Neumeyer, *The Artless Word*, p. 131; for Nietzsche/Mies see Neumeyer, "Space for Reflection . . ." in *Mies van der Rohe: Critical Essays*, ed. Franz Schulze; for Rilke/Mies and Eisenstein/Mies see José Quetglas, "Fear of Glass: The Barcelona Pavilion" in *ArchitectuReproduction*, ed. Beatriz Colomina (New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 1988). With some research, many other comparisons could be uncovered. With this incomplete catalog I would like to indicate the wide range of affiliations that can be made to seem "natural"; moreover, any comparison cannot be innocent of ideological or interpretive intent.

THE ARTLESS WORD: MIES VAN DER ROHE ON THE BUILDING ART, Fritz Neumeyer, translated by Mark Jarzombek, MIT Press, 1991, 386 pp., illus., $50.00.

Alan Colquhoun

Esprit de Corps: The Art of the Parisian Avant-Garde and the First World War, 1914–1925

KENNETH E. SILVER

The first world war is often perceived as having merely accelerated the revolutionary changes in artistic practice inaugurated with symbolism, expressionism, cubism, and futurism. This impression of continuity, with a full flowering after the war, is particularly strong in the context of architecture, in which a coherent modern language did not become stabilized until the mid-1920s. But, in fact, the war changed the direction of the avant-garde in fundamental and irreversible ways, introducing conservative and classicizing tendencies opposed to the anarchism and nihilism of the prewar movements.

This change in ideology has been brilliantly studied by Kenneth Silver in his book *Esprit de Corps*. His ostensible subject is the change that overcame the Parisian avant-garde painters under the pressure of wartime patriotism and its effects in the immediate postwar years; this provides him with a naturally circumscribed and highly dramatic theme. But the latent content of his book is much broader, and is concerned with important aspects of the postwar avant-garde in all of Europe.

In his opening chapter Silver sets the scene by describing the chauvinism and philistinism which, fanned by politicians and conservative writers like Léon Daudet and Charles Maurras, imposed its views on the whole nation. Such was the atmosphere in which, as Silver puts it, "The ideological program . . . was fashioned mostly from half-truths, misconceptions, stereotypes and, when necessary, outright lies." The fear and hatred of Germany expressed in these sentiments had a history dating to the Napoleonic wars, but their immediate cause was the rapid rise of Germany as a military and commercial power after the Franco-Prussian war of 1870, the infiltration of

German goods into the French market, and the assault this constituted on the dominance of French craftsmanship and taste. The need for a rejuvenation of French culture had been felt in France for more than a decade before the war, and was seen primarily in relation to this German threat, which took strangely contradictory forms. On one hand, a degenerate German romanticism (exemplified by Richard Wagner) seemed to threaten the intellectual tradition of French classicism; on the other hand, Germany's greater capacity for collective work and superior organizing ability threatened an increasingly slack and frivolous France. Germany, at once more degenerate and stronger than France, was cast in the alternate roles of masculine bully and feminine temptress. All modernist art, including pointillism, cubism, and futurism, was considered of German origin and its corrupting influence spread in France by German-Jewish art dealers. (The perception of modern art being German was not restricted to France, however: the German art dealer Wilhelm Uhde claimed, in 1928, that Picasso owed a debt to German culture.)

The first part of Silver's book deals with the wartime reactions of progressive artists and intellectuals to these infantile and officially promoted views. Though the pressures of social conformity are common to all countries during wartime, such pressures must have been especially great in a country in which the ties between culture and the state have always been strong. It is hardly surprising that these groups yielded to the collective paranoia and began to see themselves as intellectual warriors fighting for the common cause. The critic Clément Janin struck the correct military tone when he wrote, in the catalog of the Triennial exhibition of French art in Paris in 1916: "The painter has seized his brushes, the sculptor his rough sketches, the ce-

This satirical illustration "It's Not New!" is captioned, "Asphyxiating gas, at this point . . . Oh! là! là! . . . For more than forty years they've plagued us with everything marked *Made in Germany*!" German artifacts (as well as a cubist painting) rise from the gaseous smoke; A. Willette, c. 1914–18. (From *Esprit de Corps*.)

ramicist his wheel and his glaze . . . all have set to work . . . hearts beating in agreement with the hearts of heroes."

Silver provides copious examples of progressive critics' reactions to such patriotic fervor. Although the two chief progressive journals, Jean Cocteau's *Le Mot* and Amédée Ozenfant's *L'Elan,* poked fun at reactionary critics, they defended the avant-garde in a moderate and patriotic tone. In

Cannon in Action; Gino Severini, 1915. (From *Esprit de Corps*.)

his essay "Quand le symbolisme fut mort," Paul Dermée said that, after a period of exuberance, art must concern itself with "organization, arrangement, and science." Charles Saroléa called for an *"esprit nouveau"* (the first appearance of this term, which is usually attributed to Apollinaire) of "solid good sense inherited from the classics." Music was not exempt from the general spirit of revisionism. In 1917 Cocteau issued a call-to-order to French composers, saying, "You can't get lost in the Debussy mist as you can in the Wagner fog, but you can catch cold there." (Debussy's last compositions did, indeed, partially revert to classical forms.) The cubist painters also reacted to the wartime atmosphere. Gino Severini and Robert Delaunay both turned against cubism and futurism, and Juan Gris, although he never abandoned cubism, fused it with naturalism and traditional subjects. Picasso, who also responded to public taste though with greater detachment and irony, introduced the "Latin" theme of the *commedia dell'arte* in his curtain design for Sergei Diaghilev's ballet *Parade*, and began a series of works in the style of Jean-Auguste-Dominique Ingres (though his first work in this manner, the unfinished painting, *The Painter and His Model*, anticipated the war by a few weeks).

As Silver makes clear, this reversion to traditional forms must be attributed chiefly to the chauvinistic atmosphere generated by the war. But there was another factor tending in the same direction that had its origins in the period immediately before the war—a general return to classic models in architecture and the decorative arts, initiated around 1905 in Germany when Paul Mebes and Peter Behrens led a revival of Biedermeier and Schinkelesque neoclassicism. The movement's influence in France at the time is illustrated by the fact that French critics accused Auguste Perret
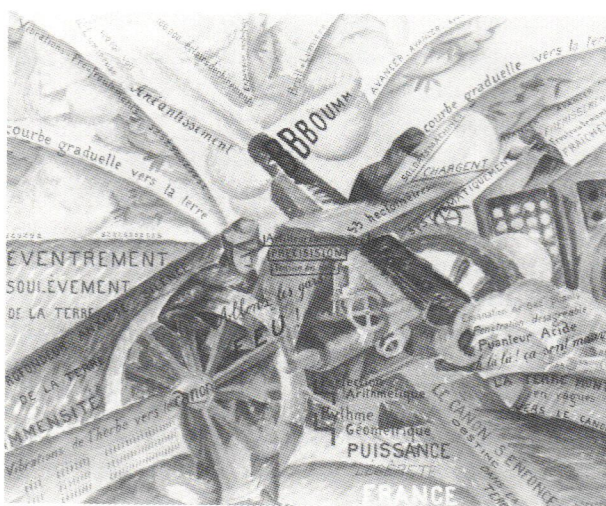
of introducing an alien German form of abstract classicism into his design for the Théâtre des Champs Elysées. But French reaction to German classicism was not always so negative, as indicated by the mounting of an exhibition of Munich interior designers' work in the 1910 Salon d'Automne. Silver's examples of French criticism of this exhibition date from 1915 and show every sign of being colored by wartime prejudice, but it seems clear that contemporary French reaction to it consisted of a characteristic mixture of admiration and dismissal. As Nancy Troy has shown in her book *Modernism and the Decorative Arts in France* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1991), French interior designers were already, in the first decade of the century, reacting against art nouveau in the same way that Germans were reacting against *Jugendstil*, rejecting the concept of the *Gesamtkunstwerk* in favor of ensembles from Empire, Directoire, and Louis Philippe styles (roughly the French equivalents of Biedermeier). The principles behind the work of these *colouristes*—with whom Charles-Édouard Jeanneret (later known as Le Corbusier) was associated during his early visits to Paris—were in many ways similar to those which Adolf Loos was promoting in Vienna, with his rejection of the "total design" philosophy of the Secession and preference for anonymous traditions. During the war the *goût Munichois* was converted, in France, from something that had aroused considerable critical interest and the spirit of emulation into just another example of *art boche*, with apparently unrelated expressionist and "Orientalist" tendencies. There are moments when Silver seems to underestimate the importance of these prewar classical tendencies; for example, in presenting Émile Jaques-Dalcroze's Hellenistic eurythmics as an example of postwar classicism, he neglects to mention that Jaques-Dalcroze's famous school at Hellerau was founded in 1911 (*and* designed by a German architect). But after reading these pages one is left with no doubt as to the extent of Ger-

In this French cartoon called "Their Culture," a German couple tours Belgium (as we can tell from the Taverne sign), and the man declares, "Ach! More beautiful than Pompeii!" (From *Esprit de Corps*.)

man artistic influence in France in the decade before the war, or that this influence was largely classical.

The spirit of patriotism, which was largely responsible for the return to classical models by French wartime painters, persisted into peacetime. The prewar period was perceived as individualistic and lacking in any sense of community. But the *grande épreuve* of the war had brought about a restoration of values, which, translated into art, meant a restoration of classical values. Progressive painters, as well as those on the artistic and political right, now extolled the French tradition of classicism and denigrated the "romantic" tradition, running from Jean-Jacques Rousseau to Henri-Louis Bergson, that was predominant before the war. In the central section of the book Silver analyzes the postwar work of the prewar avant-garde painters. He distinguishes between two kinds of postwar painters: those who turned their backs on cubism entirely (either in a terminal rejection, as with Delaunay, Roger La Fresnaye, and Severini, or in one of several manners, as with Picasso); and those who continued with cubism, "classicizing" it in various ways (as with Picasso, Gris, Georges Braque, and Fernand Léger). The only important painter who escapes this classification is Henri Matisse, but Silver subjects his pre- and

postwar work to minute scrutiny and shows that it also responded to public opinion and artistic fashion, though in subtle ways. Silver also mentions parallel tendencies in the other arts—for instance Paul Valéry's *Epalinos* and Igor Stravinsky's *Pulcinello*.

In postwar criticism, there was a significant reevaluation of prewar avant-garde work. Cubism, according to Cocteau, "was a classicism after the romanticism of the Fauves." Cézanne was subject to a confusing set of critical reversals. Some, like Emile Bernard, who had claimed Cézanne for classicism even before the war, now condemned him for being a naturalist, and offered Puvis de Chavanne's idealized pastorales as sounder classical models. Others, like Gris, praised Cézanne precisely for his classicism, contradicting the predominant prewar view that he had practiced a "penetrating" naturalism that "plunges into profound reality, growing luminous as it forces the unknowable into retreat" (Metzinger and Gleizes, 1912).

Among the painters who continued to practice a modified cubism, Silver discusses Léger, comparing *La Ville* of 1919 with *Le grand déjeuner* of 1921, and quoting the artist's own opinion about the transformation from analysis to classical synthesis represented by these two paintings. For Léger, there had to be a balance: "The romantic pushes toward the left—an excess of subjectivity (a warm state). His opposite pushes toward the right—an excess of objectivity (a cold state)." The aim of this balance was to achieve an art that was social and communicated with ordinary people. Another aspect of Léger's work brought out by Silver is the interest he showed in the theater as a collective art, and one in which mechanisms figured as prominently as human actors (a notion that links Léger with the Berlin Theatre and the Soviet avant-garde).

One of the main concepts developed during the war was, indeed, this notion of "collectivity"—the need felt to heal the split that had developed between art and every-

day life. The same idea is expressed in Severini's 1921 book, *From Cubism to Classicism: Aesthetic of Compass and Number,* which posits classicism as an antidote to the individualism and lack of social cohesion that had condemned the artist to marginality. He proposed a new "academy," "not, obviously, the old 'école' replastered . . . but an *édifice,* a brand new monument, having, from the foundation to the roof, as generating principles, the eternal laws of construction." With this cluster of metaphors, Severini broaches a theme that Silver mentions on several occasions: architecture seen as paradigm for the arts. This idea obviously has a long provenance. In the context of Silver's book, it emerges not only as a reference to the literal reconstruction needed after a war of unprecedented physical destruction, but also as a metaphor for a kind of art that is restrained, socially responsible, and impersonal.

The question of architecture's paradigmatic role in the postwar consolidation of classical values is raised again by Silver in the last chapter of the book in a discussion of Le Corbusier's *Pavillon de L'Esprit*

Nouveau exhibited at the Exposition Internationale des Arts Décoratifs et Industriels Modernes in Paris in 1925. The purpose of the exhibition was to reassert the preeminence of the French artisan tradition that had been challenged by Germany. Consistent with the established tradition of the French decorative arts, the emphasis of the French part of the exhibition was on objects of luxury. The sole dissenting voice was that of Le Corbusier, whose pavilion was the only exhibit to be concerned with habitation and to adopt an internationalist and progressive program. As one of the first architectural demonstrations of the Purist aesthetics announced in the articles in the journal *L'Esprit Nouveau*, the pavilion expressed the universal condition of modernity rather than any specifically French set of values, and its architectural language belonged to the emerging international modern movement. It was closely related to the work of the de Stijl group in Holland and the Bauhaus in Germany, and its principles were based on the doctrines of the *Deutsche Werkbund*, which Le Corbusier had assimilated during his visit to Germany in 1911.

Yet, as Silver shows, this modern, international spirit was supported in many of the articles in *L'Esprit Nouveau* by a rhetoric that still reflected patriotic, anti-German sentiments and that was often barely distinguishable from the nationalistic and authoritarian ideas of *L'Action Française* and the extreme right.

The ideas expressed by Ozenfant and Le Corbusier (then Jeanneret) in *L'Esprit Nouveau* are Silver's last examples of an avant-garde thought in France that was deeply colored by the political conservatism that had become current during the war. His book presents a picture of the wholesale retreat of the French avant-garde from a position of revolutionary dynamism to one of nationalistic caution; from an attitude of criticism, experiment, and doubt about all received opinion, to one in which the need for dogmatic certainty and reassurance was uppermost. Convincing as this demonstration is from many points of view, Silver's book inevitably raises questions connected with the European avant-garde, both before and after the war, to which it is not always able to do full justice, due to its almost exclusively French terms of reference. The only dubious aspect of Silver's thesis is that, as a result of this perspective, it fails to make an adequate distinction between the conservative and progressive stands within the classical tendencies in the European postwar avant-garde as a whole.

The prewar move to classicism in architecture and the decorative arts in Germany originated, to a large extent, in the neo-Kantian theories of Konrad Fiedler and Adolf von Hildebrand, which had such a profound influence on German aesthetics and art history in the early 1900s. By about 1910, the classical revival had become associated with the concept of modernity, as can be seen in the writings of Hermann Muthesius, who connected the products of industrial mass production with the eternal principles of classicism, and in the notebooks that Le Corbusier kept during his journey to the east, in which he equates the modern industrial world to ancient Greece. Nor were these ideas restricted to Germany
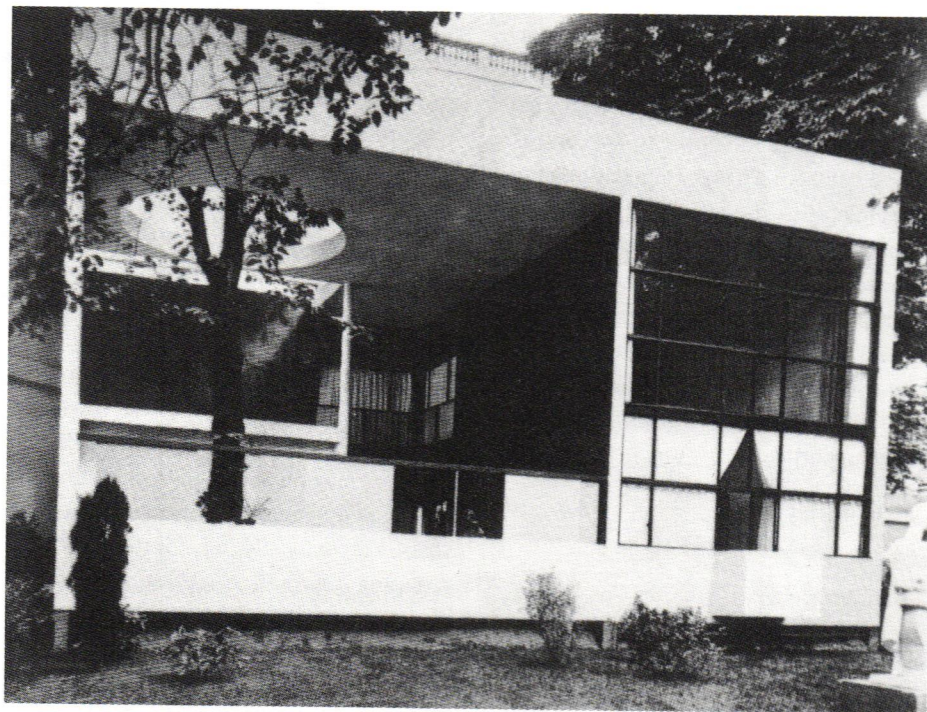
Pavillon de L'Esprit Nouveau (which has since been destroyed), Exposition Internationale des Arts Décoratifs et Industriels Modernes, Paris; 1925. (From *Esprit de Corps.*)

and Switzerland. In England in 1912, the critic T. E. Hume condemned expressionist poetry and advocated a hard, impersonal classicism that drew inspiration from machinery. These facts indicated a growing mood in prewar Europe, which, in France, became linked to a nostalgia for the French classical tradition, but which had distinctly modernist overtones elsewhere (though this modernism was often proto-fascist, as in the case of Hume).

