



1. G.F. Kersting, "Girl Embroidering" 1814



1. LeCorbusier,
Villa Savoye,
Poissy, 1925,
living room



2. Thomas Jefferson,
University of Virginia,
Charlottesville,
Pavilion IX door



2. Newark Airport
door, Newark, New
Jersey

TERMS OF APPROPRIATION

Modern Architecture and Global Exchange



3. City Hall, Portland,
Oregon



3. Ladovski,
"Temple for the
People"

Amanda Reeser Lawrence and Ana Miljački



4. Richard Bradley,
Architectural
Conservatory



4. Piano and
Rogers, Centre
Pompidou, Place
Beaubourg, Paris



5. Belsize Park Road,
London, entry door,
c. 1810



5. Belsize Park
Road, London, entry
door, c. 1955



TERMS OF APPROPRIATION

This collection focuses on how architectural material is transformed, revised, swallowed whole, plagiarized, or in any other way appropriated. It charts new territory within this still unexplored yet highly topical area of study by establishing a shared vocabulary with which to discuss, or contest, the workings of appropriation as a vital and progressive aspect of architectural discourse. Written by a group of rising scholars in the field of architectural history and criticism, the chapters cover a range of architectural subjects that are linked in their investigations of how architects engage with their predecessors.

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Modern Architecture and
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and Ana Miljački*

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The editors

INTRODUCTION

Authorship, transfer, rights, re-enactments

Appropriation

Appropriation is a familiar term in art history, music theory, literary, and cultural studies, but one seldom used by architectural historians. The term “appropriation art” is commonly used to refer to the work of 1980s artists like Sherrie Levine and Richard Prince, who rephotographed famous photographs and then exhibited them. But we can consider also the cubists and bricoleurs of the early twentieth century – figures like George Braque and Pablo Picasso and Marcel Duchamp – as appropriation artists in their use of ready-mades. Pop artists like Andy Warhol used appropriation in a slightly different register, referencing consumer imagery to conflate and complicate the boundaries of high and low art. Musicians, writers, filmmakers, and fashion designers of the last half century have constructed entirely new genres based on sampling and quotation: think of William Burroughs’s “cut up” method, Grandmaster Flash’s pioneering hip-hop events, or more recently DJ Mouse’s iconic splicing of the Beatles with Jay-Z in “The Grey Album,” anything by Girl Talk, and everything from Quentin Tarantino. But what is the architectural version of appropriation? And why do we use the term here? To appropriate is to borrow, to reclaim, to rethink. Although the source material may be different for architects than for artists, the conceptual operation is the same. We employ appropriation for the emphasis on technique – on the agency of the artist or architect in reconfiguring an earlier work – but also for the intentionality embedded in the transformation. To appropriate is to self-consciously reference, and then deliberately reframe or “re-see.”

Moreover, appropriation stands as a counterpoint to the idea of influence, which is vague, slippery, and passive. As art historian Michael Baxandall has argued: “To think in terms of influence blunts thought by impoverishing the means of differentiation.”¹ Instead of the “blunt” instrument of influence, with its “wrong-headed grammatical prejudice” as to who is the “agent” and who is the “patient,” Baxandall argues instead for a consideration of how a later work reconfigures and references an earlier one; in other words, he flips the model from a “flow” of ideas from the past to their active reconfiguration in the present. He enjoins us to think of the artistic act as the strike of cue ball in a game of billiards; with that strike, the entire table of references is reconfigured, and art becomes a practice of

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“rearrangement.” Harold Bloom’s “revisionary ratios” are another model for inverting the typical influence flow. Bloom’s well-known study of the workings of influence in romantic poetry, *The Anxiety of Influence* of 1973, is still a useful framework for systematizing how we might think about influence, not just among poets but for any producers in the aesthetic realm. Bloom, like Baxandall, opens the door for discussion of how acts of reference retain both creative and critical powers. “Poetic influence need not make poets less original; as often it makes them more original.”²

This collection serves as a corrective to an architectural history that has celebrated the original, the exceptional, and the singular. In probing the global exchange of ideas in modern architecture, we are asking a different set of questions than has typically been asked of this material. This is not to invalidate traditional modes of scholarship, nor to challenge the ever-expanding frameworks of historical lenses trained on architecture over the past few decades, but to begin exploring an overlooked area of study. This lacuna is explained partly by the difficulty of working in this way; mapping traces and tracking down connections is exhausting, and messy. How does one establish storylines within this complex history? How does one avoid facile connoisseurship, meaningless evocations of works “inspired by” or “suggestive of” earlier works, reliant principally on a blind faith in the writer’s authority? While “close reading” of the architectural object has returned with vigor among a new generation of architectural historians, we are still learning how to map the relationship of these objects to other objects, as well as to other ideas across history, geography, and politics.

Authorship

Heeding Baxandall’s call to reverse the direction of agency, Michael Kubo considers two foundational myths of modern architecture: authorship and influence. He begins with Roxanne Williamson’s map of the “career connections of major American architects,” which followed the well-known and endlessly reprinted flowchart of modern artistic movements produced by Alfred Barr and disseminated by the Museum of Modern Art (MoMA).³ Though both Williamson’s and Barr’s diagrams easily debunk the myth of avant-garde’s originality, they propagate the notion that ideas and creative agency flow from the older to the younger generation, and elevate the individual genius above any other form of authorship. But the concept of a singular and signature author, as well as the standard biographically centered history, are directly at odds with the history of The Architects Collaborative (TAC), which in its name and organization offered another significant paradigm of authorship: collaboration. A group of recent architecture graduates – three from Harvard (John C. Harkness, Jean Bodman Fletcher, and Louis A. McMillen), four from Yale (Norman C. Fletcher, Benjamin Thompson, Robert S. McMillan, and McMillen, before going on to Harvard), and Sarah Pillsbury Harkness from the Cambridge School of Architecture and Landscape Architecture (in Cambridge, Massachusetts) – invited Walter Gropius (whom only a portion of them knew from school) to join in this deliberately team-based practice in Cambridge in 1947. By 1970 the firm would become the largest dedicated architectural practice in the U.S. Kubo’s essay recounts and challenges the historically stubborn identification of TAC’s work with its most famous member. Even a historian like Manfredo Tafuri, who understood well the way that new forms of ever more anonymous and networked capital might penetrate into the practice of architecture, continued to attribute and understand the work of TAC as an extension of Gropius’s persona well after he died in 1969.⁴

In the area of London's Mansion House and the Royal Exchange, a literal death of an architectural author led to a series of hearings that aimed to get at the precise value of architectural authorship. Ludwig Mies Van der Rohe died in 1963, a year after he (along with an extensive team of associates) completed a design for an office tower and plaza on the contentious site, commissioned by developer Peter Palumbo. The traffic configuration, the historical nature of the site, the tower's formal qualities, and a change of sentiment about modern architecture more generally landed the project in front of an urban development tribunal. Timothy Hyde theorizes the specific ways in which the persona – not the person – of Mies was summoned after the architect's death. Both the TAC and Mies examples help frame a view of architectural "signature." Hyde proposes that "as a loosened attachment to personhood, signature forges a particular contract with history," whereby the relationship between a work and its creator at a specific moment is acknowledged but also extended "indefinitely forward into the future, even in the absence of an accompanying body." Though related to the more standard techniques of biography, which render an architect "emphatically present" in a particular moment in time, allowing historians access to his or her intentionality, signature adapts to a changing context, "maintaining a presumptive consistency to any future appropriations by offering as a source a coherent and knowable persona."

Another outsized persona of twentieth-century architecture, Le Corbusier, is at the center of a widely accepted narrative of attribution and blame for the tower and slab housing blocks known as *banlieues* that blanket significant portions of the French suburban landscape. Despite Le Corbusier's own "relentless promotion of the Unité as a prototype for French housing," and a few formal copies of the prototype in Marseilles, as well as the more general use of *béton brut*, most French *banlieues* have ended up looking and performing rather differently than Le Corbusier had planned, largely because he was not given the chance to build them. As Kenny Cupers shows, Le Corbusier's "position was at once highly visible and politically marginal," which begins to account for the particular nature of his "influence," and the still rather powerful vortex of "the politics of blame" surrounding his persona. Despite much excellent historical work covering the complexities of reconstruction and construction of French cities after World War II, Le Corbusier's persona and signature are still invoked in colloquial explanations of the violence and alienation plaguing the drab concrete housing of French suburbia. It is that particular "contract with history" that is forged by signature, separable and separated here from the person of the architect and adjusting to new contexts, that allows Le Corbusier to be simplistically blamed for an ever-expanding set of issues. Dealing with modernism's larger-than-life figures commonly results in slippages between person, persona, and signature, further complicated by fame.⁵ The three authors whose texts are included in Part I on *Authorship* begin to define important distinctions between the terms and their value for the writing of history, producing both a more definite vocabulary of authorship as well as new historical narratives supported by it.

Transfer

Sometimes authors travel, but mechanical and more recently digital reproduction have enabled architectural ideas to travel across geography a lot more effectively and effortlessly than individuals. That very act of ideas traversing a geographic distance, in the form of writing, images, or memories, is a type of transfer that requires its own set of historiographic tools. The chapters in Part II on *Transfer* are set against the backdrop of local and global geopolitical

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transformations that took place during the twentieth century. They map architectural events that stretched across real and conceptual walls constructed in the last century between the West and the East, or between First, Second, and Third worlds, complicating and entangling their histories.

In 1938, Bruno Taut worked on a design for the National Assembly building in Ankara, part of a larger project including a number of foreign architects whose participation was enabled by the Kemalist government’s “confidence in the smooth translatability of European-ness into Turkey.” Taut did not submit his entry in time to be awarded commission, but Esra Akcan reads the design of the building and the circumstances of that design as evidence of Taut’s attempt to find both an appropriately cosmopolitan and locally specific solution. Exiled from Nazi Germany, Taut spent time living and working in Turkey and Japan, and during this time he held that “The stronger the belief that East and West belong together, the stronger the energy to get to know the foreignness in one’s nature.” Following Taut’s and a number of other architects’ “entangled histories,” Akcan provides us with a theory of translation “as the process of transformation that takes place with the transportation from one or more places to another of people, ideas, objects, technology, information, and images,” which includes politics and requires the consideration of the sociopolitical context as well as “the agency of all parties in cross-geographical vectors.” Dialogue across politically defined geographic and cultural boundaries inevitably begets politically charged products, regardless of the authorial intention involved, and thereby historical writing of this kind enmeshes not only authors and their ideas but also the political effects of their architecture.

Vladimir Kulic examines the varied and prolific career of one of Slovenia’s key architects of the twentieth century, Edvard Ravnikar – second in national fame only to his own mentor, Jože Plečnik – in order to decipher the communicative logic and politics of his architectural references. At the beginning of his career, in 1939, Ravnikar spent three months working for Le Corbusier, which would provide his second most important source of material, thereafter always in competition and tension with Plečnik’s. Over time, Ravnikar became ever more skilled at wielding certain forms of traditionalism from Plečnik and certain forms of classicism from Corbusier, weaving these together with other Mediterranean and Scandinavian influences. Ravnikar’s key commissions in Slovenia and across the territory of Yugoslavia follow World War II, after which his participation in the resistance movement secured him a prominent position in the new society, as well as a directorship role in the new state-organized Slovenian Design Institute in Ljubljana. Kulic argues that “Ravnikar’s ever-expanding professional frame of references” exhibits “a certain isomorphism with the winding geopolitical path that Slovenia and Yugoslavia took between the interwar period and the end of the Cold War.” This isomorphism, on the other hand, points to a kind of constitutive relationship between the political context, the conditions for the production and reception of architecture, and Ravnikar’s architectural works.

Reading the work produced by two key members of the Stavoprojekt Liberec office in Czechoslovakia, Emil Přikryl and Jiří Suchomel, Ana Miljački characterizes the Cold War dynamic between Second World architects and their First World colleagues as an “imaginary conversation across the wall.” In 1975, long-term colleagues Přikryl and Suchomel produced buildings for a shopping (Uran) and a cultural center (Crystal), facing each other in the town of Česká Lípa in northern Bohemia. Just a few years later and overlapping with their work in Česká Lípa, they worked together on a housing complex included in the IBA ’87 exhibition in Berlin. While the postmodernism of their Berlin project is fairly easily accepted by

historians, this was not always the case when it came to their two buildings in Česká Lípa. The architects themselves have spoken of allusions in their work to James Stirling, Robert Venturi, Louis Kahn, Charles Moore, and others. Their seemingly benign admittance of influence was political in two concrete ways. It inevitably required “adaptation of various architectural ‘sources’ to the socialist reality and ideals of the Czechoslovak context,” and it constituted a form of “dissident defiance of the discursive barriers erected by Czechoslovak normalization and the Cold War more generally.” Czech architects’ “need to demonstrate membership in the Western cultural groups” was not a trivial impulse that inevitably resulted in the simplification of postmodernism in the Czechoslovak context, but instead precisely what made the work produced in this imaginary dialogue locally specific. Benedict Anderson’s famous concept of “imagined communities” helps us understand how “architects everywhere, but especially in Eastern Europe during the Cold War, would have been motivated to imagine belonging to a ‘community’ of world architects, who were, regardless of their different political and economic circumstances, cultural position or relative agency,” bound by shared expertise. Even this imaginary and one-way conversation in a politically divided world has to be seen as “a form of connection with the capacity to rewrite our simplistic understandings of that division itself.”

Rights

Part III on *Rights* pushes the issue of architectural appropriation to a kind of end point to historicize questions that are increasingly occupying architects and lawyers alike: When do acts of borrowing constitute forms of architectural plagiarism? What are the legal mechanisms through which architectural copyright is defined and protected? And how do architectural and legal definitions of copying intersect? In the United States, since the 1990 passing of the Architectural Works Copyright Protection Act (AWCPA), architecture is now included among the protected classes within copyright law. As Sarah Hirschman demonstrates, there are legal challenges in determining not only what is protectable in a work of architecture – since any “useful” elements are not copyrightable – but also what constitutes an “original work of authorship.” Tracing the details of the 2005 court case *Trek Leasing vs. United States*, in which the builder of one post office sued the builder of another post office for copyright infringement (though both closely followed the strict guidelines for U.S. post office design), she demonstrates the burden of proving architectural copyright infringement and the seeming disconnect with architecture that, as a discipline, “does not typically recognize (nor is it invested in) a line separating sufficient from insufficient originality.” Focusing on the political pressures leading up to the AWCPA, as well the details of the congressional hearing that resulted in the 1990 law, Hirschman highlights the degree to which a specific vision of architectural originality tied almost exclusively to the testimony of Michael Graves has shaped the law by providing a vision of architecture as “art,” and not just another “useful article.” Given the difficulty in proving “sufficient originality” most of the post AWCPA legal cases have little to do with protecting the architect as artist, but instead with builders of tract homes protecting their rights to reproducibility. This mirrors a broader cultural condition, described by legal scholar Lawrence Lessig: “The law’s role is less and less to support creativity and more and more to protect certain industries against competition.”⁶

But what about the “useful” parts of architecture? Those too have protection under patent law, another branch of intellectual property law. For architects, separating out the

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functional from the non-functional may seem impossible, if not misguided, but the distinction is paramount in the eyes of the law, which states that a patentable architectural design must be both innovative and functional. Kevin Collins argues that architects mistakenly assume that architectural patents must embody the technological wizardry of figures like Bucky Fuller. Although Fuller was indeed a “serial patent filer” – particularly related to aspects of his Dymaxion house – Collins traces a different lineage of patents: “The perhaps unexpected reality is that space, too, is a functional, patentable technology.” More specifically, architects patent “innovative dispositions of space,” novel arrangements of programmatic spaces typically manifest in a floor plan or a section. Like all patents, they must “do” something; what they “do” is “allow some human behaviors and patterns of human activity to occur more easily than others.” Collins studies four historical examples of dispositions of space patents – balcony arrangements in a theater, the continuous self-service grocery store aisle, an offset floor in a spiral housing tower, and an unfinished “bonus space” above the garage in a suburban developer home. Although these dispositions of spaces also have aesthetic components, they are at their core functional advancements, and challenge the line between the creative and useful.

Eradicating that line between creative and useful, between aesthetic experience and function, was the very polemic of early modernist work. Ines Weizman examines the entanglement of intellectual property, law, and architecture precisely in that early modernist work of European architects, arguing that “in the wake of new technical possibilities in mechanical reproduction” modern architects “began to claim a stronger stake in their works” through the tools of intellectual property. Modern architects such as Adolf Loos, Mies, and Gropius filed for patents and saw their works as repeatable, though they also wrestled with individual authorship, claiming rights to their specific, original creations. In 1910, the Belgian architect Henry Van de Velde designed the Théâtre des Champs-Élysées in Paris; when he invited renowned structural engineer August Perret for structural advice, and the Frenchman redesigned and effectively took credit for the design, the controversy and claims of architectural plagiarism erupted. Although the case of architectural copyright never came to court, Weizman argues that it demonstrates the “highly detailed and investigative architectural analysis” needed to understand copyright, as well as the complexities of a historical moment in which architecture “introduces seriality and reproduction on a large scale” while also holding on to claims of authorship. Her concluding argument – that architecture, with its “thick layer of relations, technologies, services and infrastructure” is more of a “quasi-subject” than an object, and as such might be given its own agency – challenges our understanding of intellectual property as attached to an individual author. “We might also consider copyrights as rights of things. If the rights of objects were inherent to them rather than to their authors, it would liberate their circulation as autonomous entities.”

