Reflections
The Journal of The School of Architecture
Foreword

Reflections is a semi-annual journal of theory and criticism representing works conducted by members of the Architecture faculty at The University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign and other invited contributors.

Its primary purposes are to provide a forum for theoretical or critical works generated through the personal efforts and interests of our faculty, and in so doing, to further encourage and stimulate in a formal manner an intellectual participation among students, faculty, and a public readership. Our interest is not to be restrictive in content, rather to focus on the plurality of viewpoints which has been the hallmark of the Architecture program at the University of Illinois now for more than eleven decades.

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Our editorial board invites your suggestions and comments and hopes that you will find our inaugural issue stimulating.

R. Alan Forrester, Director
School of Architecture
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Reflection (ri flek shen) n. 1.) The act of casting back from a surface. 2.) To happen as a result of something. 3.) Something that exists dependently of all other things and from which all other things derive. 4.) To look at something carefully so as to understand the meaning.
Johann Albrecht

I.

Current reflection on architecture is certainly difficult since a variety of diverse and even opposing observations can be made. At present, architecture enjoys an unprecedented popularity with the general public. This can be explained, on one hand, through an eagerness on the part of the popular press to glamorize the more spectacular results of new developments in architecture and, on the other, through an increased societal awareness of past architectural achievements. Positive as this popularity may be, it is nevertheless astonishing, for the discussion about new directions in architecture is a rather esoteric activity and practiced only by a small number of architects and their sophisticated critics.

Disappointment is certain, if one expects to find that this popularity is justified through a pronounced social consciousness on the part of architecture. Never before has architecture disassociated itself so completely from social issues and problems; not even the question of housing is being addressed. Despite the declaration of contextualism, the city as an entity is neglected. A preoccupation with the formal aspects of architecture has become the norm; architecture is reduced to formalism. Equally astonishing is the fact that the popularity of architecture takes place at a time when architecture as a profession experiences a crisis that seems to be of a permanent nature. The widely accepted explanations refer to the current recession in general and to the ailing building industry in particular. Hardly ever is it mentioned that the portion of the built environment designed by architects is decreasing noticeably. Design executed in the offices of developers and construction firms is an undeniable and growing reality, and this trend seems irreversible. Either the causes are not fully explored or they appear not interesting enough for architectural debate. The paradoxical observations, however, do not end here. Despite the negative professional situation of architecture, the number of students eager to study architecture is on the rise. This occurs at a moment when the likelihood of cutbacks with which architecture as field of study will have to reckon is imminent or already reality.

At first glance these observations appear rather unrelated, and one would suspect that it is difficult to discover a common denominator. But the paradox of the popularity and the simultaneous decline of architecture can only by fruitfully discussed if the role of architecture in our society is clarified. The same must be said with respect to the ongoing debate about new directions in architecture. Without a concurrent discussion of the purpose of architecture in our society, the indulgence in debate about style and form alone must remain superficial. The cutbacks in higher education again demand a clarification of this important issue, since reduced university budgets will force the question of the position and obligation of architecture in the academic realm. This question cannot be solved without an answer to the larger issue. In other words, architecture as a profession, as well as a subject for study, must legitimize its purpose anew. The popularity of certain developments in architecture cannot solve a legitimation crisis.

II.

In order to find a satisfactory solution to the issue of the role of architecture in our society,
the fundamental question must first be asked, "What is architecture?" Understandably, there is no consensus on this question, although many agree in considering architecture as an activity which provides built form for needs—these needs are often defined as physical. Others say simply, without explicit concern for needs, that architecture is the art of building. Still others, not content with the reference to building, characterize architecture as a form of art. A proponent of the first kind of definition is Safdie, who holds that "architecture is a response to needs." Aware of the temptation to define needs strictly from a utilitarian point of view, however, Safdie denounces such a narrow interpretation. Venturi (1966), clearly in favor of extending the notion of architecture as the art of building, declares, "architecture is evolutionary as well as revolutionary. As an art it will acknowledge what is and what ought to be, the immediate and the speculative." Similarly, Scully (1979:10) insists that "architecture, like all art ... has revealed some of the basic truths of the human condition and, again like all art, has played a part in changing and reforming that condition itself." To combine the fulfillment of basic needs with the fulfillment of needs beyond utility, as Safdie indicates, is, in the opinion of Giorgola (1981:15), the purpose of architecture. He, therefore, states, "the first task of an architect is, as it always has been, to enhance the conditions of life both in terms of accommodation and aesthetic pleasure." The second obligation of that task, to enhance life through aesthetic pleasure, requires that architecture is a form of art, whereas the first obligation asks for the provision of built form for a physical need. This, however, must not necessarily be part of architecture, according to Norberg-Schulz (1980:226), who says, "this is the true purpose of architecture, to help to make human existence meaningful; all other functions, such as the satisfaction of mere physical needs, can be satisfied without architecture."

Whether the fulfillment of physical needs should be part of architectural activity is for the moment not the crucial question. But it is evident that the fulfillment of such needs alone—important as that is—cannot be the sole purpose of architecture. Equally evident is that it is necessary to combine a statement about what architecture is with a reference to the purpose of architecture. Not only is this of benefit for the precision of the statement, but more important, it is essential that the mandate for architecture be unmistakably stated.

Declarations like "architecture is the art of building" are not very useful, although one could offer in defense of this particular statement the interpretation that "the art of building must be above all a social art." The declaration "architecture is a form of art" could also invite narrow interpretation. That is actually the case right now; the present architectural avant-garde discusses and explores new directions only from a formal point of view. Frampton (1982:280) considers this one-sided indulgence as "the return of a repressed creativity, as the implosion of utopia upon itself." Both Venturi and Scully are aware of such a problem and, therefore, speak of the ability of architecture not only to reveal and acknowledge the human condition, but also to change it. Consequently, architecture is a participant in the debate about what ought to be. To contribute, in this
case, merely formal consideration is not sufficient: social responsibility is an integral part of architecture and has always been. Giorgola confirms that when he speaks of the enhancement of the human condition as the purpose of architecture, which is nothing less than to help to make human life meaningful, as Norberg-Schulz demands. Architecture, in order to fulfill this mandate—to enhance the human condition, to help to make life meaningful—must, therefore, be a mode of inquiry before it acts creatively. Only through an inquiry into the human condition can architecture legitimize its existence; this holds true for architecture as a profession as well as a subject for study.

III.

The following is certainly not and cannot be a profound discussion of the present human condition, yet a few main characteristics will be briefly illuminated. One of the salient features of our current society is the all-pervasive belief in rationality. But what appeared previously as a sure safeguard against all irrational tendencies has now become itself irrational. The logic of positivism allows only for rational thinking in regard to means. Statements about objectives and ends remain, according to positivist postulates, subjective and are, therefore, at best, a-rational. As a consequence, goal-finding processes are considered to be an irrational activity; the only kind of rationality possible is functional in nature. These positivist tenets provide the epistemological and methodological framework not only for the natural sciences, but also for the mainstream of the social sciences: value-free conduct is the generally accepted norm in the scientific realm.6

As an implication, societal goals are discussed without the involvement of one of society’s main institutions. The sciences do not take part in such a debate; their reflective capacities and resources go unutilized for this vital task. Instead, goal-finding processes occur only in the political realm, leaving societal goals both embroiled in politics and substituted by interests, preferably by ones which can be measured and quantified. The insistence in value-free conduct by the sciences furthers the trend in society to abandon qualitative for quantitative concerns. Meanwhile, scientific knowledge transformed into technology helps to produce means for which ends have to be found—surely an inversion of any real rational behavior. In addition, the influence of the positivist sciences (e.g., scientific management, operations research, systems analysis, and so on) has brought about a rationalization, bureaucratization and technocratization of most aspects of our life. The abstractness of thought tends to overwhelm the concreteness of life. The loss of moral order has been supplanted by technical order. Behavior previously guided by ethics has become role-behavior directed by rules.

Simultaneously with the disinclination to discuss and share common goals and values, a distinct plurality of interests has surfaced, heralding the appearance of a new kind of democracy. Not so long ago, a social and cultural elite occupied the center of power, provided leadership, and determined the direction of society without the participation of the public at large. Positive as the now established participation is, there remains, nevertheless, the problem that any government, in order to maintain itself, may have to satisfy all the particular wishes of numerous special interests, thereby losing its ability for decisive action. The likelihood that the ability to govern according to any principles may get lost cannot be ruled out,7 at least as long as the pronounced selfishness of such interests remains unchanged.

The manifestations of pluralism appear at a time when the retreat from public life is no longer myth but certainty. This is no coincidence, since both processes depend on the occurrence of the other. The preferred place for activity outside the realm of work is now the family and associations of like-minded people who have the same socio-economic background and interests. Involvement in such associations is often being confused with participating in public activity. With the erosion of a rich public life, we have not only lost the stage for developing common values but also a sense of belonging to a larger entity, to a community. Our search for identity cannot rely any longer on identification with a community. The classic milieu of public experience—the city—is in a state of decay, contrary to exaggerated news about a reversal of this trend. The move to the suburbs continues, and the suburbs do not foster public experience, not even a sense of belonging to a community as one might expect; at best they provide a kind of pseudo-community. The ever-increasing mobility of a
large proportion of the population prevents the development of identity through a profound relationship with a social and physical environment.

Another implication of the retreat from public life is the development and application of two sets of ethics: for family and close friends a higher set is being used, whereas for the cherished activity of enhancing one's own interests (also those of the group one belongs to), another set applies. The paradox of the loving and caring family-man who also happens to be an aggressive and ruthless businessman may suffice to portray this phenomenon. Unfortunately, this schizophrenic situation is in general condoned and taken for granted. The existence of double standards does prevent a genuine discussion of common objectives and the legitimate needs of others. One could argue against the claim that the search for common values has been discarded, by pointing out that the "moral majority" is promoting such values. But that is not the case. The assertion of this minority, clamoring as majority, that they further common values, is incorrect. The prerequisite of such a promotion would be a debate about these values. There is no debate, there is only a falling back on values which have been popular in the past without an evaluation of whether these values can stand the test of present-day reality. These values put forward seem, rather, to further the interests of this particular minority.

A further implication of the retreat from public life is the increased possibility of manipulation through the media. This is already the case with respect to our habits of consumption. In a society where a marked shift from qualitative to quantitative concerns has occurred, this should not surprise. Progress is largely seen and measured from a material point of view and the quality of life, therefore, appears to depend solely on economic growth. At a time when the majority of people can easily satisfy their basic needs, economic growth can occur only if the consumption of material goods is increased, and that necessitates the continuous creation of artificial needs. Consequently, the rationality of the market dominates most aspects of life, almost everything is subject to pecuniary evaluation, and efficiency, the fetish for many and the seeming cure for everything, is promoted at the cost of humanistic concerns. Also, we seem not too eager to comprehend reality. The moment one is largely occupied with gaining material success and achieving a career, it is totally superfluous what one perceives and experiences. An understanding of reality is a nuisance and unnecessary when life is guided so narrow-mindedly.

IV.
What has been said in this rather short discussion of the present human condition is not particularly new; it has often been expressed elsewhere; nevertheless, this is, in general, the context in which architecture is situated and must perform. We have seen that the pursuit of rationality, understandable as it is, has some major drawbacks. Due to the influence of logical positivism, rationality has been defined in such a way that the deliberation of values is considered to be of a subjective and, therefore, non-rational nature. This definition and the concomitant declaration that only empirical investigation will deliver objective knowledge have furthered the shift in society from qualitative to quantitative concerns as expressed in a materialistic outlook on life.

This is not only very disquieting with respect to society; it poses a direct and vital threat to architecture—one of the few remaining institutions where qualitative aspects are predominant. We already bear witness to the succumbing of large parts of the profession to this quantitative trend. On the other hand, the present fascination of some members of the profession with form alone, to the exclusion of other qualitative aspects, must be viewed as an oppositional overreaction to that trend. It is ironic that this will actually further and not diminish that trend. Both positions are mirrored in architectural education and signify the deplorable polarization in the profession. The overreaction of the second group is certainly also reaction to the Modern Movement and its scientific and rational approach toward architecture, which produced functionalism and a reductive formal language. For the sake of fairness, it ought to be remembered that this appeared to be the only convincing way at that time to regain authenticity and truth in the aftermath of eclectic historicism. Also, the belief in the rational method had gained broad support among progressive professionals precisely when positivist thought culminated in the development of logical positivism and exerted its greatest influence. Before that, the
same influence had already, through the
device of zoning, led to the separation of the
main functions in the city.

There are no comments necessary about the
results of both scientific planning and the
minimalism of the Modern Movement; the
impoverishment of the quality of urban life is
obvious enough. Yet to replace the rational
fallacy with a formal fallacy will not bring
about a "better" architecture, help stem the
quantitative tendencies in society, or, make a
profound contribution to the quality of life.
The emphasis on only form and empty
symbolism overlooks the fact that meaning
and content are essential in architecture. It
seems as if the formal battles of eclecticism
are repeated. The neglect of social issues and
the public good by the two prevailing
positions in architecture, the formalistic and
the commercial, is in disregard of the ethos of
the profession. To claim that architecture is
an artistic activity, and one is, therefore,
spared the task to take these aspects into
account, misrepresents and misunderstands
truly artistic activity. The strict fulfillment of
the demands of the client by the second
group, which is used to defend the neglect of
public and social issues, is not professional
conduct, it just makes commercially good
sense. Such behavior accepts by implication,
and perhaps even consciously, the common
adherence to two sets of ethics. Furthermore,
the commercial "ethos" of many firms and
their excessive promotion of efficiency leads
to an internalization of rationalization and
tecnocratization processes already so
prevalent in society, and this, in turn,
produces externally a mechanistic
environment. Lately that has been
comouflaged by cosmetics borrowed from the
formalistic branch of architecture.

Being aware that the Modern Movement
failed in its social intentions and that the
"physical determinism" practiced during the
fifties and sixties in order to cure urban and
social ills could not deliver what it promised
is not sufficient as an additional excuse to
abandon social issues. The lesson is not and
cannot be to give them up altogether.
Admittedly, the sociological studies conducted
during the last two decades for assessing
major urban projects provided for a sobering
experience. But it is now evident that the
conclusions reached were often overdrawn in
the justifiable attempt to counter exaggerated
promises made by planning and architecture
alike. It is now also clear that some aspects of
these studies stood on weak methodological
ground, since empirical studies can give
answers only to questions and problems which
can be quantified.

Thus, the conclusion is not that architecture
and physical planning cannot contribute to
urban problems and the quality of urban life;
the conclusion is that this contribution must
be assessed anew. Unfortunately, because of
the qualitative component of this question,
there will be no certain and clear-cut
evaluation possible; the hope that empirical
research can be helpful for this particular
problem remains wishful thinking. To
aggravate the dilemma, available scientific
knowledge about the urban realm is of a
general nature, that is, human needs are
expressed in numbers and abstract categories,
yet the design professions must cope with
concrete situations and problems. Both the
social sciences and the design professions
must come to terms with this predicament.
Again, the solution is not to walk away from
such difficulties; architecture must accept its
responsibility. Additional benefits of a
renewed consideration of social and
qualitative questions would be a reduction of
the polarization in architecture, as well as
strengthening greatly the attempts of those
architects who do not accept the present
status quo of society and the profession alike.

The present pluralism in society indicates, as
mentioned, the disappearance of a democratic
reality, which was based on elitism.
Architecture had close ties to its cultural,
social and political leadership and even was
part of it. Architecture considers itself to be
an elitist activity and there are reasons that
support such a notion. Surprisingly enough, it
appears as if architecture has not yet become
fully aware of the disintegration of a coalition
that was, in certain ways, so advantageous for
architecture or of the questions which are
raised by this process. For instance, does the
disappearance of the elite mean that
architecture has to change its selfunderstanding and search for new alliance, or
does it mean that architecture ought to
remain an elitist activity and be an institution
which counters pluralism, and that this will be
of benefit for society? If the latter, it seems
necessary to question the attitude that being
elitist permits architecture to prescribe ways
of living and determine the physical
environment at its discretion. Being avant-
garde can no longer mean being deterministic. Yet this statement needs modification; otherwise, there is the risk of oversimplifying a complex situation.