When we look at the postwar situation we find again that the move to classicism in painting was far from being an exclusively French affair, or exclusively right wing. Silver discusses the clearest example of this: the about-face of the Italian futurists, who reverted to the idealized representation of "Latin" subjects. In 1921 Emilio Filippo Tommaso Marinetti, the leader of the prewar futurist movement, announced, "We are entering into a period of firm and sure constructionism . . . we must systematically avoid the analysis that we imposed on ourselves for such a long time." As in France, this new direction was associated with nostalgia for a preindustrial Mediterranean world, and it took a crypto-fascist form. But elsewhere there were cognate stylistic changes that were associated with the political left. For example, in the early 1920s in Germany, expressionism was dethroned by the *Neue Sachlichkeit* in which subversive subject matter was expressed with a laconic realism, drawing much of its inspiration from the prewar paintings of Giorgio De Chirico and from Dada. (The exhibition introducing the *Neue Sachlichkeit* in Mannheim in 1923 was originally intended to include the work of French painters whose classical realism was perceived as sympathetic to the German movement, despite its different political orientation.) Though it was antitraditionalist, antipoetic, and antipainterly, and lacked any reference to classical iconography, the hard-edged, cold objectivity and anecdotal characteristics of this movement surely relate it to Silver's broad definition of classicism.

The fact that such painting could be the vehicle for both left-wing and right-wing

political ideas suggests that the set of concepts that underlay the classical turn in France—ideas such as "reconstruction," "organization," and "collectivity"—could likewise be subject to a left-wing or a right-wing interpretation. In France, Léger is a case in point. The concept of collectivity to which he subscribed was Marxist, not conservative. In the same way, the Soviet avant-garde supported ideas that were in many ways similar to French notions that Silver describes as classical, such as "construction" and "collectivity." The formalists tried to discover the "universal" laws of aesthetics, while, for the constructivists, art should be controlled by the "objective" rules of factory production and social collectivity. The tendency toward "totalization" that Silver points to when discussing postwar aesthetic theory in France was equally present in most of the postwar avant-garde movements in the rest of Europe, whether on the right or the left. Such a tendency was part of the taste for "final solutions" that ran through the avant-garde in the postwar years, and that distinguishes it from the more nihilistic, experimental, and analytical prewar movements.

It would be unfair to blame Silver for not writing a different book. The occasional one-sidedness of his interpretations is the product of the same strict historical frame that makes this book so successful. Silver set out to tell a story that has hitherto been neglected—the story of the relations between the Parisian avant-garde and wartime French society. As a study of the relationship between art and society at a particularly crucial conjuncture of modernist art, Silver's elegantly written and exhaustively researched book is of the greatest importance.

ESPRIT DE CORPS: THE ART OF THE PARISIAN AVANT-GARDE AND THE FIRST WORLD WAR, 1914–1925, Kenneth E. Silver, Princeton University Press, 1989, 504 pp., illus., $65.00.

Robert Twombly

Fragments: In *Festschrift* and in Exhibition

These four volumes of essays—*The Midwest in American Architecture, Modern Architecture in America, The Spirit of H. H. Richardson on the Midland Prairies*, and *Fragments of Chicago's Past*—are of two types: the *Festschrift* (from the German, meaning "publication celebrating an event or a person") and what is traditionally called the catalog. The latter has increasingly taken on new functions and although there seems as yet no agreed-upon name for such "exhibition books," the examples at hand highlight recurring problems with organizing principles that occur in essay collections in general and *Festschrifts* in particular.

The primary purpose of a *Festschrift* is to honor a distinguished scholar by showcasing (and this is the secondary purpose) the work of distinguished students. The purpose of an exhibition book is to surround a museum show with context and larger meaning, sometimes by simply seizing the occasion to confront an issue without actually referring to the objects displayed—however illuminating to the issue they may be—effectively transforming the exhibition into a distant adjunct of the written word. The organizing principle of an exhibition book is a concept or a theme; for the *Festschrift*, it is a person.

Thus emerges a cluster of problems: those best qualified to judge the merits of *Festschrifts* are least likely to do so since *Festschrifts* are offered as gifts (ideally as surprise gifts, if that can be pulled off) to the honorees. Moreover, honorees cannot select contributors. And because compilers like to construct panopticons of mentorial skill as it has guided sundry student work over the years, they typically aim for diversity. But grouping apprentices with master craftspersons and extracts from unfinished doctoral dissertations with mature work of professionals often results in jarring unevenness, frequently compounded by mundane considerations such as who's got what

in the hopper and who can be trusted to produce on time.

This leaves most *Festschrifts* with no *raison d'être* beyond the dedication page. Here the exhibition book can stand in contrast: like round-table symposia, contributors can be directed to address a single or at least closely related issues. Almost by necessity *Festschrifts* must be evaluated as a potpourri of disassociated parts while exhibition books are more aptly considered as the totality those parts produce.

The following two *Festschrifts* serve their primary purpose well: *The Midwest in American Architecture* honors Walter L. Creese, who spent the bulk of his teaching career at the University of Illinois, while *Modern Architecture in America* is dedicated to Leonard K. Eaton, professor at the University of Michigan for almost four decades. Creese's important work on garden cities, Raymond Unwin, and the American landscape, and Eaton's equally pioneering studies of landscape architect Jens Jensen, H. H. Richardson's and Louis Sullivan's impact on European architecture, and the comparison of Howard Van Doren Shaw's clients with Frank Lloyd Wright's elevated the writing of architectural history in the United States by strengthening its empirical base; they also set intellectual standards that

are collectively approached, if only sometimes reached individually, by the eighteen contributors divided equally between the two volumes.

Both books illustrate an additional problem with the *Festschrift*: neither midwestern nor modern architecture's place in America is or can be given comprehensive treatment in this sort of undertaking. Do not look here for interpretive overviews of the large subjects to which the titles refer. *The Midwest in American Architecture* is not even about the Midwest taken as a whole: two essays on Chicago buildings, three including Pullman, Illinois, three on Sullivan and his legacies, and others on Walter Burley Griffin, American breweries, and Bay View, Michigan, yield a jigsaw puzzle with most of the pieces missing. Individually, the entries range in quality from a rich, penetrating reappraisal of Sullivan's banks to a discussion of brewery design that somehow manages not to distinguish it from other architecture. Similarly, *Modern Architecture in America* flops all over the place, from suburban houses to Ruskinian Gothic, libraries to city planning in Cleveland, essays about Frank Lloyd Wright to a reassessment of Douglas Haskell. Several of these are solid contributions but collectively, the edifice they build about modern American architecture has as much structural integrity as a hill of beans.

Compared to the *Festschrifts*, the exhibition books are comprehensive, integrated, and focused—one more than the other, and not because its subject is smaller or more easily managed. *The Spirit of H. H. Richardson on the Midland Prairies* is a beautifully conceived and executed model of how to examine an important theme from multiple perspectives. With the introduction "H. H. Richardson Goes West," exhibition curator Paul Clifford Larson opens the volume
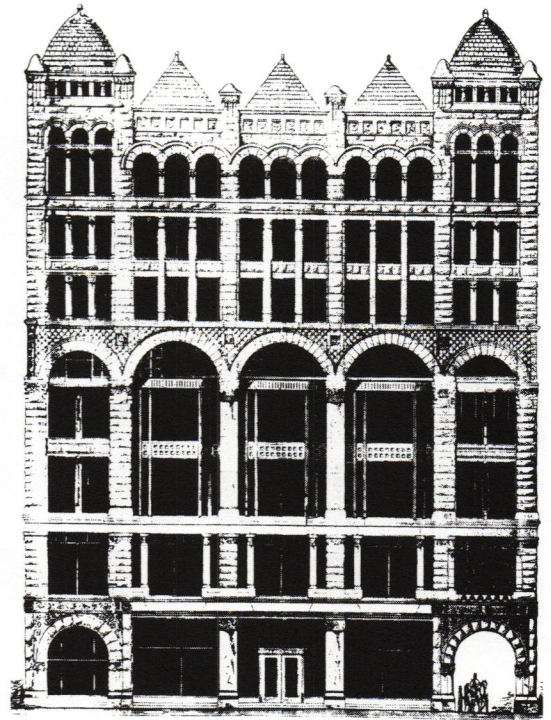
Studebaker Building #1, Chicago, Illinois; Solon S. Beman, 1885. (From *The Spirit of H. H. Richardson.*)

by surveying "the rise and fall of an Eastern star," examining his work throughout the entire region during successive periods he calls "quotation," "imitation," and "assimilation," ending shortly after 1900. Thomas J. Schlereth describes "H. H. Richardson's Influence on Chicago's Midwest," that is, how his buildings in the city and local architects working in his manner (especially Solon S. Beman) served to spread his ideas. Richard Longstreth and Kenneth A. Breisch, writing on Kansas and Texas respectively, provide case studies of the many ways dissemination was actually realized.

Exit the architectural historians and enter urban historian Judith A. Martin to isolate the material and cultural characteristics of new prairie cities that made them receptive to Richardson's ideas. Geographer John C. Hudson goes on to consider local building materials, urbanization, settlement patterns, migration, and railroad routes—the infrastructure, so to speak—that helped spread Richardson's style. The texts are supplemented by maps, illustrations, and an extensive list of architects, with dates, locations, and employees, who could be considered

Allegheny County Courthouse, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania; H. H. Richardson, 1883–88. (From *The Spirit of H. H. Richardson.*)
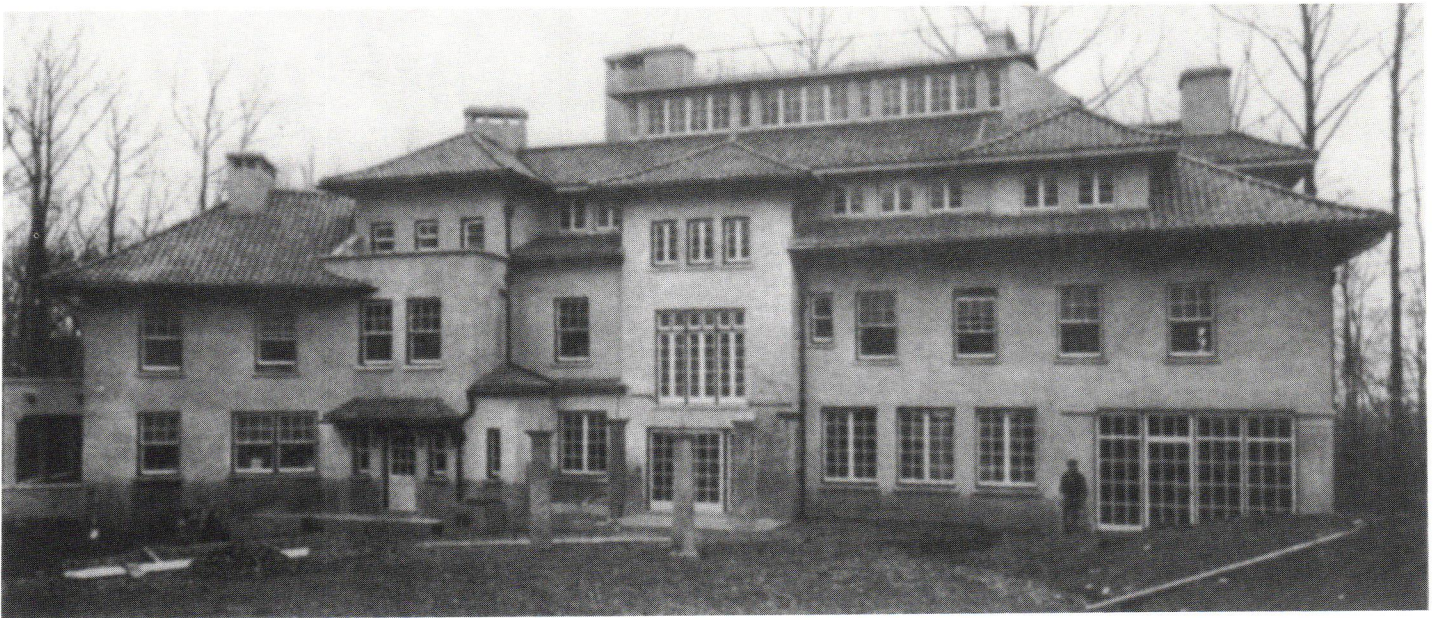
DeLanoy residence, Short Hills, New Jersey; John A. Gurd, 1909. (From *Modern Architecture in America.*).

"Prairie Richardsonians." In this tightly constructed book, one essay leads logically to the next, moving from the general to the particular and back to the general, or larger, more interdisciplinary views—all the while never losing sight of its organizing theme: Richardson's "spirit" or influence. If *The Spirit of H. H. Richardson on the Midland Prairies* is any indication, the Great Plains Environmental Design series, of which it is the inaugural volume, should be a valuable resource.

The second exhibition book is not as tightly knit, probably because, as a hostage to a place, its theme dissolves. *Fragments of Chicago's Past* is a richly illustrated handbook accompanying The Art Institute's permanent installation of the many bits and pieces salvaged from the relentless destruction of the city's illustrious architectural past. It opens with Edward N. Kaufman's impressive survey of architecture museums from Napoleon's to Henry Ford's, from private collections including buildings, through upper-caste and state sponsorship of public institutions, to buildings-as-museums such as Old Deerfield and Colonial Williamsburg. This general history enables editor Pauline Saliga to effortlessly narrow the focus in "A Century of Representing Architecture at The Art Institute of Chi-

cago," which began with plaster reproductions, proceeded with the construction of period rooms, and culminated in the acquisition of fragments despite the determined competition of greedy collectors who diminish the supply with the help of, paradoxically, greedy developers who increase it.

After the companionable essays on collecting, the book shifts direction toward the Chicago School. But Gerald R. Larson's essay on "Chicago's Loop, 1830–1890: A Tale of Two Grids"—referring to the horizontal street system that intersects the vertical grid of the skyscraper (both engendered by transport modes, the railroad and elevator)—is a conceptually forced narrative of familiar local history that does not explain the "Genesis of the Chicago School," the essay's supra-heading, or give meaning to the architectural fragments. Robert Bruegmann offers sketchy but suggestive distinctions among these fragments when they were still ornaments, during periods such as "The City Beautiful" of 1893 to World War I, what he calls "the Romantic City" born of the 1921 Wrigley Building, and what he rather mysteriously labels "the Jazz Age City." But when the ornamental distinctions are subsumed under the heading "Beyond the Chicago School," they become an extension of the school, despite the

presence of similar stylistic mannerisms across and outside the country.

It was probably inevitable for *Fragments* to end with Sullivan and Wright, who loom so large in Chicago and in The Art Institute's holdings. Lauren S. Weingarden reads Sullivan's "The Tall Office Building Artistically Considered" (1896) in light of his understanding of Eugène-Emmanuel Viollet-le-Duc and Ralph Waldo Emerson to conclude that Sullivan's architecture was a poetic integration of "mechanistic, rationalist law with its natural origins, [its purpose] to reconcile material needs and practical solutions with organic meaning and spiritual causes." Although a revisitation of her earlier publications, Weingarden's "Louis H. Sullivan's Search for an American Style" offers more substance than Donald Hoffmann's "Frank Lloyd Wright and the New Order," which contains the umpteenth assertion of *sui generis* genius.

However necessary the emphasis on Sullivan and Wright, Weingarden's and Hoffmann's essays, along with Bruegmann's, reinforce the notion that, architecturally, practically everything in town derives from the "progressive" Chicago/Prairie School era, that other design vocabularies before or during that time are not worthy of note and everything since is

somehow its continuation. The six essays, furthermore, are only tangentially related: because the installation features the kind of ornament Bruegmann discusses, he connects more closely to Kaufman's and Saliga's museum-oriented essays than to Weingarden's piece, which doesn't say much about the subject, or Hoffmann's, which barely touches it. Neither Weingarden nor Hoffmann provide—or create—a context for the fragments. And since it's not clear whether the book is about collecting, ornamentation, or the Chicago/Prairie schools, Larson's essay on the Chicago Loop seems a kind of bridge over muddy waters. If, as is implied, The Art Institute collects only "progressive" fragments, then its acquisition policy is flawed; in such a context, however, Saliga's editorial decision to let Sullivan and Wright represent the culmination of Chicago's architecture is then apropos.

Chicago and Wright have often been used as organizational devices, not just for the Midlands, but for all of American architecture. As Mary Corbin Sies reminds us in her *Modern Architecture in America* essay on suburban middle-class houses, it is a scholarly convention to divide post-l900 designers into "progressives" and "conservatives," the former originating with Wright and his Chicago-land followers. Progressive

came to mean "good" because it invoked values as "indigenous" and "pioneering," and conservative meant "bad" because it connoted "imported" and "derivative"—a view propounded by Wright, seized upon by Chicago boosters, and broadcast by reputable non-Chicago (even non-American) writers. Similarly, the "city" itself became synonymous with advanced architecture, New York in particular. Sullivan pushed this view in *Kindergarten Chats* (1901–1902), but at least *his* Chicago stood as a metaphor for the entire West (far beyond the Mid-), offered in pursuit of a spiritual inclusiveness that, after him, devolved into overt chauvinism. Other cities in the region, such as St. Louis at the turn of the century, came to be seen as Chicagos-*bis*, even by their own residents, lusting after the big time. When Chicago, which *was* the big time, became the hub of good design, all American architecture fell into place: there was Chicago and its design hinterland, Wright and his design hinterpeople, and then there was the undistinguished rest. One of the virtues of some of the thirty essays in these four books, however, without their being assertive or even conscious of it, is to supplant outmoded organizing principles with other, more serviceable interpretations.

The burden of Sies's demonstration in "God's Very Kingdom on the Earth," for ex-

ample, is that from 1877 to 1917 a nexus of bourgeois cultural assumptions and social objectives governing the program, arrangement, and content of semi-affluent new residences rendered regional and ideological (that is, progressive vs. conservative) stylistic differences irrelevant. The organizational principle that seems to have emerged was based on the interests of a new, relatively privileged caste whose members, no matter where they lived, stood in the same relation to the means of production. This meant that a "progressive" Purcell & Elmslie prairie house for a Minneapolis entrepreneur had more in common with a "conservative" residence for an entrepreneur in Short Hills, New Jersey, by John A. Gurd than it did with a low-budget prairie dwelling in St. Paul. But because caste interests had more to do with interior program than with exterior form, with architectural service to social position than with making a particular stylistic point—in other words, because expressions of social interests are more difficult to see than expressions of style are—they have been neglected by historians.