Re-enactments

In Part IV, *Re-enactments*, authors consider architectural work that self-consciously and unapologetically references other works, in which copying is intentional, even celebrated. Like all re-enactments, these are a kind of do-over, a restaging of formal tropes and the assertion of some kind of formal repetition; but of course, no copy is ever exactly the same. Beginning with the presumption of sameness and an open acknowledgment of the deliberateness of the reference, the authors in this section short-circuit the usual analytical frameworks of

source hunting, and instead focus – as Baxandall suggests – on the historical rearrangement and recombination that follows.

In some cases this relationship between “patient” and “agent” is a highly specific and binary one: such is the case in Philip Johnson and John Burgee’s School of Architecture at the University of Houston completed in 1986 – a “flagrant” copy of the House of Education by French architect Claude Nicholas Ledoux, an unbuilt work designed for the ideal city of Chaux. As Amanda Reeser Lawrence demonstrates, Johnson’s postmodern copy is a reenactment of his own earlier modernist double – the Mies-redo at the “Glass House” of New Canaan from 1949. Ledoux is also a reference for Johnson’s Glass House, and Lawrence traces Johnson’s familiarity with Ledoux through art historian Emil Kaufmann. Kaufmann not only framed the neoclassical architect as “revolutionary” – thereby suggesting a lineage that could be traced forward to Le Corbusier and beyond – but also as a proto-elementalist, whose works “were easy to take apart and put back together.” The pair of Johnson copies elicit questions as to the historical framing of certain precedents at certain moments (Ledoux in 1949 versus Ledoux in 1986), but more broadly they highlight the act of copying as constitutive of an architectural practice, the rule rather than the exception. Though Johnson was arguably the “most unoriginal” architect of his generation, his derivative works suggest an uncomfortable challenge to “our most treasured disciplinary ideology; an alignment of progress with originality.”

At the core of Italian architect Aldo Rossi’s work in the 1970s is a different but no less insistent version of architectural repetition that connects to both collective memory and self-reflexivity, rather than to any particular architectural precedent. Léa-Catherine Szacka looks at Rossi’s illusive and allusive concept, “The Analogous City,” which “refers not merely to a formal, but to an operational idea whose fundamental *modus operandi* is the appropriation of projects and references that can be freely associated to recompose a new whole,” with real and imagined fragments juxtaposed with Rossi’s own architectural works. She argues that it was in the space of three exhibitions in the 1970s – the Milan Triennale of 1973, the 1976 Venice Biennale, and the 1979 exhibition *Venezia e lo spazio scenico* – that Rossi most fully developed his ideas of the analogous city. In all three cases the public nature of the venues but also the imaginative space of the exhibition enabled these “fictive” worlds to take shape, drawing upon but also contributing to a continuously evolving collective memory.

To compare Lina Bo Bardi’s Museum of Art of São Paulo (MASP), completed in 1968, and Giuseppe Terragni’s 1934 design for the Fascist Party headquarters Palazzo del Littorio in Milan, raises another specter of issues around architectural reenactments, in which architectural derivations must be calibrated against their respective political contexts. Although the key architectural features of Bo Bardi’s design – notably the continuous public space and urban “gateway” – are “entirely populist and democratic in intent,” Rifkind traces their origin to precisely the same architectural forms in Terragni’s design, where they were intended to reinforce the authority of Mussolini and his fascist regime. Rifkind argues that it wasn’t just her admiration of Terragni’s work or their shared personal contacts that led to Bo Bardi’s appropriation of Terragni’s forms, but her belief in the ability of his architecture to “to act politically.” Rifkind dissects the features of Bo Bardi and Terragni’s designs, arguing that even though she rejected fascist politics, Bo Bardi’s “creative misreading” of Terragni’s precedent was a political act, reorienting the original political intent to democratic aims of “transparency” and “freedom.” Though Rifkind argues that the “true legacy” of Bo Bardi’s architecture is its ability “to act politically and speak poetically” the question remains as to whether or not – or to what degree – architecture retains its ideological residue.

8 Introduction

Winnie Wong also traces architectural reenactments across geographic and temporal borders, but more explicitly challenges the presumptive cultural predominance in the exchange. More specifically, she complicates the conception that Chinese architects shamelessly copy Western examples – a practice that has been given the neologism “duplicature.” Wong argues that contemporary Chinese architectural copies, which are in fact “not exactly the same” as their Western referents, can be traced to the “Window of the World” theme park built in Shenzhen in 1992, in which miniaturized replicas of the world’s iconic structures – the Eiffel Tower, the White House – acted as “full-sized models for a photo-generating life” for a selfie-stick-obsessed generation of Chinese. Contemporary Chinese duplicature, she claims, isn’t about simplistic counterfeiting, but instead about producing “themed” environments for worldly Chinese. Often designed in partnership with European firms, they are “urban design products born of foreign-domestic partnerships” without concern for historical accuracy of authenticity – much like the European eighteenth-century fascination with *chinoiserie*. Wong challenges the Western media’s outrage over fake Apple stores and British towns, reversing the usual art historical binary to claim that these Chinese examples “belong within the long-standing traditions of Western architectural practice, which for centuries have relied upon the process of emulating of architectural styles.”

Terms

As this last example underscores, cross-cultural appropriation is as politically complex an issue as the cross-cultural characterization of that appropriation. But when the directionality of vectors that constitute these exchanges is carefully mapped onto global asymmetries in knowledge and power, it expands our understanding of both architectural intellection and its global exchange. The more carefully we study the geopolitical and cultural divisions that seem to have been constitutive of global modern architecture, the easier it becomes to agree with Dipesh Chakrabarty’s proposal that, no country “is a model to another country,” although “modernity that thinks in terms of ‘catching up’” may insist on that.⁷

Though it may not be always central to architectural history, geopolitical specificity is always part of the larger historical circumstances of architectural production. Architectural critic Sam Jacob suggests that every act of architectural production is a form of both political and disciplinary reenactment. “At any given moment,” Jacob writes,

architecture projects its historical situation – the great teaming mass of narratives that prefigured its existence – into the contemporary world. And in doing so it fundamentally rewrites that history, splicing and sewing the narratives together to make a radical new proposition for the future.⁸

According to this definition, whether or not architectural authors are self-aware as to their indebtedness to the preceding “mass of narratives” (though as writer Jonathan Lethem suggests most authors, architects among them, have some sense about this), all architects are appropriators of some type. But if the architect “at any given moment” inevitably reconfigures – or rearranges (Baxandall) or “misprisions” (Bloom) – his or her own political, cultural, and/or architectural history, what does this mean for the architectural historian? How might this definition of architectural intellection and creation inform the task of the historian ascribing value to or telling the story of any of those jumbled exchanges with history? The authors in

this collection challenge the key mythologies of the historian's trade, especially those involved in drawing boundaries around and defining authorship and reproduction, various guises of orientalist narratives of geopolitical superiority and inferiority, and moralizing myths of heroic originality and intellectual property. By focusing on architectures of exchange and repetition and collaboration instead, they have begun producing new critical histories.

Terminology is a critical aspect of this reimagined history. The words we use to describe architecture and its value influence what we expect from it and the way we live with it, which is why it is imperative to construct or at least reorient and redefine a vocabulary that corresponds with and enables histories of architectural appropriation.⁹ The categories of authorship, transfer, exchange, and reenactment provide a theoretical taxonomy that begins to chip away at the discomfort initially produced in the marriage of appropriation and architecture. Authors in this book help us understand and describe the world as one (not two, or three) in which the exchange of architectural ideas takes many forms, while their work also provides a form of resistance to an all too easy folding of architecture into globalization. In one world, the assertion of techniques of differentiation, the close read, the specificity of entanglement, the valences of meaning, the challenges of translation, and forms of their legislation become ever more vital.¹⁰

Notes

- 1 Michael Baxandall, "Excursus Against Influence," in *Patterns of Intention: On the Historical Explanation of Pictures* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1985), 59.
- 2 Harold Bloom, *The Anxiety of Influence* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1973), 7.
- 3 Roxanne Williamson, *American Architects and the Mechanics of Fame* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1991), 3.
- 4 Manfredo Tafuri and Francesco Dal Co, *Modern Architecture* (Milan: Electa, 1976).
- 5 See Peggy Deamer, "Branding the Architectural Author," *Perspecta* 37: *Famous* (2005): 42–49.
- 6 Lawrence Lessig, *Free Culture* (New York: Penguin Press, 2004), 19.
- 7 Dipesh Chakrabarty, *Provincializing Europe: Postcolonial Thought and Historical Difference* (Princeton and London: Princeton University Press, 2000), XII.
- 8 Ibid.
- 9 For an extended discussion of modern architecture and the words it uses, see Adrian Forty, *Words and Buildings: A Vocabulary of Modern Architecture* (London: Thames and Hudson, 2000).
- 10 We borrow "one world" from Aijaz Ahmad, "Jameson's Rhetoric of Otherness and the 'National Allegory,'" *Social Text*, 17 (Autumn 1987): 3–25.



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PART I

Authorship



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1

SIGNED, ANONYMOUS

The persona of the architect in the Mansion House debate

Timothy Hyde

The death of the author is by now a familiar figural manifestation that opens into that sphere of textuality in which intention, significance, and meaning are diffused among the biographical fragments of a life lived; fragments disassembled and reassembled as interpretation, proposition, or possibility until the author as such has faded almost entirely from view. But we should not let the familiarity of this figurative death of the author encourage us to overlook its accompanying literal manifestation – the actual death of an author (Figure 1.1).

One such death occurred on August 17, 1969; the author in question was architect Ludwig Mies van der Rohe. Mies was eighty-three years old, thirty years on from his arrival in the United States, ten years on from the completion of the Seagram building. From his office in Chicago, with a cohort of associates that included his grandson Dirk Lohan, Mies had overseen the final stages of work on the Neue Nationalgalerie in Berlin and the more preliminary stages of several other projects. It is one of these latter projects, along with the persona of its architect, that competes for the central role of the story recounted here.

In 1958, the property developer Peter Palumbo (now Baron Palumbo of Walbrook) set out to purchase plots of land in the City of London in the blocks near Mansion House and the Royal Exchange. Four years later, in 1962, he commissioned Mies to design an office tower and an open plaza. Over the next several years, and with one visit to the site, Mies and his Chicago office developed a scheme for the tower and the plaza that Palumbo presented to the City of London planning authorities in 1968. This consultation with the authorities was required for several reasons, including the atypical height of the building and the alteration of existing street and traffic configurations, as well as the historical nature of the site itself. Mies's tower was surrounded by the work of other well-known architectural authors – George Dance the Elder's Mansion House and Edwin Lutyen's Midland Bank would form two sides of the proposed plaza – and a number of less regarded though still authored Victorian buildings would have to be demolished to clear space for the tower (Figure 1.2).

The city authorities viewed the proposal favorably, but because Palumbo owned only some of the properties that were to be demolished, permission was withheld with an instruction that he first attain sufficient control over the relevant properties. Over the next fourteen



FIGURE 1.1 Scott Covert, “Ludwig Mies van der Rohe” (2006). Rubbing of etched lettering on the tomb of Mies van der Rohe. Courtesy of Scott Covert.

years, Palumbo followed this instruction, buying a dozen freeholds and hundreds of separate leaseholds. Meanwhile, Mies’s office refined the design, and a set of working drawings was prepared and ready for presentation in 1982, the year that Palumbo returned to the Common Council of the Corporation of the City of London with almost all of the required property under his control.

By this time, now more than twenty years after Palumbo had conceived the project, a number of relevant circumstances had changed. With the rapidity of postwar reconstruction evolving into the rapidity of the development of the finance economy, new towers had appeared on the City of London skyline, and partially in consequence a trend toward preservation had emerged, so that the demolition of older buildings, even those of minor distinction, was now approached with greater hesitation. Conservation areas had been defined within the City, one of which contained parts of the proposed development, and some of the affected existing buildings had been listed – given various degrees of legal protection as either individual or grouped historic structures. More generally, a significant revaluation of architectural style had, in Britain as elsewhere, catalyzed a concentrated hostility toward modernist architecture paralleled by an increased veneration of English Victorian architecture (and of historicist architecture more broadly). At this point in time, Mies’s architecture would no



FIGURE 1.2 Photomontage of the proposed tower block for the Mansion House Square scheme, 1 Poultry, City of London, 1983. Photograph by John Donat, courtesy of John Donat/RIBA Collection.

longer be presumptively contemporary, nor would the existing Victorian commercial buildings be readily designated as insignificant or obsolescent.

Palumbo's renewed application now faced strong criticism, and was summarily rejected by the Common Council. Palumbo appealed the decision, prompting a review of the case by an appointed inspector with authority to gather information and opinions and then to convey a recommendation to the Secretary of State for the Environment. To carry out this process, and aware of the now considerable attention focused upon the proposal by the media and professional groups, the Inspector Stephen Marks convened a public inquiry held over ten weeks in 1984.¹ This inquiry, while not an actual judicial proceeding, was nevertheless organized as one, with evidence presented by barristers and witnesses speaking in favor of or in opposition to the appeal through direct testimony and cross examination.

In this forum, the persona of the architect came distinctly into view, for of all of the changed circumstances since 1968, perhaps the most consequential was the fact that Mies had died in 1969. Despite Mies's death, the design was still attached to his persona, and in 1984 this attachment assumed a considerable importance in light of the markedly diminished appreciation for the proposed development on the part of planning authorities. In order to make their case, Palumbo and his supporters – Richard Rogers, Colin St. John Wilson, James Stirling, and the historian John Summerson among them – placed Mies's persona at the center

of their argument. They pointed to his stature as one of the most important architects of the century and to the widespread appreciation of his realized works as evidence of the value of this prospective tower.² They argued, in essence, that the City had an opportunity to construct a building by Mies, and the price to be paid was a collection of Grade II listed buildings by lesser-known architects.

While proponents of the scheme affirmed its architectural value by reference to its architect, opponents sought to undermine precisely this argument, first by stating that the architect's reputation was less a historical determination than a "myth [that] had nothing to do with the actual quality of his buildings";³ and second, by suggesting that the design could not be attributed to Mies with any certainty, due to the architect's death and the absence of indisputable evidence of his hand in authoring the design. Where were the sketches or original drawings, asked John Harris, historian and founder of SAVE Britain's Heritage.⁴ The building was yet another weak derivation of Mies's iconic Seagram building, suggested Philip Johnson and Arthur Drexler. The historian Henry-Russell Hitchcock also indicated that Mies's involvement could only have been at a preliminary stage.⁵

In short, the opponents argued that the building was not definitively bound to the person of Mies in biographical terms, and therefore did not possess in aesthetic terms the superior value claimed by its advocates. Forced to rebut this line of argument, Palumbo's barrister brought to the inquiry Peter Carter, who was the job architect on the Mansion House Square scheme, and who had continued the development of this and other projects in the firm after Mies's death. Carter assured the inquiry that the building had been designed with the full involvement of the famous architect, whose typical working method left little in the way of sketches or original drawings. He testified that Mies had known and approved of the revisions pending after the first application in 1968, and that any subsequent changes were minor and had no effect upon the appearance of the design.⁶

This dispute was not the only point of evidentiary contention during the Mansion House Square inquiry – much of which focused upon questions of conservation, heritage, and urban experience – but it is the issue I wish to pursue here. There's no need for further suspense: following the inquiry and due consideration of the evidence, the Inspector recommended that Palumbo's appeal be dismissed, the Secretary of State for the Environment agreed, and the Mansion House Square scheme joined the catalogue of unbuilt work.⁷ The evidence showed with rough equality that the design was by Mies and that it was not by Mies, an opposition that, as it took shape through the testimonies before the inquiry, ultimately suggested that the architectural person under scrutiny was not the living (or deceased) Mies van der Rohe, but the signature "Mies van der Rohe."

An architectural drawing – the evidence of Mies's authorship demanded by John Harris and other opponents – has long been regarded as an extension of the architect's mind, functioning as an expressive object whose attribution enables the recognition of the architect to occur at a remove from a physical building or an actual body. Such distancing mechanisms within design (which might also include the separation of design from construction, or the collaborative nature of architecture firms) are familiar facts, even though they are most often veiled by personality. In 1984, the drawing had seemingly lost none of its standing to invoke the recognition of agency, but Carter's testimony brought to the inquiry an exacting description of the same distancing figured not by the architectural drawing, but by discussion, review, approval, and other habits and conventions of architectural practice.⁸ His version, and the

argument of non-authorship it aimed to rebut, removed the sphere of reference from personhood into signature.

The cartoonist Louis Hellman cleverly satirized the Corporation's refusal of the scheme in 1982, with a mocking account in which Christopher Wren and his 1666 plan for the rebuilding of London stood in for Mies and his Mansion House Square proposal (Figure 1.3). (In Hellman's cartoon, the then Secretary of State, Michael Heseltine, is made into King Charles II, and Peter Palumbo is the equally alliterative Christopher Columbo.) By associating Wren and Mies in this way, Hellman drew attention not simply to the stature of the latter (and the conservatism of his opponents) but also indirectly registered the suggestive presence of signature. For the parody here depends upon transposition – Mies's head wearing Wren's wig – which sets aside the determining details of biography for the more flexible characteristics of signature.