At the other end of likely scenarios, we have the proposition, sympathetic to pluralism, that architecture ought to give people what they want. This opinion must also be questioned. The obvious objection to it rests on the fact that these "wants" are not only manipulated but actually created by the commercially controlled media. In addition, to "create" what people want would mean a loss of responsibility, and that would also mean an impairment of the creative process, since this process cannot operate without responsibility. It also cannot function without authority when it comes to making decisions of a creative nature. It is precisely this claim to authority that made architecture congenial to an elite of authoritative disposition. It is evident that the imperative to fulfill the wishes of people is against the nature of the creative process. Since those wishes are manipulated and artificial, one is inclined to favor the demands of the creative process. But the claim to authority and responsibility, inherent in the creative process, is also against the justifiable demand for participation by all segments of the population on matters important to their life. It is necessary here to distinguish between the concepts of participation and the fulfillment of wants. Could one argue that the ideal of participation must acknowledge exceptions, especially of a creative kind, that certain democratic principles carried out in some areas can bring about questionable results? Obviously, this question needs attention. Unfortunately, architecture has so far been unwilling to investigate at length when participation must end and authoritative decision-making must take over for creative and responsibility reasons. In other words, how much determinism is essential for qualitative design and how much determinism is permissible without violating democratic principles? The common excuse for not addressing this issue has been that this will vary from case to case. Of course it will; nevertheless, such an excuse attests to an intellectual shallowness and rests on the assumption that architectural theory can deal only with problems of form. A profound inquiry cannot be avoided; problems of this nature need theoretical insight and guidance.14

The problematic situation with respect to participation, the fulfillment of wants, and the creative process has so far been discussed in the context of a change in our democratic reality. But this problem must also be seen in light of the current acknowledgement of various "taste cultures" (popular culture) due to the acceptance of pluralism. One objection to the demand to give people what they want, which was based on the fact that these wants are manipulated, takes on a different angle if one assumes that beneath those wants there might still be genuine tastes (one must differentiate wants from tastes). Vernacular architecture in its pre-industrial form was a true expression of such tastes. Until recently, architecture has associated itself predominantly with high culture; in its capacity of being avant-garde it has indeed created high culture. The present partial rejection of this association is responsible for the current popularity of the promotion of the vernacular. This promotion, however, overlooks the fact that the vernacular of the industrial period was not created by the people, but marketed according to the taste of the builders.15 Still, attempts must be made to discover genuine taste cultures and consider them as a source for diversity and an inspiration for creativity. The fine line which separates a manipulation and copying of such tastes from a truly creative response must be heeded. Also, we cannot overlook the argument that the promotion of popular culture will, in the long run, work against high culture in the sense that such promotion weakens the possibility for high culture to give new directions and induce necessary change. The reasoning behind this argument is convincing; nevertheless, it would be a fallacy for architecture to side with high culture to the disregard of popular culture.

The task is to work with both, difficult as that may be, in order to assure a great variety of stimulating influence on architecture, but also to permit architecture to have its own creative impact on each. Needless to say, that is the case right now. What is lacking, however, is a sharper awareness about areas of disparity and incompatability between the two cultures, greater insight into aspects of dependencies and how they influence each other, both positively and negatively. Missing, too, is a debate about what kind of role architecture should play in assisting interaction between the two realms, and how much high culture must be favored because of directional and
intellectual gains for society and architecture alike. The negative possibilities of the association of architecture with each realm are not fully understood. For example, in the case of high culture, architecture could be tempted to remain elitist in a deterministic instead of suggestive way. In regard to popular culture, it could mean an unquestioned perpetuation of the negative aspects of popular culture. The beneficial impact that architecture could exert in both instances must be clarified. A creative and positive connection of architecture with each culture would assure a plurality in architecture that would eliminate formal demagogery of any one direction in architecture.

That statement describes the potential of such a situation in optimistic terms; it also assumes for a moment that the cultural realm is safe from the penetration by the market. Unfortunately, that is not the case. Most cultural products, even those of high culture, have become consumption goods; that is, their exchange value is more important than their use value. Architecture, because of the nature of its products, has been for quite some time the only cultural area able to resist that trend. But this is changing for a variety of reasons. The widespread habit of considering the home primarily as a possibility for investment and, therefore, as a continuously changing affair is one of them. A similar attitude determines the financing of large-scale projects: acquiring short-term profits is the objective; long-term considerations, including ones of a non-pecuniary nature, are dismissed. Thus, constant selling and re-financing is characteristic of this building sector. Finally, a growing number of buildings have become advertisement in the strict sense. These processes have made it possible for the "laws" of consuming to determine the outcome of the design process; that is, the continuous need for new appearances and fast change, with which the market operates, has invaded architectural activity. The present formalism in architecture, where attention can be gained only through exaggeration which surpasses previous exaggeration, attests to this invasion and corruption. Architecture has become fashion. The failure of the Modern Movement seems not to be the sole cause for post-modernism; the total penetration of the cultural realm by the forces of the market might well be the other cause. Yet there is a yearning for permanence and continuity in society. And that yearning appears to be the only hope to oppose the overriding presence of consumption behavior in the sphere of architecture.

Another characteristic of the present human condition is the disappearance of public life. The absence of public life has far-reaching consequences not only for society but also for architectural activity. Architecture has always understood itself as an activity that depends on public life and public activity. We do not know yet the full implications of this disappearance in regard to changes and the production of urban culture. We know more when it comes to assessing the loss of a setting for discussing common objectives and a means for identifying with a community. And we speculate what the disappearance of public life could mean in terms of severing the ties with tradition and history. What we do know, however, is that architecture, as a didactic instrument for explaining the past and as a medium for expressing present cultural and social identity, is in danger of losing parts of its justification with the absence of public life.

In light of this situation it is rather ironic to see the appearance of porticos, colonnades, pediments, entrances flanked by columns and similar architectural elements in current architectural language. These elements once attested to a rich public life and were part of its symbolic expression; they articulated the drama between inside and outside. Today we lack this kind of dialectic. There is no precarious balance between these two realms; their areas of separation and transition have become unimportant, unless we are concerned about security. Today the outside has lost its significance, and the absence of meaningful urban spaces is immediate proof of this bitter truth. The outside has degenerated into useless space framed by surfaces for advertisement. It should be evident that the architectural elements mentioned cannot take on any new symbolic meaning with the disappearance of public life; very likely they become appendices and finally symbols of advertisement. Whatever public life remains is threatened with becoming "internalized" and, thus, misused and corrupted by galleries and urban shopping malls. The damage inflicted on urban life and culture by suburban shopping centers continues through its urban duplicate. In the world of Potemkin, public life was abundantly; only its built counterpart
was missing. Now, we seem to have reversed this situation, though the emphasis on "facades" remains.

Parallel to the present preoccupation with architectural elements that previously portrayed a flourishing public life occurs a likewise fascination with the application of axes. Unfortunately, the preceding observation applies here, too; with the disappearance of public life, this application seems a rather futile exercise. In addition, the employment of axes overlooks the obvious fact that our manner of circulation has changed profoundly since the time axes were more common. In conjunction with this alteration another change has taken place. Our sense of space differs from that of previous times, not only because of cultural differences but more so because of a constant over-exposure to two-dimensional stimuli. Yet a full experience of axes needs a three-dimensional awareness of space. In the past, the application of axes symbolized and implied a discernible societal direction; axes either were directed toward a center or emanated from it. With the disappearance of an authoritative leadership and elitism, this kind of symbolism seems to be out of tune with social reality: pluralism and axes belong to two different worlds. Nevertheless, one could argue that the renewed application of axes and architectural elements that once symbolized public life may be helpful in preventing the total disappearance of public life; such an application may also be helpful in expressing permanence and continuity. In case this holds true, the re-appearance of such devices in architectural activity could be justified. Their re-use must, however, occur with an awareness and reaction to, instead of a neglect of, current societal processes.

V.

It is evident that the societal changes discussed have and will have profound impact on architecture; it is also evident that architecture cannot avoid investigating the political, economic and cultural context in which it operates and the social forces which determine our time. Yet it seems as if the profession, while occupied with rejecting the methods and condemning the results of the Modern Movement, has also discarded its critical and inquisitive mode of operation that proved to be the common denominator for its diverse members. It is certainly not this critical attitude which is responsible for the negative implications of the Modern Movement, it is, rather, its premature disappearance. It appears we are to experience another disappointment if we think that without such an attitude current architectural efforts will, in the long run, produce better results.

The discussion about the current human condition points to a fundamental dichotomy, which expresses itself in such oppositions as the abstract versus the concrete, the quantitative versus the qualitative and functional rationality versus substantial rationality. Architectural activity displays these dichotomies: on the one hand, there are the thought processes of the engineer explaining problems through causality; the solutions offered are therefore rational in a functional manner; on the other hand, there is the mind of the artist reacting reflectively to life; in this instance problems are opposed by creativity. The objective of the engineer is to restore a system to its equilibrium, whereas the aim of the artist is to transform a system, to create a new reality. Ideally speaking, the architect is both engineer and artist, and it is precisely this synthesizing capacity which could help to mitigate the dichotomy dilemma in society. Due to the overall and continuing trend toward specialization, this model concept of the architect does not only look outdated but must cope with a diminishing probability of actualization. Yet this ideal must be upheld if we are serious about meeting the challenge generated by these dichotomies. Actually, this challenge has recently become even more critical since, as pointed out, quantitative considerations now by far outnumber qualitative concerns. Again, architecture, because of its dual nature, is in a unique position for assisting not only to diminish dichotomies but also to counter the advance of one side at the cost of the other. To conclude, architecture must (1) accept its capacity for synthesis and not perpetuate polarization processes by its own polarization; and (2) declare again a critical inquiry into the human condition as being an essential part of its activities. The acceptance of both demands would be in accordance with humanist tradition. Architecture needs more insight into the reasoning that justifies the constant inducement of artificial wants and the almost total commercialization of every aspect of life, and it needs greater awareness of the implications of an increasing plurality of interests, an equally growing mobility and

(continued on page 73)
Gunnar Birkerts
Interviewed by G.B.

There seems to be multiplicity of directions one can take today in architecture. Which way are you going now?
First of all, I believe I am going my own way. Secondly, I would like to change the question and ask, "Where have I been in architecture?" and that may be a good way to start our discussion.

Architecture, to me, is a progression from the past through the present into the future. Speaking of the past, I feel fortunate that the period that we would call 'Modern Architecture' falls within the time that I have been living, learning and practicing. I was born, under the same constellation as Modern Architecture; and very near to the birthday of the Bauhaus. I did not have to read books to tell me about the history and evolution of Modern Architecture, I lived right within it. My hometown, Riga, was one of the Hanseatic outposts constructed in the pure Gothic manner. From the 13th century on, it went through the same architectural evolution as the rest of the continent. After surviving the classical revival it was influenced by the eclectic neoclassical waves from nearby Finland. The Bauhaus came and was assimilated in the appropriate way within the already existing context, forming an architectural evolution through the ages.

You are beginning to stress the architectural, cultural heritage of your past. Do you consider it significantly important in your present approach to architecture? Yes, it allows me to be part of the evolution of Modern Architecture. I have the history of architecture synthesized within my cultural heritage, forming that beautiful base that allows me to work in a calm manner without making sudden discoveries of past styles or developing convulsions after reading a book about an architect or direction preceding me.

You are suggesting certain disagreement with architectural pronouncements made by generations who have learned modern architecture from books or viewing isolated examples without having grown up with them. You seem to try to make the point that you are free from any historical influences in your architecture.

Not at all. The point that I am trying to make is that the historical influences have been synthesized and have become my cultural heritage, which I can draw upon without consciously being aware of it. I draw from these influences in a subconscious way during the creative act of conceptualization.

You mentioned the subconscious act of creativity or conceptualization. Yes, it is true, after many years of working with the methodologies from my previous mentors and to a great extent the prevailing academic approach to design, i.e. problem solving, I have in the last ten years freed myself from the theories and methodologies and without any hesitation accepted the intuitive power within the act of creation.

Do you have a theory of your own that you follow? Each solution is based on a theory that develops in the process.

When do you state it? At best, not at all, since at the time of conception it is not consciously there.

Then when do you apply the theory on your process? Consciously, never. When the building has
Calvary Baptist Church

* Balthazar Korab Ltd.
Then are you truly believing in the subconscious act in creativity?
Yes, I am, doesn’t everyone.

I understand that you are a professor at the University of Michigan in the graduate program of architecture. How does this particular attitude you have developed affect the teaching of architecture? You have touched upon something very important. As a result of my own experiences and attitudes, it has become more and more difficult for me to teach architectural design in the orthodox way.

How do you mean it?
Well, I am more and more interested in developing the young mind through exposure to influences and in conveying an understanding of how one’s mind participates in the creative process—how one’s mind draws from the heritage of the past and how the creative process is drawing from the subconscious.

Isn’t this another theory disguised as a methodology?
Not theories, but life lived is at the base of all good architecture; so I am not a theoretician at all—I am a doer. It has taken years and other minds to discover the theoretical basis for the design concepts that I have proposed. Working with the subconscious and the intuitive, I have no need for theories whatsoever.

You have been talking about objectivity in design and you claim that you create objectively. How would you describe the process?
My alibi, of course, is the reliance of the subconscious in the creative process. The subconscious is not corruptible by theories, dogmas or prejudices influencing the design. But there is still a great deal of individuality, or "self", in the design solutions that are proposed.

You mention the "self" (the greatest search that any architect should have). What is the definition and the recognition of "self"?
If the "self" is expressed in unbendable terms, it becomes dogma, but I feel that the self should have the flexibility to be an appropriate solution to a given problem.

Here we come to one of the most important points: if that solution is appropriate, it will contain all the ingredients that make great architecture. To create objectively the creator has to be as objective as possible and must not extend subjectively any of the facets that go into design beyond its appropriate limit or weight. That means one should not be partial to any architectural style, philosophy, theory, aesthetic mode or idiom. The architectural concept is the synthesis of all the given conditions, requirements, the state of art, the economic conditions of the area at the time, and of course, responsive to the problem that it has to solve.

Would not objectivity in the creative process require a self-denial?
To create objectively does not mean that you have to deny your "self". It does not mean that you are just a synthesizer without any contribution from your self. It is impossible to deny your self if you have any cultural heritage or ethnic heritage. As much as I feel I’m creating objectively, I still find that observers recognize threads in my work, one to the next and to the next. That particular thread is the "self", that in the process of creation becomes the ingredient giving the character and that something which distinguishes one creation from the other.

A recent survey has put you, a mid-westerner, in company of eight east coaters and one west coaster. Where do you place yourself?
In the American scene—geographically and philosophically, I am in the best geographic position I can be. There is a certain distance, or call it time insulation between myself and the East Coast, and much more so between me and the West Coast. This separation is what I consider the greatest asset produced by my geographic location. If I decide to penetrate this insulation, within a short time I am in New York, Rome, Amsterdam, Moscow or Helsinki. Mid-West, to me, is not a confinement; Mid-West to me, is a platform from which I can observe or absorb as much as I wish and whenever I wish to do so.

What is the advantage?
The advantage is that I can maintain my own self without being or becoming a part of an intellectual, philosophical community; that
begins to equalize, deindividuate and make clones of architectural minds.

Even if you propose appropriate solutions to the problem, many of your solutions are in the direction of high technology, with almost romantic notions about the process of creation in architecture. Many of your solutions are more steeped in the building technology than the more traditional forms of construction.

Yes, I have to admit I have a belief that there can be poetry in high technology; and I have been looking for it. I want to use high technology to express qualities other than modular, pragmatic results from application of factory produced parts. The Italian critic Pasquale Belfiori, writing in "Domus" on the technological aspect in my architecture, said: "Between history and utopia there exists an accessible intermediate area in which a new mode of technological discourse can be established".