In *The Spirit of H. H. Richardson*, Richard Longstreth, who writes on Kansas, and Kenneth A. Breisch, who discusses Texas, find principles other than progressivism and conservatism to explain the Easterner's appeal: an aspiration for sophistication and ci-
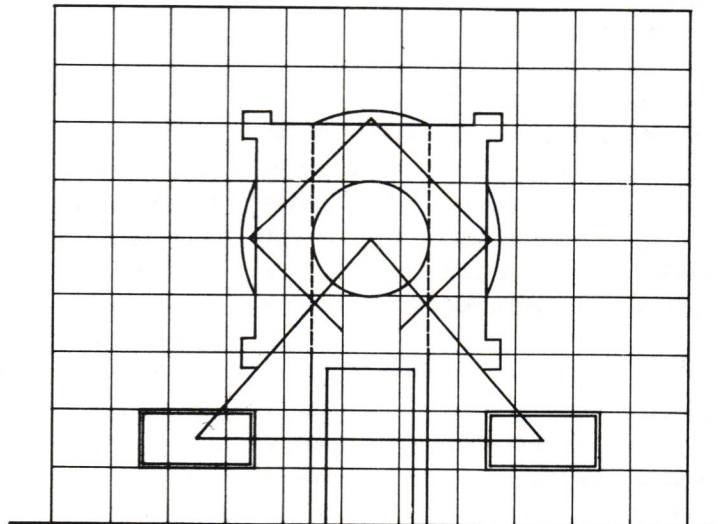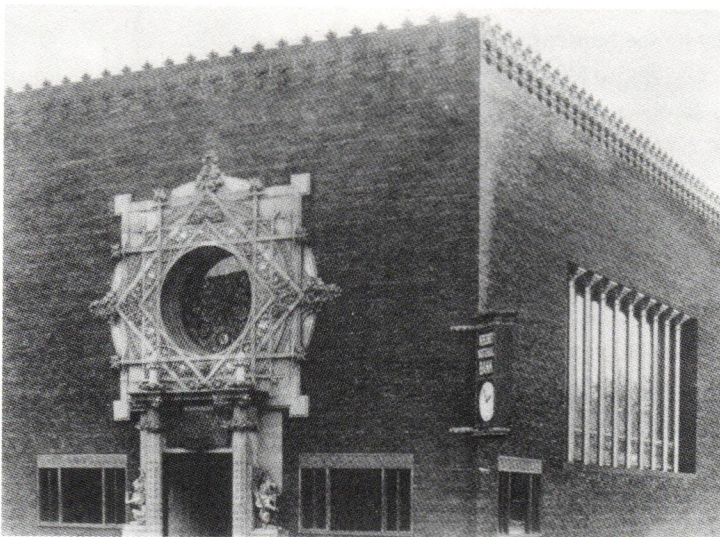
Merchants' National Bank and a diagram of the proportions of the facade, Grinnell, Iowa; Louis H. Sullivan, 1913–14. (From *The Midwest in American Architecture*.)

vility, a dissatisfaction with aesthetic chaos and built disorder, an urge to be modern, a search for regionally appropriate iconography, local self-assertion, and a buoyant optimism are some of the characteristics that attracted residents to a fertile body of work that was intellectually accessible enough to accommodate a multitude of design and social needs. In Kansas and Texas, and presumably in other states like them, a shared sense of physical newness with attendant cultural uncertainty helps explain the enormous popularity of Richardson's enduring, seemingly timeless forms. Like Sies, Longstreth and Breisch detected commonalities of social interest to explain patterns of architectural dissemination (further analysis might uncover caste associations similar to those found by Sies since the commonalities seem characteristic of upper-bourgeois groups). By investigating cultural and social content rather than stylistic statements, Longstreth and Breisch—whether or not they intended to—use design to examine fundamental features of the prevailing social order.

Four other worthy essays should be mentioned. In *The Midwest in American Architecture* Narciso Menocal's "Sullivan's Banks: A Reappraisal" soars above the rest, not only for its impeccable logic but also for its penetrating explanation of Sullivan's use of color and for his discovery of Sullivan's modular system of facade organization. Menocal recuperates the anthropomorphic program that informed Sullivan's iconography most effectively. This exciting essay hints at even bolder interpretations to come.

Readers of *Modern Architecture in America* should not overlook "Douglas Haskell and the Criticism of International Modernism" by Robert Benson, who argues convincingly that Haskell's sensitivity to "new architecture" in general and to the 1932 Museum of Modern Art exhibition in particular exceeded that of Henry-Russell Hitchcock, Alfred Barr, Lewis Mumford, or other contemporary critics. "Haskell staked a claim for the plurality of approaches to modern architecture," Benson writes, arguing "that there is no single or universal metaphorical definition of functionalism." Opposing the notion of a uniform modern style, he was committed to "the process of making shelter that would be as inclusive as possible." Benson does a first-rate job resurrecting Haskell's nonpolemical, open-minded, essentially humanistic criticism, recalling an influential voice of the 1930s and 1940s (Haskell wrote for *The Nation*) that challenged the "official" line.

Kenneth A. Breisch reappears in *Modern Architecture* to remind us of another important dissenter, William Frederick Poole who was, among other things, founder the American Library Association for which he served as president from 1886 to 1887. Poole's determined advocacy of functional library design stood in strong opposition to Richardson's more traditional notions, contributing to a heated debate that Breisch handles judiciously. He also demonstrates Poole's influence on hundreds of libraries—thousands if Andrew Carnegie's are counted—erected across the country before World War I.

In "Themes of Continuity: The Prairie School in the 1920s and 1930s," Richard Guy Wilson contrasts older architects continuing the style with those who might be considered a "second" Prairie School: Bruce Goff, Rudolph Schindler, John Lloyd Wright, Alden Dow, and several others. "Simple forms and complex details, straightforward use of materials, enlivened interior space, and relating the building to the landscape" are, according to Wilson, what distinguishes this second school from "the shrill clutter of the various foreign imports." Although this comment both knocks European-derived architecture a little too hard and attributes too much originality to the native-born, Wilson argues convincingly that, "in a quiet way," the Prairie School spirit continued without interruption until World War II. His essay is important because it helps establish a line of succession for "organic" architecture through the 20th century, even during the heyday of the international style.

Other essays in *The Midwest in American Architecture* and *Modern Architecture* *in America* are informative on matters of special interest, but those discussed in this review make the latter more substantial than the former, in which only Menocal's essay is truly memorable—the most memorable of all the contributors, in fact. In any case neither of the *Festschrifts* coalesce. Perhaps separate sections for apprentices and master craftspersons or contributions from nonstudents could improve the books' coherence. As they stand now, both volumes are fragmented offerings, encouraging one to xerox judiciously—which is no way to honor those stalwarts whose work still shapes our thinking and research.

Jeffrey M. Chusid

Frank Lloyd Wright: A Primer on Architectural Principles

ROBERT McCARTER, EDITOR

Frank Lloyd Wright: Between Principle and Form

PAUL LASEAU AND JAMES TICE

The Wright Space: Pattern and Meaning in Frank Lloyd Wright's Houses

GRANT HILDEBRAND

Frank Lloyd Wright: A Primer on Architectural Principles begins with an apologia by the editor for the general state of writings on Wright, and for the essays that follow. His is a valid exercise, and brings up the great question regarding Wright and Wrightian scholarship: in the world of architectural criticism, what is it about the man and his work that raises the gorge of so many architects and academics? The answer is partially found in the nature of the literature on Frank Lloyd Wright. But there are also several other interesting factors that influence the degree of understanding and acceptance for the architect and his work.

First is his high level of popularity among the general public. He is perceived as the Elvis of architecture: worshipped at the shrines of Taliesin, with books, reproductions, and other merchandising bringing in literally millions of dollars each year for purveyors as diverse as Tiffany & Co. and Wright's home and studio in Oak Park, Illinois. The very accessibility of his architecture would seem to doom his claim to genuine architectural preeminence since, as our educations (and jealousies) tell us, taste and judgment are acquired through training. Sami Hassid of the University of California at Berkeley has demonstrated that visual imagery, forms, and patterns which appealed to non-architecture students were often radically different from those that satisfied graduate architecture majors, and

that as students moved through the program their tastes shifted from one pole to the other. By this criteria, Wright's work must be "pop" architecture, only worth being defined and defended by "pop" critics such as Brendan Gill.

A second factor is the fact that Wright left no powerful heirs to carry on the word. He was essentially divorced from academia and the European modernists who had studied or worked under Gropius, Mies van der Rohe, and Le Corbusier. He was similarly cut off from the world of the Ecole des Beaux-Arts, which preceded the Bauhaus (Wright rejected Daniel Burnham's offer to send him to Paris). With the possible exception of the University of Oklahoma under Bruce Goff, no academic-based architectural program developed Wright's ideas into a style of either teaching or practice. Only Taliesin produced students trained by Wright, and they either stayed on in the cult-like confines of the Fellowship, or left to become isolated beacons in a hostile wilderness. Few if any have taught outside of

Taliesin. And many of them, having worked with Wright in the later decades of his seventy-year career, were seemingly prone to view "organic" as synonymous with undisciplined. The result was that architecture students would request Wright to lecture, while faculties would view Wright's architecture as essentially foreign to what they knew and taught.

A third issue is the man himself. His ego, charisma, and quasi-mystical behavior, his contempt for the profession and almost complete refusal to discuss his architecture in any but the most theocratic, variable, and nonspecific terms (his pronouncement that "the sliding glass door is democratic" is a good example) all lead many to think that the architecture itself must be as much a figment of Wright's overactive imagination as was his own persona (he changed the facts of his birthdate and his name). Because the occasions when he explained "how" he derived his designs were so outweighed by the essays on "why," critics felt that Wright was inviting a kind of "feel-good," in-

Wright's buildings consistently adopt a rigid geometry; the main body of the Freeman House, for example, is a perfect cube while the various portions of the house are each set on a different quadrant of the site, Los Angeles, California; Frank Lloyd Wright, 1924.
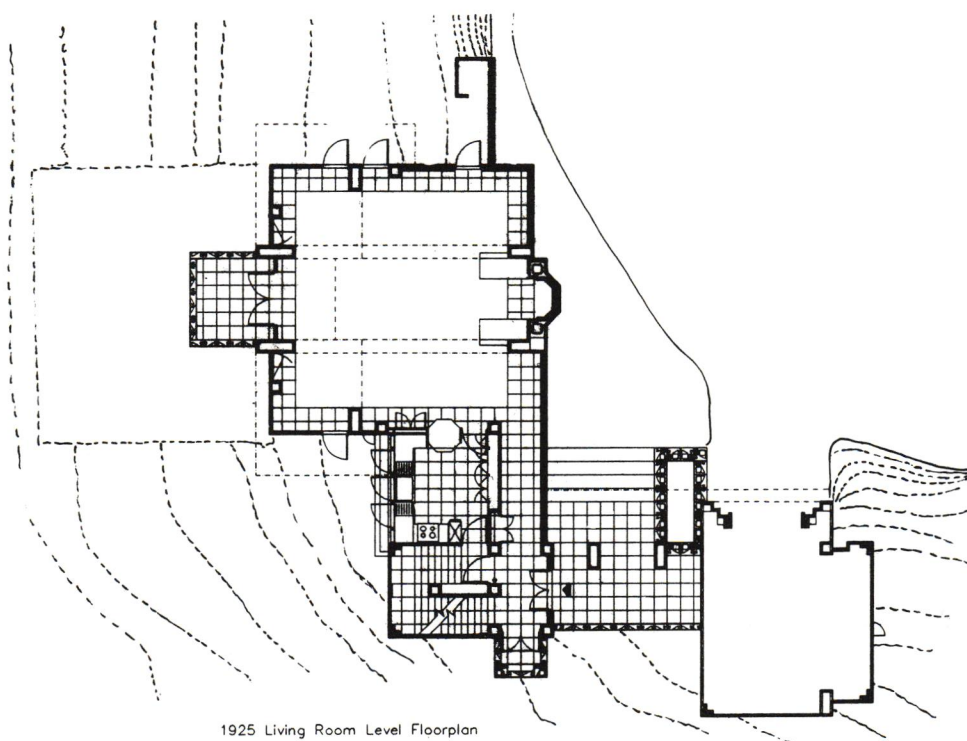
1925 Living Room Level Floorplan

Wright choreographs movement through his buildings on the diagonal to counterpoint the formal axes of architecture; Freeman House, Los Angeles, California; Frank Lloyd Wright, 1924. (Illustration courtesy of the Freeman House.)

tensely idiosyncratic, inexplicable, and—most importantly from a didactic viewpoint—inimitable way of building.

Fourth, Wright's work played on a stage different from that of most other important modern architects: the United States had little competition or context to test the international value of his architecture. It was true in 1910, when, after a twenty-year career, his work was first published not in America, but in Europe (to great acclaim), and is still true today. Wright's preoccupation with Usonian (United States–ian) domestic architecture is often seen as provincial rather than a means of approaching fundamental principles of design through depth.

Fifth, most critics on the international stage today were exposed to Wright himself and the architecture of Taliesin in the l950s, when the work was often as rooted in kitsch as in brilliance. It has been difficult to divorce the experience of Wright's later career from the blazing trail of its first half-century.

Lastly, there is the literature. While there are exceptions, the books on Wright have tended to be hagiographic biographies or of monothematic scholarship. Few are up to the standard of the buildings they seek to discuss. Many are filled with errors in fact: the Hollyhock House (1917) is not concrete despite what Henry-Russell Hitchcock says in *In the Nature of Materials* (New York: Capo, 1975), which, given the title of the work, is a rather important slip. None has yet convincingly shown us the man, who, as Robert McCarter, editor of *Frank Lloyd Wright: A Primer in Architectural Principles*, points out, must have spent *some* time designing as opposed to just providing the grist for soap operas. To a great degree, the problems with Wright literature are due to the field being taken over by enthusiastic amateurs in the absence of serious scholarship. For example, Jonathan Lipman quotes Colin Rowe as saying, "But I don't *like* Frank Lloyd Wright." The result is that Le Corbusier's geometries are presented before the academic world, and Wright's are not.

Therefore, the challenge facing serious scholarship in the architecture of Frank Lloyd Wright is to make the work serious—to somehow demonstrate that Wright was more like Mozart than Elvis: popular, yes, but not therefore illegitimate. The architecture that often shared, but didn't fully participate in, the polemics of European modernism is still valid. The personality of Frank Lloyd Wright, the man, should be beside the point: what he did to sell himself and his work is now accepted as routine marketing practice, admittedly geared to the general public and clearly not the full measure of what he put into his architecture. (Neil Levine recently indicated the success of Wright's promotional efforts when he found that the vast majority of the original Wright clients he met had read the architect's autobiography prior to hiring him.)

Having spent six years working and living in a Wright house, I am also looking for the text that demonstrates the same resonance of ideas, the same level of tectonic and formal sophistication, that can be found in the architecture. In Wright's best work, everything works together: siting, plan geometries, construction technologies, building systems, response to climate, light, historic architectural and cultural references, access and circulation, views, ideas about domesticity, community, and family, the nature of the modern city, and so on. Each element can be isolated as an "essay" and traced throughout the building in terms of its own development. Taken together, each element also reinforces the others, and elevates the overall result. Demonstrating this phenomenon, or assisting the reader with the tools to perceive it, should be the standard for contemporary criticism of Wright's architecture.

Frank Lloyd Wright: A Primer on Architectural Principles is a collection of eight essays on different aspects of Wright's design theories. The essays vary somewhat in sophistication of argument, and widely in tone. They are also quite often contradictory, which enhances rather than detracts. The overall effect is that of a *Festschrift*, and, as Jonathan Lipman's epilogue reveals, the idea for the book indeed originated fifteen years ago as an issue of the late journal *Oppositions*. Nonetheless, the cumulative

result of the book is to effectively demonstrate that Wright's work was unequivocally grounded in rigorous formal principles and a comprehensive knowledge of contemporary, historical, and traditional architecture from around the world.

Patrick Pinnell, in his essay "Academic Tradition and the Individual Talent," outlines the similarities between Wright's earliest works and projects by McKim, Mead and White, Charles Atwood, H. H. Richardson, and others, tracing the development of Wright's architecture as he essentially learned from others. Pinnell then convincingly argues that after the Winslow House (1893) came a series of non-derivative (and relatively unsuccessful) works which proved that Wright had well-developed skills but an immature style. His period of experimentation ended with his adoption of H. H. Richardson's plan for the Winn Memorial Library in the Husser House of 1899. Recognizing its power, Wright then accepted the academic concept of type, and used its "variety within unity" to develop two plan types for the *Ladies Home Journal* projects of 1901 ("A House for the Prairie" and "A Small House with Lots of Room"), both derived from the plan of his own home. These plans have since become known as the "cruciform" and the "pinwheel."

In underlining the similarities between Wright's work and its precedents, Pinnell misses the opportunity to point out the origins of certain ideas that were important to Wright's development, but were at variance from his sources. For instance, his early 1887 Unitarian Chapel for Sioux City differs from its Richardsonian antecedent with its more exaggerated response to the way building meets sky and earth, as well as its more consistent geometry in the formation of the roof. His Blossom (1892), Charnley (1891), and Emmond (1892) houses all presage Wright's preoccupation with the hearth by the way this feature is placed—immediately in view of visitors as they enter, as in the Winslow House. It is as if Wright was trying to establish the point of the building up front: this is a private house, and the hearth is its literal and figural center.

Pinnell also limits his sources to Western classical or contemporary American precedents. Neither the Ho-o-den Japanese pavilion seen at the 1893 Columbian Exposition (well-covered in other essays in the *Primer*), nor the Mayan architecture (also at the exposition) is mentioned. The Dove Cotes building of the Acropolis at Uxmal, for instance, is at least as important a source for the triangulated facade of the Robert Roloson House of 1894 as the Phoenix House by McKim, Mead and White was. A final criticism of this otherwise excellent essay: Pinnell devotes so much space to the development of the plan types that it is frustrating that the many illustrations used to show its implementation are not labeled.

Werner Seligman's "Evolution of the Prairie House" is a similar essay on the development of plan type in Wright's domestic architecture. He discusses circulation and the arrangement of rooms along formal axes. In doing so he relies on the orthogonal; movement along the diagonal is equally important to Wright's heavily choreographed circulation. Throughout his architecture, the two are interrelated. In his own home, for instance, the inglenook is placed in the living room to the left of the entry so that it is visible from the front door. Upon moving to that niche (with its mirror and unglazed openings to other rooms, reinforcing its ability to receive this movement), one then turns to discover the corner bay windows with a window-seat overlooking the garden. From there, the visitor is directed to the dining room. This sequence of diagonal attraction is in contradistinction to the organizational axes of the building.