Though signature now inevitably invokes starchitects and their signature buildings, the architect as brand is only one narrow manifestation of signature, which I propose might be understood more usefully as the translation of personhood into a medium other than the actual person.⁹ In the case of Mansion House Square, one such manifestation would have been the legal attribution of liability, which, had the design been constructed, would be assigned not to Mies as an individual person, but to his incorporation as an architectural office



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FIGURE 1.3 Cartoon by Louis Hellman depicting the Mansion House debate with Mies van der Rohe represented as Sir Christopher Wren, first published in *Architects' Journal* (August 4, 1982). Courtesy of Louis Hellman.

or to the licensure of the name stamped upon the working drawings. Other manifestations of signature appearing in the inquiry varied from the irreducible singularity of “genius” to the encompassing breadth of universally legible architectural form. In the former apparition, the signature “Mies van der Rohe” was an insight or capacity beyond the grasp of biographical explanation; in the latter, it was the formulation of a timeless classicism. More revealing of the implications of signature were the extensive renditions of design details as the expression of signature, details that both proponents and detractors agreed were the salient elements to be considered. The claim that Mies’s buildings were unified by “7 shared characteristics” was submitted into argument, as was Ludwig Glaeser’s detailed explication of the variance in module, bay size, and ceiling height in Mies’s realized projects.¹⁰ Consisting of both repetition and difference, signature was established here as a conscious deliberation within the design indicative of yet independent from the author it embodied.

Understood in this way, as a loosened attachment to personhood, signature forges a particular contract with history, one that acknowledges a relation between a work and its creator at a specific moment, but that also extends that acknowledgment indefinitely forward into the future, even in the absence of an accompanying body. The architect, when understood as a person and addressed through the technique of biography, appears with an emphatic presentness, with the re-enactment in the present of the prior decisive moment, unqualified and unchanged. This presentness is the repetition of an already determined intention that, although it occurred originally in the past, is placed again before its audience, unchanged, as fact. In this sense, personhood forges an isolation from context, with the completed fact reasserted without reciprocation to its newer historical moment. But when understood as signature, the architect is addressed differently through a technique of inquiry that acknowledges the distancing of embodiment and the distancing of time, of duration. Signature moves forward in time, always newly aware of its changing context and maintaining a presumptive consistency to any future appropriations by offering as a source a coherent and knowable persona.

The literary theorist Seán Burke, in an essay on the “Ethics of Signature,” described this effect as a “structure of resummons whereby the author may be recalled to his or her text.”¹¹ The signature, Burke proposed, is addressed to the future; it “offers itself to any tribunal which may be subsequently established upon the basis of the signatory’s text in relation to as yet unrealized historical circumstances. The signature accedes to this tribunal.”¹² Burke elaborated this potential for resummons as an ethical function, whereby, for example, an author could be called to account for his words at some later date. This function might also serve to protect an author from the interpretation of a work, or indeed, to protect a work from the interpretation of its author.¹³

In proposing that signature sets the conditions for a resummoning by a future tribunal, Burke added that the

shape, agendas, and composition [of this tribunal] will necessarily be unknown at the time of signing but [the tribunal’s] distinctive form will in some sense be predicated upon the manner of signature and the relation of the signatory to what has been signed.¹⁴

The Mansion House Square inquiry was in quite literal terms just such a tribunal, resummoning the signature to a tribunal of unexpected inclination, and, as Burke describes, even though the form of the tribunal was unknown at the moment the signature was produced, the

signature was nevertheless fully incorporated into the tribunal's structure of thought. In other words, where the tribunal was simply forestalled in making its biographical address – because Mies was dead, no conclusion could be reached as to his actual involvement – it was freed by the inquisitional address of signature, able to examine and resolve anew the relation of architect, building, and present context.

The tribunal was not thereby arriving at a conclusion as to whether or not Mies designed the Mansion House Square scheme; rather, it was producing an embodiment, an embodiment that enabled it to evaluate the scheme in both its prior and its present context without implicitly privileging one over the other. The testimony heard by the inquiry did not establish points of certainty; to the contrary, it produced an area of uncertainty, in which signature was not a mere personification, but an embodiment of a process of architectural practice. Not a personification of Mies, that is, but an embodiment of the acts and operations of Mies's office and its client. In this respect, it might be more correct to suggest that the signature stands in for what is actually a complex anonymity.

There is, therefore, an opportunity in these events to explore the possible terms by which an architecture may be appropriated by its subsequent audience when the signature reads "Anonymous," a signature fully within history yet in a particular way unrecognized by history. Michel Foucault, in his essay "What Is an Author?," noted that with the modern notion of the author (or what he characterized as the "author-function"), the relation between author and text (or here between architect and building) was fixed by signature so that the circulation of illicit or transgressive discourses could be disciplined or curtailed.¹⁵ An author's signature was an acceptance of liability for the undersigned contents; in order to evade that discipline, the signature "Anonymous" appeared in its modern form.

Anonymity rewrites the contract with history, further loosening – though not severing – the conjunction of work and persona so that any future tribunal can no longer resummon the author to the same standard of presence. When the signature reads "Anonymous," no specific body can be entered under judgment. No determined past is announced, and therefore no lineage can be established from the persona and to the work. A past exists nevertheless, manifest in the existence of the work, in its embodiment of decisions made and situational potentials realized. But this past cannot be described by the tribunal. It must instead be posited, put forward as a claim which burdens more than satisfies judgment. Any appropriation here is thus likely to distort the conventions of borrowing because it is unable to claim the usual signifying parameters of personhood.

With the signature "Anonymous," the motivation that inevitably accompanies signature initiates a more contingent state, in which motives are assigned provisional attributes rather than definitive personal ones. The anonymous signature would then predicate a different shape and agenda of inquisition of an architectural practice by a future tribunal – whether of historians or lawyers – with the relation of signatory to what has been signed premised upon a void, a distance, or a displacement. In effect, motive now attaches not to a person, but to the function of a person, and, thus displaced, motive is in a literal sense depersonalized. It does not, however, become abstract or non-human. Rather, the depersonalized condition effected by "Anonymous" consists of a transfer between attributes of personality and personhood and those of institution, system, or technique. Although this signature places such attributes into an embodied form, that form remains inaccessible to biographical interrogation. Instead, the anonymous signature solicits the projection of the tribunal's own motives, intentions, and desires.

There is quite a long epilogue to the Mansion House story, but the salient facts are these: following the denial of his appeal, Palumbo conceded that “the Mies scheme is dead,” yet did not abandon his plans to develop the Mansion House site.¹⁶ He commissioned a new proposal from James Stirling and steered it successfully through heated debate and yet another public inquiry. This new building, known as No. 1 Poultry, was eventually completed in 1997 – by then, James Stirling had been dead for five years.

The entanglements of authorship – as signature and as anonymity – only increased with this seeming resolution of the Mansion House episode (Figure 1.4). The legal inquiry convened to evaluate the No. 1 Poultry proposal subjected the design to detailed scrutiny and critique. The footprint of the new building was much smaller (and no longer accompanied by an adjacent plaza) and the scope of demolitions therefore considerably smaller, but the proposal still required the removal of the 1870 Mappin and Webb building that had become the central focus of preservation efforts. The new design, characterized by Stirling’s highly articulated postmodern historicism, faced aesthetic disparagement that, if anything, exceeded

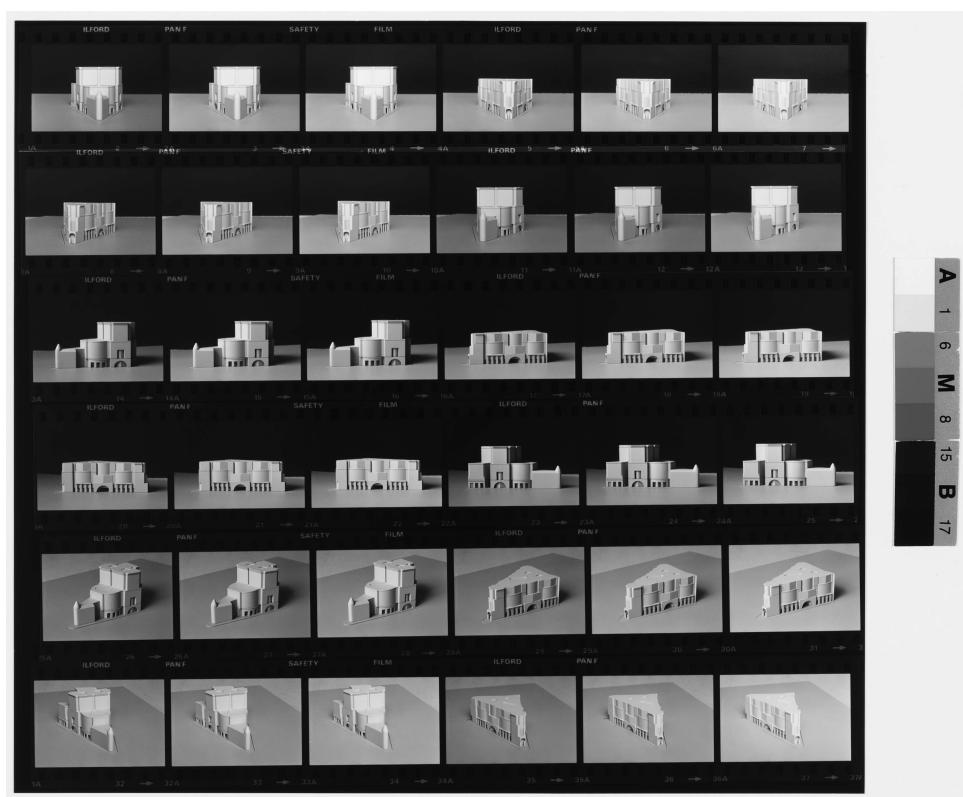


FIGURE 1.4 James Stirling, Michael Wilford, and Associates. No. 1 Poultry, London, views of model, 1986. Courtesy of James Stirling/Michael Wilford fonds, Collection Canadien d’Architecture/Canadian Center for Architecture, Montréal.

that directed toward Mies's tower proposal. In this case, however, the architect was present to answer the summons of the tribunal – Stirling presented evidence to two public inquiries, answering questions about his design and its revisions.

The apparently incontrovertible affirmation of the person of the architect – the affirmation of a present author – did not endure for long. Construction of No. 1 Poultry did not begin until two years after Stirling's death in 1992, and took another three years beyond that. The building's posthumous attachment to a persona rather than a person thus followed a course somewhat similar to that of its predecessor project, but the fact of the building's realization has led more recently to an additional exhumation of the question of authorship. In 2015, the submission to planning authorities of a proposal to modify certain aspects of No. 1 Poultry met with a strong reaction. The firm Buckley Gray Yeoman had prepared plans for interior and exterior alterations to the building in order to redevelop its commercial spaces, prompting a number of previous participants in the Mansion House process, as well as some new protagonists, to speak out in protest.

The 20th Century Society called for the building to be listed Grade II (an appeal whose ironic relation to earlier events could not be overlooked) in order to prevent or mitigate any future changes to Stirling's design. Lord Palumbo and Richard Rogers both endorsed this petition, with Rogers arguing that "James Stirling was the first British architect to develop a truly modern style" and that No. 1 Poultry, "one of his last buildings," was a "beautifully designed, post-modern masterpiece."¹⁷ Stirling's widow, Mary Stirling, conceded the possible need for changes to the building to ensure its maintenance and viability, and what she called the building's "integrity," but opposed the specific proposals under consideration, which would, she argued, "emasculate the design concept."¹⁸

Some nineteen former employees of the firm Stirling + Wilford joined the defense of No. 1 Poultry, adding their support to the petition to have the building listed. Other parties, however, entered into the public debate to suggest that there was in fact a measurable distance between Stirling's architectural ideas and the realized building. One of the titular partners of Buckley Gray Yeoman suggested that the new scheme intended only to rectify certain shortcomings that Stirling himself would have corrected had he been alive during the final stages of design and during the period of construction. The insinuation that the design was at some remove from Stirling's intentions was translated into explicit terms by Tom Muirhead (who had worked with Stirling on the Venice Biennale bookshop pavilion), who stated flatly that if Stirling had been alive, the building that emerged from the construction site "would be profoundly different" from the one recommended for listing: "When I look at No. 1 Poultry I see the well-meaning approximation or simulacrum of a James Stirling building completed by acolytes, who must admit that they could not possibly have known what he might have done."¹⁹

This claim provoked in turn a rebuke from Michael Wilford:

I worked alongside James Stirling for over 30 years (in partnership for 21 years) and participated in the meticulous design process which the office employed for each project. Ideas and decisions were sequentially layered over each other, obviating the need for subsequent changes and avoiding the occurrence of doubt and dissatisfaction with the design. Drawings and models were not released from the office unless James Stirling was satisfied with them.

From a first-hand position I can confirm that the assertions are untrue, misrepresent the status of the project at the time and are self-serving.²⁰

Echoing Peter Carter's inquiry testimony from three decades earlier, Wilford's argument returned to the difficult circumstances of architectural personhood and authorial presence, then as now balanced on a fragile calibration of signature and anonymity. The process employed by the office, and the sequential layering that Wilford claimed it produced, became embodiments for authorial presence, one subsequently verified by the support of anonymous (in terms of the process itself) employees. To affirm or refute the accuracy of either account of the design history of No. 1 Poultry is not the point; rather it is to reveal the instrumentality of that uncertainty, or more precisely, the instrumentality of the terms used to navigate that uncertainty. The event is once again a resummoning, a summons issued to the persona of the architect on behalf of a historical present, and a summons in which the terms of possible appropriation are founded upon the construction of the architect's persona.

Notes

- 1 The Mansion House Square Inquiry convened by Stephen Marks was held in the Livery Hall of the London Guildhall from May 1 to July 6, 1984. The inspector's final report, which contains summaries of the testimony and evidence, can be found in Folder AT 41/411, National Archives.
- 2 Additional papers pertaining to the Mansion House Square inquiry are contained in the RIBA Archives, with John Summerson's testimony included the John Summerson Papers. For an analysis of Summerson's testimony in relation to his concerns about preservation see Michela Rosso, "An Open Space at the Constricted Centre of the City: Summerson and the Artificial Inflation of Victorian Values," in *Summerson and Hitchcock: Centenary Essays on Architectural Historiography*. Edited by Frank Salmon (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2006), 155–169.
- 3 Report by Inspector Stephen Marks, Section 10.88, page 56 (National Archives, folder AT 41/411).
- 4 John Harris, "Was the Design by Mies van der Rohe?" *Financial Times* (April 30, 1982).
- 5 In a minor controversy during the inquiry, the inspector was told that Dr. Ludwig Glaeser, curator of the Mies archive and a supporter of the proposed tower, had suborned Hitchcock, attempting to induce him to recant this statement. The inspector did not pursue the accusation formally but surely took note of it.
- 6 Opponents also argued that the reputation Mies enjoyed was itself a fiction, forged largely by the sustained propaganda of Philip Johnson. Richard Rogers aimed to rebut this claim with an explication of the broad historical importance of Mies's work.
- 7 The Secretary of State issued his decision on May 22, 1985. See Press Notice "Patrick Jenkin Rejects Mansion House Proposal" (National Archives, folder AT 41/411).
- 8 See Peter Carter, "The Design Was by Mies van der Rohe," *Financial Times* (May 5, 1982), and "Expert Witness: Peter Carter," *Architects' Journal* (August 22 and 29, 1984), 24–25.
- 9 An expanded consideration of architectural personhoods can be found in Timothy Hyde, "Notes on Architectural Persons," *The Aggregate Website* (Transparent Peer Reviewed), <http://we-aggregate.org/piece/notes-on-architectural-persons> (accessed January 27, 2014).
- 10 Report by Inspector Stephen Marks, Section 10.10, page 40 and Section 10.50, page 48. (National Archives, folder AT 41/411).
- 11 Seán Burke, "The Ethics of Signature," in *Authorship: From Plato to the Postmodern: A Reader*. Edited by Seán Burke (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1995), 289.
- 12 *Ibid.*
- 13 The well-known instances Burke references, of Paul de Man and Martin Heidegger and the increasingly detailed accountings of their activities before and during World War II, are accountings in both senses of the word; they are inventories of facts and moral assessments. Mies van der Rohe has of course received a similar scrutiny in this regard.

- 14 Ibid.
- 15 See Michel Foucault, "What Is an Author?" in *Authorship: From Plato to the Postmodern: A Reader*. Edited by Seán Burke (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1995), 141–160.
- 16 "Palumbo to Commission New Scheme," *Architects' Journal* (May 29, 1985), 24.
- 17 Colin Marrs, "Foster and Rogers Add Weight to No. 1 Poultry Listing Bid," *Architects' Journal* (July 13, 2015), (accessed May 6, 2016).
- 18 Colin Marrs, "James Stirling's Widow Hits out at Poultry Plans," *Architects' Journal* (September 1, 2015), (accessed May 6, 2016).
- 19 Richard Waite, "Wilford: 'Claims Stirling Was Unhappy with Poultry Are Wrong,'" *Architects' Journal* (July 27, 2015), (accessed May 6, 2016).
- 20 Ibid.