Do you think that there is a perfect solution to a given set of problems, a best solution?
There's never a perfect solution; however, there is a best solution under the circumstances present: the problem giver's ability to state the problem, and the problem solver's ability to synthesize it with the necessary cultural and historical parameters to contribute to the solution.

What if another architect with equal but different experience works with the same subconscious approach, and approaches the same set of problems? Would his solution be different if his heritage were, for example, Japanese?
It would be different without question. The scenario may be the same, but the synthesizing mind is different, so the solution will be different.

Has this method ever failed you?
It certainly has. As a rule, it fails me when I deal with architectural competitions. My concepts are not based on formalistic answers to the given problem, but are based on strong component of interaction with the user. I have finally decided not to enter competitions because of this. It is more important to design and construct appropriate building solutions than to win competitions.

What are the ingredients you inject in the problem solving process? On one hand they are functional, architectural, historical, but what about other materials of modern life? I am thinking of video games or of the claim that a certain image from the film "2001" strongly influenced your design for the IBM Computer Center in Sterling Forest, N.Y. and the Museum in Houston. This particular input you are alluding to is what I call "the times we live in". This is one of the strongest facets after the historical one. The solution based on the strength of this "the times we live in" would allow the viewer and user to fully experience the created architecture physically and emotionally.

Does this methodology you are describing have any use for the young architect? The one who has not fully absorbed history and the range of practical problems involved in design?
It is applicable at any stage of maturity and experience of an architectural mind. The result, however, would be expressive of the total synthesis of the wealth and storage of that creative mind. It is dissimilar to the creative process in tonal synthesis and creativity in composition. There the creative mind works with eight or twelve tones.

I would say it is less a matter of the age of the creator but more of the talent and ability. Only a few have the calling.

Would you advise a firm, practical schooling in architecture? Do you believe that the best of architects have been educated or have they been born?
At the risk of being unpopular, I think that they have been born.

Do you think history is going to look back and condemn much of what has been going on in these times in architecture, and if so, why? On what basis?
History will look back in search of architecture—and may not find too much evidence of architecture expressing our present society in any coherent way. For one thing, the archaeologists of the future will find that the more expressive pieces of architecture carry the borrowed signature from decades ago.
Concavity and Convexity:  
Notes toward More Felicitous Form

Henry S. Plummer  
... Architecture need do no more than assist man's homecoming...  
Aldo van Eyck, 1962

I would like to examine here an aspect of architectural form in which rather simple perceptual phenomena carry fascinating and, I think, significant implications about how human beings relate to buildings (and vice versa).

It seems to me that underlying the infinite variety of shapes presented by buildings are three archetypal patterns: convexity, flatness, and concavity. Now, if these were only categorical types, they would be of little interest to us. Each of these, however, possesses a unique perceptual structure of configurational force. I am speaking of forces here in a visual rather than mechanical sense, of tensions rather than motions, and in particular of pressures that appear to have pushed or pulled a form into its present shape so as to give the object various directions of intended movement and manifested force. Convexities push outward, pressing against exterior space and its contents, while recesses pull inward, so as to draw external space into the object’s corpus. Flat planes do neither and remain neutral without any force. Every plastic form, indeed every shape including two-dimensional outlines, exhibits a pattern of such implied forces along the topography or edge of its configuration.

Environmental objects can be seen then to possess a variety of implied movements upon their surfaces, and these can be reduced to figures of either outward or inward force with respect to the object itself. Convexities in the surface exhibit externally directed force, while concavities possess inward force. We sense this at once in our own bodies. Inflated lungs expand the chest outward, flexed muscles bulge and protrude, a drawing in of the stomach narrows the waist, and a finger pressed into a fleshy surface creates an indentation. In other words, there is a direct correlation between the direction of force applied to matter and the direction of material deformation which results upon its surface. Beyond such bodily knowledge, every person has a rich store of memories causally relating the directions of force applied to external objects and their change in configuration, such as the shape and depth of footprints in wet sand, the modeled forms of clay, or the inflation of a balloon. And we find in all these examples that, although the same generic deformation may be produced by either external application or internal generation, protuberances always manifest a drive in the object outward and recesses inward.

We may say then that although the form of an object such as a building may be complex and extensive, an observer can grasp in its shell a rudimentary structure of salient features. The form is distilled into a collection of simplified figures, each lying within a continuum between convexity and concavity. This range reduces, as we have noted, to three archetypal models with the two extremes being contextually active and producing opposite forces (Fig. 1). Zones of peripheral space around a building, and the bodies within that space, are either repulsed and brushed off, ignored and uninvolved, or drawn inward and assimilated. Put another way, they are either deflected away from the shell, disengaged from the shell, or inflected into the building’s mass.
We might at this point ask what difference these forces make. Are they just movements along the surfaces of buildings, sources of visual animation? It seems to me that if buildings were simply external objects that man viewed from a distance and to which he felt little physical relationship, these forces might well be dismissed simply as formal activity. Buildings, however, despite the efforts of so many modern architects to erase such a capacity, possess enormous potential for bodily association. This relationship is perhaps most concentrated and strongly experienced in the phenomenon of entrance, where the configurational forces operating on the space about an entry point demand to be personally felt by anyone approaching them. The detached spectator relationship of a viewer passing by or gazing at a building from a distance is superseded during entrance by an increasingly intimate relationship of direct physical involvement. Moreover, these forces alone on an architectural shell are aimed at a human being. As man approaches and steps into the axis of a convexity or concavity, he enters a locus of directional forces which either push or pull upon his own body. And movement toward such forces, as is implicit in the act of entering, magnifies their power and influence, for protuberances appear to gather outward momentum while recesses become progressively deeper in contrast to foreground surfaces. Thus the building’s configurational forces around the entrance actually deflect or inflect people with steadily mounting strength at the point of arrival, so as to psychologically facilitate or hinder the act of penetration. The entrant is either pushed away from or reeled in toward his destination, and his perception of accessibility is correspondingly reduced or amplified.

1. Diagrams of configurational force

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Let us look more closely at these three models of directed configurational force, both by examining their operation in the entrance formations of particular buildings and by observing parallel forces in human gestures and artifacts which are more consciously fashioned and deployed by people to control physical contact and interaction with external phenomena. We will find that underlying the perceptual structures of both animate postures and inanimate devices, including buildings, is a common language of relational actions. All employ the same typology of configurations to determine the extent and method of physical involvement with their surroundings.

Deflection and Convexity

We have seen that the convex architectural form produces a deflectional action on those who approach it head on. It is an antigravitational phenomenon, sticking out at the entrance, opposing the inward movement with a corporeal counterthrust, and assaulting his body with a striking force. We see in convexity the morphological essence of the push, shove, prod, poke, punch, nudge, bump, butt, and jolt. We also sense a parrying action in such forms. The protuberance induces objects in its path to jump out of the way so as to avoid collision and impact. The entrant is thus persuaded to alter his course sideways, to scramble out of the line of thrust, to be swept, as it were, along the object’s flanks like the wake of sluiced water left by a ship’s bow.

And, in a structural sense, the convex form resists entrance by presenting a reinforced corner of its borderline, the most impervious zone of any volumetric container. By meeting the entrant with a place of augmented massing, gathered strength, and amplified solidity, penetration is resisted as well as repelled.

Sharp protuberances display a concentration of outward force. The spear, sword, knife, axe, wedge, prow, and karate chop are formed to cut through obstacles in their path. They are forms of violence and breakage. In more blunted convexities, the outward force becomes diffused so that the area of contact is broadened and the form can repel rather than sever objects. Jabbing instruments, such as a fist or stave, drive their subject backward and keep him at a safe distance from softer and more vulnerable parts of the body. Even the facial countenance of aggression is marked by a hard stare rather than soft eyes, by a stiffening rather than yielding of the...
The deflective architectural form is related to all these devices both in morphology and effect, leaping out with directed force to oppose and repulse those who frontally approach. At S. Croce in Gerusalemme, for instance (Fig. 2), doorways press out from the building mass as segments of a slight excursivation, gently diverting away those arriving. The rounded rear entrances to Mendelsohn’s Berlin Apartment Building (Fig. 3) are more boldly protrusive, jutting rather than out-bowed, and the cresting of each form directly upon a doorway focuses its outward force upon the entrant.

A similarly concentrated force occurs in the entry formation of S. Maria della Quercia, (Fig. 4), with its centralized doorway and its mass emanating out from a flat rear wall. But here we sense something more than an elementary convexity, for the protuberance advances in two stages, beginning with the peripheral pilasters and culminating with the prominance of a central bulge. And even the surface topography and cornices are tightly folded and creased into a jagged formation, the angles of which might lacerate the skin of any who approach. A sequence of protrusions occurs also in Fontana’s Basilica dei Collegium (Fig. 5), where a circular entry chamber inside has seemingly struck, deformed, dislodged, and set in motion the entrance walls, vestibules, and stairs in a train of circular ripples spreading out from the source of disturbance. At the Kneses Tifereth Israel Synagogue (Fig. 6), entrance occurs through a bulbous mass plunging out from the main building. This flagrantly solidified receiving form is even more impervious than the sealed fortress behind, seemingly standing guard as an intransigent outpost and front line of battle. Moreover, by striking out from the facade as a semi-independent nodular formation, its volume bursting with outward force, and covered with a hard, tense, and undivided skin, the entrance configuration resembles a closed fist or club extended to pummel the entrant, keep him at arm’s
When an entry form projects out of a surrounding convex building mass, its local deflective force is compounded and accelerated since it is *propelled from behind* as well as independently emerging. The billowing entrance to S. Chiara (Fig. 7) erupts out of the junction of two converging walls, while that of Montano’s temple on the Via Appia (Fig. 8) appears compressed and narrowed into a spearheading form of already tapering walls. At the Richards Medical Research Building (Fig. 11), the entrant must not only pass under a stack of sharpened and out-turned angles, but must climb a projecting stair whose sagittal form suggests both an arrowhead launched at his body and a cowcatcher to sweep him away from the entrance and cast him off to the side. The gradually narrowing protuberances of Venturi’s Guild House (Fig. 9) displays a more collective action, a sortie of forms marching out as a wedged phalanx toward the entry path. To slide along the flanks of such a form is to be drubbed and buffeted by a series of hard corners. And yet this lesser of evils is prevented, since the unlikely point of entry at the building’s vertex is coerced by a shape of approach path which funnels the entrant into the grinding path of the building. An entrance located in the tip of an oblong architectural shape advances toward the entrant with a momentum accumulated from the driving force of an entire building mass. The vestibule of Die Wies (Fig. 10) swells out of an already elongated building form, becoming its leading edge, apex, and nose. It bears down upon and threatens to ram those who step into its path. An even more impulsive action is encountered in the streamlined convexity of the Einstein Tower (Fig. 12), where entrance is required, not in the more tranquil space of the building’s flanks or tail, but directly into a bow whose symbolism of cutting edge is made concrete by the building’s nautical form.

A building with multiple entrances obliterates any impression of open access when each portal is carried outward in the thrust of a protrusion. The quadrilobite plan of the church of Dubrovitsi (Fig. 13) presents the entrant with several possible entry points, all of which exert equal repulsion as cylindrical segments, while each of four radiating entry formations is tapered into an effective vertex.
in the vestibular sequences for Sforza Chapel (Fig. 14) and in the axial porticos and stairs of the Villa Rotunda (Fig. 15). We find germinating convexities in the entrance of the Dulwich Art Gallery and Mausoleum (Fig. 16), its vestibular protrusion sprouting three equal appendages with their own doorways.

Corporeal accretions abound in the centralized plan of Michelangelo’s solution for S. Giovanni dei Fiorentini (Fig. 17), where alternating vestibules and chapels press outward in unison, squeezing all air out of the collapsed spatial crevices between and imparting to the external shell an uninterrupted fusillade of radiating bursts. We note that in Bramante’s similar project for St. Peter’s (Fig. 18), the cavities left over between expanding protrusions are generous enough to exert a marked inward force and, in fact, were intended for entrances, thus somewhat counteracting and relieving the still unavoidable sense of teeming and encrusted repellent forces. The cruciform plans of so many ecclesiastical buildings also impart centrifugal force to a range of entry points. Both transeptal arms of Chartres Cathedral, for instance, provide a moderate outward push for secondary entrances, while the main entrance drives westward with the gathered power of an elongated nave, leaving the inward tug of four concavities between to fruitlessly draw empty space into their dead-end recesses.

A certain amount of deflection is produced by convexities in a building’s “section” as well as “plan”. A convex profile is found in buildings that step back as they rise and slump at their base, creating an outward force along the ground. We see such forces in the massing form of Ledoux’s design for a pyramidal house, and also in the way runs of stairs spilling out and down from entrance porticos at the Villa Rotunda add a convex profile to their convexities in plan. The deflective component exerted by the profile of such forms, however, is never as strong as those delineated in plan. Without a pair of bordering recesses, the convexity’s thrust is weakened, since it does not jump outward from a background plane continuing behind at either side. Also, a convexity in plan tends to focus its outward force upon a specific zone along the ground, whereas a convexity in section distributes the force laterally so as to diffuse its repellant power and avoid any sense of deflective force guarding the doorway.
and aimed deliberately at the entrant. Because such profiles, whether convex or concave, contribute relatively mild forces at an entrance and, once bisected and prone, have lost all resemblance to gestural forms, I will consider here only the horizontally articulated forms of a building shell.

**Detachment and Flatness**

Midway between convexity and concavity are forms whose topographies are devoid of configurational force. Their surfaces are still and motionless, lacking any configurational involvement with or action upon their surroundings. Circumambient detachment is epitomized in the continuous surface of a sphere or cylinder, although we sense a lingering deflection in its uniformly bulging excurvation, while detachment from a single external position is completely accomplished by a flat plane.

We observe several different kinds of relational meanings in forms devoid of configurational force. The first we might call a *centripetal tendency*, whereby the object extricates itself from the environment. The flattening of an object’s integumental shell diminishes its surface area and thus its exposure to external phenomena. Potential physical contact is reduced to a minimum. And with its extremities seemingly retracted into a tight ball and taut skin, the form appears to have undergone an act of physical withdrawal. The configuration is closed to its surroundings, standing isolated with an introverted boundary line and interface. Whereas the deflective form goes on the offensive to avoid access, the extricative form becomes passively defensive, closes ranks, turns inward rather than outward, and ostracizes those outside its walls rather than driving them away. The fetal position assumed by human beings when frightened or freezing is an instinctual response carried with us from birth to reduce exposure to and escape from our surroundings. Similarly, the turtle withdraws its head and legs into its shell when threatened and a caterpillar rolls into a ball. Even within a social setting, the *physically dissociative* purpose of such a formal configuration remains the same. Social distance and avoidance are expressed by such gestures as a straightened mouth, retracted and folded arms, stiff posture, and a refrain from inclusive actions such as unclenched limbs or the curved smile of a relaxed and yielding face.

15. Villa Rotunda, Vicenza. Palladio

16. Art Gallery and Mausoleum, Dulwich College. Soane

An absence of configurational force also suggests relational apathy. As surface activity evaporates in the absence of convexities and concavities, the object loses all sense of responsiveness to its surroundings. We see in its topographical emptiness the central physical manifestation of a cluster of parallel relational phenomena. The passivity of a flat form makes it appear insensible and dead to the world, endowing it with qualities of numbness, petrification, listlessness, callousness, self-absorption, and obliviousness. We also identify corporeal staticity with coldness. Movement, after all, is a sign of molecular activity, energy, and warmth, while stillness is equated with sleep, wintertime, and freezing. The inactive interface thus appears frigid, cold-hearted, chillingly unmoved, even emotionally paralyzed, since it lacks the heated passion of either anger or love. The relational implications of a flattened configuration are similarly expressed in the metaphors of certain colloquial expressions, such as a person being "thick-skinned", "straight-faced", "dead-pan", having a "heart of stone", or coming to a "dead stop". While such tranquil physical qualities may be interpreted as signs of even-temper and self-control in a general posture toward the world, the special conditions of entrance, in which a stranger arrives in a suppliant position "begging" hospitality, or an acquaintance returns after a "journey" to renew a relationship, impart to such gestural forms a situational hauteur, rudeness, and unfriendly character.