Similarly, in the discussion of the Heller House (1896), Seligman points out the various niches of the living room, which is entered on the diagonal, but he misses the drama this diagonal movement provides in the potentially claustrophobic, narrow town house. The plan of the Heller House is instructive because of the different roles rooms play depending on whether they are entered on the axis or on the diagonal (from a corner). In the latter case, rooms are intended to reinforce movement and provide

clues to the location of other spaces; in the former, centripedal rooms are clearly meant to terminate movement. Examples include the dining room at the Heller House and library at the Winslow House: both are, by their function, necessarily static spaces.

Seligman does, however, engage in an extensive discussion of the third dimension in the development of the house types. Structural elements and facade features (window and door openings, water tables, roofs, balconies) are followed as they evolve from the 1891 Charnley House to the epochal Darwin Martin House of 1904.

Richard MacCormac contributes a useful essay on the Froebel blocks, those totemic children's learning toys that apparently had such a profound effect on Wright's design sense. It was originally an essay for *Architectural Review* in 1968, and reprinted in H. Allen Brooks's collection, *Writings on Wright* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1981), which might explain the poor quality of the illustration reproduction. But MacCormac's pioneering work on the geometries of the blocks and Wright's architecture, identifying the tartan grid of Froebel Gift No. 6 in the Prairie Houses, for example, is still essential to an understanding of Wright.

Kenneth Frampton's elegant essay on patterns of ornament demonstrates how Wright's textile-block aesthetic is derived from Gottfried Semper's metaphor of building as woven fabric. He also discusses the significance of Owen Jones, author of *Grammar of Ornament*, Louis Sullivan's *A System of Architectural Ornament*, and the widespread, late 19th-century fascination with the arts of the Orient, from rugs to calligraphy—ideas that were both allied with the Froebel gifts and important in influencing Wright. Frampton traces the textile-block aesthetic and its metaphysical underpinnings in Wright's work from the windmill of Romeo and Juliet to the Usonian House. He ends with a nice description of the way the sequence of construction of the Usonian houses of the 1930s and 1940s parallels the four elements of Semper's general theory of 1852.

Frampton does, however, fall into a

common trap set by Wright for those discussing the California Block Houses. Despite his history and defense of its design and construction, the Millard House (1923) is actually not a textile-block structure (as a close comparison of the Richard Neutra drawing of the Ennis House and Wright's Millard section, both of which accompany the article, will demonstrate). The differences are significant, among them that the Millard House used mortar in its construction, while the textile-block houses were mortarless, supposedly to allow for erection by unskilled laborers instead of masons, but contained two-way steel reinforcing.

In several ways, Archie Mackenzie's "Rewriting the Natural House" is the most courageous inclusion. Mackenzie recognizes the fundamental difficulty of critically analyzing a text written in a medium other than language. He sets up a three-part invention using "speakers" named Naturalist, lyar', and Hero. These three, in between comments by the author, deconstruct verbal texts by Frank Lloyd Wright and each other, using a Wright's Wheel (a "rewriting" device), while the author deconstructs drawings with a computer.

Mackenzie's avowed purpose is to discover an architecture that succeeds Wright's Usonian House, by taking it apart and reconstituting it. The Natural House becomes the [Natur(al)]-[house]. Mackenzie talks about the difficulty of doing this to an architecture in which form, intention, and experience are intertwined, and, for this reason, he uses three voices. The lyar', not accidentally, is female. Given her description as morally reprehensible and subversive, one hopes that her role is to respond to the paternalism inherent in Wright's architecture; this point remains unclear in the essay, however, which is apparently taken from a larger work in progress.

What is surprising in Mackenzie's essay, given its high degree of artifice, is the beauty of some of the deconstructed fragments of text and the way they evoke and transform concepts found in the original, whole work. Ultimately, the reader is left to wonder whether the new text, with its game pieces and rules, is not as deceptive (or seductive) as the original—or any more relevant to the reader's own reading of Wright.

Jonathan Lipman's essay, "Consecrated Space," illustrates the consistent use of a single parti for most of Wright's (built) public buildings. First seen in a reworked plan of the Baths of Caracalla cast onto the stork panels decorating the entry to his own studio, this parti is found in the Larkin Building (1903), Unity Temple (1904), Midway Garden (1913), Imperial Hotel (1915), Johnson Wax Building (1936–39), Beth Shalom (1954), and Greek Orthodox Church (1956). It consists of an organization of the project into major and minor volumes, with the entry located in between. The major volume contains the consecrated space, top lit, walled off from the world, expressive in its massing of the space and function within. The minor volume contains the support services.

This is clear and convincing in most of the examples shown. It is particularly exciting when demonstrated in Midway Gardens, but tenuous in the description of the Imperial Hotel. But that period in Wright's work is the most complex and most awash with con-

Wright adopted the Arts & Crafts prominence of the hearth as the literal center and metaphorical symbol of the home and family. He sets it in opposition to the garden and, typically, the community outside; Freeman House, Los Angeles, California; Frank Lloyd Wright, 1924. (Hearth photo, 1925, courtesy of the Freeman house; living room photo by Julius Sherman, 1960.)

tradictory formal and polemical ideas. Lipman's focus on the public buildings does not allow him to demonstrate that the diagram he draws for the Imperial Hotel is identical to the diagram one would draw for Hollyhock House, which is essentially contemporary: circulation across the middle of a U, with two wings extending to one side, and the major space opposite. Similarly, the Baths of Caracalla parti also describes the Freeman House (1924), which one enters between two volumes, the minor containing the garage and laundry room, the larger containing the living quarters. The house is walled to the street, with only the hearth, the symbol of home, expressing itself. Perhaps this use of the public building type in houses (the Ennis is similar) helps explain their frequent description as nondomestic. But perhaps the parti is so widely used by Wright that it actually has less to do with public/private function than it does with a particular program or other issues.

The Viennese historian Otto Graf contributes the least convincing or interesting essay: a shrill polemic which asserts that Wright is right, and "the basic tenets of present architectural practice are wrong." Like Christopher Alexander, he bemoans the current economic climate and industrial structure. He argues that Wright used the German phrase *Lieber Meister* to refer to Louis Sullivan because "the *commercial* world of Chicago did not possess an equally appropriate term" (my italics). This putdown of turn-of-the-century Chicago would have surprised Wright, who said in 1918, "In a great workshop like Chicago, this creative power germinates." Further, Graf laments the inability of the world to love a work of art as an erotic entity. It seems that much of Graf's commentary is more directed at Europe than at the United States, and is wide of the mark in discussing this very American architect. Finally, Graf follows up with thirty-six pages of sketches and notes on the Larkin Building; unfortunately (or fortunately) these sketches are reproduced four to a page, and are therefore just difficult enough to decipher that most readers will probably flip right past them.

Robert McCarter, the volume's editor, contributes a good "summing up" in the one essay that feels least like a magazine article. He enumerates a range of fundamental principles or patterns found in Wright's architecture, some of which are commonalities at this point in our understanding of his work, but several of which are perceptive and original. Particularly important is McCarter's discussion of the way Wright "created by resolving dichotomies." While the tremendous design skills Wright brought to his work would probably always guarantee recognition, it is the tension and drama inherent in opposing ideas that elevates his architecture to greatness. This tension was as obvious within Wright as in his buildings, and may be the thing to which we relate the most.

As a whole, this collection of essays is a worthwhile contribution to the literature on Wright. I would urge, however, that readers also purchase *The Nature of Frank Lloyd Wright*, edited by Carol Bolon, Robert Nelson, and Linda Seidel (University of Chicago Press, 1988), a collection of discussions of topics complementary to those found in McCarter's *Primer*. It holds excellent essays by Gwen Wright, Neil Levine, Joseph Connors, and others.

Frank Lloyd Wright: Between Principle and Form is an elaboration of the kind of typological studies done by Seligman, MacCormac, and others. It is essentially a series of hundreds of drawings categorizing Wright's work by plan type (hearth, atrium, or tower) and siting, and then describing the manifestation of various principles across representatives of each plan type. Through this strategy, Paul Laseau and James Tice effectively demonstrate many of the arguments in the *Primer*. For instance, Lipman's parti for public buildings becomes a series of clear drawings on binuclear organization, site access, and structure.

The accompanying text attempts, with mixed results, to construct a framework which holds all the various diagrams in context. Its strength (and weakness) is its ambition: it discusses virtually every aspect of Wright's work that could have a formal implication (which is then drawn). It compares

important buildings with those derived from other architect's works or historic precedents (the site plan of Katsura Palace and Fallingwater (1935–37), or elevations of Monticello and the Blossom House, for example). It analyzes particular examples from myriad different perspectives so that, over the course of the work, a layered view of the architecture takes effect.

The book is clearly intended more for architects than historians. It tries to demonstrate Wright's design process, largely from the perspective of what one would have to do to design with similar intentions, not with a claim that it is how Wright really did it. The book is extensive but not critical (and occasionally statements are arguable, to say the least). However, there are so many well-drawn diagrams that the historian should be able to illustrate just about any point on Wright's work from the collection contained in this sourcebook.

Two complaints: first, the book itself (as opposed to the drawings) is rather ugly and appears cheaply produced. While designed as a textbook, it still deserves better. Second, the drawings are not always accurate, although apparently not to such degrees as to challenge any of the points being made by the authors.

The same cannot be said for *The Wright Space: Pattern and Meaning in Frank Lloyd Wright's Houses* by Grant Hildebrand. This attractive book with extraordinarily considered illustrations is filled with enough inaccuracies to often challenge the argument being presented. This is frustrating. On one hand, it is a commendable effort that tries to demonstrate Wright's ideas more clearly than virtually any previous work on the architect—plans were redrawn, new photographs taken, and a labor-intensive series of axonometric diagrams by William Hook commissioned. On the other hand, the level of the argument is (with some exceptions) rather superficial. All Wright's work becomes an essay on a single theme: the English geographer Jay Appleton's theory of "prospect and refuge," which is certainly one legitimate set of opposing principles with which to analyze Wright's architecture.

(Wright himself called this dialogue the "treehouse and cave.") But it is not enough of a critical position to significantly parse the architecture. Too much gets left out. As one example, Hildebrand asserts that because the Ennis House has the most powerful sense of refuge, it is one of Wright's greatest houses—an unbalanced claim at best. He also forces the argument: he approvingly describes a large inert volume in the Ennis living room (due to a Schindleresque, and rather rude, penetration of the space by a bathroom) as a "minstrel gallery," even though the volume is totally inaccessible.

Hildebrand concludes his book with a series of rather unconvincing statistical analyses that attempt to give helpful design clues: Wright's terraces are between 20 and 33 percent covered; ceiling height changes range from 1:1.25 to 1:2, etc. He also quickly dispenses with Charles Rennie Mackintosh, Greene and Greene, and other architects by pointing out their buildings didn't have prospect and refuge. "Not that those other aspects were of 'poor' quality . . . it's just that Wright's way has had the stronger and more enduring value."

And then there are those illustrations. The redrawn plans are relatively neutral, although they are done with a kind of mock-Wright hand. But they are neither of the buildings as designed, nor as they stand today. To focus on a few California houses, for example: the 1924 Freeman House is shown with the planters that were added to the entry in the 1940s to regulate traffic, and with the pool filled in. The plan of Hollyhock House, also with an important relationship to water, leaves out the stream that connected two of the pools about which Hildebrand writes at length. The loggia of the Ennis House does not end in a doorway as drawn in the plan, but with a blank wall, as his own photographs show. This change is one key to the destruction of the sense of movement in this house which happened when Wright was thrown off the job.

Similar criticisms could be leveled at the Hook illustrations. A key outdoor terrace at the Freeman House is buried under a hillside and the roof is shown with steps that

don't exist. The Palmer House (1952) in Ann Arbor, Michigan, is located at the edge of a ravine, which is not shown in the axonometric despite its impact on the plan. The fact that Fallingwater is set against a cliff, and the entry is between the natural rock and the constructed rock is also missing. More importantly, the Hook drawings are so idiosyncratic and lush that all the houses end up looking the same, as if they were located on identical sites. Packed with as much art and information as these drawings are, the shortcomings are regrettable.

Having said all this, it is also true that some of the same qualities which make this volume unsuitable for the architect or architectural historian may well make it a good introduction to Wright for the general public. With accessible writing and illustrations, the book uses a simple, powerful, and interesting concept to explain the way ideas connect Wright's diverse work.

The great Frank Lloyd Wright book, like the great American novel, is still waiting to be written. But in the meantime, I would concur with Robert McCarter's suggestion that a particularly rich source of understanding is the single-building study. These texts typically present enough information for readers to establish their own interpretations, and allow space for the pursuit of enlightening tangents by the authors. But it is time for the general level of argument and scholarship in this field to move significantly forward. Hopefully, a new journal on Wright studies, and upcoming books by Katherine Smith, Robert Sweeney, and Neil Levine will do just that.

FRANK LLOYD WRIGHT: A PRIMER ON ARCHITECTURAL PRACTICE, Robert McCarter, editor, Princeton Architectural Press, 1992, 304 pp., illus., $39.93 (cloth); $29.95 (paper).

FRANK LLOYD WRIGHT: BETWEEN PRINCIPLE AND FORM, Paul Laseau and James Tice, Van Nostrand Reinhold, 1992, 208 pp., illus., $34.95.

THE WRIGHT SPACE: PATTERN AND MEANING IN FRANK LLOYD WRIGHT'S HOUSES, Grant Hildebrand, University of Washington Press, 1991, 192 pp., illus., $55.00 (cloth); $29.95 (paper).

Jeffrey Cook

The House as Lifestyle

Personally, I have small respect for the mere human animal, and no enthusiasm for homilies upon the purity of the social state emanating from those whose personal belongings are nasty with ignorance, whose homes are a fashionable tangle of meaningless things and whose persons are freaks of fashion. The homes of America need the application of intelligent interest that is rare, if they are to have an artistic, and therefore let it be said, in a spiritual sense, the "airing" that will make them fit for the souls to grow in.

So said a thirty-three-year-old Frank Lloyd Wright in Chicago in 1900 in his first formal address to his profession. He was then cresting toward the finest of his emerging Prairie Style houses.

The literature of the house is an enduring core in the library of architecture. Continuing and timeless, the stream of books on the house has a perpetual source in the human need for shelter of both mind and body. It is a tradition that occupies the center of the earliest books and most influential treatises on architecture. From Marcus Vitruvius, Leone Battista Alberti, Andrea Palladio, Sebastiano Serlio, and onward, the giants of the field have consistently conceived of architecture as rooted in the design of the house. Every year classic books are reprinted and new ones appear to add layers of richness to this tradition of literature on dwelling.

Published in successive years, *The Good House*, *The Most Beautiful House in the World*, and *Gentle Architecture* illustrate recent ideas about lifestyle and house. They are completely unconcerned about the view from the street and about domestic form as viewed by the public. Rather, they dwell inwardly on the philosophies that inform a personal and intimate quality of private life. The richness of American domestic culture as explored in these books is far from the urban angst and global irresponsibility that increasingly command design attention at the urging of the world's environmental leaders.

Architects could learn a lot about both

houses and the design profession's attitude to all other building types from these three publications. But these books are truly for others—initiates and novices, new and old clients, and those who daydream about the house. And these books, in their refusal to be trendy and avoidance of high-style and rarefied discourse, will last.

The most handsome is *The Good House* with its stimulating, illustrative mix of sketches, color, and black-and-white photography. Written by three practicing architects from the San Francisco Bay Area, it is among the best in revealing the California lifestyle, which embodies a design philosophy and an architectonic vocabulary that has influenced house design globally. But this is not the indolent life of vast, semidomesticated emporiums of automobiles, sports facilities, and over-sized eating/drinking/entertaining events that can be found along the coast and hills of California, from the Mexican border to the northern reaches of Sea Ranch. Rather, it's about the world of modest scale and intimate accommodation, where the richness of private life experience is multiplied by its embrace of the natural world as epitomized by the small garden. Although the authors illustrate their words with their own thoughtful work, they also describe wonderful houses by others. Included in the case studies are several classics including Bernard Maybeck's 1907 Schneider House and H. H. Harris's 1939 Havens House in Berkeley, as well as a little gem in Cairo, Egypt, the 1978 Hamdy House by Abdel Wahed El-Wakil.

The book's subtitle, *Contrast as a Design Tool,* underlines a theme explained by Joseph Esherick in the foreword: "It is indeed only by contrast that the world is readable at all." But the simpleminded black-and-white cover does not foretell glaring graphic contrast as a convincing theme for domestic architecture. This is a gently embraced discipline where linkages, transitions, and gradients turn a rule into art. Thus, although richly instructive, this is hardly a design textbook. It has no index, few references, and most
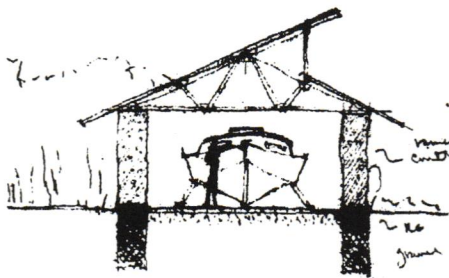
Witold Rybczynski's original intent—to build a simple boat-building shed—evolved into a slightly larger project: an exploration of the house as it fulfills a personal dream. (From *The Most Beautiful House in the World.*)

of the plans are not labeled. Instead, it is a kind of visual reference that infers meaning from a particular relaxed but strongly designed lifestyle—an idea about the domestic environment in California that emerged almost a century ago in the houses of Maybeck.

The book is beautifully written. But this is a book of visual pleasure and it is produced even more generously than the bimonthly *Fine Homebuilding,* for which the book's publisher is best known. Sun-filled photographs contrast with moody sunrise shots, diagrammatic plan analyses are juxtaposed with rendered elevational drawings, and vignettes of select corners amplify visual ideas. The synthesis of articulated whole houses is presented in loving detail.