2

THE ANXIETY OF ANONYMITY

On the historiographic problem of Walter Gropius and The Architects Collaborative

Michael Kubo

Influence

The vectors of architectural influence are typically assumed to travel in one direction only: from master to disciple, elder to younger, originary author to legatee, “genius” to emulator. Take for example the master diagram that opens Roxanne Williamson’s *American Architects and the Mechanics of Fame*, mapping the “career connections of major American architects”¹ (Figure 2.1). The timeline purports to trace a pattern of correlation between architectural employers and “mentors” during their formative periods of development and the later successes of their employees and “protégés” in the field, ranked according to an “index of fame.”² One of numerous attempts to visualize the trajectory of modernism’s rise and fall at the cusp of the postmodern turn, the resulting tangle of lines illustrates both the extension and the limits of such arrows of influence, as the pathways along which much of the received history of twentieth-century architecture has been directed.³

Williamson’s diagram is clearly inspired by canonical flowchart of the development of modern artistic movements propagated by Alfred H. Barr Jr. and the Museum of Modern Art, a timeline endlessly repeated in art-historical surveys.⁴ The map of American architects directly adopts the structure of Barr’s diagram, with names and movements ordered chronologically from top to bottom and connected via a thicket of arrows that flows from employer to employee, from influencer to influenced. In Williamson’s more convoluted version, the attempt to diagram influence not among a smaller constellation of movements but between a far larger set of individual names creates an increasingly knotted web of connections as it multiplies and flows forward in time, seemingly overburdened by this relentless proliferation of authors.

Like Barr’s master diagram, which splits historically overlapping groups into strict binaries as a necessary function of the arrows that bind predecessor X to successor Y (like the separation between the entry “Bauhaus,” identified with two locations and dates – Weimar 1919 and Dessau 1925 – from the dateless and placeless entry “Modern Architecture”), Williamson’s chart also relies on an insistent splitting of individuals from groups, partners from collaborators. Dissociated within the temporal space of the diagram, these uncoupled terms are situated

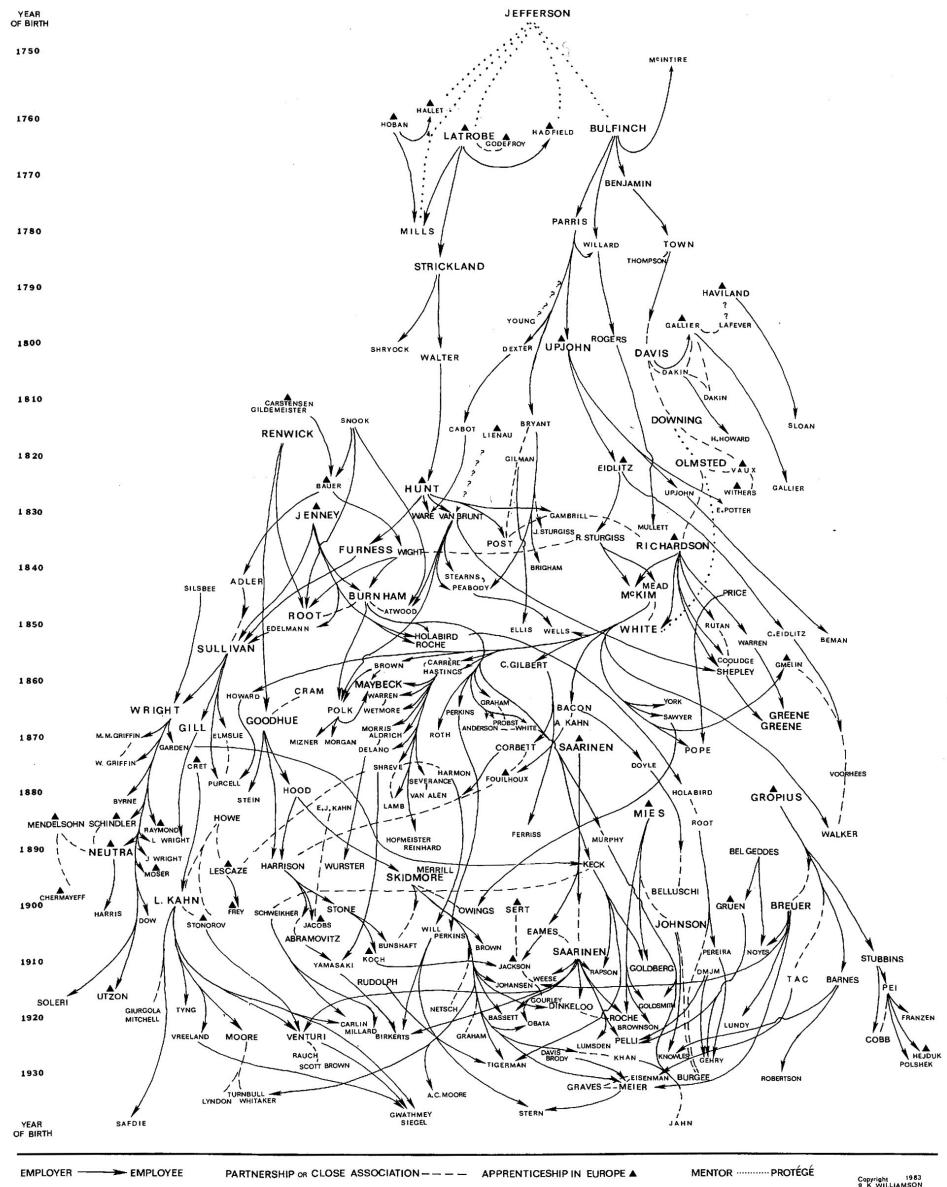


FIGURE 2.1 “Career connections of major American architects,” in Roxanne Kuter Williamson, *American Architects and the Mechanics of Fame* (University of Texas Press, 1991). Courtesy of the University of Texas Press.

no longer according to their primary periods of activity (as with Barr's movements), but more anachronically according to the birth dates of their protagonists, now attached to biography according to the metric of fame rather than located organically in time.⁵

It would be easy enough to criticize the complication or the imprecision of Williamson's chart. Instead, we might seek to untangle the threads of historiography implied by its vectors, to look for evidence of other groupings that these arrows of influence carry away with them as they flow in time. Most conspicuously absent from such narratives, in particular, are the collective and corporate practices that came to constitute no less than the dominant form of architectural production in the United States after World War II. Falling largely outside the framework of individual actors that populate such conventional histories, we might seek to identify these corporate bodies within the blank spots that appear between names and lines of connection, abstracted behind the threads of authorship and influence.

In what follows, I propose to trace the path of one such collective practice and its historiography after World War II: the one enclosed in Williamson's diagram by the curving lines at bottom right – first solid (as from employer to employee), then dotted (designating “partnership or close association”) – that bind the seemingly originary name of “Gropius” with the smaller and more cryptic entity designated by the acronym “TAC,” separated by a distance of some thirty years. The two bodies tethered together across this temporal distance are The Architects Collaborative (TAC), the team-based firm established in Cambridge, Massachusetts, in 1945 and the largest dedicated architecture practice in the United States by the 1970s, and the figure of Walter Gropius, the German émigré who constituted one of its eight founding partners and worked within the firm for the last quarter century of his career.

The formation of TAC reflected the unique conjunction of recent school graduates forming a partnership with an accomplished elder figure – already renowned first as the founder of the Bauhaus and later as chairman of the Harvard Graduate School of Design – in which all of the firm's partners insisted on their equality and lack of hierarchy in both practice and external appearance, regardless of their individual pedigrees. Diagrams of influence like Williamson's negate this image of equality, graphically separating the elder Gropius in order to assign him temporal and authorial primacy over his collaborators, often described in histories simply as “his” students⁶ (Figure 2.2). As such, the arrow constructs an implied relationship of influence in time from the disciplined parent (*Pius*, as Gropius was known to his closest friends: pious, conscientious) to his presumed disciplinary subordinates (his *filia*, his affiliations).⁷ The resulting conjunction isolates a single, “signature” member of this collectivity from the nameless remainder of the group, subsumed and anonymized under the abstraction of the acronym, TAC.⁸ In between, other names appear in eddies of tangential or parallel lines: [Marcell] Breuer, [Hugh] Stubbins, [Edward Larrabee] Barnes. Only one arrow extends outward from the acronymic entity named TAC, and this not to any of its unnamed partners but rather more curiously to the figure of an architect – [Peter] Eisenman – who would later frame his own disciplinary position as an explicit rejection of the firm as a lineage of influence.⁹

Far from an atypical construction, such attempts to trace the dynamics of legacy point us to the conventional means by which much of the history of modernism in the twentieth century has been narrated. Such accounts have been canonized in flowcharts, maps, and timelines that seek to codify and make legible a historiographical framework of influence, proceeding via the avenues of temporality, geography, or intentionality. By the time

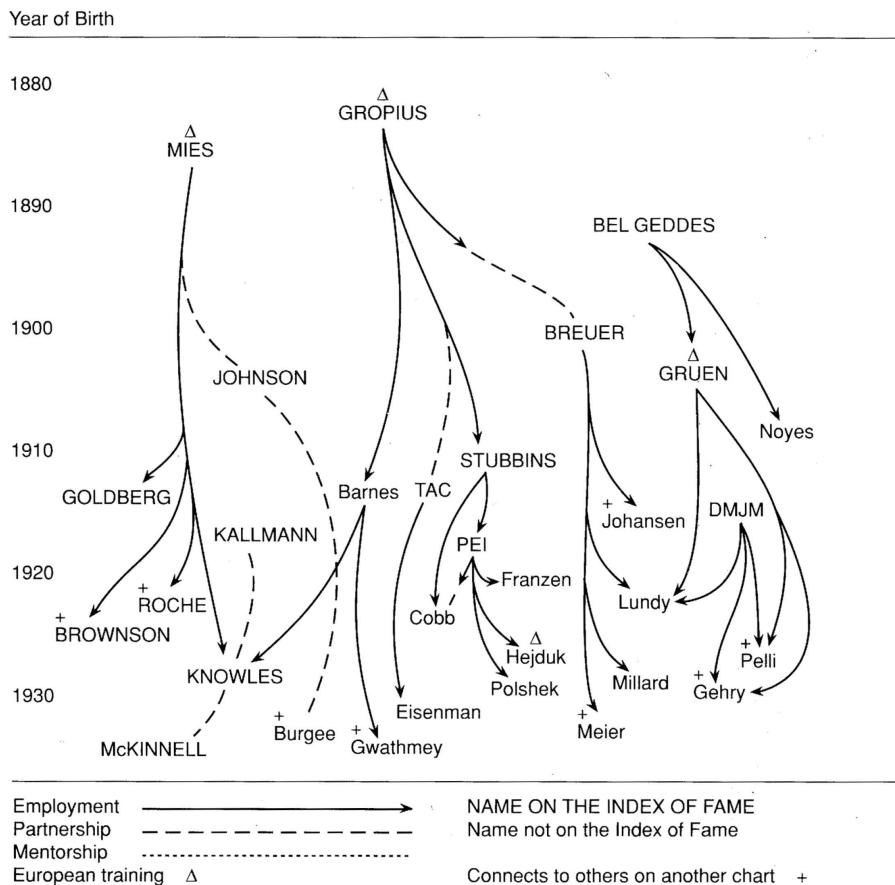


FIGURE 2.2 “Gropius and Mies and their descendants,” in Roxanne Kuter Williamson, *American Architects and the Mechanics of Fame* (University of Texas Press, 1991). Courtesy of the University of Texas Press.

of accounts like Williamson’s, the discursive binary of Gropius and TAC had come to play a characteristic role within this framework, as a conjunction that seemingly confirmed the master narrative of an early twentieth-century European avant-garde (personified in the figure of Gropius) and its dissolution in contact with the realities of mainstream architectural practice in the United States after World War II (subsumed within the abstraction and disappearance of entities like TAC).

Navigating against the currents of influence we encounter in such conventional narratives, we might seek to develop strategies for redrawing these lines, to rejoin what has been separated or to reorient their flows. This might suggest, for example, an attempt to reverse the directionality of the arrows, evading the chronology of influence in order to better reflect the property of inclusion by which the larger entity (TAC) encompasses each of its members (Gropius). A provocative argument for just this sort of chronological reversal has been made

by the art historian Michael Baxandall, who cautions us that “to think in terms of influence blunts thought by impoverishing the means of differentiation.”¹⁰ Commenting on the problematic nature of influence as a means of relating artists (but also architects) occupying different temporalities and intentions, he describes the trope of influence as

a curse of art criticism primarily because of its wrong-headed grammatical prejudice about who is the agent and who the patient: it seems to reverse the active/passive relation which the historical actor experiences and the inferential beholder will wish to take into account.¹¹

Instead, Baxandall advocates for a reversal of this causal sequence, granting agency to chronological successors (who look actively back toward the past) over their predecessors (whose actions neither determine nor predict the future):

If one says that X influenced Y it does seem that one is saying that X did something to Y rather than that Y did something to X . . . If we think of Y rather than X as the agent, the vocabulary is much richer and more attractively diversified: draw on, resort to, avail oneself of, appropriate from, have recourse to, adapt, misunderstand, refer to, pick up, take on, engage with, react to, quote, differentiate oneself from, assimilate oneself to, assimilate, align oneself with, copy, address, paraphrase, absorb, make a variation on, revive, continue, remodel, ape, emulate, travesty, parody, extract from, distort, attend to, resist, simplify, reconstitute, elaborate on, develop, face up to, master, subvert, perpetuate, reduce, promote, respond to, transform, tackle . . .¹²

Taking up Baxandall’s expanded lexicon would allow us to narrate the history of TAC in the opposite direction: rather than assigning originary status to the father (Gropius) over his legatees, we might seek to personify the young architects who joined together and sought out Gropius, to identify them as actors equally worthy of authorship.

Enacting such a procedure here has the immediate benefit of granting primacy to the collective over the individual, a fairer reflection of the intentions embodied in the deliberately anonymous naming of The Architects Collaborative.¹³ This narrative would additionally deflect the weight typically given to Gropius’s numerous statements advocating the virtues of teamwork among holistically trained designers, in which he urged the next generation of architects “to learn to collaborate without losing their identity” in order to overcome “the ideology of the past century [that] has taught us to see in the individual genius the only embodiment of true and pure art.”¹⁴ Drawing instead on the various theorizations of collaboration and anonymity among TAC’s members might allow us to avoid reducing the firm to a mere translation of Gropius’s ideas through a group of “disciples” who would realize this group ideal in practice – a deceptively simplistic model of theory and application, pronouncement and realization. This would have the effect of deconstructing the persistent myth surrounding the firm’s origins, namely that Gropius established the office as “his” firm.

Indeed, this inverted chain of directionality bears a stronger historical relationship to the actual circumstances of TAC’s formation in the fall of 1945, through a sequence of events that ran largely in the opposite direction from the one implied by lineages like Williamson’s. The seven recent graduates who came together to form TAC were linked not by an allegiance to

Gropius but through a network of overlapping personal and professional connections, formed in a shared climate of social and architectural optimism at the start of the postwar building boom, with Gropius as essentially the last piece in this puzzle of associations.¹⁵ In soliciting the senior practitioner's involvement in the collaborative office they envisioned, these younger architects went so far as to elaborate "some background on the cooperative idea" to Gropius as they saw it, writing to him that "we feel that we can learn more and give more as productive citizens if we achieve more responsibility and independence than is possible in the traditional office organization."¹⁶ In pursuing this collective approach, they wrote, "our aims become, not architecture for architecture's sake, but architecture for the sake of a healthy society."¹⁷

Anonymity

A conspicuous aspect of The Architects Collaborative throughout its existence was its partners' repeated definition of their practice not according to a language of influence, legacy, or inheritance, but rather through one of collaboration, teamwork, and anonymity. Its founders were united in the firm's early years by their belief in the model of shared input among holistically trained designers, a method capable of producing what Gropius described as "Total Architecture."¹⁸ In contrast to the specialization and division of tasks associated with other large-scale practices in these years (particularly Skidmore, Owings & Merrill), TAC's partners regarded themselves as generalists able to criticize each other as equals, Gropius included.¹⁹ Yet the collaborative method at TAC was not simply design by committee. Its partners were careful to emphasize that their ideal model relied on individual as well as collective agency, formalized through the in-house rule that each project would be led by a single partner with ultimate responsibility for decision-making following this group criticism.

To understand the intended balance between individual and collective at stake within this structure of practice, we might turn to the statements made by the founding members of TAC around the closure of the firm's first twenty years of existence, marked by the publication of its first major monograph as well as the consolidation of its offices (by then with a staff of over 150 employees) in a purpose-built headquarters in Harvard Square.²⁰ In the monograph, both the titles of the essays by each partner – "The Idea of Anonymity," "TAC's Teamwork," "Search for a Common Language," "Collaboration" – and the nature of their separate contributions spoke to the delicate balance between signature and anonymity, with each partner's name attached to an individually authored text, though all sought to outline the principles of the collaborative ethos they shared.²¹ John C. Harkness affirmed the hope that "the interrelation of the principals in the firm should not weaken or reduce their individuality, but should make the work handled by each, singly or in groups, part of a common language."²² Sarah P. Harkness suggested further that the individual and the team were mutually dependent constructs, arguing that "The essence of collaboration is the strength of the individual. When collaboration is operating as it should, a good idea will be carried by conviction, recognized by others without loss of their own prestige."²³

For his part, Gropius affirmed that "What makes our group function is a common method of approach, a kindred way of responding to the challenges of our day, a similar *Weltanschauung*, if you will."²⁴ At pains to articulate a specifically democratic notion of collaboration – a persistent feature of both his contemporary and later advocacy for teamwork in the context

of U.S. postwar practice – Gropius insisted that “it is one thing to condition an individual for cooperation by making him conform; it is another, altogether, to make him keep his identity within a group of equals while he is trying to find common ground with them.”²⁵ Achieving this balance made it “imperative to develop such a technique of collaboration [as] guarantees the protection of the individual against becoming a mere number and, at the same time, the development of related expression rather than of pretentious individualism.”²⁶ According to this argument, the firm’s collective method offered a middle path between the anti-democratic extremes of groupthink on the one hand and the autocratic cult of the genius on the other.