The most extreme dissociative actions are found, obviously, in entrances located in a flat planar facade. Not only does the portal itself and the area immediately surrounding it remain inactive, but there are no contextual concavities or convexities to give the entrance relative force and movement. The internal world remains thoroughly uninvolved with and disavows the external world. Thus the portal to an airplane, the shell of which is required for aerodynamic reasons to minimize any interplay with the outside, is formed merely as a hinged flap within a smoothly continuous and uninterrupted fuselage. Clusters of anaesthetized entrances are seen in the monolithic buildings of the Illinois Institute of Technology (Fig. 19). The austere rectilinear volumes contain unbroken expanses along their external planes. Like an assortment of expressionless and sullen individuals at a garden party, each preferring his own
17. *S. Giovanni dei Fiorentini, Rome.*

Michelangelo

18. *St. Peter's, Rome.*

Bramante's first plan
company, the forms stand isolated from each other and coldly repudiate those who seek to engage them frontally. At the I.I.T. School of Architecture and Planning, and more vividly at the Munson-Williams-Proctor Institute (Fig. 20), a series of interlocking exterior bands tightly engird the already minimalized and contracted building mass so as to perceptually heighten its centripetal condensation and contextual noninvolvement. Like overly massive ropes securely binding a small parcel, the contained form is externally trussed up to eliminate any hope of outward gesture and shackle whatever gregarious or belligerent actions might arise from within.

Other examples of planar entry structures would be superfluous, for their dissociative actions are generally uniform and unvaried in effect. We might note, however, that the architecture of this century has produced more than its share of such entrances. It is perhaps not accidental that a civilization characterized by the pervasive annihilation of social bonds, and a phase of human history noted by many as an age of alienation, should have perfected, multiplied, and even celebrated an architecture of flattened entry facades and plain rectilinear boxes.

**Inflection and Concavity**

We have seen that deflective and withdrawn architectural forms are related in their exclusion of the entrant and treatment of the individual as *persona non grata*. Both tend to isolate the interior world and seal off the threshold, the flat form relying passively upon the resistance of its armor while the convexity actively attacks. They also estrange the entrant by avoiding internal exposure and contact. An inflective form, on the other hand, *maximizes contact*, since the building's interfacial exposure is increased as it wraps about the point of entrance. The extremities at either side of a concavity extend and unfold to gather and draw exterior space inward and bind the entrant to its corpus. The form is thrown open to those arriving, so that each step into its collecting limbs leads to ever deeper *engagement* with the interiority and penetrality of the building. And if convexity approached is basically a form of disaffinity, counteraction, denial, conflict, and *negative force*, while planality is a form of neutrality, then concavity approached is a form of affinity, concurrence, accompaniment, and *positive force*.  

19. Illinois Institute of Technology, Chicago. Mies van der Rohe
The relational meaning of the inflective gesture is essentially that of contextual inclusion. Concave objects such as a cup, bowl, and nest enfold external objects and space. They are vessels and receptacles. The extended and outstretched arms of embrace, the handshake, the clasp and hug, relaxed fingers, a softly yielding face, and the open forms of sexual allurement are all configurations human beings utilize to convey intromission. They offer physical invitations to approach, touch, and penetrate. Moreover, they all imply that the person to whom they are directed is intended to advance closer, and that it is safe physically to intermingle with them. The inflective gesture is basically one of offered sympathy and sustained assimilation. As an architectural formation surrounding the doorway, a concavity initially beckons to the entrant as a cordial gesture of human affinity, pulls him toward the portal with an inward force, gradually accepts him through a physical involution as he approaches, and signifies that he belongs by physically incorporating him.

A subtle allurement is found in the shallow incurvation for the entrance facade to the Filippini Monastery (Fig. 21), the faint inward force of its dish-like hollow barely visible against the inactive surface planes at either side. In the entrance to Santa Maria dei Sette Dolori (Fig. 22), the concavity becomes more dynamic and forceful, its radius of curvature shortened so that the corporeal arc summons the observer and tenaciously grasps any who enter its field, while an even deeper curve occurs in the near semicircular entrance facade to the Villa Madama (Fig. 23). We discover deeply bored back-to-back entrance recesses of both rectilinear and curvilinear shape in Palladio’s design for the Villa Mocenigo (Fig. 24), and the entry spaces of Mount Airy (Fig. 25) and Tryons Palace (Fig. 26) are extended by the attachment of outwardly curved and flanking wings leading to terminal buildings.

Weak inflections are also evident where doorways are near, but oriented obliquely, to the main inward force which bisects the angle of a concavity. A constantly recurring characteristic in the buildings of Frank Lloyd Wright (Figs. 27 and 28) is an entry door located in one of the recesses between perpendicularly radiating masses, but always to the side rather than point of the angle’s vertex. The entrant is swept inward, but must
I. Villa Madama, Rome. Raphael

24. Villa Mocenigo. Palladio

25. Mount Airy, Richmond, Va. Tayloe

26. Tryon's Palace, New Bern, N.C. Hawks
27. George Barton house, Buffalo.
   Wright

   Wright

29. Catholic Church, Hague.
   van Eyck
circumvent the main current as he follows the ground form and skirts and concavity's walls, and must at the last moment step away from the force-field's target to reach the threshold. Similar but even subtler exploitations of "leftover" corners as effective cavities occur in the way entrance locations adjoin shallow cambers in the facades of the Zimmermanns' churches at Steinhausen and Gunzburg. A virtual concavity for the doorway is also created by the angle between wall plane and cylindrical projection at van Eyck's Catholic Church in the Hague (Fig. 29), and the entrance of Lutyens' Nashdom (Fig. 30) gains an impression of inflection by the bulges at either side of the door, although the uniformity of wall plane behind both projections creates a sense of illusion and weakens the inward force by robbing its recess of real depth.

An entrance concavity can exert a force of adhesion as well as gravity, and thus make the entrant belong to the building through the retention of its grasp as well as its general pull inward. We see this particularly in bracketing forms which take hold of and clasp space. The subtlest of grasps are found in Borromini's canted pilasters, as in the Propaganda Fide's outside entrance (Fig. 31) and its internal portal to the room of the congregation (Fig. 32). The forms appear engaged in a struggle to come alive, to pull out from the deadened wall in response to the entrant and twist into a concave embrace. Cornices are deformed, pulled inward at their centers and forced out into lines of intended movement at their extremities so as to form an embryonic recess, while the pilaster faces swing apart from the wall plane and stretch toward each other. At St. Peter's Square (Fig. 33), the colonnaded arms reach far beyond the threshold as a pair of curved hands, as it were, extended from straightened arms, cupping and warming an outer space of arrival with their contained and interreflected body heat. Entry to van Eyck's G.J. Visser house (Fig. 34) occurs through the side of an eroded corner of the building's mass, followed by an octagonal spatial node implanted within and surrounded on five sides by the building shell, the spatial inverse of the Kneses Synagogue, so that the entrant arrives at a spatial nest deeply embedded within and securely embraced by the internal world. We see other internalized entry spaces, but in which the large enclosing walls of the shell are offset and the space is clutched by the
outer tendrils of lower walls as well as the recess behind, at Wright’s Unity Temple (Fig. 35) and Hertzberger’s Montessori School (Fig. 36), the form gently gathering in and cradling the spatial receptacle, binding it to the building both horizontally and vertically, and pulling the entrant inward from an oblique direction of approach.

Entry forms at Vaux-le-Vicomte (Fig. 37) are fashioned to create recesses within recesses, with large arrival spaces containing and succeeded by smaller and more intimate ones. The successive systolic pulls, first encountered in the adjoining ares of retaining walls along the approach path and culminating with the stepped-in masses of the building facade, not only aim the gathered space directly toward the point of penetration, but draw the entrant inward through a sequence of coordinated tugs, each acting on a different area of the inlet, so that the inward force is unrelenting and steadily increasing in momentum. A similar graduated series of concavities occurs in the low outbuildings and curved colonnades of Palladio’s Villa Trissino (Fig. 38). We see at once that such entry forms are the antithesis of Guild House’s driving wedge, originating instead with a wide collective zone and ending with a deep recess of embodied belonging, rather than passing from a zone of violent collision through an ever widening path of expulsion.

A series of concavities occurs also at the entrance to the Stupinigi Palace (Fig. 39), but here the recesses alternate in size rather than form a strict gradation, each briefly taking hold of the entrant through a series of pulsations and centers of gravity, much like a guest line leading to the host and his threshold at the rear. Since each centralized space is of different geometry and magnitude, passing from circularity to hexagonality, the entrant passes through a progression of individualized clasps. We might say that here the cumulative concavity is subdivided into and bordered by component concavities, adding lateral inflective nuances to the synthetic axial pull of the total composition. Variations of concave geometry, but superimposed rather than sequential, are also found at Lutyns’ Heathcote (Fig. 40), the orthographic recesses of the massing combining with a counterpoint of curvilinear recesses in the ground form to produce overlapping magnetic fields. And at Lutyns’ Grey Walls (Fig. 41), the approach path
35. Unity Temple, Oak Park, Chicago.
   Wright

36. Montessori School, Delft.
   Hertzberger

37. Vaux-le-Vicomte.
   Levau
unfolds through a sequence of three powerful inflections which tug upon the entrant exactly when he must change direction: first a simple semicircular recess in a garden wall leading off the road, then an octagonal fragment of wall where the driveway changes course, and finally a circular recess which culminates the driveway and is deeply inset into the building mass.

The entrance to Smith’s house at Groton (Fig. 42) involves more complex inflections, as the path is successively grasped by unequal and variegated recesses of the retaining wall on one side and building shell on the other, as well as by the predominant overall concavity through which the entry path meanders. We observe a series of spatial pulsations, but they are never centralized, for one side always pulls slightly harder than the other and the facing recesses are generally offset. Rather than producing a sequence of focal points along an axis, as at Stupinigi, the configuration exerts oscillating forces and a state of evolving but never-interrupted belonging. The entrant is induced to pause in various spatial pockets as much as he is gently guided forward, is wedded to the landscape as well as the building, and is grasped from many directions along the periphery with the merriment of spontaneous and unpredictable embraces, rather than squeezed into a center line from both sides and aimed formally toward a single climactic target.

Hybrid Forces
Let us last consider several hybrid species of inflective and deflective force, conditions in which the relational actions of entrance are equivocal, since the building simultaneously counteracts and concurs with the entrant’s movement.

We have seen that forces which push the entrant away from or pull him into the doorway are generated by the configuration of massing in which the point of entrance resides. But since convexity and concavity are perceived as contextual phenomena, that is, as local areas of surface which are either pushed outward from or pulled inward to the larger surrounding mass of an object, a change of context can alter or modify their forces. We have seen an elementary illustration of this phenomenon in convexities and concavities which are additive and successive, as at Guild House and Vaux-le-Vicomte, where the
configurational forces of the local massing around a doorway are magnified by reinforcing contextual forces. Their vectors are cumulative. However, if the local and contextual forms around the doorway axis exert contrasting forces, each will tend to neutralize the other with the predominant force diminished but still characterizing the relational action at the entrance.

We see, for instance, that the accumulated thrust of convexities in the entry facade of Guild House drives the frontal plane relentlessly outward, but that this plane is itself softened by a doorway recess at ground level and a stack of balcony recesses above. Yet even this yielding zone is counteracted in turn by a massive column at its center, which sticks out beyond the wall plane so as to reassert a bowsprit of convexity, fill the recess, and reclose the entry facade plane. The entrant first sees a powerful deflective force in the entire building mass from a distance, discovers a feeble inflective force as he approaches, only to have this refuge, an eye in a configurational storm, occlude and turn hostile. Moreover, while the sense of outward force is momentarily reduced, it still remains the dominant relational action expressed by the building because of the accumulation of deflective forces preceding arrival.

Even more ambivalent forces are found in the entry facade of the Zimmermanns' Project for Ottobeuren Abbey Church (Fig. 43), where a protuberant portal ends with a concave face, and also in the way tall recesses bordering the central portal of Vierzehnheiligen simultaneously soften the facade, restrain and pull the doorway mass backward, and accentuate the portal's convexity by throwing it into relief and giving it greater outward spring. The broad deflective protuberance around the doorway of the Palazzo Carignano (Fig. 47) is weakened at its edges by the deep concave recesses at either side, as well as its midpoint, by bordering fissures and a central hollow which extends from the open portal through a tall balcony space above. And each of the radiating shapes in a Gothic cathedral presents the entrant with a massive deflective force containing strong localized inflections of embrasure-like portals that draw and funnel space inward. The alternating folds of pilaster and niche bordering the doorway to the Johanniskirche in Landsberg-am-Lech (Fig. 48) completely neutralize each other.
producing an entrance that is animated but without relational force, like a sail that cannot generate locomotion because it flutters equally back and forth across an intermediate plane.

If a local concavity does not defuse the repellence of a powerful protuberance within which it lies, then a small convexity will not eliminate the inflective force of a large surrounding recess. Or put another way, a portal convexity is softened when its outwardly swelling form is preceded and predominated over by a larger enveloping concavity. One might compare such an entry form to the genial host who advances to receive a guest, but is preceded by an outcurved, bent, and enfolding arm rather than a rigid one trained upon its subject. At S. Agnese in Piazza Navona (Fig. 44) the entry facade is stratified into three spatial layers: a foreground plane at either side, between which a cavity recedes and from whose center a third plane pops back outward to an intermediate depth. Here the central portal mass is slightly convex but is relegated to the rear surface of a deeper spatial excavation, so that the latter’s inflective force prevails. A relational duality is similarly intensified at S. Andrea al Quirinale (Fig. 45), where the convex portico and stair project way beyond the church facade, only to be engulfed by an even wider receptacle of outcurving walls at either side, and also at S. Michele (Fig. 49) in the way that curved cornices, walls, and towers wrap about the portal mass. And the final portal deflection is overwhelmed and downplayed by, since it is reached only after deeply penetrating, enormous surrounding concavities at the entrances to Bernini’s First Project for the Louvre (Fig. 46), the British Museum (Fig. 50), and the Stupinigi Palace.

A different kind of relational hybrid is produced when the material density of an entry configuration counteracts its relational force. While inflection and deflection are produced solely by an object’s shape, our impression of physical contact can be altered by the object’s skin.

This relational force and membranous density may reinforce each other. Thus the striking force of a convexity will be given added punch by a solid integument, as we have seen in the toughened and armor-plated surface of the Kneses Synagogue vestibule. The entrant is about to be struck by a hard instrument,
7. Palazzo Carignano, Turin.
   Guarini

    Zimmermann Brothers

49. (right) S. Michele, Rivarolo Canavese.
    Vitone
leaving no doubt of the form’s deflective function and intensifying its malevolence. A contrast of solid entry projection and otherwise fragile wall is even sharper in the Fagus Factory (Fig. 51). In a similar way, the receiving nest of a concavity becomes a *pliant cushion* when its walls are diluted in density, a phenomenon found in the G.J. Visser house where the boundary changes from solidly opaque walls to a framework of slender structural elements and fragile panes of glass around the doorway. We sense here a gentle encompassment whereby the impact of arrival is absorbed and eased, as if catching the speeding entrant and “breaking his fall” with a soft net.

When configurational force and material density are at odds with each other, however, interfering with and nullifying each other’s effect, the relational implications of a deflective or inflective action may be refuted. We find such a counterbalance in the solidified entry recesses of S. Ignazio (Fig. 52) and Santa Maria dei Sette Dolori, which pull the entrant into and thrust him against a steeled barrier. Configurational inflection is negated as an act of investiture and belonging by a material resistance and hardness in the interface which slams shut the receptacle’s walls. The apparent permeability of the boundary, promised by a configurational yielding of its walls, is reversed by presenting a *cul-de-sac* whose lining has been sealed off and stiffened.