In contrast is *The Most Beautiful House in the World,* which turns out to be a boat house south of Montreal. It became the ob-

Rybczynski's boat shed beget a low, spreading house. (From *The Most Beautiful House in the World.*)

session and, ultimately, full-fledged home of the author, Witold Rybczynski, who teaches architecture at McGill University and publishes and editorializes internationally and distinctively on architecture. He states, "The most beautiful house in the world is the one that you built for yourself." Although a professional himself, Rybczynski is critical of contemporary architecture as "a self-expressive pastime" indulgent in innovation. Instead, he explores personal context and culture as a process of building, "of installing ourselves in a place, of establishing a spot where it would be safe to dream, to let our minds drift." It is a process of constructive consciousness and of playful, personal involvement that might be easier for a nonarchitect to effect.

This book on the house as a personal dream is great reading. It starts with an elementary idea—"It began with the dream of a boat. At a certain moment in my life . . . I was struck with what seemed an irresistible urge to become a sailor"—and nimbly and elegantly unfolds problems and pleasures, making for a delightful as well as intelligent essay. It is a book to return to again, to relish the perception and affection of this personal yet universal journey. It even has an index to help rediscover the impressive range of memory images, connections, and origins that stimulate the individual meanings of house: Moshe Safdie, Vincenzo Scamozzi, George Gilbert Scott, Sir Walter Scott, Sebastiano Serlio, Shakespeare, George Bernard Shaw, Maharajah Sawai Jai Singh, Harold Sleeper, Joshua Slocum, and Sir John Soane are called forth in what may seem like an eclectic menu of the dialogue, both intellectual and visual, of the house.

As befits a delightful and provocative verbal narrative, *The Most Beautiful House* is elegantly designed in a small format with printed pages that invite the eye and mind. But the 1932 Edward Hopper painting *Dauphinee House* on the dust jacket is the dream of only some. Less than a dozen fine-lined drawings throughout the text give us

the biological responsiveness of sites and buildings. Crude and judgmental, it is also accessible and understandable, and easily the best among the few attempts to provide a serious scoring method for environmentally conscious architecture.

Wells quotes James Marston Fitch about "two sorts of error. One is a lack of comprehension of the absolute interrelatedness of all the component elements of the natural environment—an interdependence which makes it impossible to manipulate one factor without setting in action a complex chain reaction that usually extends far beyond the individual designer's sphere of action. The other error is the consistent tendency of modern architects and engineers to grossly underestimate the magnitude of the natural forces of the environment; or contrariwise, to grossly overestimate the magnitude of manmade capacities at their disposal." This concept of the connectedness of buildings and environment is fundamental to our current and continuing practical dilemma, to say nothing about the scale of our blunders.

Mistaken for a hopeless romantic, Wells is in fact a rational hopeful. His affectionate clarion call for earth values is deliberately without economic projections, pollution targets, or specifications of building science. He is radical in his rootedness and conversational in his communication. Chapter one, "Commitment," begins, "We all know that buildings destroy land, and yet in the name of architecture we continue to pave this beautiful country with buildings and parking lots. . . . We're really out of touch." This ten-year-old book is of continuing, pivotal importance.

The humanity of these three books remind us not only that architects are people, but more importantly, that people are architects.

Sketch and site section of an underground office by Malcolm Wells, a long-time exponent of underground and earth-embracing architecture; Cherry Hill, New Jersey; 1970. (From *Gentle Architecture*.)

some idea of the author's imagery, but are incidental to the readers' personal imagery as stimulated by the text. Readers must illustrate these pages of private insight by themselves.

A soft cover is especially appropriate to *Gentle Architecture*. Its contents are identical to the 1981 hardcover edition, including the occasional typos. The one charming change is an identical affectionate dedication but to an apparently different devotee. The author, Malcolm Wells, has never been known to hide his commitments. And his own long-standing dedication to building within the earth is a landmark in the theory of current architectural practice. Neither researcher nor academic, this convert practitioner exudes common sense. The resultant building designs vary sharply with the modernism of his glass-boxed generation.

Wells is known as an exponent of the un-

derground—both as an advocate of earth-embraced architecture and as an iconoclast of "business as usual." His own persuasive personality is well-communicated in his several crusading books (some self-published and all popular). But *Gentle Architecture* is probably his best book. While it includes a few examples of his own building designs, it also documents the pattern of his thinking and the nature of his conscience. Wells tells us not what to do or how to do it, but *why* to do something that is critical.

And in all the recent noise about global responsibility regarding the built environment and the need for sustainability and an ecological base, few designers have gone much further than mouthing the buzz words. Wells first published his "Wilderness-based Checklist and Scale" over twenty years ago as a technique for rating

THE GOOD HOUSE: CONTRAST AS A DESIGN TOOL, Max Jacobson, Murray Silverstein, and Barbara Winslow, The Taunton Press, 1990, illus., 148 pp., $21.95.

THE MOST BEAUTIFUL HOUSE IN THE WORLD, Witold Rybczynski, Viking, 1989, illus., 211 pp., $18.95.

GENTLE ARCHITECTURE, Malcolm Wells, McGraw Hill, 1991, illus., 178 pp. $19.95.

Annmarie Adams

Eccentric Spaces: A Voyage Through Real and Imagined Worlds

The Built, the Unbuilt, and the Unbuildable: In Pursuit of Architectural Meaning

ROBERT HARBISON

Eccentric Spaces is an eccentric book. In this unusual account of architecture and its representation—originally published in 1977 and reprinted by Godine in 1988—Robert Harbison investigates a series of real and unreal places through the human imagination. Ranging from subjects as unusual as Sherlock Holmes's house and images in the Sears catalog to more traditional topics such as the Villa Rotunda and the Boboli gardens, Harbison sees the entire built environment as a form of self-expression, through the ways users imagine space as much as any formal design process. "Places thoroughly lived in become internalized in a series of adjustments till they represent a person to himself," Harbison explains in his chapter on the home, "a process the critic can try to follow in reverse, deducing the life from the quarters."

What follows is a somewhat impetuous voyage "in reverse" through gardens, houses, industrial buildings, city plans, fictional architecture, maps, museums, and catalogs of the last five centuries in which Harbison transgresses the boundary between real places and those that exist only in the imagination. As a book on the architecture of the imagination, however, he relies far too heavily on his reader's ability to imagine. Unbelievably, there are no illustrations in *Eccentric Spaces*. Harbison explores his diverse subjects in words only, assuming readers are familiar with the famous and not-so-famous places in not only England, France, and Italy, but also in the land of make-believe, such as in *Hypnerotomachia Poliphili*, a 15th-century Italian romantic novel.

Harbison also relies far too heavily on the reader's propensity to believe him. There are no footnotes in *Eccentric Spaces*. Further reading is suggested at the conclusion of each of the book's eight chapters, but the "historical data" used by Harbison in his exploration of imaginative architecture of the last five centuries was apparently drawn from four guidebooks. As a result, the book is riddled with errors and omissions; it is also, in places, extremely offensive. "Being grown-up children, 19-century men were able to find satisfactions in simple things," he claims in the section on housing, while stating a few pages later that "Holland and Belgium are nations of homes to the extent that there is little else to look at." The great public squares, churches, market buildings, Amsterdam's canal system, and the tradition of sophisticated commercial architecture in both Holland and Belgium are apparently invisible to him.

Indeed, throughout *Eccentric Spaces*, European cities and architecture are discussed as if they were constructed simply to amuse late 20th-century American tourists. English houses, for example, are "inoffensively nondescript"; he finds the structure built to supply Pompeii with water "more provoking" than its temples; and railroad stations are supposedly less architectural
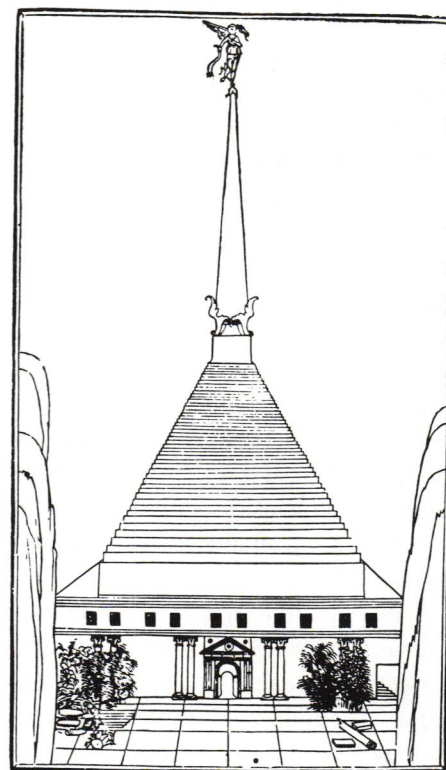
Woodcut from Francesco Colonna's *Hypnerotomachia Poliphili*; 1499. (From *The Built, the Unbuilt, and the Unbuildable*.)

than other building types, according to Harbison, "because they are experienced less deliberately." Wedged between outrageously patronizing statements like these are some perceptive passages—particularly
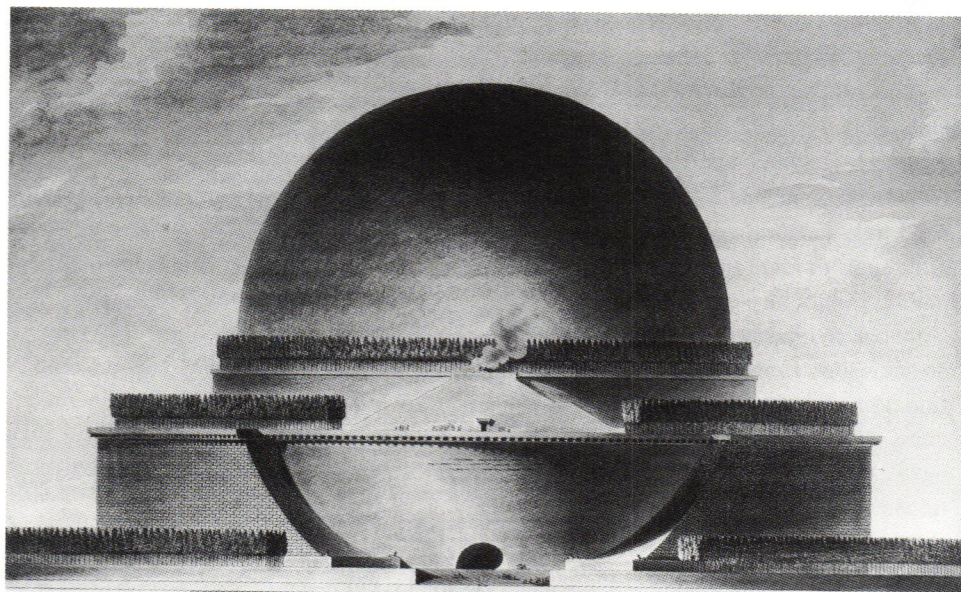
Monument to Sir Isaac Newton by Etiènne-Louis Boullée; 1780s. (From *The Built, the Unbuilt, and the Unbuildable*.)

his analysis of fictional architecture—but readers demanding architectural insight and accuracy will be sadly disappointed throughout the book.

This is unfortunate, as *Eccentric Spaces*, in its interdisciplinary approach to the subject and its bold use of fiction, might have appealed to an extremely broad audience. However, the lack of illustrations, uneasy leaps between time periods, and incessant name-dropping will undoubtedly fatigue readers outside the field. In the end, *Eccentric Spaces* is little more than an assembly of places and books Harbison seemingly enjoyed, but which ultimately lacks intellectual substance.

While *Eccentric Spaces* is, at least, eccentric, *The Built, the Unbuilt, and the Unbuildable* is unreadable as architectural history or criticism. Harbison's most recent book is entirely impressionistic and extremely elitist. In the preface, he states the book's objective is to argue that the "solidest architectural facts are fictional to a degree," foreshadowing the confused agenda of the subsequent six chapters. "Most buildings," he states at the beginning of the book, "aren't really architecture," echoing Nikolaus Pevsner's famous comparison of the Lincoln Cathedral to a bicycle shed. Pevsner's exhaustive surveys of English architecture were obviously a source on which Harbison relied greatly in *Eccentric Spaces*.

The subject matter of *The Built, the Unbuilt, and the Unbuildable* is roughly the same as his earlier book; Harbison explores gardens, monuments, fortifications, ruins, paintings, and "unbuildable" architecture, moving from real to unreal spaces. Fortunately, this book is profusely illustrated with superb black-and-white photographs and drawings. Here Harbison focuses on the function of architecture, and asserts that many of the places explored in the book have changed use over time, or "malfunctioned," as he says. The discrepancy between architectural intention and reality is a fascinating question, meriting serious scholarly consideration. But, like his earlier book, *The Built, the Unbuilt, and the Unbuildable* is, unfortunately, based on spontaneous responses to places and stories rather than comprehensive research.

Again, incredible leaps are made between places and periods, from Sir Edwin Lutyens to Christo, for example, in the section on monuments. And again, the voice of the ill-informed American tourist is audible throughout; cities and buildings are dismissed in a single sentence or paragraph. Harbison calls the Canadian Parliament Building in Ottawa, one of the world's most significant examples of Ruskinian Gothic architecture, "the Capitol." He continues that the building "still accumulates reliefs which could have been carved by a Mission Indian a hundred years ago," leaving the reader to wonder about Harbison's familiarity with the history of native Canadians or the 19th century in general.

General readers will find both *Eccentric Spaces* and *The Built, the Unbuilt, and the Unbuildable* impossible to follow; specialists will find both books shockingly sloppy. For now, the architecture of the imagination will remain in that realm.

ECCENTRIC SPACES: A VOYAGE THROUGH REAL AND IMAGINED WORLDS, Robert Harbison, David R. Godine, 1991, 178 pp., $10.95.

THE BUILT, THE UNBUILT, AND THE UNBUILDABLE: IN PURSUIT OF ARCHITECTURAL MEANING, Robert Harbison, MIT Press, 1991, 192 pp., illus., $25.00.

Michael Brill

Archetypes in Architecture

THOMAS THIIS-EVENSEN

Archetypes in Architecture describes a primary way universal feelings and meanings are experienced through architecture. It documents the way in which forms act as a direct expression of meanings and as a conjurer of emotions, forms that have not been previously encoded into symbols by culture. Some call these "natural symbols," "natural" for they are neither learned nor invented. We are either born with an innate understanding of them, or they are the result of everyone's earliest development. Thomas Thiis-Evensen acknowledges Carl Jung's theory of "archetypes" as the general source for the concept of his book.

The book's 450 pages of text, diagrams, and photographs presents material that is bold, wise, generous, and seemingly exhaustive, yet comprehends only a portion of the possible experience of meanings and feelings from the built world. Given this, one unwitting contribution of this work is the astonishing realization of the enormity of the range of people's meaningful experiences in built places.

The author argues that our "spontaneous and unconscious reactions to architecture" are not idiosyncratic or culture-driven, but rather, are species-wide, and are highly patterned responses. Through a better understanding of these responses to built form, Thiis-Evensen seeks, for architects, "a more reliable basis for the emotional content of architecture." A handful of certain elemental forms and their variants are his archetypes. Through investigation of these archetypal forms, he attempts to make a theory by classifying and describing the archetypes, and then articulating the universal feelings and meanings they embody and somehow transmit.

From a fundamental dialectic of the forces of "inside" and "outside," he derives the archetypal physical elements, those that delimit spatiality. The floor, wall, roof, followed by the door, window, and stair, are
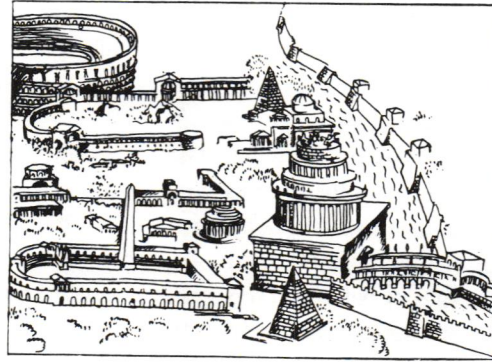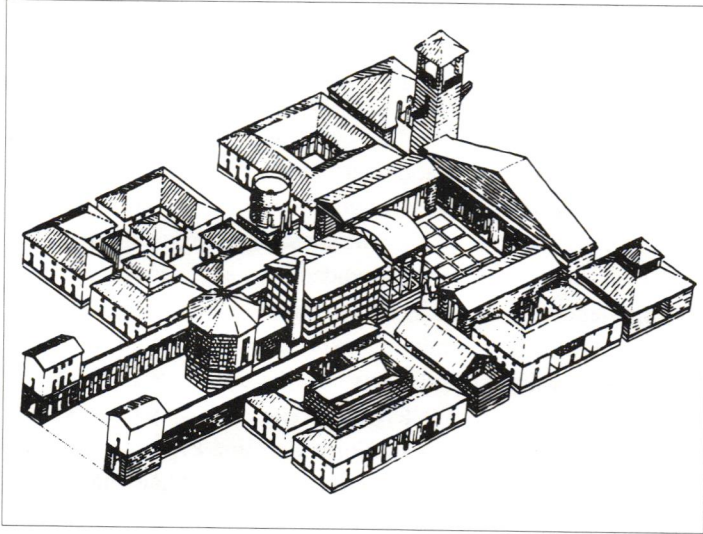
Volumetric archetypes: (left) project for a school by Leon Krier, c. 1970s; and (right) from Le Corbusier's *Towards a New Architecture* (published 1970). (From *Archetypes in Architecture*.)

primary. These are his archetypes, which he likens to a "grammar."

The author argues that our first impressions of a building are essentially feelings about its mood or atmosphere, and that our body (mind included) senses meanings and has feelings through its relationship to three characteristics of each archetypal building element: its motion, weight, and substance, or what he calls "themes." Motion is the archetype's dynamic nature, felt as expanding, contracting, or balanced. Weight is its relation to gravity, felt as rising, falling, or stable. Substance is the character of material, felt as hard or soft, warm or cool, rough or smooth, textured, patterned, colored. These are all sensorial characteristics.

The specific content of the themes varies somewhat across the archetypal elements, based on what each element "does" especially, in fundamentally spatial terms. For example, what floors basically do is give direction and delimit space—both essentially about the theme of motion—and they support, referring to the themes of weight and substance.