For TAC’s partners, anonymity constituted both the key characteristic and the ideal expression of this balanced model of collaboration in practice. Louis A. McMillen cited the firm’s name as evidence of this shared goal among its members, declaring that “When we called our firm ‘The Architects Collaborative’ instead of Fletcher, Fletcher, Gropius, Harkness, Harkness, McMillan, McMillen and Thompson, we were conforming to our ideal of anonymity.”²⁷ Only once TAC and its collaborative approach had become “firmly established as a group venture in the world of architecture . . . did the identity and diversity of the individual reemerge and become recognizable as an essential factor of the cooperative effort.”²⁸ Even then, McMillen claimed this shift was less a reclaiming of signature than a revelation of the internal mechanisms of the collective method itself, “more in the nature of opening a door of the drafting room to the public or to the client to let them view and understand the operations within.”²⁹

In the same year, Benjamin Thompson – though soon to leave the anonymity of TAC to establish a practice under his own name – wrote separately of a parallel search for forms of communal architectural expression that would reflect this shared character of production.³⁰ “We don’t dare to be anonymous because we think of anonymity as conformity, and thus follows a loss of identity,” he claimed.³¹ Instead, Thompson ventured that “a higher level” of expression was possible as the mark “of a true community architecture,” though one that “could only come after egotism and upstage-it is have been overcome, leaving the confident self-assurance to design for other humans than ourselves.”³² Such self-descriptions were reciprocated by professional bodies like the American Institute of Architects, which in granting its Firm Award for 1964 commended TAC for “producing architecture of a high rank without personal idiosyncrasies – even of the self-effacing master.”³³ In this way, anonymity was seen as a shared attribute of both the office and its products, binding the democratic idealism of the partners’ collaborative method to the architectural character of their work.

Unresolved in such statements was the question of whether the model the partners envisioned could accurately be described as anonymity at all, or rather as a form of collective authorship, a reactivation of the signature at the level of the group. Unlike contemporaneous invocations of essentialized or timeless modes of cultural production supposedly without authors (or more precisely, without the author-function), from Gideon’s “anonymous history” to Bernard Rudofsky’s “architecture without architects,” in the case of TAC the assignation of authorship was clearly maintained, but now in the form of a team-image rather than that of individual names.³⁴ At the same time, the partners’ statements reiterated a parallel stress on the maintenance of personal identity within the group as a hedge against conformity, seen as anti-democratic if anonymous in the strict sense. In contrast, TAC’s “group venture” appealed instead to less rigid concepts of shared cultural consciousness – Gropius’s *Weltanschauung* – in the search for an ostensibly more democratic model of group practice, premised on a precarious balance between the individual and the collaborative ethos.³⁵

The external imaging of TAC in its early years revealed the inherent tensions between the “ideal of anonymity” in practice and the individuality of its members, Gropius in particular. As the firm began to receive its first major commissions, group portraits of the partners belied McMillen’s claims of a smooth transition from the public establishment of the “group venture” to the later freedom for “the identity and diversity of the individual” to emerge. Despite the intended equality among the partners, the evident presence of Gropius among the collective induced a subtle hierarchy to these portraits, structuring them according to his figure. We can gain a sense of the shifting interplay among these concepts in practice by comparing official and unofficial images of the TAC partners taken in its early years. An informal photograph (likely taken between 1949 and 1950) provides a literal image of an “opening a door of the drafting room.” It captures the weekly partners’ meeting, the central construct through which office projects were presented and criticized by all principals equally (Figure 2.3). The office members sit loosely encircled around a drafting table piled with drawings, surrounded by textile swatches and the everyday detritus of the office; Gropius appears here as simply one among the partners, embedded comfortably in this workaday context. Compare this with contemporaneous portraits of the TAC principals in which Gropius is always situated at the center of the composition, flanked symmetrically by his younger collaborators, hierarchically ordered by gender rather than according to their own relationships – dissociating for example



FIGURE 2.3 The Architects Collaborative (TAC), partners meeting, c. 1950. From right to left: Louis A. McMillen, Walter Gropius, Norman C. Fletcher, Jean Bodman Fletcher, John C. Harkness. Courtesy of Perry Neubauer.



FIGURE 2.4 The Architects Collaborative (TAC), partners, c. 1951. Bottom row from left to right: Jean Bodman Fletcher, Walter Gropius, Sarah Pillsbury Harkness. Top row from left to right: Benjamin Thompson, Norman C. Fletcher, Robert McMillan, Louis A. McMillen, John C. Harkness. Photograph by Walter R. Fleischer, courtesy of Perry Neubauer.

the two married couples among the partners, the Harknesses and the Fletchers (Figures 2.4 and 2.5). Such official portraits conflated the image of the firm with that of its work, taken not in the space of the office (as would happen after the completion of the firm's purpose-built headquarters in 1966) but on the site of its first major non-residential commission, in the commons building that anchors the Harvard Graduate Center complex. While the informal picture captures the process of the Graduate Center in production, the official photograph constructs an image of the office as a team, coincident with the image of its first major commission as the emblem of both these collective efforts and a collective public architecture.

Signature

Despite the repeated emphasis of TAC's founders on the principles of collaboration and anonymity as the key to understanding their practice, the disciplinary reception of the firm after 1945 fell increasingly back onto formulaic narratives about the prewar European masters and their legacy after World War II. Given Gropius's singular identification with the pedagogy of teamwork among holistically trained designers, first at the Bauhaus and later at Harvard, and his numerous pronouncements on collective work in these years, critics tended to interpret TAC's working model as the application of these statements to the professional context of



FIGURE 2.5 The Architects Collaborative (TAC), partners, c. 1951. From left to right: Sarah Pillsbury Harkness, Jean Bodman Fletcher, Robert McMillan, Norman C. Fletcher, Walter Gropius, John C. Harkness, Benjamin Thompson, Louis A. McMillen. Photograph by Walter R. Fleischer published in *The Architects Collaborative 1945–1965* (Teufen, Switzerland: Arthur Niggli, 1966).

postwar practice in the U.S. Even sympathetic profiles of TAC in its early years tended to focus on the figure of Gropius above all, emphasizing his declarations (even if emphasizing his equality within the collective) above those of his partners and implicitly consigning the firm's younger members to the status of his legatees.³⁶ Gropius became the anointed voice of TAC in the architectural press, if not synonymous with its output, despite the abundant evidence that he was not the primary author of the firm's work.

What such narratives revealed was the growing inability of architectural critics to reconcile the work of team-based practices with the historiographic demands of authorship that were seemingly required in order to assess the legacy of modernism and its heroic prewar figures after World War II. In parallel with the formation of TAC among other collective firms, Henry-Russell Hitchcock speculated on the critical consequences of this shift in practice, predicting the rise of an emerging “architecture of bureaucracy” as a mode of production distinct from that of genius.³⁷ Taking as given the victory of the prewar avant-garde and the resulting stylistic consensus around modernism after World War II, Hitchcock famously predicted the evolution of a new professional entity to meet the increasing scale and scope of design tasks in a postwar society: the bureaucratic office, whose technical competency would engender the standardized, consistent quality of “all building that is the product of large-scale architectural organizations, *from which personal expression is absent.*”³⁸ In contrast, Hitchcock was careful to reserve “an entirely different world” of design practice for those monumental or special cultural commissions requiring artistic or creative synthesis, “the world of the architecture of genius.” Here the genius was defined as the anti-bureaucrat, “the sort of architect who functions *as a creative individual rather than as an anonymous member of a team*; his method would be “a particular psychological approach and way of working at architecture which may or may not produce masterpieces.”³⁹

Significantly, Hitchcock already warned that this dichotomy between the competent prose of the bureaucrat and the imaginative poetry of the genius, at once productive and discursive, would require the architectural critic to develop different tools to evaluate the built results of such practices. Henceforth it would no longer be possible to judge bureaucratic production on the same artistic criteria that had applied to the prewar avant-garde, whether the interpretive framework of signature and authorial intention or the expressive attributes of imagination, creativity, or synthesis. While in Hitchcock’s formulation these discursive categories were intended to be held separate and applied to wholly different types of practice, little was said about how such binaries – the genius versus the bureaucrat, the “creative individual” versus the “anonymous member of a team” – might function as differentiating labels among the members of a single group. No attempt was made to assess the work of a collective entity in which competing historical claims were made as to the status of authorship between signature and anonymity, whether these came from inside or outside the collective.⁴⁰

Among the team-based practices established after 1945, TAC constituted a uniquely problematic case in terms of such categorizations. None of the other corporate entities founded in the context of postwar professional practice in the U.S. included the presence of a prewar figure like Gropius within a generationally distinct group of practitioners, and none insisted on their equality in the terms posed by TAC. Firms like Skidmore, Owings & Merrill (SOM) or Caudill, Rowlett, Scott (CRS) consisted solely of this younger generation of architects, unburdened by the presence of their avant-garde predecessors in the flesh. Other practices organized around prewar modernist figures, like the offices of Ludwig Mies van der Rohe and Marcel Breuer, corporatized over time yet deliberately remained identified with their titular leaders.⁴¹ TAC was a composite construction: a postwar collective of recent graduates, but also the medium for the singular image of Gropius during the last twenty-five years of his work. The peculiar conjunction of Gropius with a group of younger collaborators constituted a particular problem of anachronism, in which the figure of Gropius was seen to correspond increasingly to the prewar period, despite his evident presence within a partnership of

young school graduates that would become one of the most prominent offices of the postwar decades.

James Marston Fitch pointed to this conundrum in his 1960 monograph on Gropius, identifying him with those outsized cultural figures who “lived on into a world in which their works had become commonplace,” producing a temporal dilemma in which “the prophet had overrun his prophecy.”⁴² Fitch was clear about the historiographic problems posed by this dichotomy, in which such figures “have simultaneously the scale of legendary heroes and the normal dimensions of colleagues and contemporaries,” a phenomenon that “has complicated enormously the necessary task of weighing their contributions to contemporary life.”⁴³ In the case of Gropius, he existed as both “the creator of the world famous *Bauhaus* and the most influential architectural teacher alive, [and] at the same time, a successful practicing architect with the greatest volume of work in his entire career.”⁴⁴ Caught in the ellipsis between Gropius’s early years and “his” later career was TAC, the entity through which this great volume of work took place.

In confronting this temporal and scalar problematic, critics tended to fall back onto two primary modes of assessment, often in tandem: the extraction of an author (Gropius) from within the group, or the sublimation of authorship and intentionality through the abstraction of the collective (TAC).⁴⁵ An early image of the tensions between these divergent narratives is provided by Giedion’s monograph on Walter Gropius (1954), enigmatically split into the binary subtitle “Work and Teamwork”—a curious juxtaposition of an authored oeuvre (work) with an anonymous mode of practice (teamwork). The cover, designed by Herbert Bayer, depicts an overlay of Gropius’s face onto an abstracted, unidentified image of TAC’s work, in this case the unbuilt McCormick office building in Washington, DC.⁴⁶ (Figure 2.6). Gropius’s face is subsumed within the graphic cage of the building’s façade pattern of windows and balconies, rendered in blue against a white background, not in front of this background but seemingly behind or even enmeshed within it, an ambiguous layering of personhood and anonymity. Such images locked the image of an author, the assignation of “his” work, and the abstraction of “teamwork” in an uneasy relationship of irreconcilable terms.

Such dynamics induced an increasing tension between public representations of Gropius alone and that of TAC, the firm in which he practiced. The result was the narrative isolation of Gropius above and apart from the collective, in order to better identify and account for his presumed signature within the firm’s work—but also as a means to track the arrows of modernism’s influence from prewar avant-garde to postwar mainstream, from Europe to the U.S., and from the generation of the “founding fathers” to their inheritors. Gropius provided a ready synecdoche not merely for the corporate body of TAC but increasingly for the prewar European “masters” in the United States and, by extension, the fate of the avant-garde after World War II.⁴⁷

Surveys such as Manfredo Tafuri and Francesco Dal Co’s *Modern Architecture* (1976) provide a symptomatic example of the force such tropes had acquired at the close of what had by then come to be categorized, at the endpoint of this historical arc, as “late” modernism.⁴⁸ Tafuri and Dal Co begin their account of architectural production after the 1950s with the need to take stock of the canonical figures of the prewar avant-garde, those “traditional ‘masters’ of the modern movement” whose work after World War II had now “arrived at a final accounting.”⁴⁹ Seeking to isolate the solitary figure of Gropius as a convenient stand-in for the postwar dissolution of modernism at large, the authors describe TAC as his creation alone, no more than the product of Gropius’s desire “to

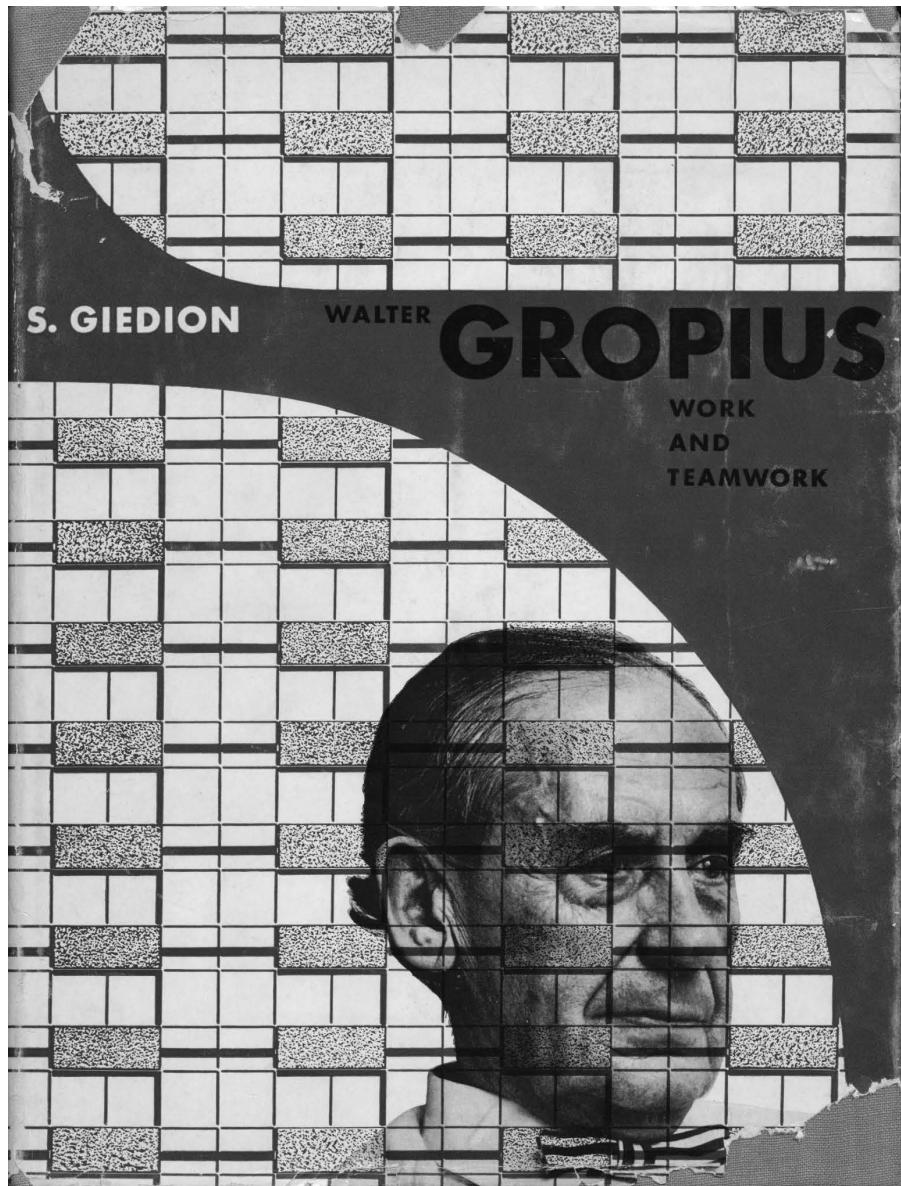


FIGURE 2.6 Sigfried Giedion, *Walter Gropius: Work and Teamwork* (New York: Reinhold Publishing Corporation, 1954). Cover design by Herbert Bayer.

realize in America his constant ideal of teamwork designing as evidence of the continuity between the specialist group and society as a whole.”⁵⁰ So, the authors tell us, “In 1946 he created The Architects Collaborative [sic], gathering around himself some of his former students and, as was his wont, reserving to himself the role of methodologist within the group.”⁵¹ Symptomatically, the story of agency is told backwards through the intentionality

of Gropius and his presumptive influence on “his” students, betraying an indifference to the real circumstances of TAC’s formation and implicating the figure of Gropius as the singular culprit of this narrative. Such evident distortions revealed more about the historiographic assumptions underlying contemporary accounts than they did about their subject, unwittingly pointing to the compulsion of critics like Tafuri and Dal Co to assign an authorial voice to Gropius alone.