Correspondingly, the deflective action of a convexity is softened by a *tenderising* of its form. Like the open hand of greeting which reaches out, but as a web of subtile and relaxed fingers rather than a closed fist, an entry form of dematerialized convexity presents a configuration of entanglement rather than repulsion. In order to dispel a sense of solidity and impact, the entry form must be physically incomplete and spatially permeated in the zone of human height. A familiar example is the light and airy form of a protuberant portico, its members slenderized where the entrant steps into its volume, while the more complete and solid convexities of canopy and stair advance overhead and underfoot to the entrant’s periphery rather than solar plexis. The entry structures to Greene & Greene’s Blacker House (Fig. 53) and Maybeck’s Christian Science Church are largely skeletonized and porous, loosely assembled latticeworks of
Blacker house, Pasadena.
Greene and Greene

sticks rather than closely woven and air-tight skins. And dematerialization is also produced by a thinning of the walls. Thus, the projecting portal of Zonnestraal Sanatorium (Fig. 54) dissolves into a wispy and filmy crystalline assembly, the configurational deflection of which is deflated and enervated by the form’s material attenuation and gossamer delicacy.

The foregoing discussion has attempted to clarify only a single aspect of the architectural entrance and to see it in a phenomenological light. It does not claim that relational forces preempt other architectural associations, or even that they are consciously perceived by the average observer during his scurry to the front door. Rather, it has sought to extract the connotative nucleus of an archetype deeply lodged and intertwined with a variety of others in every architectural structure, in order to make its presence visible, observe its actions, and make tangible a modality of environmental manipulation which contributes in its own limited but unique way to the humanization or dehumanization of our environment.

Perhaps most significant about such configurational phenomena are their implications for a phenomenology of environment in general and architectural entrances in particular. A current concern among some architectural theorists, including this writer, is the relationship of human alienation to architectural form. Certainly the way people relate bodily to buildings plays a critical role in their sense of environmental belonging or alienation. Buildings that cast man out, that either actively or passively make him feel perpetually outside and unwelcome, cannot help but produce an extreme sense of isolation and estrangement. While there are certainly no simple formulas for a humanistic architecture, and concavities alone are no environmental panacea, we have noted some rather convincing evidence of the phenomenological effects of concavity and open-form in general to include man in architecture—to absorb him into its edges—and especially to accept him hospitably when he enters a building’s shell.

A sensitivity to such human needs and events is necessary if we are again to become responsible for the forms we make, and to shape the world into wiser and lovelier forms fit for human dwelling.
How Fare Thee Fair Camelot?

John S. Garner

Before money and petrol began to ebb from US shores, its highways were flooded with motorists in search of motor hotels. Suburban motels, as opposed to urban hotels, represented the trend in travel accommodation and building design. They conveyed the image of exotic retreats, such as castles and spas, though were far more affordable and convenient. But the oil embargo of 1973 and the recession that followed changed all that. Less fancy motels began to appear, and exotic facades lost their appeal. Some motels, however, never made the transition. For example, the "Camelot Inns" of America, a small chain of luxury motels, refused to flow with the tide and change its image. Thus it became a chain of very few links, whose brief history may well portend yet another trend.

Rise and Demise of US Motels
From the shabby roadside cabins which once dotted the nation's highways to the more recent creation of exotic motor lodges has been an innkeeper's dream come true. Beginning in the fifties and continuing until the mid-seventies, the motel business boomed. What had been a small industry grew quickly, as corporate chains took charge of development. Motels sprang up wherever the traffic was heavy and the easement fertile. In the vanguard of this expansion appeared the Holiday Inns, Ramadas, ITT-Sheratons, Hiltors, and Howard Johnsons. The first Holiday Inn was built in Memphis, Tennessee, in 1952. It led the others in number, with approximately 1,670 lodgings and 260,000 rooms in 1975. Its success, as well as that of the other chains, resulted from a meteoric rise in American living and vacationing standards since World War II, more leisure for working families, a glut of automobiles in preference to trolleys and trains, and the completion of a network of highways, paved largely from federal revenues. But things would change. The motel business soon landed on hard times.

During the first quarter of 1974, motel earnings fell off nationwide thirty to forty percent. The oil embargo was a principal cause, as highway travel declined. For years, motel developers had been pushing construction to the brink of market saturation, and, in some resort areas, motels were operating at fractional occupancy in expectation of tourists who never appeared. Huge sums were lavished on rooms which offered everything except a convenient, inexpensive place to sleep.

It used to be that the more sensational and expensive motels were the more successful. Motorists overlooked bargains for comfort and flare, and guests stayed longer than the usual night or two, as increasing numbers of professional drifters (such as athletes, entertainers and salesmen-on-account) paid highly for a home on the road. Profits financed new construction, while services expanded. Even though these luxury motels sounded a death knell for downtown hotels, they brought life to new businesses along commercial strips which trail into, out of, and around most cities, thereby stimulating suburban growth. Because of their size and signage, motels vied successfully with drive-in theaters, restaurants and shopping centers to become the chief visual attraction of the strip. However, this signboard appeal, call it architecture parlante, expressed all the wrong features. Through exterior gimmickry of one sort or another, motels advertised all kinds of superfluities above and beyond a quiet room...
and clean bed, and herein lies the rub. Fewer families could afford to travel as room and board soared to fifty dollars a day. Instead of mere stopovers along the way, motels themselves became vacation attractions in minuscule form. The higher rates charged for rooms forced numbers of motorists to look for alternatives. As a consequence, the motel business has reversed its development strategy, and a new type of accommodation has recently appeared. But before discussing it, or the impact it will have, examine for a moment one of the endangered species, a luxury motel.

Fair Camelot
Overlooking an access ramp to US Interstate Highway 44 is Tulsa, Oklahoma's "Ole Camelot Inn." This particular Camelot (Fig. 1), one of two nationwide, was built in A.D. 1966, exactly nine hundred years since the Battle of Hastings. Though its appearance is foreign and strange to American lore, the Camelot has become a familiar sight to Tulsans and travelers alike. It welcomes to the Central Plain wayfarers, who, per chance, have dismounted from dusty Dodge Chargers or trusty Ford Mustangs to spend the night in happy repose after a day on the road. Upon arrival at their day's end, these weary motorists find no pens of thatch but, instead, discover rooms "created for the pleasure and comfort of royal guests," as an advertisement proclaims. Each chamber contains, among other things, deep-pile carpets, beds with vibrators, and a color telly with HBO—all this and more to soothe the pilgrim's body and soul, to titilate, tranquilize, and benignantly surprise. If asked "why such luxury?" the innkeeper's reply would be "to attract more company." Company and staff to fill 352 rooms and four penthouse suites, banquet and hospitality rooms, kitchen and scullery, dining room, coffee shop, lounge, and offices for management fill an area of 202,000 square feet. Such is the scale of this mighty motel, this prodigy house! Here one can dine in the "Great Hall" on a gourmet treat such as pheasant or venison in season, or, for more intimate feasts, the Great Hall can be partitioned into the "Friar Tuck," "Robin Hood," and "Jesters" rooms, seating in each 150 or so. An axe-toss away from the dining space lies the "Red Lion Club" for additional refreshment. Pause here a moment, quaff an ale and imagine yourself as one of Scott's rogues, spinning tales and reveling: "Barmaid! another pint for the bloke in the double-knit Lincoln green."

What a shame it would be if such hospitality could no longer be found by motorists, be they pilgrim or native. And where could the traveler find safety?

From without, the Camelot seems an unlikely fortress, though it conceals a potential arsenal. "Totally Electric" announces a sign in illuminated script which can be seen at night from a mile away. No torches flicker where electric lanterns brighten chambers and ambulators, inviting guests while providing safety. But need a defense be staged, in case a "no vacancy" be declared by yet another sign, guests could find cover behind crenelated parapets, machicolated turrets, and corner bartizans masked high atop the castle's walls. Above the drawbridge strategically placed gargoyles could pour forth cauldrons of bubbling oil (a mineral that Tulsa carefully refines) (Fig. 2). However, before taking this unwelcome shower, an intrusive motorist would first have to clear an asphalt court and then jump a moat which surrounds the entrance tower. This daredevil feat would require the likes of Evil Knevil or Prince Valiant at the least. Then, to penetrate walls of stone veneer on poured-in-place concrete would call for more than a mere automobile as a battering-ram. Indeed it would. Only in the upper stories can the walls be breached, where stone and mortar give place to curtain wall. But motorist beware of those strange openings in the spandrel beneath each chamber window, for they could be portals for cannon rather than passages for "through-the-wall" self-contained, heating-cooling units. To be sure, the Camelot has its defensible aspects, and rumor has it that each pennant flies for a challenge withstood.

Where else, pray tell, could the motorist find comparable safety and comfort from the wearisome ordeal of travel? Though another question remains—can fair Camelot fare?

Camelot Pruned. The Budget Motel
The principal threat to the Camelot Inn and other luxury motels is self-imposed. Budget motels, or "sleep-cheaps," are stealing clientele by providing fewer amenities and thus lower room rates. For instance, "Days Inns of America," one of the newcomers, charges a modest $19.88 per room, as compared to the Camelot's $40. Its 200 inns offer none of the trappings of the luxury
motels; motorists get only a cinderblock cell, bed, toilet and the indispensable telly. Food, entertainment and convention facilities must be obtained elsewhere. The threat posed by Days Inn, Motel 6, Econo-Travel, Imperial 400 and Regal 8 Inns, the sleep-cheap chains, has forced even the prestigious Holiday Inn to react. The Holiday's management has altered its plans for building luxury motels in urban centers and has begun economizing on units under construction to compete with the cheaper inns. Building motels in urban centers, incidentally, runs counter to the Holiday's original formula, and was only possible after the old downtown hotels went broke.

For the Camelot Inns of America the threat of competition was carried out, resulting in no expansion at all. The second Camelot lowered its drawbridge in Little Rock, Arkansas, just before the recession hit. Like its sister, it was built as something more than a nightly stopover; it was also a convention facility. Both inns struggled to draw the convention crowd away from larger cities to their smaller, more convenient sites. To achieve this goal meant attracting the trade of regional groups which would rather drive to a gathering in the nearest small city than fly to Chicago or New York. The logic behind this goal paid off until the traveling stopped. Of course, professionals such as doctors and lawyers continued to fly to Chicago and New York for their annual bash, but home builders, realtors, automobile salesmen, etc.—those hit worst by the recession—postponed their regional conventions. Their absence left the luxury motel cum convention facility with rooms to fill. Business declined. Ordinary travelers en route from one town to another stayed in the new budget motels. The situation remains, and the luxury motel appears doomed.

But perhaps not. Luxury suites and convention space can be turned to other uses. An effort could be made to invite local business groups and social clubs to meet at the motel for their weekly luncheons. After all, the same highway leading into and out of town also leads from one side of town to the other. The local Knights of Pythias or Knights of Columbus could joust with one another to determine which group gets to dine in the "Friar Tuck." Venison might become a blue-plate special. If necessary, castles could be pared down to the size of manor houses or, less than that, mere tents. Through a sharing of chambers, an Anglo-Saxon custom, the friendly camaraderie of olden times could reappear and new levels of intimacy might obtain. Asphalt parking lots could be rented for flea markets or perhaps provide the setting for a spectacle like a "tournament of thrills." Surely something must be done to attract new visitors, lest the luxury motel become a relic in more than appearance.

What a disappointment it would be if this trend toward the building of budget motels continues, and the shabby roadside cabin reappears. The ordeal of travel will once again become spartan and wearisome, as pens of thatch replace "rooms created for the pleasure and comfort of royal guests." To bid farewell to Camelot would be a sad event in deed.
Arata Isozaki’s Mannerism
Or How To Put Humpty-Dumpty Together Again?

Botond Bognar

Humpty-Dumpty sat on the wall
Humpty-Dumpty had a great fall
All the King’s horses and all the King’s men
Couldn’t put Humpty-Dumpty together again

Around the middle of the 1960s, the architecture of the 20th century arrived at an important turning point. The Modern Movement lost its vitality and with the strong criticism of its orthodox main line as their point of departure, countless new directions were evolving to find exit from the 'crisis' situation. Parallel with the legacies of the changing modernism, a new, pluralistic architectural awareness was on the rise to take over the international scene by the late 1970s. As architecture is trying to find its new 'raison d’etre,' the previous taboo, a strong negative attitude toward history, has changed significantly and with it, greater respect is paid to traditions.

As of now, at the beginning of the 1980s, it seems that the multifarious new directions show some common patterns and 'group' around three culturally different traditions. According to this, recent American, European and Japanese architectural intentions—beside their common opposition to hard-line modernism—feature basic differences among themselves. The architecture of Charles Moore, Aldo Rossi and Arata Isozaki, who with their conscious reliance on their own respective cultural heritage are typical, even extreme examples, prove these differences particularly well. Moore represents an all-inclusive, easygoing, radically informal, eclectic architectural approach, which, following the American nostalgia for a past, provides 'ready-made dreams.' On the contrary, Rossi extracts the most rigorous and rational European classical urban traditions to create a formal, highly ordered, serious architecture as 'absolute Truth' with minimal means. Isozaki—like the Japanese always do—borrows from numerous, yet selected sources, brings them together in extremely abstract frameworks within which, according to the viewpoint of the observer, the quotations or images can always turn out to be also something else beside the original to suggest a realm of 'ambiguous reality.'

As a consequence, in the 1980s, architecture may move toward not one but several 'styles' better expressing, or even further developing, the standards of values of these respective cultures. According to this reasoning, we can refer to European neo-rationalism, American populism and Japanese existentialism, showing that pluralism can be and is interpreted in various ways on the international scene.

It is important to note, however, that these 'coherences' are not necessarily and not always conscious or direct, and are not forming some homogeneous movements. Rather, they are guided by deeper, indirect factors rooted also in a common cultural milieu. Consequently, this observation does not, in any way, intend to prove that, on the extremely wide spectrum of individual intentions, there are no exceptions from and transitions between these three main directions, but maintains that well-defined and clearly noticeable traditional cultural patterns play important and, in many cases, determining roles in these respective architectures today. If this is the case, then architecture is in a state wherein the how is at least as important as, if not more than, the what.

In Japan after the more than a decade-long
In the method of establishing these new relationships, spaces as forms are assigned unique and strong, often ambiguous, symbolic quality, where the "spatial" operations range from the reintroduction of ma and oku, the principles of the traditional Japanese place making, to layering, packaging, then distorting, "defamiliarizing," dismantling and, finally, re-assembling the elements and spaces. Above all, unparalleled is the manner in which they are able to create elementary and powerful images or Gestalt.

Arata Isozaki—with his active career of more than two decades, and consistent devotion to his evolving mannerist design attitude, mature talent and brilliant technique—spans over most of the Japanese intentions and, thus, is regarded appropriately as the Father of the Japanese New Wave, which he both influenced and has been greatly influenced by. He has rightfully achieved international fame as well.

Isozaki (b. 1931) started his work as a disciple of Kenzo Tange in the late '50s and early '60s. As an associate in Tange's URTEC office, he collaborated in several large-scale urban projects such as the Plan for Tokyo—1960, the new structuralist urban vision for the congested Japanese metropolis. Although he was not a member in the group, he sympathized strongly with the Metabolist ideas and, with some futuristic new city projects of his own, he contributed significantly to the spirit of the age.
Figure 3: The Cartesian orthogonal grid, an artificial infinite as the base of the spatial concept of many buildings by Isozaki. Fukuoka Sogo Bank Saga Branch (1971, Fukuoka City)

Figure 4: Reminiscent of the Russian constructivist projects, the double ‘barrel’ aluminum clad concrete structure of the Kitakyushu Municipal Museum of Art cantilevers out boldly from the hillside near the city. (1974, Kitakyushu City)

Figures 5-6: Other projects are conceived with the help of the cylinder, semi-cylinder and the circle.

5. Kitakyushu Central Library (1975, Kitakyushu City)
6. Fujimi Country Club (1974, Oita City)
Yet, even these early architectural attempts display expressly mannerist qualities. His City in the Sky was conceived as a metaphor of ruined classical columns as well as of traditional Japanese wooden bracketing systems blown up to enormous size. Ever since the time he left Tange's studio and set up his own Atelier in 1963, Isozaki's commitment to a mannerist-symbolist architectural approach has crystallized further.