Within each theme are "motifs," or the particular physical ways the general themes are expressed. For example, for the archetype of floor, the theme of directionality is made particular through the floor's motifs: surface (its pattern and material); form (whether it is sloped, flat, undulating, lay-

ered); and path (a figure against ground, suggesting one's location or movement). To describe each of these, the book offers both historic examples and explanatory sketches.

To offer a feel for the work's structure, the following is my very crude summarization of over fifty pages about the floor. This summary leaves out all the examples, and, of course, most of its richness and clarity:

What the floor "does" best, the phenomena it expresses most robustly, is: directs us from one place to another; delimits a space from its surroundings; and supports us by providing a firm footing. These are the themes of floor. But the theme unique to floor is support—our vertical relationship to the natural ground.

The natural ground is nature's floor, which is experienced in two parts: its "surface" and, beneath it, a "mass." Surface is the material we see; with a rich palette, it illustrates variability. Mass is the unseen material beneath surface and is about stability, firmness, and security, or the lack thereof. Tangibly, mass is stone, earth, fire, and water. Mass affects our movements by its form. We feel it. If it is flat, it suggests freedom of action. If it rises before us, it can be a hindrance. If we experience it as dropping, it—and we—seem to fall. The expressive capacity of floors is derived through the interplay of surface and mass—the seen and the felt.

The floor's theme of direction emphasizes certain motions, such as our for-

ward movement and the connecting of one place to another. This directing comes from the floor's surface—its form and articulated path.

The theme of delimiting creates a stationary situation, where the floor's edges keep us in a position or contain us within a boundary. The feelings and meanings of delimiting come from how the floor is connected to the walls that enclose it, and from making privileged zones in the floor (e.g., a raised or lowered part of the floor).

The theme of support explores the issue of verticality, the relationship of a floor to the ground below, or the sky or ceiling above. The feelings and meanings of supporting are derived from experiences of weight and substance, and from whether the floor is flat with the ground, sunken, spreading, rising, detached, or directional (like stairs).

In this, Thiis-Evensen has developed an abstract system of grammar, theme, and motifs. It sounds more systematic, finicky, and complex than it actually is. As the book's material unfolds, it is easy to follow, makes sense, is quite interesting, and feels useful. While his theory of archetypes is relatively systematic, he says it is "not a recipe for right and wrong," but rather, a way "to point out the possibilities which lie at the roots of architecture, and which in the hands of a creative practitioner, can give the art of building a more humane countenance."

By not insisting that it is *the* way, but merely *one* way, Thiis-Evensen makes his theory more palatable and accessible: it is not necessary to give up other theories, ideologies, or cherished traditions in order to grasp or accept it. For him, archetypes as a phenomenon are inherently and simply "there" in the world, and thus inherently additive to other ways of knowing. The work's accessibility is further increased by hundreds of thumbnail sketches of places, of clarifying diagrams, and carefully selected photographs of buildings. (For phenomena that are supposedly universal, however, the photographs selected are quite Eurocentric.) There is, as well, an eighteen-page diagrammatic sketch-summary of the three archetypal elements and their themes and motifs, itself a tour de force of sketch-thought.

While his method is rigorous, it does not ploddingly attempt to bound or exclude; rather, it has a welcoming character. Thiis-Evensen does not assume the need for categorical "completeness." The work is not simplistically systematic, but graciously open to suggestions and directions offered by the very nature of the magical places it explores.

The book does not delve much into how these archetypes may originate. The theory of origins briefly offered holds that the meanings and feelings we experience from these archetypes originate through a person's earliest "bodily experience . . . common to all people . . . gained through confrontations with the phenomena which surround us." For him, archetypes are constructed anew for each individual in his or her early life, as opposed to Jung's theory of archetypes that suggests they are inherited memories, derived from eons of recurrent and collective human experiences that somehow became "hard-wired" and transmitted down the generations, creating archetypes now present in the unconscious of all individuals.

For Jung (and many others who have explored this concept for some twenty-five-hundred years), archetypes exist for many phenomena in human experience, including gender, divinity, mortality, authority, creatures, forces, time, objects, behaviors, and, of course, places. In all of these, meaning and emotion seem bonded to—or carried by—form. In many theories meaning and emotion are as much a product of the expressive and boundless human spirit and our mythic consciousness as they are of the more grounded body experience.

For Thiis-Evensen, archetypes originate in bodily experience, and the question that follows is how the body "does" this. E. V. Walter, in *Placeways* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1988), suggests that a primary way of knowing a place as a whole is through a sixth sense, haptic perception, a way the whole body senses and feels the environment. Some haptic perception comes through real physical touching, but much comes from a body projection of "touching"—for example, feeling what a chair will be like before sitting in it. Through both forms of touching, one's body feels the properties of a place's physicality, rhythms, edges, size, mass, completeness, and directions. Walter argues that haptic perception is not based on a particu-
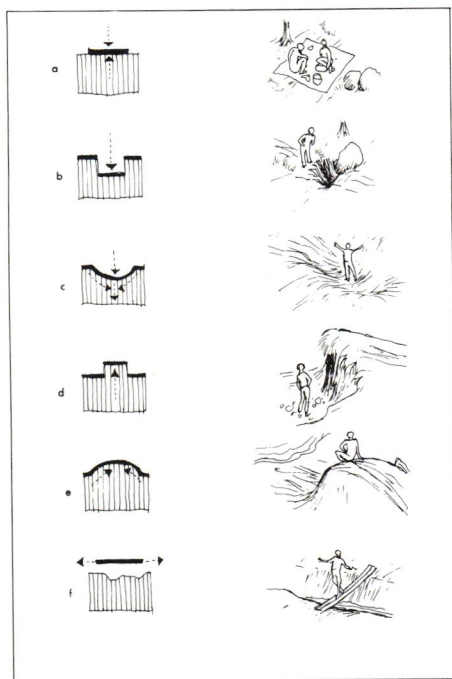
The expression of nature's floor and the relationship between the surface and the mass. (From *Archetypes in Architecture*.)
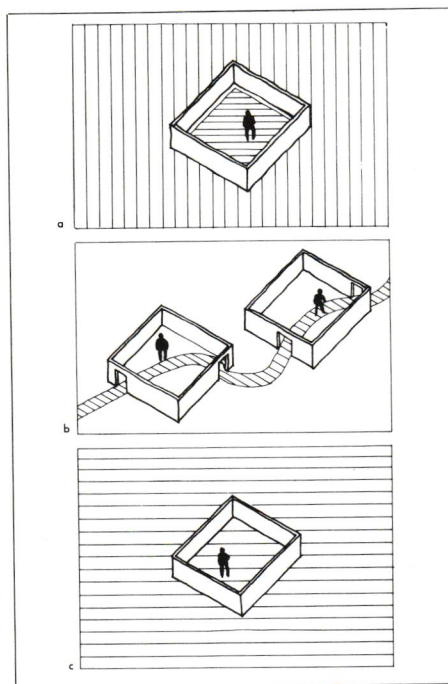
The directional floor theme. (From *Archetypes in Architecture*.)
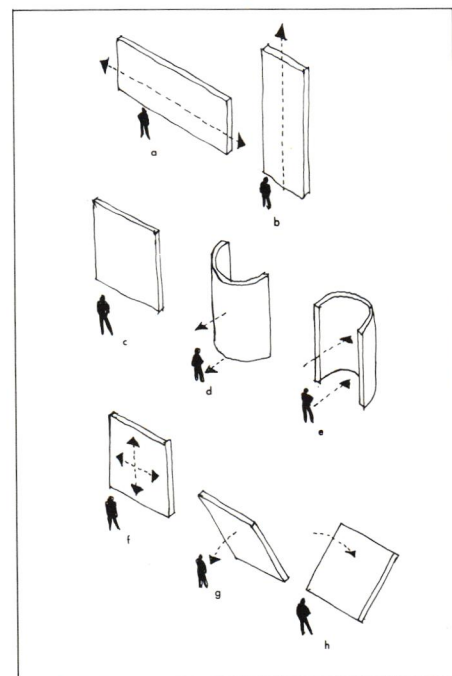
The main forms of the wall. (From *Archetypes in Architecture*.)

lar organ (as hearing is on the ear) but rather the entire body feels things through its own "inner articulations" of its own geometry, gravity, motion, and tension. This haptic sense "organizes a unity of function from anatomical diversity. In this way, the whole self may grasp a place-reality."

Karsten Harries, Yale's philosopher of architecture, hypothesizes that "natural symbols" are derived through millennia of common, transmitted experience of the body's sense of place—an imprint theory. He posits some fundamental dialectics that humans experience, such as our bodies' six directions and its center, and the polarities experienced through our senses of vision, hearing, touch, gravity, and location. These polarities are dark-light, loud-soft, rough-smooth/hard-soft/cold-hot, heaviness-lightness, here-there/inside-outside; all are analogous to our experience of our own bodies. In all experience, the body feels and responds to these polarities and recognizes a kind of natural meaning. These meanings are not simple one-to-one relationships between form and meaning, but are more complex. For example, a spire's verticality can be felt as a connection to or movement toward the spiritual, or as bravura, risky arrogance, or, more ambiguously and richly, both.

In these and other theories, forms embodying archetypally significant meaning can act as "natural symbols." Depending on their complexity, mode of expression, and the skill of the architect, they may even act as a "natural language." But in comparing archetypes to a natural language, the written and spoken language itself is confining, inadequate, for it is not a good vehicle for discussing archetypes or any nonlinguistic forms of meaning. Archetypal meanings just do not work like language; nor, of course, do meanings in dance or painting.

A linguistic narrative is sequential; its words have fairly precise meanings that must be learned; it has a beginning and end; the ear hears and the mind understands. Conversely, meaning experienced through
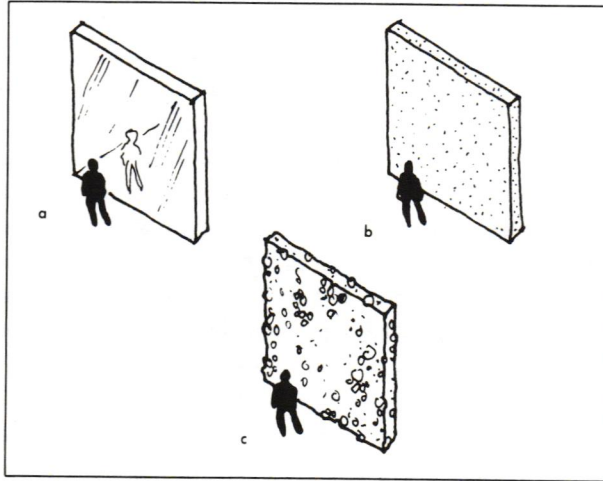
Three categories for texture: (a) smooth, (b) fine, and (c) coarse. (From *Archetypes in Architecture*.)

the medium of place takes the form of an unlearned or "natural language." Meaning comes through all the senses, body movement and posture as well as the mind, but it is more felt than understood. It does not have precise meanings, but rather, flickers, bundles, or even a mosaic of meanings. It is less sequential and more simultaneous. No direct linguistic translation is possible; places speak in another way. The archetypal voice of place can be expressive about a wide range of meanings, but compared to all meaning, place is only narrowly expressive. For example, place cannot easily narrate a love story or express jealousy, both of which are easily expressible in poetry, dance, and song.

I believe that the most robust expressions of meaning for each symbolic form (such as poetry, dance, song, architecture) spring from those qualities that most distinguish it from the other symbolic forms—the qualities that constitute it, its particular essence, and make it what it is. So the essential qualities that distinguish made places from other symbolic forms should give rise to expressive capacities that only made places possess, or that made places possess most aptly. This expressive capacity is clearly present in Thiis-Evensen's body-resonant archetypes of floor, wall, and roof. His archetypes do conjure strong feelings and meanings, but there remains expressive content that this theory does not reach to,

content that is also well-conjured through the medium of place.

While the origins of archetypes can never truly be known, any particular theory about them profoundly alters what "material" that theory can engage and explain. Thiis-Evensen's theory chooses the body's haptic perception as both the origin and the medium for archetypal place-experiences, so it must have as its archetypal elements those that the body can touch, or project itself toward or into, or empathize with. Because these conditions all operate at a scale of intimacy or proximity, it is no wonder that the archetypal elements Thiis-Evensen chooses are those smaller than a building: wall, floor, roof, door, window, and stair. And given this small-scale, body-proximate focus, any attempt to explain our experiences of whole places would tend to be aggregates of experiences of *parts* of places, rather than experiences of them as place unities. The few analyses of whole places in the book bear this out, for they are actually aggregates of sequential experiences of building sub-elements.

This theory's focus on the constitutive elements of buildings (floor, wall, and roof) can bring us to the next step, buildings; but it does not easily go beyond that step to site, landscape, grand works of engineering, public open space, city and settlement—everything just outside the walls, doors, and windows that are this theory's archetypes. The theory's cut-off point suggests, in effect, that place experiences stop at the front door. Site, landscape, and settlement all loom large in place experiencing and a truly robust theory would try to include them, or at least acknowledge their exclusion and the implications of such limits.

The omission of open space, city, and settlement precludes exploration of all the archetypal feelings and meanings that have their base in community, kinship, anonymity, tolerance, and authority. The omission of landscape overlooks all the archetypal content of nature's intransigence and mystery, our connection to nature's rhythms and

changes, the fruits of tending and the lessons of decay, and the tranquillity mixed with terror that Edmund Burke called the Sublime.

The omission of whole-places overlooks our experiences with whole-places, real and imagined, that arouse strong feelings and meanings—cases in which it is not walls and doors but the very places themselves that are archetypal. I believe these archetypal whole-places are of two kinds: archetypes that at their origins are places, such as Paradise or the deep forest; and archetypes that are not places at their origin but rather are significant human themes expressed spatially and through places, such as the Labyrinth, a metaphor for being "lost," a journey made permanent, an unresolvable ambiguity, a place where distinctions and memory are lost, beyond our use. It is in this way that place-making is an immensely powerful symbolic form.

Some archetypal whole-places that are places at their origin come to mind. These are our originally significant places, and as such are very strong for us. They might include: a place of mystery and fear; a sacred place; a grove or bosque; a made clearing; still and wild waters; a settlement of people; a gathering place, perhaps a dancing ground; a sleeping enclosure; a dwelling and its place in the sun; a place to be alone with spirit; a land of the dead; a garden of plentitude; a journey or pilgrimage.

Note that none of these places conjure specific building forms, which suggests that their power is not body-based but, rather, is rooted in their general or shadow forms that somehow touch our spirit, and generate strong feelings and meaning for us—in other words, a spirit-based archetypal expression through places. (As an aside, note how many are landscapes.) And while wall, floor, roof, door, and window do act as body-based archetypes, I believe they have spirit-driven content as well. (I use the word "spirit" not for its religious sense, but for its primary meaning, "the animating or vital principle giving life"; it originally meant "breath" and "to breathe.") Many scholars, such as Mircea Eliade, Ernst Cassirer, and

Amos Rapoport, argue that our archetypal places are often the embodiment of mythic themes in built form. As an oft-used example, the forms of many sacred places in many cultures seem to have underlying consonances. The archetype that sits beneath these similarities is a mythic theme, and the forms of sacred places somehow embody and "tell" the primary myth of place, the myth that relates place to divinity at its origin—the creation of the first place, the world, a place for us to dwell, the first fixed location, a center, the first harmony, wrested from an infinite universe of chaos.

Yet another way places may be archetypally expressive is their capacity to signify dialectics, to embody in their forms significant oppositional themes in our lives, such as dwelling and placelessness, community and solitude, order and chaos, valued and disdained, power and subjugation, aspiration and contentment, nurture and risk, and immortal/spirit and mortal/body.

A primary dialectic embodied in many of our significant places is that of the spirit and the body, immortality and mortality. The body always fails, as does the human dream of an escape from our body and its vulnerability, mortality, and death. Only through immortalizing the spirit, embodied in something, is this dream ever realized. Built forms can embody spirit, and the forms endure, some seemingly forever, and thus, we become immortal through our places.

Through the places we make, we try to find respite from our physical vulnerability in nature and try to gain spiritual and psychological control over our mortality. Through the stability and durability of built places, we try to banish change. Through built landscapes and their tending, we try to hide, control, frame, beautify, or objectify nature's intransigence and sublime indifference to us. Through the use of perfect geometries in our constructions, we give them an aura of perfection and permanence that is timeless, immortal, even divine. And, even in our softer domestications, the quiet garden and dwelling, we make places to shelter reverie and daydreaming, more humble attempts to escape from time's terror.

It is easy to take *Archetypes in Architecture* to task for what it is not, but not for what it did not intend to be. This book is very good. It whets the appetite for an even grander excursion into the realm of archetypal place experience, the realm of the almost-knowable. Given the subject, any theories about and understanding of archetypes cannot be deterministic or finite. It is not even appropriate to try to make them so. In addition to Thiis-Evensen and his theory of body-based archetypes, others are exploring theories about archetypal content that is more ancient, and probably generated by the expressive human spirit and our mysterious, noncognitive mental functions. So, while I don't expect a coherent theory of archetypes of made places that will satisfactorily integrate body, mind, and spirit, I do hope that the disparate theories, emphasizing one or another of them, will offer malleable "edges" that clearly await and easily hook onto the other theories, establishing a connection and the possibility of some common ground. In this way we can engage more of what our made places mean to being human.

Peter J. Holliday

The Houses of Roman Italy, 100 B.C.–A.D. 250: Ritual, Space, and Decoration

JOHN R. CLARKE

We tell the world who we are, or who we want to be, through our houses. Ancient Romans behaved no differently. As with the modern dweller, they defined pretensions of taste, class, and status through the display of art in private, domestic spaces. For generations scholars have documented and catalogued the diverse artwork Romans commissioned to decorate their houses—paintings, mosaics, stuccoes, and sculptures—but exploration of the interrelationship of different works in a single structure or the consideration of the experiential impact of domestic decoration on the Roman observer has been sadly lacking. Only recently have the decorative systems employed by Romans received serious study.