As TAC’s commissions increased in scale and scope through its first two decades of practice, these authorial claims were inevitably projected onto the interpretation of the firm’s work, as critics searched for discernible traces of intentionality beyond the firm’s rhetoric of anonymity. An especially prominent position in such accounts was reserved for the Pan American Airways building in New York City (1958–1963), designed by TAC in consortium with Pietro Belluschi and Emery Roth & Sons. Critics attacked the project from the outset for both its extreme scale and its perceived banality – “a colossal collection of minimums,” as Ada Louise Huxtable derided it – and the resulting public and architectural outcry over its construction did permanent damage to the reputations of its major protagonists, Gropius in particular.⁵² A common feature of these judgments was the interpretive conflation of the building and its characteristics with the personae of its presumed authors. Critics searched in Pan Am’s laconic qualities for evidence of Gropius’s imprimatur, as a statement on architecture and the city that might take its place among the trio of towers associated with the modernist masters that took shape in New York City in the 1950s.⁵³ At the same time, the unsettled attribution of authorship over the tower’s final design also gave ammunition to the critical perception of Pan Am as a building whose aesthetics embodied the anonymous, corporate character of its architects.

Sibyl Moholy-Nagy invoked both of these readings in her review of Pan Am and the subsequent project by Marcel Breuer & Associates for an adjacent tower over Grand Central Terminal, criticizing the work of “The Gropius T.A.C. team, so *anonymous* that it has left to its leader the glaring spotlight of world publicity.”⁵⁴ Portraying the firm’s other partners as incapable of superseding the authority of the master, for Moholy-Nagy the tower’s mute aesthetics provided damning evidence that the firm had “dutifully turned its pencils in the same groove of a stuck conceptual record.”⁵⁵ Other prominent critics echoed similar criticisms of the building’s unrelieved scale and monotony in relation to its prominent urban setting. Tafuri and Dal Co cemented their critique of Gropius by portraying Pan Am as the ultimate sign of the master’s dissolution into mere professionalism, condemning him for the willingness “to legitimize with his signature ostentatious urban paradoxes like the Pan American Building of 1958.”⁵⁶ For William H. Jordy, the inability to distinguish any individual signature within TAC’s work (whether Gropius’s or otherwise) was similarly problematic: while buildings like Pan Am or the U.S. Embassy in Athens were “not without quality . . . they are essentially *without personality*.”⁵⁷ Repeating the trope by which TAC’s work stood in for the greater collapse of postwar modernism in the U.S., for Jordy such buildings revealed the fundamental “blandness of both visual qualities and theoretical commitment in most modern architecture” by the late 1940s, a quality “more evident in Gropius’s work” and its “mildness” than in that of his fellow émigrés.⁵⁸ As for the implications of this supposed lack of qualities for Gropius’s reputation, Jordy saw these dynamics as similarly damaging to his status as modernist master, as, “his fame secure, his work at the close of his career blurs his former position to that of the merely distinguished professional.”⁵⁹ Such reviews made the language of authorship explicit in conveying the means by which the synthetic mastery of the avant-garde had been

subsumed into the bureaucratizing formalisms of postwar practice, corrupting both producers and their products.⁶⁰

In his speculation on the modes of embodiment in architectural history, Timothy Hyde has identified the ways in which, in accounts such as these, “the signature stands in for what is actually a complex anonymity, with anonymity understood here not only in its colloquial sense of an unknown authorship but in a theoretical sense as an uncoupling of the consequences of authorship from individuated acts of authoring.”⁶¹ The reception of Pan Am frequently conflated these two senses of anonymity, one as an attribute of the building and its qualities (“Indistinguishable from others of its kind; unexceptional; bland, generic, nondescript”), the other of its architects (“Nameless, having no name; of unknown name”).⁶² The Gropius who is made to appear in such narratives – “common-place,” “willing to legitimize with his signature,” “merely professional” – forms a natural corollary to the abstraction of TAC, associated with “mildness,” “blandness,” “essentially without personality.” The signature has become anonymous, while anonymity becomes a characteristic of the signature.

The dissolution of character, of personality – of personhood, in Hyde’s terms – that critics saw in buildings like Pan Am was seen to apply equally to Gropius and his team. As Anna Vallye notes,

Moral-aesthetic formulations of blandness or superficiality in Gropius’s American production were frequently expressed as a weakness in his authorial position, his status as both the designer of a specific set of architectural works and the originator of a specific legacy in theory and design.⁶³

We are left with the figure of Gropius as what Vallye has described as a *cipher*, “a code name for the historical eclipse of the modern movement and a blind spot for critical assessment.”⁶⁴ The problematics of legacy are exacerbated in this case by the presence of an author who deliberately sought to efface his own signature by advocating for the principles of anonymity, teamwork, and collaboration in both pedagogy and practice over the length of his career.⁶⁵ For critics like Tafuri and Dal Co, this abdication of authorship could only be a negative, providing a damning coda to his practice and pointing to the essential conundrum of Gropius’s status within the group: “the refusal of Gropius to remain a ‘master’ and his disappearance into the reality of American professional life were paid for with a harsh price that necessarily affects any discussion of his career.”⁶⁶

Vallye points to the ways in which these stakes ultimately served to condemn Gropius’s authorial stature: “Like the dilemma of the split in quality between Gropius’s early and late work, the scholarly investigation of the collaboration problem has reinforced the logic of authorial erasure by splintering the consistent articulation of work over time.”⁶⁷ The consequence of this logic of erasure has been a progressive rupture of the historiography of TAC into two opposed categories. On the one side stands the figure of Gropius as genius, a role he disavowed and a reputation his work could never adequately fulfill, built as it was on a handful of early buildings – themselves designed with collaborators – and thereafter produced within a collective body.⁶⁸ On the other side of this binary there remains the history of his anonymous collaborators, first reduced to the status of mere students or acolytes of the master and ultimately condemned to irrelevance and abstraction within the historical record.

Disappearance

The historiographic construction of anonymity as a term of critique proved to be as damaging for TAC's reputation as the problematics of the signature were for Gropius. Far from the figure of Gropius's cipher, the abstracted ground of TAC – an entity “so anonymous that it has left to its leader the glaring spotlight of world publicity” – came to function as a stand-in of a different sort. As a vehicle for the reduction and erasure of authorship, the consequences of teamwork in practice were far different from the “ideal of anonymity” desired by the members of TAC in its early years. Such statements instead engendered a form of historiographic anonymity (and its consequent distortions of historical accounts ever in search of authors, signatures, and other figures in whom to invest intentionality), rather than an anonymity of process or a positive sublimation of the individual to the larger project of collectivity.

Gropius's death in 1969 reinforced the collapse of TAC's reception after the 1970s, once detached from the biographical narrative of the author. Within a decade, the discursive split between Gropius as author and TAC as anonymous corporate entity was largely taken for granted in the architectural literature, reinforcing the false impression that Gropius was the primary actor in the founding of the office. The last monographic treatment of the firm was produced in 1966, and the few accounts of TAC after Gropius's death remained largely focused around the question of his authorship alone within the firm's oeuvre, a phenomenon reinforced by the construction of the archive of both Gropius's and TAC's work.⁶⁹

Once separated from this authorial presence, the abstracted image of TAC came to serve as a ready example for the critical dismissal of bureaucratic practice as a submission to the demands of capital. For Tafuri and Dal Co, the firm offered a paradigmatic example of these processes and their consequences:

by its nature, and subject as it was to the laws of the American market, TAC very soon became a many-branched, impersonal concern equipped to deal with the major professional ventures and open to any sort of request from public or private clients.⁷⁰

Surveying the legacy of the avant-garde masters and their postwar followers, Tafuri and Dal Co took up the dichotomy laid out by Hitchcock in 1947 in order to lament a condition in which “a true and proper ‘architecture of bureaucracy’ settled in everywhere,” while the field “came to be dominated not by individual architects intent on communicating their opinions of the world but by large studios in which the tasks were parceled out with virtual assembly-line standards.”⁷¹ In this categorization, TAC became simply one among a group of equally technocratic U.S. firms, “equipped to work at an intense speed of production and to fulfill demands for high technological levels in buildings as anonymous as the architectural concerns that build them.”⁷²

The historiographic ellipsis surrounding TAC's work by the 1970s is most fully registered by the only monographic treatment of the firm produced in the decade after Gropius's death, a special issue of the Japanese magazine *PROCESS:Architecture*, published in 1980⁷³ (Figure 2.7). The first section of the issue, “Works of Walter Gropius in America,” conforms to the conventional reliance on the image of Gropius as author of the firm's work, beginning with a full-page portrait of the genius himself, granting his imprimatur to the projects that follow – those works that Gropius “proved willing to legitimize with his signature.” Some of the projects in this section are illustrated with photos of Gropius hovering and gesturing over



FIGURE 2.7 Cover, “Works of Walter Gropius in America,” in “TAC: The Heritage of Walter Gropius,” *PROCESS:Architecture* No. 19 (1980).

architectural models of TAC’s buildings, visually constructing the image of his architectural authorship within the pages of the monograph. In contrast, the second section of projects after 1969, generically titled “Recent Works of TAC,” reveals the weight of editorial ambivalence in how to present the work produced after Gropius’s death. Instead of an image of the iconic father figure, the section begins with an altogether different aesthetic: an abstracted graphic of the world, marking the international locations of the projects produced in the 1970s (Figure 2.8). The image is now truly anonymous – simply data points on a map.

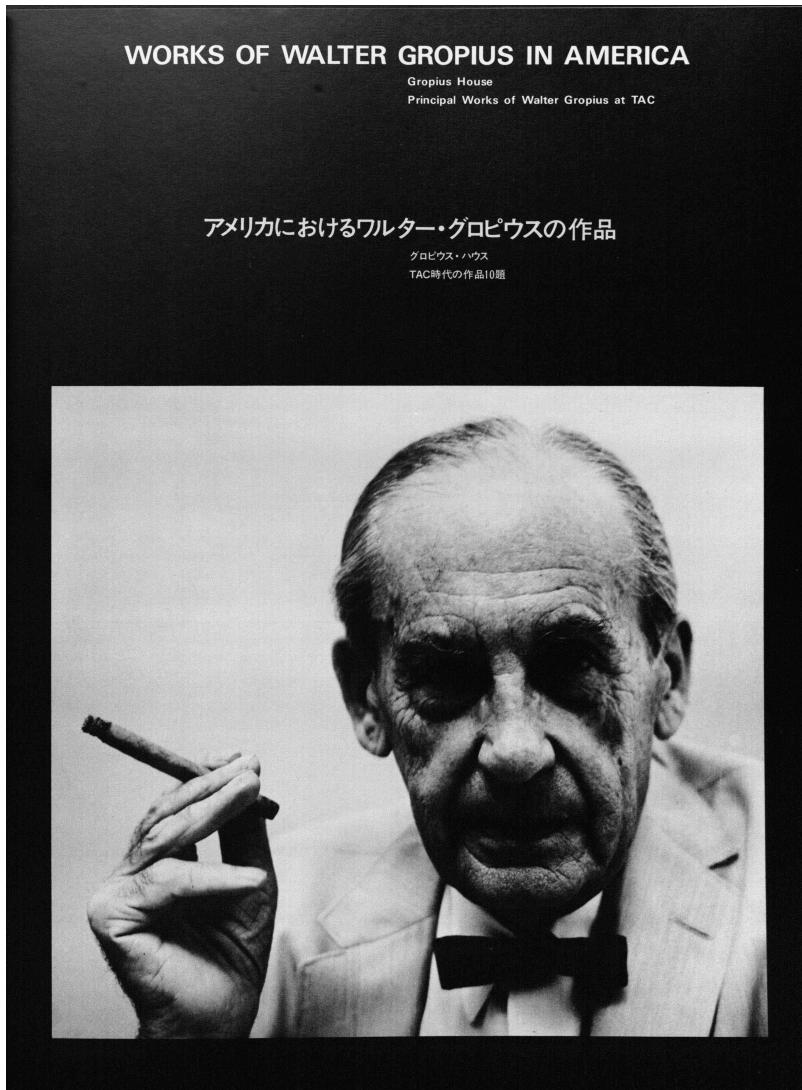


FIGURE 2.7 Part I, “Works of Walter Gropius in America,” in “TAC: The Heritage of Walter Gropius,” *PROCESS: Architecture* No. 19 (1980).

An extreme example of the systemic elision of TAC appears in Charles Jencks's *Modern Movements in Architecture* (1973), the revisionist history best known for its categorization of six traditions of modernism, as codified in his “evolutionary tree” of twentieth-century architectural production.⁷⁴ Indebted in its own way to Barr’s diagram of influence, Jencks’s genealogy produces a temporal splitting much like that of Williamson’s chart, with the signature of Gropius allied to the “Heroic” prewar avant-garde of the Bauhaus, while the anonymity of TAC is grouped with other large-scale “Bureaucratic” practices of the post–World War II boom (Figure 2.9). In a chapter of the book devoted largely to Gropius (along with Frank Lloyd Wright) and his perceived “collapse into formalism” after World War II, the various TAC projects used to illustrate this progression are ascribed to Gropius’s authorship alone, while the

RECENT WORKS OF TAC

TACの最近作40題

Office : 9 works
Housing : 4 works
Health Care : 6 works
Community : 5 works
Education : 3 works
Transportation : 2 works
Commercial : 3 works

オフィス設計：14題
ハウジング：4題
医療施設：6題
コミュニティ：5題
教育施設：3題
輸送施設：2題
商業施設：3題



FIGURE 2.8 Part II, “Recent Works of TAC,” in “TAC: The Heritage of Walter Gropius,” *PROCESS:Architecture* No. 19 (1980).

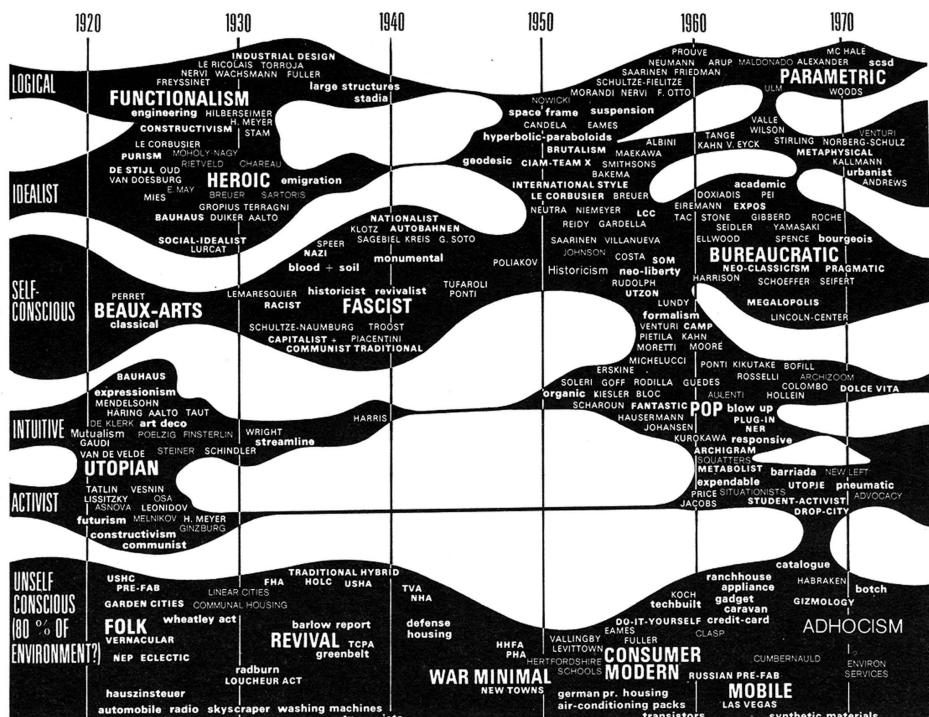


FIGURE 2.9 “Evolutionary Tree, 1920–70,” in Charles Jencks, *Modern Movements in Architecture* (Garden City, NY: Anchor Press, 1973). Courtesy of Charles Jencks.

existence of The Architects Collaborative remains unmentioned. Where the acronym TAC appears, this occurs not within the body text but solely in the captions to three images (out of 236 total) situated in the marginalia; even in these instances the firm is relegated to secondary status alongside the master, as an addendum to projects whose authorship is designated as “Walter Gropius with TAC.” The repression of the firm’s presence extends into the index of the book, where a half page of references is given under Gropius’s name – again including the same three projects accompanied by the parenthetical “(with TAC)” – while omitting any listing for the firm itself. In the place where one would expect The Architects Collaborative to be listed independently, one finds only an absence.