Along the 'newly' rediscovered idea of mannerism, Isozaki turns to the use of a sometimes overwhelmingly abstract geometry with the simplest solids: the cube and cylinder and their projections: the square and circle. The different operations—amplification, slicing, projection, transformation, etc.—applied to these geometrical elements constitute almost without exception the underlying conceptual skeleton of the spatial organization of his buildings and also form their tectonic 'deep-structure,' as best seen at the Gumma Prefectural Museum (Figs. 1, 2).

Due to the conspicuous application of this geometry, Isozaki's buildings, similar to the works of other contemporary Japanese architects, could remind one easily of the achievements of modern Western architecture. Nevertheless, while there is a definite dependence on the 'simplistic' interpretations of formal elements, these forms cover—in the true sense of the word—a basically different approach to the essence of architecture, most especially to the quality of spaces or, better yet, of the spirit of places inside. Geometry then serves as one of the tools for a deliberate aim to re-establish the genius loci, which coincides with the strong intention of re-defining human existence.4

According to the applied geometry, Isozaki's buildings can be classified into two types: the ones which are based on the formal manipulations of the cube, and the ones in which the cylinder plays the primary role. This polarization is already clearly expressed in the works starting from the early '70s. First, these works had been small bank buildings for the Fukuoka Sogo Bank, but later such well-known large projects like the Kitakyushu Municipal Museum (1975), the Kitakyushu Prefectural Library (1975), or the Fujimi Country Club (1974) were also based on this 'polarized' geometry (Figs. 3-6). Isozaki employed the same formal elements in
Isozaki, though, does not intend to create an absolutely pure and consistent Cartesian system, which does not tolerate the slightest deviation. In an insidious manner, one of the parts or sections of his compositions is shifted out of the overall orthogonal grid, thus deliberately breaking the chosen rule. This is seen, among others, at the Gumma Museum, the Kitakyushu Museum, the Shukosha Building and very expressively at the Kamioka Town Hall. This attitude might look like only an arbitrary one; however, it is not. It is deeply rooted in the traditional Japanese aesthetic standards based on the intuitive appreciation of things 'incomplete' or 'imperfect.' In Professor Yuji Aida’s words: “The active affirmation of transience, the way of thinking based on the idea that the essence and beauty of things are to be found precisely in their mutability... is the true spirit of Japan” 6 (Figs. 10-12).

Nevertheless, if Isozaki's works were only remaining on the level described above, his architecture would most probably be a mere 'distorted' variation of, say, the International Style, High-tech or, at best, Peter Eisenman’s generated structuralism. But Isozaki goes further than just conceiving a framework architecture. "Architecture is a machine for the production of meaning," as he himself says. 7 He argues that a structural system alone—or grammar, using a language analogy—is not enough for creating and transmitting meanings. Architecture can
perform this job only through an appropriate stock of expressive elements, signs (codes) and images, that is, a selected, and—in Isozaki’s opinion—multivalent enough, vocabulary.

But in order to communicate, he is more than reluctant to invent new “words” as the modernists were so apt to do, and instead believes that architects today have a large and rich vocabulary at their disposal to express themselves “freely.” This vocabulary of expressive means developed and compiled throughout history therefore can span equally over different cultures and ages including, naturally, Modernism. Isozaki then selects from among this readily available stock to set up his sentences. This selection is, however, already rather arbitrary and characterizes Isozaki’s idiosyncratic architecture. Among his numerous sources the most important emerge: Palladio, Lissitsky and the Russian constructivists, Piranesi, Marcel Duchamp, Ledoux, Moore and Venturi, “Alice in Wonderland”, and, of course, his trademark, the ubiquitous motif of Marilyn Monroe’s figure (Figs. 13, 14).

One aspect, though, has to be noted here with regard to these sources. The quotations he employs never appear on a one-to-one ‘realistic’ basis as direct references, nor as replicas modified due to the errors of the memory, as is very often seen in the works of the American post-modernists, and most especially Venturi’s and Moore’s scenographic architecture. In Isozaki’s mannerism, the quotations appear as ‘remote’ motifs or prototypes, filtered through some opaque screen that is abstracted in a subtle way, becoming metaphors and then, in many cases, are turned inside out, upside down or simply exaggerated. In his Kamioka Town Hall, for example, the semicircular multistory interior space is reminiscent of Palladio’s Teatro Olimpico in Vicenza. The flat and arched elevations of the Fujimi Country Club (1974) with the carefully proportioned openings recall again Palladio’s architectural forms, yet mock them ironically by deliberately modifying some inherent relationships, i.e., leaving out some ‘important’ columns where they were otherwise ‘necessary.’ The vaulted inner spaces of the Kitakyushu Library are clearly and admittedly reminiscent of Boullee’s project for the extension of the National Library in Paris from 1780. In the Fukuoka Sogo Bank (1972), large horizontal square tubes like architraves span over short,
Figure 11: First floor plan of the Gumma Museum

Figure 12: Second floor plan of the Kamioka Town Hall

Figures 13-14: The abstracted lines of Marilyn Monroe's nude figure appear in just about every work of Isozaki.

13. The entrance hall detail of the Kamioka Town Hall

14. The curving surface of the second floor at the Hakubi Kimono School

Figures 15-17: Isozaki's buildings with the carefully applied forms always incorporate several historical references or "quotations".

15. A Renaissance mannerist building. Palladio's Teatro Olimpico can be sensed in the interior with the curving colonnade of the Kamioka Town Hall.

16. The vaulted interior of the Kitakyushu Library is reminiscent of Boulée's project for the National Library in Paris (1780).

17. Metaphors of Greek columns, huge overblown cylindrical shafts support the storey-high tubular structures which like architraves span over them. Fukuoka Sogo Bank Home Offices (1972, Fukuoka City)
Figures 18-20: Isozaki’s buildings also feature various visual ‘tricks’ and ambiguous details.

18-19. Among the eight mirror-glass doors arranged in a semicircular recess of the Shukosha Building, only two are real entrances. (1975, Fukuoka City)

20. The large, stepped sculptural composition in the Gumma Museum was designed with distorted, reversed perspective by Isozaki’s wife, sculptor Aiko Miyawaki.

The Shukosha Building (1975), also in Fukuoka, features a semicircular entrance with eight mirror glass doors, only two of which are functional, the rest is fake. (Figs. 18-19). For the large lobby of the Gumma Museum, Isozaki’s wife, sculptor Aiko Miyawaki, designed a large stepped-platform composition with reversed perspective (Fig. 20). Then, in the Kamioka Town Hall and the Social Service Building of the Nihon Electric Glass Company appears the glass block, the newly rediscovered ‘Japanese’ building material, as complete walls or elevations. Glass block surfaces have a translucent quality rendering ambiguous the events taking place behind the in both the exterior and interior, similar to the light, paper-covered sliding screens (fusuma, shoji) which also filtered the exterior light inside the traditional wooden buildings (Figs. 21-23).

With the visual ambiguities, Isozaki’s buildings gain a quality where real and unreal are blended subtly, often resulting in surreal images. This takes a new intensive form in the Hakubi Kimono School in Tokyo (1980). In addition to the often-seen play with mirror-reflected spaces, the lobby features some unexpected ‘events’ in the form of the ‘half-finished,’ yet already ‘crumbling’ columns and the metal cast kimono spontaneously ‘thrown’ on the handrail of the gallery. The metamorphosis of the columns represents time through compressing their life span, from the beginning till the end, into one simultaneous

enormously blown-up but extremely wide cylindrical columns (Figs. 15-17).

But what happens to these seemingly numerous and sometimes discordantly multifarious quotations in Isozaki’s buildings? The answer is his method, the collage or the radical juxtaposition complemented with various visual tricks, creating rather illusory effects furthering the ambiguity of the experience. In one of the rooms of the Fukuoka Sogo Bank Home Offices, the walls are decorated by painted shadows of people in different groups, giving the feeling of a hidden double light source and an imaginary center of the room, a theme which reappears also in the large dining hall of his Nihon Electric Glass Company Social Service Building (1980) in Otsu City, where the capitals of the square columns are again only painted shadows as if projected on the ceiling from a central hidden spot.
Figures 21-23: The newly rediscovered Japanese building material, the glass-block—which creates a visual relationship between exterior and interior similar to the light filtering effect of the traditional paper-covered shoji walls—also appears in Isozaki’s latest buildings.

21. *Interior detail of the Nihon Electric Glass Company Social Service Building (1980, Otsu City)*

22. *Hakubi Kimono School (1980, Tokyo)*


Figure 24: The usual blending of the real with unreal takes new intensity inside the Hakubi Kimono School resulting in unexpected surreal images. “Half-finished” but already “crumbling” columns, real and metal-cast kimonos set against the dazzling rectangular net of the high-polished and mat surfaces make the lobby the focal point of the design.
moment, and also symbolizes a transition from the dark, highly polished reflecting floor to the light grey matte walls and ceiling, and thus all together creates a transition from one reality to another beyond (Fig. 24).

On the upper floors this transition is rendered ambiguous in a different way. The vertical surfaces within the orthogonal structural skeleton (substructure) are 'openings' toward the outer world by being glass block walls or just simply painted as the infinite blue skies with scattered white summer clouds. That is, the boundary between inner and outer worlds gains meaning according to the mode of introducing the exterior. In the first case, the infinity of the external world is represented indirectly by the dazzling 'conceptual' grid of the glass block, while in the second, it is brought about 'directly' as pop supergraphics, in a 'perceptual' way.

Pop elements, colors, supergraphics or worded signs are not foreign to Isozaki’s architecture in general (Figs. 25-26). Again the Social Service Building of the Glass Factory offers the most prominent example because all its exterior solid walls are painted with brown and ochre horizontal stripes. In this pervasive form, pop is a new feature in Isozaki’s work together with the inherent responsiveness of the building toward its immediate context. Namely, the same stripes properly refer to the industrial environment of the Factory where, for safety reasons, projecting surfaces and edges are treated in a similar way. In addition, in front of the painted and glass block surfaces of the elevations, Isozaki clearly exposes the steel bar braces, the structural means of the building’s stability, a feature which can be correctly associated again with industrial buildings. (Fig. 27).

This sort of contextualism relying on a well-exploited use of the semantic quality of structural solutions can be observed partly in several of his earlier projects such as the Kitakyushu Museum, with its Lissitsky-like double barrel concrete structures cantilevering boldly from the hillside, or the Kitakyushu Library where the ribs of the prefabricated concrete panels of the circular vaults create an inherent feeling of Gothic interiors. But employing a contextual method on a larger scale appears first in another of his recent works, the Kitakyushu West Japan Exhibition Center (1977) which, designed with steel cable suspension structures on vertical masts, create
25. Worded signs appear as some modest details at the Fukuoka Sogo Bank Ropponmatsu Branch Office (1972, Fukuoka) but take the form of the whole elevation as if eating up the Tokyo Branch Office of the Fukuoka Sogo Bank behind (1971, Tokyo).

26. In the case of the Social Service Building of the Nihon Electric Glass Company, the pervasive application of the painted horizontal stripes creates an appearance which also fits the building into its industrial environment.

27. Figures 28-30: Careful selection and presentation of structural elements and solutions as symbols generate special associations and sometimes give appropriate meanings to the buildings in their immediate physical context.

28-29. The masts and suspension structural system of the West Japan General Exhibition Center refers to the proximity of the port and its facilities nearby.

30. The prefabricated vaults at the turning of the space inside the Kitakyushu Library recalls the image of clustered ribs in Gothic architecture.
Figures 31-32: As their forms and compositions, Isozaki's works are not derivatives of certain urban formations.

31. This indifference sometimes takes an expressly negative, or even aggressive attitude towards the surrounding urban scape as in the case of the Kamioka Town Hall.

32. While in few of Isozaki's recent buildings the types of formal elements could remind one of Rossi's 'analogical' architecture, the two design approaches remain different. Detail of the ramp leading to the Audio-Visual Center in Oita.

Figures 33-35: In the background of Isozaki's mannerism and the multialency of his architecture one discovers the most ambiguous traditional Japanese spatial and aesthetic concept, the ma which always suggests the 'image' and sense of void within the interiors of his buildings.

33. Reception hall with the stairstepped cubicle of the managerial office in the Shukosha Building.
a metaphor of the ships and the installations of the nearby industrial port thus, also referring to the presence of the sea (Figs. 28-30).

In other cases, Isozaki’s intention is diametrically the opposite. The Kamioka Town Hall has been designed for a small, traditional mining town located among beautiful mountains. But instead of finding any ways and means to blend the new into the old, Isozaki—as he put it—“decided to generate a sense of disharmony (an inherent quality in many of his works) that borders on the dangerous.”9 The building evokes the image of a shiny metal spaceship from another planet to invade the helpless settlement. With this almost inhuman character Isozaki wanted to give a strong identity, a shock to the ‘usual’ and thus unchallenging environment (Fig. 31).

This building, perhaps, more than any other by Isozaki, reflects best the way in which this deliberate mannerism works and further highlights the differences—with little parallels—between the Japanese pluralism and the Italian rationalism represented by Rossi’s typology and, further, the American populist, post-modernism. Isozaki primarily brings together two basic and, at the same time, opposing tendencies as the instruments in his architecture. The first is the ‘meaningless’, abstract geometry, best represented by overall Cartesian orthogonal grid, the underlying and organizing substance, projected consistently into the infinite. This ‘infinite’ grid has an assigned role of paralyzing our senses, perceptions and memories with the automated mechanism of our routine associations or, in other words, by removing ordinary, everyday meanings “‘defamiliarizes’ architecture, which is also promoted by numerous illusions and visual tricks, a distorted reality. “The user of such ‘intellectual’ architecture is finding less and less that is familiar—entrances that he can’t find, glass that he can’t see through, columns that don’t support anything, walls denuded of their familiar references,”10 as Jonathan Gale writes. In Hiromi Fujii’s words, this would be a state of the “primordial condition” of Man.11

With Isozaki, however, the innocent experiencer is not left alone after being let or led (or provoked?) into this benumbed state, but is given the chance to get himself together and in a new way. And this might be the key intention behind all these insidious operations: to create a new feeling of existence. However, how the individual would perform the ‘rebuiding’ of his personality is his own job with which the architect has not much to do at this point. Isozaki packs his buildings, the rational and ‘infinite’ frameworks, with a series of paradoxical elements and lets everyone play or struggle with the quotations and metaphors, like with pieces in a puzzle, and construct certain images the individual would like to, or is able to perceive, according to his own body of knowledge, intelligence, experience, memories, etc. That is, even if there existed an original image of the architect controlling the design process, the final product together with its meanings is open to various reinterpretations. This ‘suspended’ reality would also explain what Isozaki means when saying that he does ”not regard architectural space as existing of itself, but as coming into being the moment human beings enter that space.”12

In this second intention lies another one of the major differences between the architecture of Isozaki—or putting it in a more general way, of the young Japanese existential architects whom he influenced greatly—and Aldo Rossi’s typology representing the European contextualists. In the latter case, the final architectural image is strictly controlled, being abstracted from the existing, usually the historical European urban-scape alone, through a rational decomposition of the city into its basic formal elements to a point where their minimal forms do not carry any special meanings, and then reconstructed into something which could be called common denominators or prototypes of the direct visual, physical facts in the immediate environment, the city, and which are intended to elude semiotic interpretations. In other words, Rossi’s works, a self-evident “analogical architecture,” are derivatives in every case of the European urban traditions and transmitted on an explicitly surrealistic level, almost always with a definite sense of Death.

As opposed to Rossi, Isozaki avoids relating his architecture to the city, remains indifferent or, in many cases—Kitakyushu Museum, Kamioka Town Hall, etc.—takes a strong ‘anti-urban’ attitude. Anyway, to propose an urban integration reminiscent of
the one put forward by the European contextualists would be an absolutely futile endeavor in the cramped, chaotic and volatile Japanese urban conditions, a line of understanding which has been picked up and pushed to extremity by the Japanese hermeticists: Tadao Ando, Hiromi Fuji, Monta Mozuna, Hiroshi Hara, Takefumi Aida, Toyo Ito, etc., and which understanding is then also "utterly opposed to the 'cataclysmic purity' of Corbusian urbanism,"13 as Bruce Goodwin put it.