In *The Houses of Roman Italy, 100 B.C.–A.D. 250: Ritual, Space, and Decoration,* John R. Clarke presents the first lengthy diachronic study of Roman interior decorative systems. Previous work in this area has focused on select projects or single issues, such as viewing angles. In addition to monuments in the city of Rome, the author undertakes a comparative analysis with material preserved by the eruption of Vesuvius in A.D. 79 from the Bay of Naples and from Ostia, the ancient seaport of Rome. These areas are often arbitrarily isolated by scholars, but Clarke's stratagem allows him to trace the entire history of wall painting in Italy. In addition, the broad range of examples permits the author to fully document the extent and variation of artistic preferences throughout Italy, issues precluded from the city-specific focus of most earlier studies. Through this important book, readers for the first time gain a thorough appreciation of Roman decorative programs.

In the first chapter Clarke briefly examines the development of the various typologies of Roman houses in ancient Italy: the patrician *domus* (town house), the Hellenized *domus* with peristyle, working and pleasure villas, lower-class houses, and urban apartments. The author focuses on how aspects of domestic ritual affected the private spaces governing Roman life. This supports the main thesis of the book, "that in each house the ensembles of painted, stuccoed, and mosaic decoration participated in a coding process that modified, emphasized, and often personalized ritually defined spaces through perspective, color, and the meanings of images included in the decorative schemes."

The succeeding chapters provide a chronological discussion of decorative ensembles of historical periods from the late Republic (100–30 B.C.) to the mid-third century A.D. This is not another survey of the "four styles" fundamental to previous scholarship. Although Clarke outlines the changes that allow the dating of specific wall paintings and mosaics to distinct, stylistic phases, his emphasis is on the effect
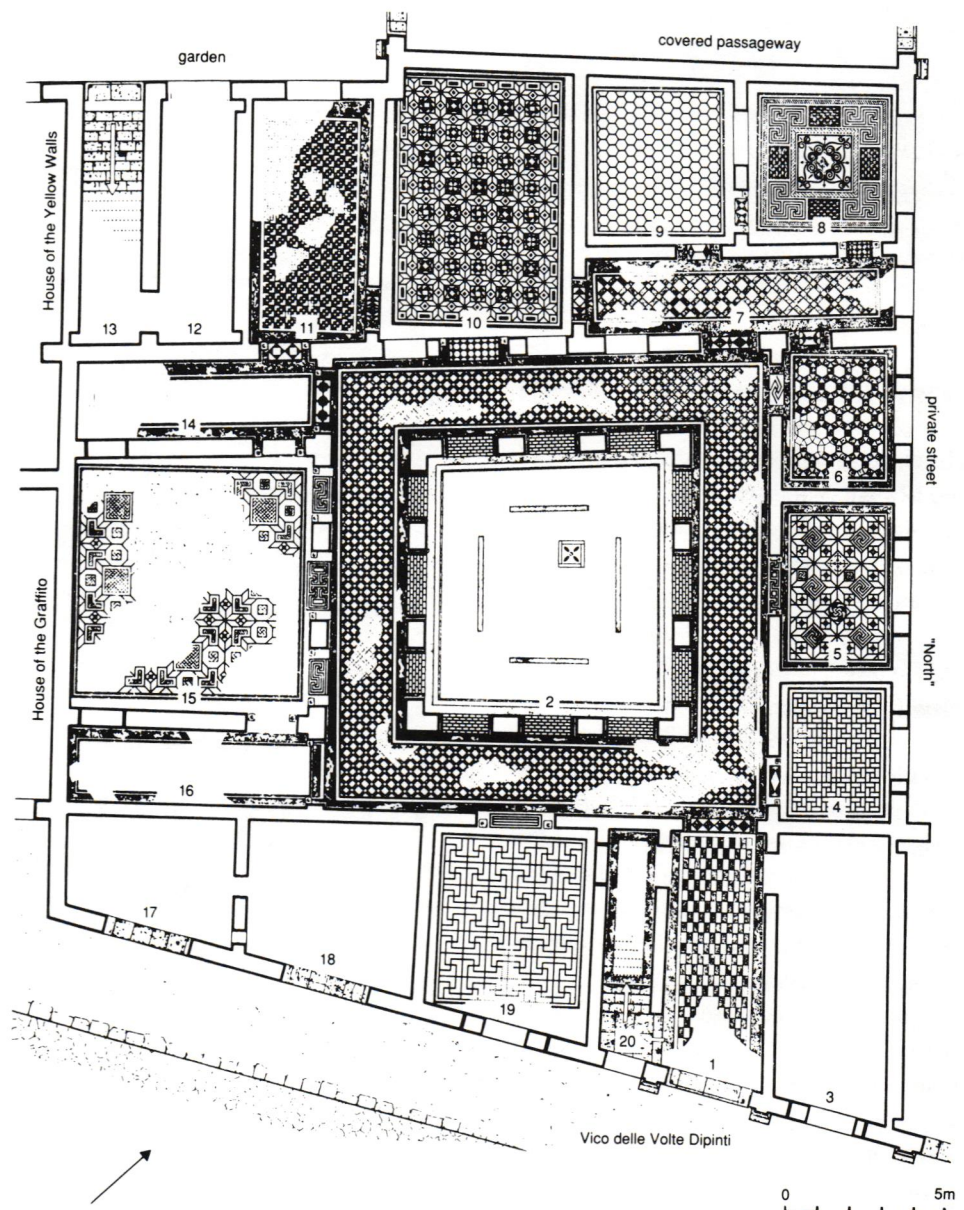
Plan of the House of the Muses, a luxurious residence in Ostia, with the mosaics drawn in. Domestic decoration such as mosaics held encoded messages for the viewer, signaling the relative importance of each space. (From *The Houses of Roman Italy.*)
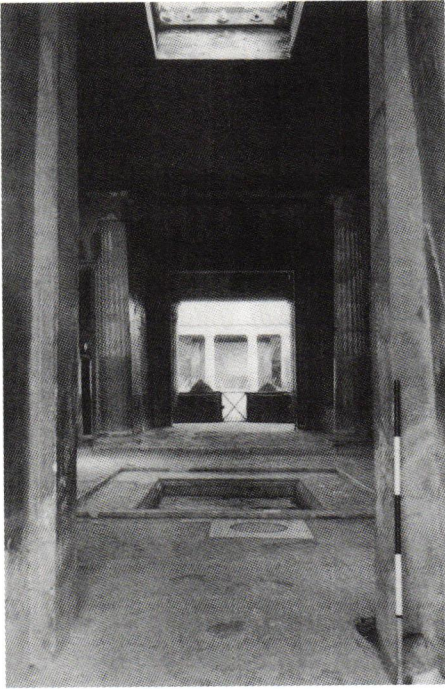
The architect created a long visual axis by using several symmetrical framing elements, even though the plan of the house is irregular (see right); House of the Menander. (From *The Houses of Roman Italy*.)

these decorative styles had upon the spaces they adorned and upon the ancient viewer. His examination of the evidence for spatial modification and perception also raises questions related to practical issues of planning and executing frescoes, stuccoes, and mosaics. Clarke's book is particularly valuable for its clear presentation of the complex controversies surrounding the dating, identification, and attribution of many Roman wall paintings. His study of the history of techniques and division of labor is a great contribution, placing the distribution of tasks and working techniques within the context of the overall evolution of Roman decorative programs; in addition, this discussion often leads back to literary sources naming specific styles and artists.

Clarke's study focuses on a small number of houses over a long period of time, emphasizing both the distinctive characteristics of their spaces and their decoration and the persistence of decorative traditions over the centuries. The author examines representative decorative ensembles in the context of the function and arrangement of the spaces they adorned and in light of the

meanings those decorations may have had for the patron. Indeed, by not excluding the peculiarities of the patrons, the decorators, and the houses themselves, Clarke avoids defining the style at a given time through its purely formal characteristics. This study increases our awareness of just how each patron's taste and social position affected the look and display of the artistic ensembles.

Only recently has Roman art from the private sphere become the object of discussion; previous historians have concentrated on official art, on the impressive remains of arches, columns, and imperial building programs considered part of the canon of ancient art history.[1] Clarke's interdisciplinary method uses archaeological and literary material from a variety of genres in a way that challenges the cata-

logs and taxonomies of traditional scholarship. He makes skillful use of broad areas of comparison that illuminate his discussion through the introduction of unusual material that helps verify his conclusions. The discussion of wall paintings and mosaics is superior; Clarke draws upon a wide variety of sources, some difficult to obtain and many unavailable in English.

Books on Roman wall painting are surprisingly few and limited in scope.[2] Most emphasize iconography and style[3] or limit their subject temporally or geographically.[4] The few studies of single residences tend to focus on the wall paintings of a single room or suite of rooms rather than the artistic program of the entire building.[5] Holistic examinations of Roman residences tend to be descriptive rather than critical or analytical.[6] Similarly, articles dealing with the obser-
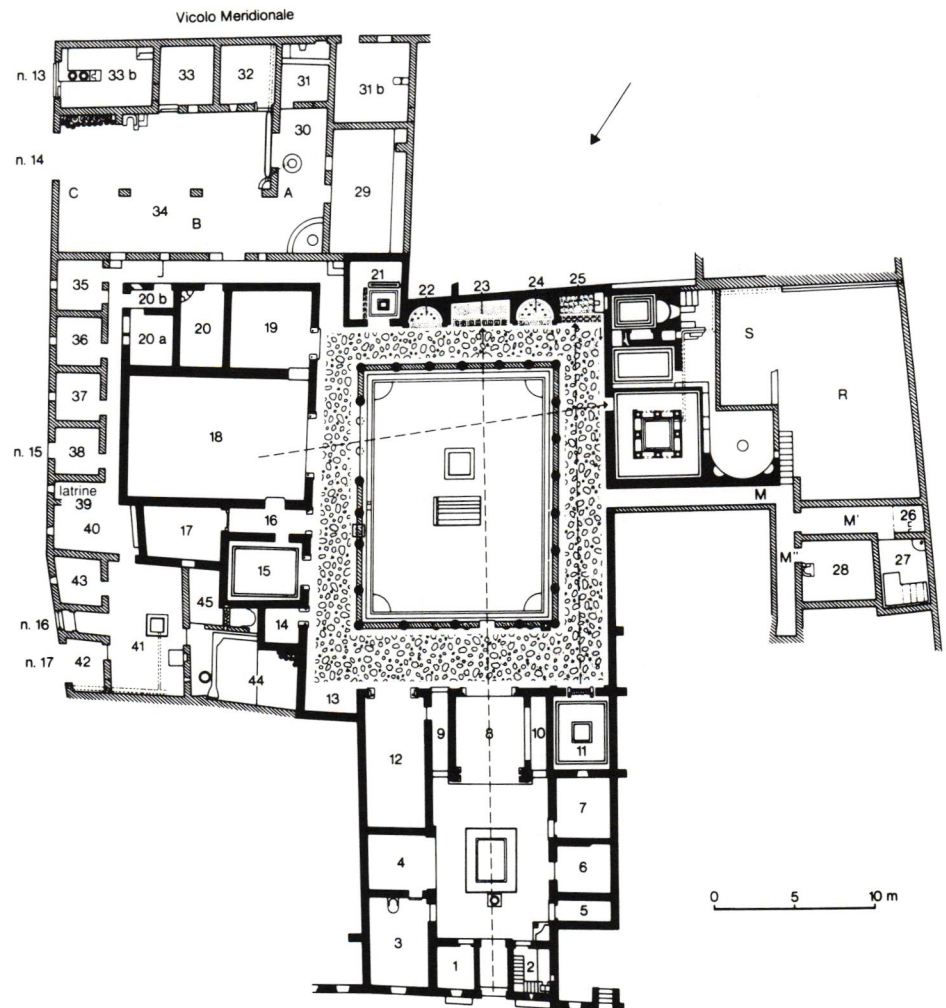
Floor plan of the House of the Menander. (From *The Houses of Roman Italy*.)

ver's environmental experience are also limited in scope, generally emphasizing a few major rooms and sight angles rather than the full sequence of visual experiences.[7]

Care has been taken to make this book accessible to a wide audience. The glossary of technical and foreign terms is extremely useful; it even includes the plural forms of several irregular foreign words. Full citations are given in the footnotes, chapter to chapter, obviating the necessity of searching back through the entire book for sources. The comprehensive bibliography will prove useful for both expert and student. The volume is richly and comprehensively illustrated; photographs of lesser-known paintings and mosaics complement those of famous monuments. Michael Larvey is responsible for many fine photographs of individual works not familiar to the general reader, difficult architectural shots, and views of ensembles that illuminate the author's discussion about experiential effects. The plans coded by mosaic patterns, viewing lines, and chronology of intervention are particularly enlightening. As a result, the text and images allow the reader to comprehend the decorative programs of entire buildings. Brief commentaries accompany each illustration, alluding to points made in the text. Unfortunately, the captions are neither uniform nor do they include the name of the monument, its site, or date. (Some of that information is available in the list of illustrations preceding the text, but it should also accompany the image itself.) Plans of structures are sometimes taken from other sources. The text frequently specifies a room on a corresponding plan by letter or number, but either full keys should be printed with each plan or the old numeration blocked out and replaced.

The book operates on two complementary levels. Synchronically, the reader experiences individual structures—how their plans, decoration, and spaces functioned to program the experience of the ancient observer. Diachronically, the reader learns about changes and developments throughout the history of Roman art. Paintings, mo-

saics, stuccoes, and the spaces they decorated are not treated as isolated works, notable only for their style, technique, or iconography. Rather this study presents a broad, synthetic survey of Roman residential decorative programs. Clarke's work is an essential addition to the library of anyone interested in the classical past, in artistic ensembles, or in the experience of architecture. Furthermore, this book is a poignant testimony, as the author affirms, of the need for more active and effective preservation of Roman works.

NOTES

1. See, for example, Elaine K. Gazda, ed., *Roman Art in the Private Sphere: New Perspectives on the Architecture and Decor of the Domus, Villa, and Insula* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1991), which includes a contribution by Clarke.
2. The best recent general work is Roger Ling's *Roman Painting* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991); Anne Laidlaw's *The First Style in Pompeii: Painting and Architecture* (Rome: Bretscheider, 1985) examines one particular stylistic phase, while Eleanor W. Leach's *The Rhetoric of Space* (Princeton: 1988) investigates the interconnection between painted and literary representations of space. These works complement Clarke's study and can be read beside it with profit.
3. Gilbert Picard, *Roman Painting* (New York: 1968).
4. Maurizio Borda, *La pittura romana* (Milan: 1958).
5. Gianfilippo Carettoni, "La decorazione pittorica della Casa di Augusto sul Palatino," *Römische Mitteilungen* 90 (1983): 323–419.
6. Eugene Dwyer, *Pompeian Domestic Sculpture: A Study of Five Pompeian Houses and Their Contents* (Rome: 1982).
7. Lise Bek, *Towards Paradise on Earth: Modern Space Conception in Architecture: A Creation of Renaissance Humanism, Analecta romana Instituti danici*, supplement 9 (Rome: 1980); Heinrich Drerup, "Bildraum und Realraum in der römischen Architektur," *Römische Mitteilungen* 66 (1959): 145–74; Franz Jung, "Gebaute Bilder," *Antike Kunst* 27 (1984):71–122.

THE HOUSES OF ROMAN ITALY, 100 B.C.–A.D. 250: RITUAL, SPACE, AND DECORATION, John R. Clarke, University of California Press, 1991, 411 pp., illus., $65.00.

Michael Kaplan

Contradictions of Patronage

In the last several years architect monographs have proliferated, Rizzoli being a prominent player in this specialty field with a current list of over two dozen titles. In an attempt to legitimize the monograph as scholarship and to counter its perceived image as promotional material for the architect's office, the lavish visuals we have come to expect are now being prefaced by increasingly serious critical essays and probing (if not prying) interviews. Despite these efforts, the architectural media remain reticent about reviewing these books, and understandably so: for one thing, they are so alike in format that they have become as indistinguishable as volumes of an encyclopedia. More problematic is the fact that reviewing a monograph logically becomes architecture criticism as opposed to book criticism; consequently, it becomes necessary for reviewers to see the built work in reality rather than through the filters of professional editors, photographers, and writers.

How does one compile a running documentation of an architectural career that spans decades? This is a dilemma for a publisher as well as an architect (or firm) wishing to record and communicate the ideas of an evolving body of work. The most compelling and rational model is the *Oeuvre Complète* of Le Corbusier, a series of eight volumes published between 1910 and 1965, each including only those projects specific to the years covered. While the format is uniform, the nature of each volume reflects the economic, technological, and social circumstances of the period and the evolving design responses. The fact that so many of today's monographs are comprehensive retrospectives is probably due to marketing considerations of the publishers as much as the use of the piece as a public-relations vehicle by the firm. Each subsequent iteration becomes not only an updating of the work, but an inevitably reductive selection that limits the depth of inquiry into any one project.
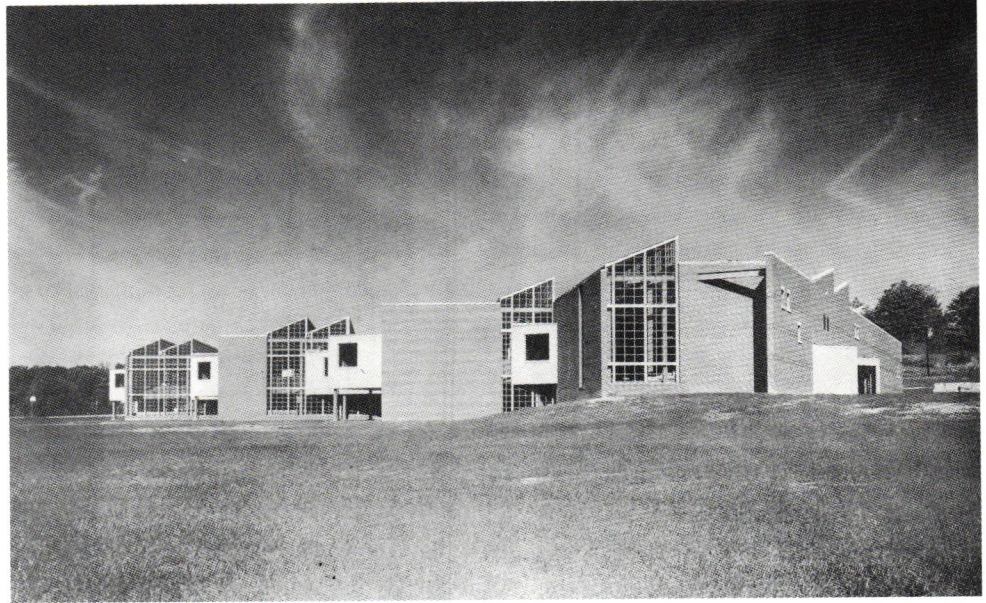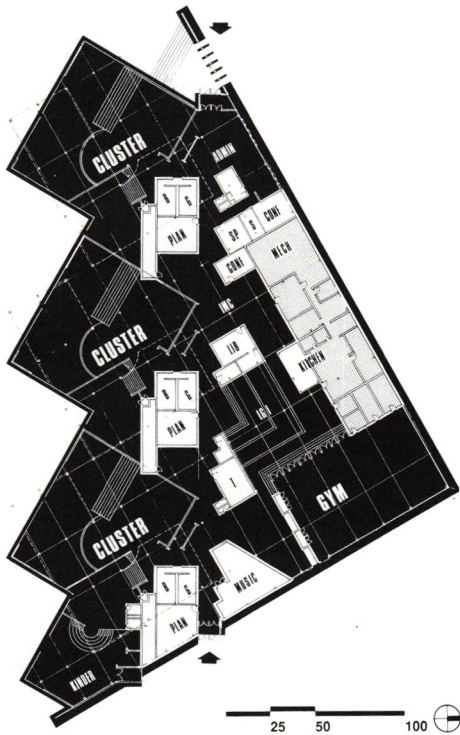
Mt. Healthy School, Columbus, Indiana; Hardy Holzman Pfeiffer Associates, 1972. (From *Hardy Holzman Pfeiffer Associates: Projects and Buildings 1967-1992.*)

Hardy Holzman Pfeiffer Associates, established in 1967 by the partnership of Hugh Hardy, Malcolm Holzman, and Norman Pfeiffer, is celebrating its twenty-fifth anniversary with the publication of an extensively illustrated monograph that includes a carefully edited selection of the firm's work. Printed and bound in Singapore (reflecting the industry's trend to manufacture overseas), this volume supplements an earlier compilation (introduction by Michael Sorkin, published by the Whitney Library of Art, 1981), now out of print. While the previous book is a tentative, in-progress consideration of a precocious young firm, the current volume represents it at mid-career with larger commissions, and—now that the firm is well known—fewer surprises.