The degree to which TAC’s presence is suppressed through the apparatus of these histories points to the deep ambivalence felt by Jencks and other contemporary critics towards assessing the large-scale bureaucratic firms that had come to dominate architectural production in the United States by this time. While Jencks’s account would seem to be an almost caricatured example of the sort of elision of TAC that had become common by the 1970s, all too easy to criticize for its inaccuracy, it demonstrates the force of received histories of modernism that had set in on the cusp of the late- and postmodern turns in architectural production. Only such an extreme repression of the reality, indeed the very existence, of TAC in favor of the signature of Gropius could allow Jencks to proclaim, for example, in the introduction to his second edition of the book, that

In 1984, fateful year, when our architectural future is being stamped by ever larger bureaucratic firms, when our biggest offices such as those led by Walter Gropius [*sic*] perpetrate a form of historicist kitsch in the Middle East . . . it is time to reassess our recent past and Western culture together: criticize the unthinking modernism and historicism which are so commercially successful.⁷⁵

Such is Gropius’s authorial weight that his ghostly signature is compelled to appear here again, “leading” the office fifteen years after his death. In parallel, the abstraction of TAC is left as a floating signifier, denied an image, unmoored from its own history and condemned to the marginalia of the historical record as a footnote to the authorship of Gropius.⁷⁶

The evident anxieties over how to envision the work of TAC and other “anonymous” bureaucratic practices mark a particular form of historical closure by the close of the 1970s. Despite Henry-Russell Hitchcock’s call in 1947 for new modes of criticism adequate to the bureaucratic office, it was still impossible to critically or historically situate the reality of such practices without a continued reliance on the conventional tropes of authorship, influence, and intentionality. In the case of The Architects Collaborative, the result was a falling back onto the simplifications of binary categories that repeated, in varying terms, the same fundamental dichotomy between signature and anonymity: the architecture of genius and the architecture of bureaucracy, work and teamwork, the heroic prewar and the bureaucratic postwar, the heritage of Walter Gropius and the abstracted map of TAC’s “late” work.

A look at the historiographic absences that have taken place within the gaps of these dichotomies, like that of TAC, leads to troubling questions about the adequacy of the traditional methodological apparatus of the architectural historian in situating or properly evaluating this kind of production. Attending to the historiographic case of TAC and its dissolution under the signature of Gropius requires us to confront both the shadings of anonymity with which the firm described its intentions and the abstraction into which its later history

increasingly disappeared. This confrontation would necessarily undo the ways in which, as John Harwood notes, “Such abstractions pull away from the archive of architectural history, the primary facticities architectural history seeks to wrestle into form.”⁷⁷

A lasting residue of these historiographical abstractions is that The Architects Collaborative has remained largely absent from histories of postwar architectural practice, while the authorial presence of Walter Gropius has become the vehicle for dismissing the firm’s work in the breach. This double construction has posed a crisis for historians, most of whom have chosen to shoehorn the history of the firm back into the narrative mode of other supposedly singular authorial practices before and after World War II. In this way, the firm’s “ideal of anonymity” gradually gave way to the anxiety of anonymity. The arc of TAC’s reception might thus serve as a cautionary tale for both the historian and the architect to be attentive to the nuances of such appeals to collectivity. For as we have seen, in the idealization of anonymity, historiographically speaking, one very often gets what one wishes for.

Notes

- 1 Roxanne Williamson, *American Architects and the Mechanics of Fame* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1991), 3.
- 2 Williamson defines fame tautologically, as “the sort of reputation that arises out of truly innovative designs, the kind of work deemed important enough to be included in the history textbooks.” *Ibid.*, 13.
- 3 Examples of such visualizations include Charles Jencks’s series of “evolutionary trees” after 1970 (discussed later in this essay); Klaus Herdeg, *The Decorated Diagram: The Decorated Diagram: Harvard Architecture and the Failure of the Bauhaus Legacy* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1983); Alexander Caragonne, *The Texas Rangers: Notes from the Architectural Underground* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1995).
- 4 This image first appeared as the cover of Alfred H. Barr Jr.’s *Cubism and Abstract Art* (New York: Museum of Modern Art, 1936). See also Barr’s sketches of the chronology of modern art as a “torpedo moving through time,” of 1933 and 1941 (bottom). *The Museum of Modern Art Archives* (New York: Alfred H. Barr Jr. Papers, 9a.15). Reproduced in Sybil Gordon Kantor, *Alfred H. Barr, Jr. and the Intellectual Origins of the Museum of Modern Art* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2002), 367.
- 5 The phrase “mechanics of fame” is adopted from George Kubler, who nevertheless would seem to offer a rebuke to such attempts to identify and valorize predecessors over successors rather than situate them within the dynamics of historical time: “The mechanics of fame are such that their predecessors’ talent is magnified, and their own is diminished, when talent itself is only a relatively common predisposition for visual order, without a wide range of differentiation. Times and opportunities differ more than the degree of talent.” Kubler, *The Shape of Time: Remarks on the History of Things* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1962), 7–8.
- 6 Among the founding partners, only three attended the Harvard Graduate School of Design under Gropius’s chairmanship: John C. Harkness (graduated 1941), Jean Bodman Fletcher (1944), and Louis A. McMillen (1947). Of these, only Harkness studied in Gropius’s one-year master’s class, while Gropius had been Bodman Fletcher’s thesis advisor. Four others studied at Yale: Norman C. Fletcher (1940), Benjamin Thompson (1941), Robert S. McMillan (1943), and McMillen (1940) prior to attending Harvard. The eighth partner, Sarah Pillsbury Harkness, graduated from the Cambridge School of Architecture and Landscape Architecture in Cambridge, MA.
- 7 While Gropius’s name appears circa 1886, the year of his birth, the placement of TAC is less precise, landing sometime around 1915, a date presumably derived from the birth of one of the firm’s other seven partners. Jean Bodman Fletcher and Sarah Pillsbury Harkness were born in 1915; John C. Harkness in 1916; Robert S. McMillan and Louis A. McMillen in 1917; Norman C. Fletcher and Benjamin Thompson in 1918.
- 8 This acronym is one of only two that appear amid the swirl of authorial names. The other is DMJM, for Daniel, Mann, Johnson, and Mendenhall (also established in 1945). This acronym serves in the diagram primarily as a predecessor for Cesar Pelli and Frank O. Gehry, two architects who later

- established signature practices after working for the firm. Oddly, the acronym is not connected to the name of Anthony Lumsden, the head of the design division at DMJM and a collaborator of Pelli's there, who also later established his own practice (he appears instead as a legatee of Eero Saarinen). Like TAC, its individual partners are unnamed outside of the acronym.
- 9 In retracing the steps that led to his PhD dissertation at the University of Cambridge, Peter Eisenman conspicuously located his decision to return to the academy in having become "disillusioned with practice after working with Walter Gropius's Architects Collaborative [sic] in Cambridge, Massachusetts" in the summer of 1959. Eisenman, postscript to "The Formal Basis of Modern Architecture," (PhD dissertation, Cambridge, 1963), published in 2008 (Zurich: Lars Müller), 379.
 - 10 Michael Baxandall, "Excursus Against Influence," in *Patterns of Intention: On the Historical Explanation of Pictures* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1985), 59.
 - 11 Ibid.
 - 12 Ibid. A related argument for the creative potential of influence-in-reverse is developed by Harold Bloom in *The Anxiety of Influence: A Theory of Poetry* (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1973), to which the title of this essay obviously alludes. On the reversibility of influence in time and its historiographic consequences, see also T.S. Eliot, "Tradition and the Individual Talent" [1919], in *Selected Essays* (New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, Inc., 1932), 3–11, and Jorge Luis Borges, "Kafka and His Precursors," in *Labyrinths: Selected Stories & Other Writings* (New York: New Directions Publishing, 1962), 199–201.
 - 13 The Architects Collaborative was the first major architectural practice in the United States whose title did not include the individual names of partners. Here I differentiate private firms like TAC (typically limited liability partnerships or corporations) from working groups, professional societies, or other team-based entities whose structures were not primarily market-driven. Among TAC's predecessors in deemphasizing the signature were artistic societies (the Société Anonyme, established 1920), working groups of architects, landscape architects, and planners (the Telesis group, established 1939), and federal architectural agencies such as the Architect's Department of the Tennessee Valley Authority (established 1933). In the U.K., precedents included industrial and interior design concerns like Isokon Ltd. (with which both Walter Gropius and Marcel Breuer practiced prior to their emigration to the U.S.) and architectural collectives like Tecton (established 1932), self-defined as a group rather than a firm and whose individual members continued to be identified under their own names.
 - 14 Walter Gropius, "The Architect Within Our Industrial Society," in *Scope of Total Architecture* (New York: Harper & Brothers Publishers, 1955), 85–86.
 - 15 On the formation of the office, see Michael Kubo, "Towards Collaboration: The Idea of TAC," in *Bauhaus 7: Collective* (Dessau: Bauhaus, 2015), 142–147. In the 1966 monograph of the firm's work union of the partners was described as "the outcome of several coincidences involving people who were not even known to one another, but each of whom had a dream in mind of group practice of architecture." Walter Gropius and Sarah P. Harkness, eds., *The Architects Collaborative 1945–1965* (Teufen: Verlag Arthur Niggli, 1966), 12.
 - 16 Letter from Jean Bodman Fletcher and Norman Fletcher to Walter Gropius, November 11, 1945, Reginald R. Isaacs papers, circa 1842–1991, Smithsonian Archives of American Art.
 - 17 Ibid.
 - 18 Walter Gropius, *Scope of Total Architecture* (New York: Harper & Brothers Publishers, 1955).
 - 19 Note that this concept of holism entailed a delimited disciplinary definition of the architect, expanded to include problems of planning but not landscape architecture or engineering; these would be kept outside the framework of the architects' office, as they were at TAC, though the architect would collaborate heavily with these fields as part of what Gropius described as "a closely co-operating team together with the engineer, the scientist and the builder." Gropius, *Scope of Total Architecture*, 80. In this sense TAC remained in the conventional category of firms consisting solely of architects (even if holistically trained), unlike more integrated (and consequently much larger) firms like Skidmore, Owings & Merrill that incorporated engineers and other disciplines within the office.
 - 20 Mildred F. Schmertz, "A Challenging Collaboration for TAC," *Architectural Record* (September 1967), 160. On the design and construction of TAC's headquarters at 46 Brattle Street (1964–1966) see Michael Kubo, "The Architects' Corner," in *Heroic: Concrete Architecture and the New Boston*, ed. Mark Pasnik, Michael Kubo and Chris Grimley (New York: Monacelli Press, 2015), 184–193.

- 21 Walter Gropius and Sarah P. Harkness, eds., *The Architects Collaborative 1945–1965* (Teufen: Verlag Arthur Niggli, 1966).
- 22 John C. Harkness, “Search for a Common Language,” in *The Architects Collaborative 1945–1965*, 27.
- 23 Sarah P. Harkness, “Collaboration,” in *The Architects Collaborative 1945–1965*, 26.
- 24 Walter Gropius, “TAC’s Teamwork,” in *The Architects Collaborative 1945–1965*, 24.
- 25 Ibid.
- 26 Ibid. On the dangers of conformity and the need for democracy in the processes and products of architectural production, see the essays collected in Walter Gropius, *Apollo in the Democracy: The Cultural Obligation of the Architect* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1968), particularly “Unity in Diversity,” originally published as “The Curse of Conformity,” *The Saturday Evening Post* (September 6, 1958), 18–19.
- 27 Louis A. McMillen, “The Idea of Anonymity,” in *The Architects Collaborative 1945–1965*, 27.
- 28 Ibid.
- 29 Ibid.
- 30 Thompson left TAC in December 1965 along with the members of what had by then become his de facto studio within the firm; Benjamin Thompson Associates (BTA) was incorporated in January 1966.
- 31 Benjamin Thompson, “Remarks on Anonymous Architecture,” *Connection* (June 1965): 16–18.
- 32 Ibid.
- 33 American Institute of Architects, “Architectural Firm Award Honoring the Architects Collaborative,” 1964. Courtesy Canadian Centre of Architecture Collections.
- 34 Sigfried Giedion, *Mechanization Takes Command: An Anonymous History* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1948); Bernard Rudofsky, *Architecture Without Architects* (New York: Museum of Modern Art, 1964). On the “author-function,” see Michel Foucault, “What Is an Author?” [1969], in *Language, Counter-Memory, Practice* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1977), 113–138.
- 35 These concerns were presaged by the group at Harvard associated with the student journal *TASK* (published irregularly from 1941 to 1948), which included Louis McMillen among the editors of the second issue (1942). In *An Opinion on Architecture* (Boston: Century Press, 1941), a manifesto published by an early grouping of these students as a critique of the perceived formalist tendencies of the school, its authors point to “The Problem of Personality,” identified paradigmatically with the figure of Frank Lloyd Wright, “an obscure genius . . . overshadowed by his own personality.” While its authors call for collective work “among architects, engineers, contractors, and the working class” as “THE CREDO AND THE FAITH OF ARCHITECTURE TODAY,” they evince a telling ambivalence toward the consequences of genuine anonymity, qualifying that while “we advocated the principle of collective work as the only one which can solve the architectural problem . . . we do not mean to deny the value of personality. Collaboration and collective work does not mean anonymity, but a meeting of personalities in mutual understanding.” Elsewhere, the authors maintain that “We must recognize the existence of the genius as a philosophical necessity. . . . there has been in the past, and there will be in the future the man of self-sufficiency in analytical and comprehensive work: the man of synthesis and creation. We call for collaboration but a Leonardo could work alone.”
- 36 See for example the special issue of *l’Architecture d’Aujourd’hui* in February 1950, edited by Paul Rudolph, devoted to *Gropius et son école* – “Gropius and his school.” The issue includes a portfolio of Gropius’s work in the U.S. that mixes projects by Gropius and Marcel Breuer between 1937 and 1941, his work with Konrad Wachsmann under the General Panel Corporation, and projects by TAC after 1945.
- 37 Henry-Russell Hitchcock, “The Architecture of Bureaucracy and the Architecture of Genius,” *Architectural Review* (January 1947), 3–6.
- 38 Ibid. Emphasis mine.
- 39 Ibid. Emphasis mine.
- 40 In his text Hitchcock specifically counterposed the practice of Albert Kahn & Associates, representing the bureaucratic firm par excellence, with that of Frank Lloyd Wright, the epitome of the genius. On the other side of this dichotomy from attempts to parse questions of authorship within an acknowledged collective, a parallel case could be made that Wright’s atelier model (cultivated at his Taliesin studios in Arizona and Wisconsin) functioned far more as a team-based practice than has been acknowledged.
- 41 For a related exploration of the concepts of signature and anonymity in relation to the office of Ludwig Mies van der Rohe, see Timothy Hyde, “Signature: Or, the Life and Death of Anonymous,” in *Under the Influence*, ed. Ana Miljački (Cambridge, MA: MIT SA+P Press, 2014), 152–163.

- 42 James Marston Fitch, *Walter Gropius* (New York: George Braziller Inc., 1960), 7.
- 43 Ibid.
- 44 Ibid.
- 45 Another sense of this tenuous splitting within a single practice was reflected in the self-image promoted by Skidmore, Owings & Merrill (SOM) as a firm characterized by consistent products rather than by signature architects – one supposedly so anonymous that a partner claimed “it could even be called the ABC Company” – despite the parallel acknowledgment of Gordon Bunshaft as the firm’s lead designer, and his description as office “dictator.” “Skidmore, Owings & Merrill, Architects, U.S.A.,” *Museum of Modern Art Bulletin*, 18, 1 (Fall 1950): 7. The description of Bunshaft as dictator is from “Designers for a Busy World: Mood for Working,” *Newsweek* (4 May 1959), 100.
- 46 Sigfried Giedion, *Walter Gropius: Work and Teamwork* (London: Architectural Press Ltd., 1954).
- 47 The titles and chapter titles of the major surveys on twentieth-century modernism in this period attest to the historiographic concern of postwar critics to account for the legacy of the prewar avant-garde, variously referred to as masters, pioneers, founding fathers, etc. To note only some of the most prominent examples, see Nikolaus Pevsner, *Pioneers of the Modern Movement from William Morris to Walter Gropius* (London: Faber & Faber, 1936); Peter Blake, *The Master Builders: Le Corbusier, Mies van der Rohe, Frank Lloyd Wright* (New York: Norton, 1976); Charles Jencks, “Gropius, Wright and the Collapse into Formalism,” in *Modern Movements in Architecture* (Garden City, NY: Anchor Press, 1973), 109–140; Manfredo Tafuri and Francesco Dal Co, “The Activity of the Masters After World War II,” in *Modern Architecture* (Milan: Electa, 1976), 306–330; William H. Jordy, “The Aftermath of the Bauhaus in America: Gropius, Mies, and Breuer” [1968], reprinted in Jordy, ‘*Symbolic Essence’ and Other Writings on Modern Architecture and American Culture*, ed. Mardges Bacon (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2005), 187–224.
- 48 As the capstone to such narratives, the periodizing label of “late” modernism served to confirm the secondary, negative framing of the generation of postwar successors like TAC as a confirmation of the master narrative of a revolutionary European avant-garde and its “collapse into formalism” in contact with the realities of mainstream practice. See especially Charles Jencks, *Late-Modern Architecture* (New York: Rizzoli, 1980).
- 49 Manfredo Tafuri and Francesco Dal Co, *Modern Architecture* (Milan: Electa, 1976), 306.
- 50 Ibid., 307.
- 51 Ibid.
- 52 Ada Louise Huxtable, “Architecture Stumbles On: Recent Buildings Are Nothing Much to Brag About,” *The New York Times* (14 April 1963), 119.
- 53 The others were the Seagram Building, designed by the office of Ludwig Mies van der Rohe (1958), and the United Nations complex (1952), designed by the office of Wallace K. Harrison following notorious disputes over its authorship with Le Corbusier, a member of the international Board of Design Consultants convened for the project.
- 54 Sibyl Moholy-Nagy, “Hitler’s Revenge,” *Art in America* (September–October 1968): 42–43. Emphasis mine.
- 55 Ibid.
- 56 Tafuri and Francesco Dal Co, *Modern Architecture*, 307. Emphasis mine.
- 57 William H. Jordy, “The Aftermath of the Bauhaus in America: Gropius, Mies, and Breuer” (1968), reprinted in Jordy, ‘*Symbolic Essence’ and Other Writings on Modern Architecture and American Culture*, ed. Mardges Bacon (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2005), 215. Emphasis mine.
- 58 Ibid., 214. Rem Koolhaas later echoed such assessments of Pan Am as a building “without qualities” in his comparison of the tower with the Seagram Building and the U.N. Secretariat, describing it as “so effortlessly integrated that it is, ironically, both unavoidable as and hard to locate. The biggest building in the world leaves no footprint. It is a disappearing act, *an apotheosis of background.*” Koolhaas, “Enabling Architecture,” in *Autonomy and Ideology: Positioning an Avant-Garde in America*, ed. Robert E. Somol (New York: Monacelli Press, 1997), 298. Emphasis original.
- 59 Ibid., 216.
- 60 See for example the summary judgment contained in the title of Meredith Clausen’s history of Pan Am, *The Pan Am Building and the Shattering of the Modernist Dream* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2005).
- 61 Timothy Hyde, “Notes on Architectural Persons,” *The Aggregate Website* (Transparent Peer Reviewed), <http://we-aggregate.org/piece/notes-on-architectural-persons> (accessed October 15, 2013).
- 62 “anonymous, adj.” *OED Online* (Oxford University Press), June 2016, <http://www.oed.com.ezproxy.lib.uh.edu/view/Entry/8061?redirectedFrom=anonymous> (accessed 25 July 2016).