And just as Isozaki's mannerism differs basically from the European Contextualism—even if unconsciously incorporating some formal elements of Rossi's works, such as those of the Monumental Fountain of Segrata, Milan (1965) into the long ramp leading to the main entrance of the Oita Audio-Visual Center (1979)—it differs in a similar way from the American "scenographic" architecture as well (Fig. 32). This particular American tradition, reflected in the works of many contemporary postmodern architects such as Charles Moore, Robert Venturi, Robert Stern, etc., offers a more populist approach with some 'ready-made' images. This approach along the "take it easy" manner, often ends up in romantic dreams, wherein everything is beautiful (or "ordinary") and moves along the surface with the constantly present temptation of kitsch, like in Disneyland, which Moore admires so much and which works well in the American, particularly the Californian cultural atmosphere. Here the user's participation is to remain on the level of sensation, fun or thrill, and thus, is rather effortless.

To underline this difference between Isozaki and the Americans, the Kamioka Town Hall, among others, can be mentioned again as an excellent example. It is this building, where Isozaki employed the idea of independent surface, that is, 'superficiality,' for the first time, in the form of an undulating false elevation. A small portion of the aluminum skin on the roof departs from the tectonic body and creates visual continuation of the larger block, and also a transition to the smaller one clad in stone. With its curving surface, it acts in a manner similar to the sensual 'Marilyn Monroe' line of the entrance hall section on the first floor. This 'superficiality,' however, falls far from any pop interpretation, being more abstract than simply sensational. Like various elements in the traditional garden or residential architecture, these thin layers act more to structure, to wrap around and to give another aspect, another facet of the elusive nature of reality or, even emptiness behind and beyond, than to act as the 'real thing,' reality per se (Fig. 8 and 13).

This comparison, on the other hand, points out another feature in Isozaki's architecture, namely, how far it is embedded in the Japanese cultural traditions. According to these traditions, the Japanese appreciate more that which is only suggested or hinted at, than what is clearly stated. Indeed, ambiguity, the quality of in-between, the philosophical14 and aesthetical concept of ma, "the natural distance between two or more things existing in continuity" or "the natural pause or interval between two or more phenomena occurring continuously"15 is an ever-present sense or feeling in just about every aspect of Japanese life, including architecture, even today. It is this very quality of 'emptiness' or 'void' which constitutes the elusive background of Isozaki's quotations, the multifarious elements he uses and sets up as the connecting media not only among the various phenomena, but also among the underlying, ordering and controlling framework and the things and objects within. This is what renders Isozaki's buildings and their spaces ambiguous or 'multivalent,' with images that are exceptionally powerful and also metaphysical. They fail to provide the observer with meanings of 'absolute' certainty, or in Isozaki's words, they evoke the feeling of "artificial twilight," where "visual differentiation" between real and unreal is suppressed, yielding illusory images. Someone wanting to understand Isozaki's architecture better may obtain additional help from 14th century court poet Yoshida Kenko, who, in his famous Essays in Idleness, expressed an important feature of the Japanese mentality, saying: "The most precious thing in life is its uncertainty"16 (Figs. 33-35).

With the unique, expressly anti-romantic, non-nostalgic and traditionally non-classical manner in which his buildings are put together, Isozaki, through his architecture—as Bruce Goodwin writes about him incisively—"has consistently challenged both cozy complacency and chaotic urbanism with imagery that is intentionally aggressive and evocative of the sublime"17 and—to which I may add that—has also created a feasible and meaningful alternative to both the American and European contemporary intentions.
34. The multi-storey high entrance hall of the Kitakyushu Municipal Museum of Art.

35. The 'empty' spaces inside the traditional Japanese house. Interior detail of The Gepparo Tea-pavilion within the compound of the Katsura Imperial Villa in Kyoto (1647).

All photographs by the author B. Bognar
Culture and Architecture:
Cultural Responsiveness in a Global Society

James P. Warfield

The intent of this article is three-fold: first, to present a structural model which clarifies the relationship of architecture to culture; second, to discuss a method for teaching students of architecture how to approach design projects of international scope; and finally, to share with you the results of one such international project taught in the architectural design studios of the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. While each of these subjects is important and most relevant in discussing cultural responsiveness in a global society, I feel compelled to begin with what I have called a Mandatory Preface—an introduction which addresses the question why, as educators and architects, we must teach and build within a framework which allows the design professional to respond to global issues while respecting the cultural values of others.

A Mandatory Preface
In recounting his life and experiences as a young man in Spain, Ernest Hemingway wrote in *Death in the Afternoon*:

"There are some things which cannot be learned quickly, and time, which is all we have, must be paid heavily for their acquiring. They are the very simplest things and because it takes a man's life to know them the little new that each man gets from life is very costly and the only heritage he has to leave."

I have long been intrigued by one of the underlying thoughts in this passage. Indeed, they are "the very simplest things," the principles, the fundamental relationships which are most difficult to teach to a young student, or for that matter to fully comprehend oneself. Such a relationship is that between culture and architecture. Few design professionals would disagree that architecture, while an important component, is nevertheless but a single aspect of culture. Like language or music or technology, it is but one part of the greater whole. Often, however, when we teach or practice architecture this relationship becomes muddled, reversed. We act in a manner biased in favor of our own field. We write architectural programs which present "cultural factors" on the same level as "style" or "geometry" or "materials of construction." We attend conferences and workshops which place architectural values before global needs, as if world issues were dependent upon architecture. I myself, educated as an architect, find it difficult to write about "Culture and Architecture" as opposed to "Architecture and Culture."

As an old man Mark Twain once quipped about his advanced age, "I realize it, but I don't recognize it." So, as architects and educators, many of us persist in not recognizing the appropriate relationship between culture and architecture. The error that this perpetuates is that, especially when designing in a foreign context, we rely upon our own cultural values to interpret the environmental needs of others, and we teach our students to do the same. It does not diminish the prestige of the field of architecture to recognize it as an aspect of culture. It is one of those simplest of principles that is so difficult to learn.

Architecture as an Aspect of Culture
Most design professionals concerned with people and their physical surroundings would likely accept Richard Dober's encompassing definition of environmental design as a practice "intimately connected with man's

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1. *Machu Picchu.*
2. Aspects, Dimensions and Units on the Cultural Model.

3. Architecture as an aspect of Culture.

4. Plaza de Armas, Cuzco, Peru.
ability... to bring visual order to his surroundings' and "embrace and embellish the territory he occupies." In this definition, Dober views the environment in physical terms that most architects and planners could accept. Anthropologist Donald Lathrap, however, offers an alternative viewpoint. He emphasizes that more than the physical setting "culture is man's environment."1

There is, of course, a great validity in each of these definitions and the question for the design professional is not which to apply, but rather, what is the appropriate relationship between the physical and cultural, between man's built environment and the culture for which it is designed. An architect or planner involved in projects for people of other than his own culture must be able to acknowledge and respond to cultural issues in his work. What follows is a discussion of one method developed to enable the architect/planner to integrate material which is essentially culture specific in nature into the design project.

Fundamental to the development of any design methodology involving culture is the establishment of an appropriate relationship between culture and architecture. Figures 2 and 3 illustrate a model of such a relationship.

In this model culture is viewed structurally as a number of aspects or elements, each consisting of a series of dimensions, a number of arbitrarily selected variant units along each dimension, and a grammar which allows for communication and/or expression. Cultures vary dependent upon which dimensions are expressed and upon which contrasting units are stressed. It follows that appropriate and meaningful environmental design for a culture, whether performed by one within or outside the culture, must be based upon those dimensions and units which are recognized by and significant to the people of that culture.4

The model of culture illustrated in Figure 3 examines architecture as one aspect of cultural framework. The dimensions indicated (space, form, meaning, structure...) are, it should be noted, categories of design considerations which exist in all cultures and which occur in all of man's built environment. It is the degree to which each dimension is recognized and the fervor with which it is expressed, however, that identify a dimension as a principal design determinant for a specific culture. For example, the dimension of space exists throughout the built environment of all cultures. It is a necessary by-product of any architecture. In Western civilization, the conscious, rational study of space has been a keystone of architectural thought, most notably highlighted in the Renaissance period5 and the Modern movement.6 In the Japanese culture, on the other hand, the concept of architectural space was never identified in traditional architecture but was treated as a "leftover or neglected quality."7 Space serves, therefore, as an example of one dimension considered fundamental to design by one group of cultures, yet secondary at best to another.

A number of variant units modify each dimension. The significant characteristics of the architecture of a specific culture are determined by which of these units exist, which are dominant, and how they are ordered and expressed. These units may or may not exist within all cultures. Regardless, they are often non-negotiable and programmatic for the architect/planner for they reflect the shared perception of what a people considers essential to architecture. The concept of an axis mundi, for example, as described by Johannes Wilbert among the Yekuana of Venezuela is the fundamental design consideration among the people of that culture, a principle to which all other design considerations are secondary.8 This concept of a world pivot point, around which all life and activity are ordered, dictates architectural form and expression in Yekuana society, yet this variant unit along the dimension of meaning on the model is totally non-existent in many other cultures.

Design provides the rules of grammar with which the architect orders dimensions and contrasting units. By searching for physical solutions which are based upon those dimensions and those units perceived as a fundamental by the people of the culture for whom the design is intended, the architect may express in built form an architecture or an environment which embraces the most cherished values and reflects the unique character of that culture.

Teaching Cultural Responsiveness
In his book, Architecture by Team, architect William Caudill describes a procedure utilized by his firm during the programming and conceptual design stage of many projects.
Figures 5 through 14 represent material presented to students during the Cultural Saturation Process.

5. (left) Corpus Christi in Cuzco.
8. (right) Llamas on a Cuzco Street.

6. (left) Incan Stonework.

7. (left) Quechua Man.
10. (right) Indian Dignitaries.

This technique referred to as CRS Squatters involves sending an entire design team from the home office to the project locale to establish a temporary studio/office. An intense period of client and user contact, information gathering, programming, concept generating, and even conceptual design characterizes this session. Caudill notes that "the squatters represent the highest order of efficient operation during the most critical period of the design sequence." The thought underlying this method is that nothing can replace the first-hand experience of living, even temporarily, in the project area and meeting and working with the individuals for whom the work is being designed. This procedure serves to sensitize the members of the squatters team in a very real sense to the region and the people.

The method described herein as "cultural saturation" is an outgrowth of the squatters method. It is an attempt to bring that spirit and understanding acquired by the squatters team back to the office or design studio. While nothing can replace the first-hand experience of living and working in the culture for which a project is intended, this is not always a feasible possibility. Even the squatters teams described by Caudill represent but a small percentage of the total number of employees—designers, draftsmen, spec writers, engineers, administrators, etc.—who may contribute to the success of a project. When the project is international in scope and is designed for a foreign culture, problems are compounded: the need for understanding a foreign culture is even more critical, and the probability of being able to send a large squatters team is often diminished for financial reasons.

Cultural saturation is then, as a means of sharing knowledge, ideas, and even sensitivity, appropriate. This method begins during the pre-design stage of a project and involves an intense period whereby all future project participants are literally bombarded with sociological, political, economic, and religious data concerning the culture for which the projected work is to be designed. A design principal or team with first-hand knowledge of the culture area as well as an understanding of the parameters of the design project considered conduct the sessions which occur before the design process begins and continue throughout all design phases of the project. Invited host country nationals, social
scientists, environmental professionals, and educators participate in these sessions and may discuss a wide range of topics such as music, politics, art, ethnography, literature, history, diet, medicine, urban planning, economics, natural resources, or any other topic that may be helpful in understanding the people of a culture.

The object of cultural saturation is not only to provide sufficient information for designing the project considered, but also to render all participants involved in the project sensitive to the shared values and perceptions of the people of the culture for whom they are designing. Caring is a difficult thing to teach, but it is the ultimate goal of this method. Understanding that architecture is one aspect of culture, rather than that culture is one consideration in architecture, is an important first step. It is the combination of this intangible sense of caring for the people for whom one designs, and the professional skills in identifying which dimensions and units are culturally appropriate expressions within the aspect of architecture, that allow the environmental designer to establish design determinants which reflect things valued within a culture.

A Case Study: The Cuzco Project
Between 1980 and 1982, one form of cultural saturation was tested in the architectural design studios of the School of Architecture. Students were presented with an architectural building program outlining a project in a foreign context, a new hotel/office/shop facility on a site overlooking the Plaza de Armas in Cuzco, Peru. Cuzco was the capital of the Inca Empire and later an important provincial Spanish city in the New World. Today, Cuzco retains a great deal of its Inca and Colonial heritage and remains a blend of Indian and Western cultures. The design of a project in such an historically and culturally significant location required great sensitivity for the physical surroundings as well as for the great tradition and heritage of a people.

To begin the project, one faculty member of the School of Architecture traveled to Cuzco for a three month period with the specific assignment of outlining the building program for this project and of gathering materials to support the cultural saturation process. The materials collected included technical data specific to the proposed project, city and regional maps, detailed information
Concerning the site, city codes, soil information, seismic activity charts, etc. as well as broad cultural information such as books on the history, art, and archaeology of Cuzco, current newspapers and magazines, recorded folk and popular music, tapes of the Spanish and Quechua languages, folk art items, and even recipes of local dishes. He conducted extensive interviews with the people of the region and recorded a number of daily activities and special events in photo essays. These essays explored such themes as the Indian markets of the region, the art and architecture of the Inca empire and Spanish Colonial rule, the streetscapes of Cuzco, the major Catholic religious event Corpus Cristi, the major Inca festival Inti Raymi, the highland landscape, Sunday in the Plaza de Armas, and political protest and confrontation with Peruvian police. This information served as the basis of the cultural saturation process which followed immediately at the University of Illinois.

The greatest quantity of this material was shared with the students in a series of ten long and very intense sessions over a two-week period. These sessions included presentations by a number of university sociologists, planners and anthropologists as well as invited guests who are natives of Andean countries. This period also included parties and receptions for guests where Cusqueño foods were served and music of the region accompanied continuous slide shows of images of Peru and its people.

During the second week of this period students began to graphically record and analyze the information. Their analysis drawings included traditional architectural context plans and sections, mass-space diagrams, and block elevation studies. They also recorded such culturally significant information as Inca and Spanish city plans, organizational techniques, and architectural vocabulary. A detailed site model was also constructed utilizing the many detailed photos of contextual conditions which had been recorded in Cuzco. Throughout these initial studies every effort was made to make the people of Cuzco and their culture real to the student designers. Information and involvement lead to knowledge and understanding, and understanding is a precondition to designing a physical environment which meaningfully reflects the shared values of a culture—and this, of course, is the objective of the cultural saturation process.
15. Site Plan
(by J. Lamanski)

16. Site Model and Student Project.
(Project by M. Hershensen)
17. Site Analysis.
(drawings by J. Lemanski)

18. Site Model.
ANCIENT INCA PLAN (dua plana)
(drawings by D. McKay)

22. Site Sections.
(by C. Doyle)

23. Project by
Karen Stanton.
21. Street Elevations of Existing Building
(by T. Haug)
A Critical Afterthought:
Downtown Revitalization

Johann Albrecht

The previous lecture series of the School of Architecture not only featured such speakers as James Stirling and Charles Moore but also representatives of the more commercially oriented branch of the profession. Lauren Askew, principal designer of the Rouse Company, used the occasion to present those projects which established the reputation of the Rouse Company in the field of downtown revitalization. Included in the presentation were Quincy Market, Boston, Baltimore harbor and seaport New York, to cite a few of the better known projects. The lecture was disappointing. Not so much because Mr. Askew used every opportunity to turn the “lecture” into a promotion campaign for the Rouse Company, but rather because he could have been in the position of helping us to answer some difficult questions.