The visual production is stunning. Each project is allocated between two and eight pages that include descriptive text, miniature plans, and photographs by a veritable who's-who of the profession. While their technical quality is impeccable, the images are more titillating than truly explanatory of the spatial complexity and textural richness of the buildings. A comprehensive catalog at the end of the book chronologically in-

dexes built and unbuilt projects, studies, and research publications that include classics of "adaptive reuse" advocacy such as *Reusing Railroad Stations* (New York: Educational Facilities Laboratories, 1974) and *30 Theaters* (New York: Hardy Holzman Pfeiffer Associates, 1983), which have proved to be invaluable resources for a generation of preservationists. A careful look at the project list provides an answer to why HHPA has so successfully survived periods of recession: its commissions have been weighted to public work—contracts which are difficult to obtain, least prone to standard solutions, subject to restricted budgets, but ultimately more resistant to cyclical economics. The buildings illustrate HHPA's ingenious and uniquely appropriate responses to unorthodox programs, together with their ability and willingness—as Hardy has boasted on many occasions—to literally make architecture "out of anything."

To fully understand HHPA's approach, one must look at the firm's rough but remarkable early work for its mix of extraordinary program, personal client-architect relationships, and provocative physical outcome. In Columbus, Indiana ("Athens

of the Prairie") two seminal buildings were underwritten by Cummins Engine Company, the corporate presence that dominates the small midwestern town. Mt. Healthy School (1972) was part of a program where Cummins paid the architectural fees, enabling the local school board to retain outstanding designers to provide innovative responses to 1960s pedagogical approaches that included open planning, team-teaching, and nongraded progression. (HHPA's design so unequivocally supported open planning that it would be impossible to reverse the original pedagogical intent, even if one wanted to.) A second project, the Columbus Occupational Health Center, was commissioned by Cummins itself, and defies easy identification as a health clinic; the building is a structural and spatial tour de force that established standards for rotational geometry, exposed structural, mechanical, and lighting systems, and innovative uses of (mostly ordinary) materials—formal devices taken for granted today. Further examples of creative programming and inventive design are their projects for the African-American community in New York City—the New Lafayette Theater (1968), MUSE: Bedford-Lincoln Community Center (1968), the

Dance Theater of Harlem School (1971), and the Cultural Ethnic Center (1972)—austere renovations that redefined modernist minimalism, but are given minimal coverage in the current monograph.

The firm's role as innovator should be considered historically as well, within the context of other work being designed and constructed at the same time. Neither book is very useful for this kind of assessment; one must turn to the periodicals. For example, the little, metal Fisher Theater at Phillips Exeter Academy (1971) was built concurrently with the Louis Kahn library across from it. Who would have known? The projects couldn't be more different in concept, technology, use of materials, and square-foot cost. Surprising, too, is a comparison of the Firemen's Training Center (a partially underground building that challenges preconceptions of this building type) with the project on the very next page of the February 1976 *Progressive Architecture*:

Frank Gehry's modernist Rouse Company Headquarters that, while competent, breaks no new programmatic or design ground.

On the occasion of HHPA's anniversary and the publication of the Rizzoli monograph, a seminar was held in June 1992 at the Urban Center. Sponsored by the Architectural League of New York, the proceedings were moderated by Michael Sorkin, New York critic and architect, author of the introduction to the firm's earlier book and of the preface to the latest. The theme, "Where Did Modern Go?" established "formalist" parameters for the discussion by positioning HHPA's work as a polemic against a profession dominated by modernism. Following an epic overview of the office's work by Hugh Hardy, Sorkin attempted (unsuccessfully) to engage an apathetic audience by asking the question of why HHPA's work had "lost its cutting edge." The use of a term that suggests an "apotheosis of the new" seemed inappropri-

ate to the consideration of a body of work whose dimensions clearly transcend fashion. Indeed, much current discussion of the firm's work refers to its formal aspects, reflecting the astigmatism of contemporary architectural criticism.

Having worked with HHPA in its formative years, I decided to attend the Architectural League seminar both out of respect for the firm's achievements and out of curiosity. The evening began with unexpected irony as I exited from the Independent Subway's Rockefeller center station into the lobby of the (former) RCA building. This tallest and most elegant of the Center's towers is no stranger to controversy, having been the site of the creation (in 1933) and destruction (in 1934) of Diego Rivera's mural depicting "human intelligence in control of the forces of nature," found so offensive because it included a likeness of Lenin.[1] Passage through the black marble lobby is always a sensuous experience, but this time

The Rainbow Room boycott: literature distributed by striking Rainbow workers, 1992.

Rainbow Room, New York; restoration and renovation by Hardy Holzman Pfeiffer Associates, 1987. (From *Hardy Holzman Pfeiffer Associates: Projects and Buildings 1967-1992.*)

I was confronted by a picket line of chanting workers on strike against the Rainbow Room nightclub and restaurant. I am generally supportive of striking workers, welcome their literature, and gladly converse with them. The construction of Rockefeller Center had, in the past, been a canon of congenial relations between capital and labor: specially negotiated union contracts provided jobs for over 75,000 workers in New York during the most difficult years of the Great Depression. Yet the Rainbow Room, on the sixty-fifth floor of what was once the world's largest (in gross area) office building, has always symbolized the exclusivity of the affluent by its inaccessibility to others. HHPA were the architects of its "revitalization," one of their most celebrated, publicized, and expensive projects (1987). The Rainbow Room dramatically speaks to the evolution of patronage over the years, as "socially meaningful" work has been supplanted, for many architects, by the lucrative and prestigious. The strength of HHPA in this culture of contradictions has, perhaps, come from its unique ability to be both the social and socialite architect. Playing both architect *and* revolutionary has enabled the firm to endure, but it's a difficult, ambiguous, and ultimately compromised role. Where is Diego when we need him most?

NOTES

1. For thorough documentation of this extraordinary affair, refer to Irene Herner de Larrea, *Diego Rivera: Paradise Lost at Rockefeller Center* (Mexico City: EDICUPES, S.A. de C.V., 1989).

HARDY HOLZMAN PFEIFFER ASSOCIATES: BUILDINGS AND PROJECTS 1967–1992, preface by Michael Sorkin, introduction and interview by Mildred F. Schmertz, building descriptions by Nicholas Polites, Rizzoli, 1992, 288 pp., illus., $60.00 (cloth); $35.00 (paper).

John M. Jenkins

Earthship

MICHAEL REYNOLDS

The word "interface" often surfaces in the discussion of ecology and architecture. A word that has come to describe a realignment between the natural and the man-made, interface is to be considered on three levels: a one-to-one relationship with the land; communal interaction versus the isolated, utopian city; and the introduction of a new system within the existing man-made environment. Architect Michael Reynolds uses "interface" to describe man's return to a balanced relationship with nature. As he describes it, "Interfacing is a dance between two systems. . . . The solar/wind system interfaces with the existing system and they give and take, back and forth. It is a dance, a wave, a pulse, an alignment, as opposed to merely taking from the existing power system." Reynolds has manifested this connection in the form of the "Earthship," a self-sustaining, living environment constructed from found objects and indigenous materials and relying solely upon orientation, solar power, and its ability to capture and recycle water and waste.

A detailed analysis of Reynolds's ecologically balanced architecture is provided in two volumes titled *Earthship*. Published by his own Solar Survival Architecture, these how-to books carry the reader through all phases of development, from the straightforward, theoretical approach to self-sustainable systems to explicit, easy-to-follow diagrams outlining actual construction techniques. The books are not meant to be read and simply cast aside; by addressing the needs and concerns of the common man, Reynolds intends for them to be used as a blueprint for survival.

Assuming the role of a modern-day Noah, Reynolds's "ark" is meant to rescue humankind from the impending ecological holocaust.

The impetus behind the development of the Earthship is twofold: first, if we learn to live without these existing, wasteful systems, we could radically slow down destruction of the planet and possibly reverse certain aspects of the deterioration; second, if it is already too late, we will need, in the near future, living units to sustain us via direct contact with existing natural phenomena.

Reynolds's apocalyptic architecture responds to society's growing concern for human consumption and waste through the use of recycled automobile tires and aluminum cans as primary building materials. But Earthship plays to the eye as well as the conscience. Adobe and unmilled wooden beams, or vigas, add a rustic warmth to the architecture and evoke romantic images of the American Southwest.

Through the books' simple language and clear, step-by-step methodology, Reynolds has made the Earthship accessible to anyone who wants to construct his own habitat. Reynolds's concept is meant to be carried far and wide, the Earthship intended to interface with a variety of new environments and climates.

Most of the existing Earthships, however, have been built in northern New Mexico, a region ideally suited to passive systems. The arid desert environment has a high diurnal fluctuation; in other words, it gets extremely hot during the day and cools rapidly at night. The Earthship's thick, insulating walls can effectively store the day's heat and radiate it at night, warming the structure and its inhabitants. The dry cli-
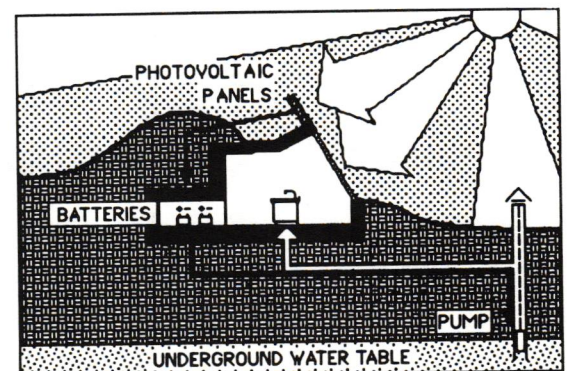
Detailed advice about where to put your Earthship. (From *Earthship*.)

mate allows the unit to be submerged and constructed without a foundation—it literally interfaces with the ground. The integration of greenhouses or planters into the design returns moisture to the parched air. Finally, the predominantly rural nature of the region practically necessitates self-sustaining design.

For all of his successes in New Mexico, Reynolds fails to produce tangible evidence for the possibility of a wider application of his system, or its adaptability to alternative conditions. The *Earthship* books provide suggestions for modifying the system to other locales; however, these suggestions fail to accommodate some basic flaws in Reynolds's thinking.

Although he promotes the use of indigenous materials and found objects, Reynolds assumes that materials indigenous to New Mexico are indigenous to all regions, and the same objects can be found everywhere. This is not true. Although mud can be found in most regions, it is not always the preferred building material. Reynolds is trying to impose the needs of his ideal environment upon a multiplicity of less-than-ideal environments. Construction in the tropics, for example, tends to minimize thermal mass through the use of light materials, such as bamboo. The same desire to avoid heat storage is reflected in the paper walls of traditional Japanese architecture.

Furthermore, Reynolds's primary building blocks—automobile tires and aluminum cans—are readily available *only* in industrialized areas, a factor that drastically limits implementation on a global scale. One may, however, perceive their use merely as a marketing tool—a means to attract the attention of both the eco-chic and the true ecologist—for they do not affect the way the design functions. The fact that they are found in the areas of highest energy consumption is significant, yet Reynolds limits his Earthships to rural areas.

Through his writings, Reynolds seems to downplay the basic human need for community. Until recently, Earthships have appeared as isolated occurrences, but Reynolds's latest undertaking, the Rural
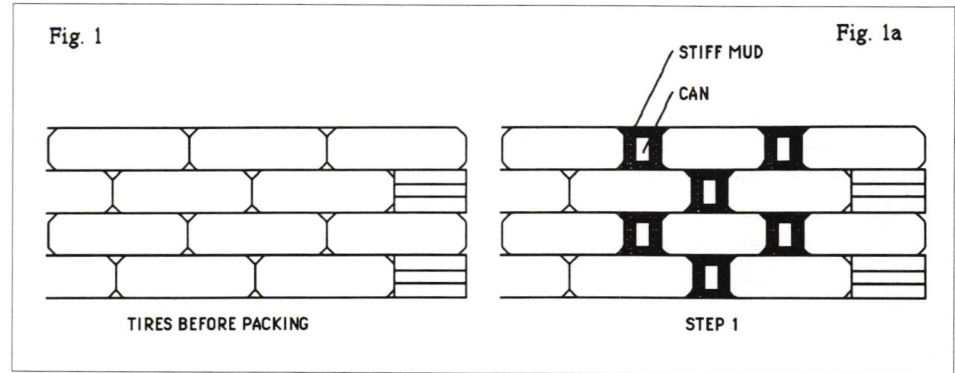
How to pack the voids the tire wall: with cans and stiff mud. (From *Earthship*.)

Earthship Alternative Community Habitat or REACH, begins to address this issue of community. The project consists of a half-dozen Earthships placed near each other, yet it is quite clear that the independently functioning units do not form an independently functioning community. The Earthships act merely as residences; this singularity of function limits the degree of human interaction and thereby prevents the inhabitants from breaking ties to the outside world. They still depend on the automobile to carry them to and from their places of work and commerce. The project excludes complete independence.

Another southwestern architect, Paolo Soleri, addresses the same issues of community and self-reliance through his ecological architecture, which he calls "Arcology." Soleri too has been searching for a solution to humankind's current ecological dilemma by withdrawing from it. He

A prototypical Earthship in Taos, New Mexico; Michael Reynolds. (From *Earthship*.)

explains: "The whole of this activity is comparable to the work of the medieval monks who, placing themselves at the edge of society, attempted to lay the foundations of the evolutionary leap that would distinguish subsequent centuries."

Arcosanti, Soleri's utopian city, is a fully functioning, self-sustaining community that provides residents with spaces to live, work, and congregate. Because of its compactness, vehicles are unnecessary. Soleri interprets Arcosanti as nature that has been made by humans, or "neo-nature." He believes that true nature and neo-nature can successfully interface. Although one could find flaws in this solution to the interface problem, Soleri is still a step or two ahead of Reynolds.

The alternative to seclusion is inclusion. In their book *Sustainable Communities,* Sym Van der Ryn and Peter Calthorpe address the issue of integrating environmental architecture into a preexisting urban fabric. By looking at three different types of urbanism—the inner-city neighborhood, the postwar suburb, and the heart of the metropolitan area—Van der Ryn and Calthorpe give specific examples of projects that struggle to mediate the "conflict between material progress and planetary health" and bridge the gap "between individual gain and common good."

Reynolds's Earthship defies integration into existing urban landscapes. In its current form, the Earthship uses systems that fall short of standard building codes, thereby precluding application within the city. The use of gray water (waste water from sinks and bathtubs) and compost toilets are illegal in many urban areas, as they pose a potential threat to public health. Reynolds hopes to reverse existing codes through proven success in rural areas, but such a process is time-consuming. And if what Reynolds says about the approaching apocalypse is true, time is of the essence.

While the current Earthship design does lend itself to suburban and low-density urban environments, Reynolds's restrictive choice of building materials prevents interfacing with a dense, urban fabric. The tire module and the adobe brick do not lend themselves well to the extremely vertical nature of the urban highrise, as neither can be stacked beyond a certain height without reinforcement. If Reynolds would consider steel to be a material indigenous to the city, his system could be modified to compete with neighboring buildings.

The successful urban or suburban application of Reynolds's earth-friendly system could seriously challenge current building methods and technologies. Yet Reynolds seems unwilling to make concessions in his design. It would seem that any reduction in the level of urban consumption would be better than none; however, Reynolds ac-

tively discourages potential clients from even considering urban sites. "Remember, [building code officials] will be easier to deal with in less visible locations. Avoid planned subdivisions whenever possible." If Reynolds was truly committed to his cause, wouldn't he urge clients to confront the urban fabric? Resistance from a building inspector appears to be a petty inconvenience when weighed against the possible rewards society would reap should integration occur. Reynolds is not aggressive enough in the struggle to realize his dream.

Despite his claims, the system Reynolds details in his Earthship books is not universally applicable, and perhaps shouldn't be. By failing to consider alternate means of interfacing, Reynolds limits the scope of his vision. To broaden them, he must confront the areas of highest consumption, either by further exploring the merits of the utopian community or by aggressively pursuing integration into existing urban realms. Only then can he succeed in realigning humans and nature.

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