At no time did Mr. Askew feel it necessary to address the complexity of the problems which evolve around the commercial revitalization of downtown areas, nor was he inclined to take issue with the concerns raised in urban planning and design circles about the redevelopment projects of Rouse and similar companies. The latter negligence astonishes more than the first, for these concerns have been known for some time and cannot have gone unnoticed by the Rouse Company. In general, these criticisms charge that the present way of revitalizing downtown areas repeats the mistakes of Urban Renewal or rather perpetuates the same disturbing problems which we associate with it. For instance, in the case of Quincy Market the success rests on the loss of low income jobs and inexpensive shopping facilities for the immediate neighborhood, and on a further deterioration of the identity of this neighborhood; in other words on the destabilization of a once well-functioning community. This points to a continuation of the uprooting of low income people and their constant displacement from downtown areas, a trend which was already initiated by Urban Renewal.

It is acknowledged that Quincy Market created new jobs (middle income), boosted the downtown economy of Boston and turned the area into a tourist attraction of some magnitude, and that similar projects can claim comparable results. But as the case with Urban Renewal, we ought to be informed in an unmistakable way what the costs are for such a success and who pays the price for it—both sides of the coin must be known. Provided that the current manner of downtown revitalization is our only remaining possibility, for stemming inner city decay—and it appears that may be so—we ought to know the full consequences. I am sure the audience would have been very appreciative if Mr. Askew had made an effort to address this issue and to provide us with more insight, and I am also certain that he could have counted on understanding, perhaps not an agreement, if he had come to the conclusion that we have no other choice. It is regrettable that this effort was not made since the Rouse Company, considered to be one of the more enlightened developers, is in a good position to collect pertaining facts or very likely is in their possession. Instead Mr. Askew spoke of the competition some of their projects create for Disneylands (here the facts were provided).

Aside from the social implications of the present mode of downtown revitalization, another implication must be noted. The promotion of urban shopping malls and the
like seems to go hand in hand with a rather superficial attitude towards history in general and to historical artifacts in particular. Obviously, for some, historical objects are only worth saving if they can be used for selling a product and assuring profit (the sacred cow of Western civilization); to save them for other reasons merits no attention. To put it differently, Mr. Askew seems to imply that a "Disneylandization" of historical artifacts is vital in order to prevent the further demise of downtown. It is not necessary to elaborate on the points made so far, the socio-economic concerns are treated at length in planning literature and need not be repeated, and the particular opinion about history just mentioned can be dismissed without prolonged discussion.

I would like now to deal with the assumption which seems to underly downtown revitalization and which hardly ever receives attention, although it appears to be quite common. It is assumed that cities are nothing more than places where one works and shops. This opinion is somewhat modified through the admission that some people live in cities, those who have no choice and those who can afford it. Basically it is believed that the sole justification for cities derives from these two activities. Unfortunately, this viewpoint is not just confined to developers. It is widely held and partially responsible for the deplorable conditions of cities, especially since for the first time in modern Western history the two activities, working and buying, need no longer be associated with the urban realm.

In order to expose this narrow interpretation and explain what the true nature of cities is, I would like to use a quotation by Lewis Mumford (The City in History):

"The city in its complete sense is a geographic plexus, an economic organization, an institutional process, a theater of social action, and an esthetic symbol of collective unity. On one hand it is a physical frame for the commonplace domestic and economic activities; on the other, it is a consciously dramatic setting for the more sublimated urges of a human culture. The city fosters art and is art; it is in the city that man’s more purposive activities are formulated and worked out through conflicting and cooperating personalities, events, groups, into more significant culminations.

Thus, aside from providing the frame for economic activities, the city is first of all a locale with a distinct character (genius loci). We are told that we have lost the gift of Baudelaire’s flaneur to appreciate the aura of a time and place—have we really? Certainly, we no longer possess the flaneur’s sophistication, nor his patience and willingness for abandonment, but I would argue that we still own the ability to be conscious of such intangibles as aura. No one would insist that we have disavowed an interest in people. Yet it is only in the urban realm where interactions occur which are based on social diversity, where segregation has not become final, where aspects of collectivity still prevail, and where the symbols of this collectivity are part of the environment. We, therefore, can speak of the city as being, on one hand, built ethical content and, on the other, a didactic instrument. It is in the city where man’s sublime aspirations express themselves and where his more significant activities take place. Historical remnants continuously remind us of this fact.
For the sake of demonstrating that Mumford's opinion is not singular, let me present some other voices. For Christian Norberg-Schulz (Meaning in Western Architecture) the center of a city represents to man what is known and it is there that we experience the meaningful events of existence. Roland Barthes (Empire of Signs) believes the center of a city to be a marked site, where the values of civilization are gathered and condensed. And Colin Rowe (Collage City) speaks of the city as a positive concert of culture and educational purpose and as a comprehensive statement about human life. One could augment these opinions by pointing out that already Aristotle (Politics) maintained, the virtue of man can only find its full development in the city and hence culture cannot take place outside of its boundaries. I may note in passing that Plato (Republic) denounced any city which just satisfies the physical aspects of life as a city of barbarians.

The present attempts of downtown revitalization disregard completely these transcendental aspects of city life. Therefore, any success brought about through commercial redevelopment can only be of a limited nature, tainted also by negative social implications. The importance of economic revival is not in dispute; on the contrary, but what is contested is the neglect of these other issues. One could argue, and that is indeed an additional point I would like to make, that the current manner of downtown revitalization not only negates the essence of city life but creates an environment which is not conducive for fostering and reproducing this essence.

Postscript: The lecture by Mr. Askew which prompted these thoughts deserves an additional remark. I would like to voice my concern about the fact that an increasing number of people now use the academic realm solely for the promotion of their ends (and expect to be applauded) without feeling obliged to adhere to a basic academic premise which is to further our insight into reality.
a concomitant disappearance of public life and common objectives. To accept the status quo in an unquestioning manner would mean to accept uncritically its underlying ideologies; emancipation from false consciousness would remain elusive, impeding human, as opposed to material, progress.

In case there is the impression that a claim is being made comparable to the one at the outset of the Modern Movement, namely, that society can be changed for the better only if the ideas of architecture would prevail, then clarification is necessary. All that is demanded here is that architecture commit itself fully to its obligation as a social institution. In order to do this correctly, ideas about human life and its assessment on the part of architecture must be put forward in a dialectical manner, that is, architecture must enter into a dialogue with the general public and other social institutions. Given the fact that truly qualitative aspects of life are lacking in support, alliance should preferably be sought with institutions that voice similar concerns; but again, even in this instance, the dialogue remains essential.

Since positivist thought declares any discussion about values a non-rational activity, the possibility that such discussions are rational and methodologically correct if certain conditions are met must be upheld. Furthermore, for similar reasons, the academic part of architecture ought to further the cause of bodies of thought that reject the epistemology and methods of empiricism as too confining for gaining social knowledge. It is obvious that the academic side of architecture has a special obligation to perform, not just because of this particular task but also because it enjoys greater independence from economic and social pressures. To teach under these circumstances, only professional skills would be in opposition or ignorance of the overall obligation of architecture. If the demands outlined are being met, especially the call for critical inquiry, then the media popularity of architecture could be justified and perhaps the decline of the profession as such reversed. The legitimation crisis of architecture could end. In this vein, architecture could live up to its intrinsic purpose, that is, to enhance the human condition and make life more meaningful.
Notes

Albrecht

Footnotes
1 The proportion of the built environment designed by architects has always been quite small, less than the profession in general is willing to admit; but even that share is diminishing noticeably, as latest surveys reveal.
2 Statement by M. Safdie made at the Annual ACSA meeting in Quebec, April 1982.
4 Any discussion of this particular issue must take into account that the history of architecture has until recently been solely occupied with monuments and structures which one might call "high-design." Thus, it disregarded the majority of the built environment, which has been implemented in the vernacular. Since the latter only paid attention to physical needs, it is easy to see that a discussion as to whether the fulfillment of physical needs is part of architectural activity must take notice of the way historical studies have been conducted.
5 Already the Enlightenment had thought that widespread use of rationality will once and for all eliminate irrational activities and results. Certain occurrences during the French Revolution and the first realization of negative impacts of the Industrial Revolution put that belief at rest for awhile. Logical Positivism had been developed, among other reasons, because rationality had become totalitarian and, thus, irrational in the hands of European fascism. It was thought that curtailing the definition of rationality would prevent any future alliance with totalitarian systems; rationality in its preceding definition was believed to have totalitarian dimensions.
6 Value-free conduct is based on the drive for objective knowledge that is founded on the belief that there is nothing that is not given in stable objects and that cannot be perceived by the human mind and logically ordered and thereby made intelligible and communicable. Yet this quest for certainty is paralleled by, if not steeped in, a fear of liberty. While a reduction of all to a universal objectivity avoids the anxieties and risks of personal responsibility and decision, liberty and choice must cope with the imperfection of knowledge, namely with uncertainty (K. Jaspers in H.J. Blackham, 1959).
7 One of the more vigorous remedies for this danger calls for a drastic reduction of the role of government. This would eliminate the possibility that a nominally omnipotent government becomes the pawn of all the separate interests it must fulfill in order to secure support. See F. A. Hayek (1978).
8 The word "aggressive" used to have negative connotations; now it is considered to have positive characteristics—we actually applaud performances of this nature. The fact that one can be so only at the cost of someone else is neglected or considered irrelevant.
9 H. Marcuse (1964) asks for the replacement of Marx’s concept of "economic exploitation” with the Freudian notion of "instinctual repression.” Repression characteristic of
most historical situations was necessary because of scarcity. It is for this reason that repression is not inherent in human nature but a historically conditioned phenomenon. In a society which is increasingly capable of removing scarcity, repression tends to take the form of "surplus repression." Conflict in society is caused then by the clash between the rationality of the market and real human needs; the uneven development of the productive forces prevents societal emancipation. "Uneven" means, here, that our moral and reflective capacities are not as well developed as our productive capacities. Cf. K. Mannheim (1940).

Observation by W. Shawn (1982) in the film "My Dinner with Andre" (Louis Malle). He adds that in such instances one easily can turn off one's mind for years and operate completely on automatic pilot.

The extent to which the abstract tendencies of positivist rationality or "ruthless economic exploitation" are responsible for this impoverishment is, in the opinion of K. Frampton (1981), not yet clear. In my view, both must be held responsible. In addition, they are essentially not two different phenomena; positivist rationality with its emphasis on means complements very well the ideology of capitalism.

The professions differ from other commercial activities through an adherence to ethical standards that, of course, need redefining according to changes in society. What remains constant, however, is the acceptance of the notion of the public good which guides any professional activity. The colloquial usage of the word "professional" is in disregard of its original meaning.

For a very insightful treatment and for a tentative attempt to solve this problem, see C. Perin (1976).

Urban planning literature has been addressing these problems since the '60s. Admittedly, the situation in planning is not exactly the same, but many parallels exist.

It ought to be mentioned that vernacular of this period was, nevertheless, embedded in regionalism which had its own economic and social base, whereas today this base has disappeared for a variety of reasons, though cultural traces of regionalism may exist.

For a more extended discussion of this point, see J. Albrecht (1982).

So far the term "public life" has been used in its broadest possible sense. The following remarks deal more with its physical aspects though not at the total exclusion of its other components.

These dichotomies are part of the Cartesian split between mind and body, cognition and reality (\textit{res cogitans} and \textit{res extensa}). For a definition and discussion of functional and substantial rationality (in the context of planning), see J. Albrecht (1981: 73-81).

In order to avoid a misunderstanding, the usefulness of empirical research for a variety of research activities in the social realm is not questioned. What is deplored, however, is the inability of empirical research to deal with qualitative issues,
that is, with the nature of human action instead of the merely observable, the physical manifestation of human action; therefore, the demand for a new framework for the social sciences, e.g., critical theory, phenomenology and analytic linguistics.

For a summary of the main arguments against logical positivism, see J. Albrecht (1981:175-255). This includes a discussion of the three concepts mentioned, especially of critical theory (219-255). Included in the explication of critical theory is a discourse about the possibility to discuss values rationally (theory of communicative competence; 240-252).

References


Bognar

This essay was written in 1981 and thus precedes the chapter on Isozaki’s architecture in B. Bognar, *Challenge of Japanese Architecture* (London: Academy Editions, 1984) which is partially based on this work.

1 The name "Post-Metabolism" as a title first appeared in *JA. The Japan Architect*, Oct-Nov. 1977 used by the editors Kazuhiro Ishii and Hiroyuki Suzuki.

2 Japanese culture in its whole history has always been a blend of foreign cultures and thus has always displayed certain multivalency or pluralistic features. Among the ones which influenced it most, the ancient Chinese (between the mid 6th c. and early 17th century) and modern
western cultures (from the mid 19th century on) have to be mentioned. Despite
the numerous foreign elements however Japanese culture has always maintained
and preserved its particular features and patterns which can be observed even
today.

3 The Metabolism group was formed in 1960 and included: Kiyonori Kikutake (b. 1928),
Kisho Kurokawa (b. 1934), Fumihiko Maki (b. 1928), Masato Otaka (b. 1923)
architects, Noboru Kawazoe architectural historian and critic, Kenji Ekuan
industrial designer, and Takashi Asada urban designer. The scope of metabolist
architecture however was much larger than the work of the group itself and as a
general trend dominated the 1960s and early 1970s in Japan.

4 A large number of Japanese architects in the New Wave apply geometry as one of the
bases for their architecture. Yet as opposed to the preoccupation of the
Modern Movement with geometry where it served as a tool for industrial production,
these architects use it for generating existential meanings with their
architecture. This intention, not quite unlike the one represented by Zen-
Buddhist architecture, art and philosophy, aims at revealing "emptiness", "silence"
or "void" as a state of intuitive understanding of existence, and in which
its meanings are not absolute, but elusively relative. Among these Japanese
architects besides Isozaki, we find: Kazuo Shinohara, Tadao Ando, Hiromi Fujii,
Takefumi Aida, Toyo Ito, Kazunari Sakamoto, Itsuko Hasegawa, etc.

5 The Shukosha Building in Fukuoka (1975) is probably the first of such kind of
buildings, but the application of the cylinder here is still limited to a semi-
circular porch recessed into the front elevation. (Figs. 18, 19)

6 According to these standards, everything unfinished or imperfect would mean more
to the Japanese since, due to their inherent multivalency they are open to
more varied interpretations than the univalent "finished" ones. Yuji Aida is
130.

7 Arata Isozaki: "From Manner, to Rhetoric, to . . . .", JA, The Japan Architect, Tokyo,

8 First Charreau and Bijvoet employed this material in an overall scale in their
Maison de Verre in Paris (1937), then in Japan Fumihiko Maki built his Tsukuba
University Central Building (1976) also completely with glass-block. Since then
numerous young Japanese architects have been turning to it for its expressive
qualities especially fitted to their own Japanese aesthetic standards. Isozaki's
applying this material could be explained by the direct influence of his
contemporaries like Maki, Ando, Ishii, Toki, Koyama, etc. on him.

9 Arata Isozaki: "Kamioka Town Hall", JA, The Japan Architect, Tokyo, January 1979,
p. 9.

10 Jonathan Gale: "Tadao Ando's Architecture", unpublished manuscript,


14 Buddhist philosophy also distinguishes an ambiguous, "in-between" state in the flow of existence where between two different forms or phenomena of existence there is always a third state which is both and none of the other two at the same time in the constant process of rebirths of the substances.

15 Quotation from Iwanami’s Dictionary of Ancient Times, Tokyo.


Garner

Notes

In addition to the information gleaned on site by the author, the following sources of information were consulted: Business Week (Sept. 7, 1974), U.S. New and World Report (Sept. 8, 1975), Better Homes and Gardens (November, 1974), and the Electric Heating Association, Inc. Case Studies (Camelot Inn of Tulsa). The author wishes to express his profoundest gratitude to Kathy Binkley, Director of Sales, Camelot Inn of Tulsa.

Warfield

Footnotes


3. From author’s conversations with Dr. Lathrap.

4. The author wishes to acknowledge Dr. Donald Lathrap whose lectures on mode and dimension led the author to develop the model illustrated in Figures 1 and 2.


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