- 63 Anna Vallye, “‘A Figure Covered with Labels’: The Reception of Gropius’s American Work,” in *Design and the Politics of Knowledge in America, 1937–1967: Walter Gropius, Gyorgy Kepes* (PhD dissertation, Columbia University, 2011), 37.
- 64 Ibid., 32.
- 65 Similar narratives conditioned the reputations of other Bauhausler in the United States. Louis Kaplan offers a provocative reading of Laszlo Moholy-Nagy, another figure narratively tied to the fate of the modernist “masters” in the United States, as an artist specifically motivated by the effacement of the signature in favor of practices of anonymity. In discussing the historiographic consequences of the “signature effect” in relation to the construction of authorship. Kaplan points to “the double band of the signature effect (between signified subject and signifying matter)” as a mechanism that “prescribes a series of tensions . . . that shuttle between identity and anonymity, between originality and plagiarism, between necessity and chance, between authorship and its resignation.” In this manner, Kaplan writes, “the signature becomes a problem for history – not just the history of the signature, but the signature of history.” See Louis Kaplan, *Laszlo Moholy-Nagy: Biographical Writings* (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 1995).
- 66 Tafuri and Dal Co, *Modern Architecture*, 307.
- 67 Vallye, *Design and the Politics of Knowledge in America, 1937–1967: Walter Gropius, Gyorgy Kepes*, 40.
- 68 Architects with whom Gropius worked in partnership or collaboration prior to TAC included Adolf Meyer (1910–25), Maxwell Fry (1934–36), Marcel Breuer (1937–41), and Konrad Wachsmann (1942–52).
- 69 The construction of this archive has served to reinforce the binary division between Gropius and TAC. In contrast to the meticulous organization of Gropius’s personal papers and archival documents related to the Bauhaus, materials on TAC have remained fragmented since the firm’s sudden bankruptcy in 1995, when portions of the then extant office drawings, slides, and documents were hastily scattered among a consortium of institutions in Boston including the MIT Museum, the Harvard Graduate School of Design, and the Boston Architectural Center. The consequences of this split can be seen in the four volumes of *The Walter Gropius Archive* (New York and London: Garland Publishing Inc., 1990–1991), published as an illustrated catalogue of the holdings of the Gropius archive at the Busch-Reisinger Museum (now Harvard University Art Museum). While the Busch-Reisinger holds the original documents published in the first three volumes, covering Gropius’s work up to 1945, the majority of the material that appears in the fourth volume (1945–1969) remains unaccounted for. Further, while the fourth volume is subtitled *The Works of The Architects Collaborative*, this includes only a selection from the “TAC Projects in which Gropius Had a Major Part,” given in an index at the front of the book. How this involvement was determined is never established.
- 70 Tafuri and Dal Co, *Modern Architecture*, 339.
- 71 Ibid.
- 72 Ibid.
- 73 *PROCESS:Architecture* No. 19, *TAC: The Heritage of Walter Gropius* (October 1980).
- 74 Charles Jencks, *Modern Movements in Architecture* (Garden City, NY: Anchor Press, 1973). The first version of Jencks’s diagram appeared as “The Evolutionary Tree,” *Architectural Design* (October 1970): 527. Subsequent revisions include versions published in his *Architecture 2000: Predictions and Methods* (New York, NY: Praeger, 1971); the revised enlarged edition of *The Language of Post-Modern Architecture* (New York: Rizzoli, 1978 ff.) in which the tree begins Part Three, added from the original 1977 edition, and *The New Moderns: From Late to Neo-Modernism* (New York: Rizzoli, 1990). Jencks revisited the accuracy of the diagram in retrospect in *Architecture 2000 and Beyond: Success in the Art of Prediction* (Chichester, West Sussex: Wiley-Academy, 2000).
- 75 Charles Jencks, *Modern Movements in Architecture*, 2nd edition (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books Ltd, 1983), 8.
- 76 Jencks’s quote provides a particularly egregious example of the problems of chronology that accompany the signature. Timothy Hyde connects these problems to the historiographic construct of personhood and the related problem of *presentness*, a form of temporality that “forges a narrative order, commonly chronological, that accompanies the appearance of persons.” He notes that “such an emphasis on presentness . . . may well be a liability, because among its consequences is the obscuring of forms of multiplicity or collectivity in which the presumption of a unified time would be misleading.” Hyde, “Notes on Architectural Persons,” n.p. It is a similar problematic of chronology that induces the swirls of arrows in diagrams like Roxanne Williamson’s, in which an entity composed

of multiple persons, located according to their respective dates of birth, cannot be in two places at once. The arrow serves in such cases as a patchwork device to connect what has been separate in a tenuous gesture of reconstitution, yet one that necessarily introduces the directionality of influence.

- 77 John Harwood, “Corporate Abstraction,” *Perspecta 46: Error* (2013): 228. In his assessment of the theoretical difficulties of historicizing team-based or corporate entities in architecture, Harwood points to the “sophistry of inter-war avant garde theory,” such as that of Hitchcock, in its attempts to finesse “the historiographical attitude produced by simultaneously viewing the history of architecture as the product of individuals and of groups.” Instead, he calls us to address “the question of what is excluded from a historical account that treats neither collective action, nor the behavior of individuals as motivated by corporate identity.”

3

THE POWER OF ASSOCIATION

Le Corbusier and the *banlieues*

Kenny Cupers

On October 27, 2005, two French youths of African descent died of electrocution in a local power station in the Parisian suburb of Clichy-sous-Bois. Police had been patrolling their neighborhood, responding to a reported break-in, and the youngsters, scared that they might be subject to an arbitrary interrogation, decided to hide in the nearest available building. Sparked by their death, riots immediately broke out in the high-rise suburbs of Paris and in hundreds of similar neighborhoods across the country. The unrest persisted well into November. The rioters, many of whom were unemployed teenagers from impoverished and marginalized housing areas, torched hundreds of buildings and thousands of cars. The media attributed the widespread violence to the living conditions in the drab concrete blocks and slabs, which often formed the backdrop in images of burning cars and youth throwing Molotov cocktails.

Soon after, and again when similar uprisings took place in 2007, journalists asked whether the architects were to blame for the problem-ridden banlieues, as these suburbs are called. In a *New York Times* article published in the wake of the 2005 riots, Christopher Caldwell suggested even more specifically that Le Corbusier carried the bulk of the blame. “Le Corbusier,” he wrote, “called houses ‘machines for living’. France’s housing projects, as we now know, became machines for alienation.”¹ The suggestion that Le Corbusier lies at the origins of France’s suburban crisis rests on three unspoken assumptions. The first is that social conditions are a result, directly or indirectly, of the built environment, a conviction falling under the broad rubric of environmental determinism. The second is that architects are mainly responsible for creating this environment, rather than the many others involved in its planning, construction, maintenance, and governance. And the third is that the design of French housing projects can essentially be reduced to the influence of one architect, Le Corbusier. This threefold logic tends to shift the focus away from the deeply troubling patterns of institutional racism, unemployment, and police brutality that fundamentally shape everyday life in metropolitan France today. At the same time, it elucidates why and how architecture is understood to matter in society.

Caldwell was certainly not the only critic to link the unrest in the banlieues to Le Corbusier, nor was this the first time the great master of modern architecture had been blamed for France’s suburban condition. As early as 1968, Jacques Riboud, in his book *The Mistakes of Le Corbusier and Their Consequences*, attributed the much-lamented housing projects, “with their cold and severe geometry, built everywhere in France, in big as well as in small cities,” to the

teachings of Le Corbusier. “To convince oneself of this, it suffices to look at the now-classical image of such ensembles in series in the drawings which illustrate his books.”² Writing three years after Le Corbusier’s death in 1965, Riboud represented an increasingly mainstream point of view, shared by journalists and inhabitants alike, as well as the young generation of May 1968, who saw in the banlieues nothing but the alienating machinations of state capitalism. But not everyone agreed with Riboud. His accusatory book elicited virulent defenses from a range of architects and state officials, who claimed that the country’s housing projects had little or nothing to do with the genius architect. At the same time, they admitted that, whether positive or negative, “nobody can deny the influence of Le Corbusier.”³

Le Corbusier’s Unité d’habitation, built in Marseille between 1947 and 1952, stood as a template for the housing projects mushrooming across France in the 1950s and 1960s. A thick, massive slab, seventeen stories in height, it required an enormous mass of poured-in-place concrete and was lifted above the ground plane by colossal columns. The building comprised twenty-three different apartment types, from studios to units for large nuclear families. Each dwelling enjoyed double exposure – facing both east and west, mountains and sea – a double-height living room, and an outdoor loggia. But the Unité was more than just housing; it also contained a variety of collective services. Its roof deck was equipped with a nursery school, a gymnasium, an outdoor theatre, and a running track. And on the seventh floor, the building featured what Le Corbusier called an interior street: a double-height gallery with shops, a restaurant, and a hotel. The Unité was the architectural expression of a new collective order, with the ocean liner as both a poetic metaphor and functional equivalent (Figure 3.1). Even though Le Corbusier himself planned over seventy Unités, only five were eventually built: four in France and one in Berlin.⁴ Small projects



FIGURE 3.1 Le Corbusier, Unité d’Habitation, Marseille, aerial view, 1945–52. Courtesy of Foundation Le Corbusier, Paris, L.1.13.5.

such as the Maisons Jaoul and his own vacation home aside, these four Unités were the only housing Le Corbusier built in France during the postwar period.

The Unité of Marseille helped spawn a new direction of postwar modernism, after the architect's use of *béton brut*, and some French architects built almost literal copies of the Unité, as an ode to the master⁵ (Figure 3.2). But such formal imitations can hardly account for Le Corbusier's complex and contradictory influence on the making of the banlieues. Despite his relentless promotion of the Unité as a prototype for French housing, the mainstream of the country's housing projects looked rather different. The project of Clichy-sous-Bois, by Prix de Rome winner Bernard Zehrfuss, was designed as an orthogonal distribution of blocks and slabs, with schools, shopping centers, and other collective amenities as separate objects (Figure 3.3). Such layouts were inspired by the compositional principles of monumentality, axiality, and hierarchy as they were taught at France's prestigious École nationale supérieure des Beaux-Arts.⁶ Le Corbusier's poetic concept of the Unité as a city in a building was far removed from Zehrfuss's massing, and its colorful tectonics and typological diversity stood in stark contrast with the repetitive



FIGURE 3.2 Trébeurden, Résidence Hélios, by architect Roger Le Flanchec, 1951–1957. Gérard Monnier, *Le Corbusier: Les unités d'habitation en France* (Paris: Belin-Herscher, 2002), 179.

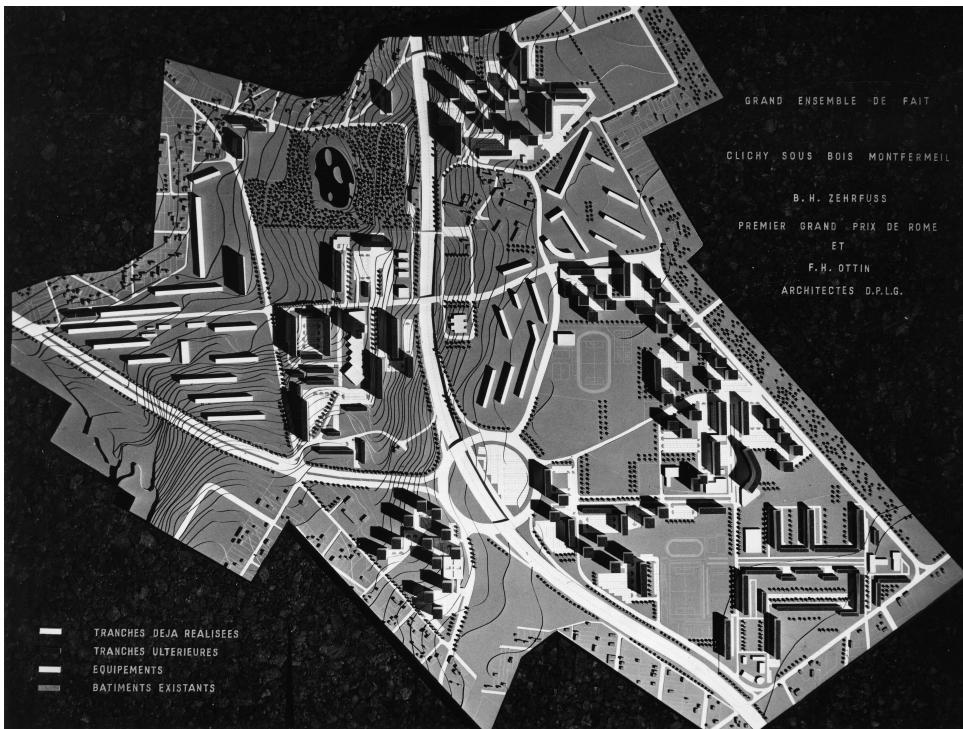


FIGURE 3.3 Bernard Zehrfuss, Clichy-sous-Bois, near Paris, 1960–1965. Courtesy of Fonds Zehrfuss, Cité de l'architecture.

but monumental character of typical housing projects at the time. The overwhelming majority were indeed designed not by Le Corbusier acolytes, but by the country's elite and well-respected corps of Beaux-Arts-trained architects, many of whom were hostile to the ideas of CIAM (International Congresses of Modern Architecture).

How is it possible that France's suburban housing projects are at once divorced from Le Corbusier's work, yet at the same time persistently attributed to be nothing but a poor imitation? What politics of blame and concepts of influence are at work here? This question can be read as a thread through the turbulent reception of Le Corbusier's buildings and writings, including the 2015 controversy about his fascist and anti-Semitic views and the current efforts to list his entire oeuvre as world heritage. At the same time, it is also a prism for understanding the historical forces that have shaped the banlieues. The architectural and political milieus in which Le Corbusier operated in France, the industrial techniques of housing production in the postwar decades, and what we might understand as the shared logic of architects, state officials, developers, and housing organizations during this period, offer different windows into Le Corbusier's paradoxical influence on the banlieues.

Milieus

Three million French people came out of World War II without a home. Housing development had lagged behind for decades and the existing stock was gravely insufficient. A decade

later, blocks and slabs of modern housing had sprung up all over the country. Their apartments all had modern kitchens and fully equipped bathrooms. In 1959, of the 320,000 homes built that year, the vast majority were multi-family housing and more than 90 percent were at least partially state-financed. The housing market was overwhelmingly shaped by government, like many other domains of life during the golden age of the welfare state. Contrary to what is often assumed, the first beneficiaries of these housing projects were not the poorest or immigrants, but predominantly white, middle class French nuclear families. This transformation was neither a simple nor an expected one. Commissioning the country's corps of Beaux-Arts-trained architects, the ministry of reconstruction and urbanism, led by Raoul Dautry, remained unconvinced by the Athens Charter and neglected the discourse of CIAM.⁷ Even though the reconstruction of bombed towns and cities in the 1940s featured an array of styles and approaches, these architects often adopted a regionalist approach focused on restoring the perimeter-block urbanism of destroyed historic centers. Some less traditional solutions included Auguste Perret's stripped-down classicism for Le Havre's reconstruction.

In this context, Le Corbusier's position was at once highly visible and politically marginal. Despite his international renown and the popularity of his writings, he failed to secure large-scale commissions in France, and was unable to realize his urban plans. Saint-Dié is a case in point. For the rebuilding of this small historic town in the Vosges, the ministry commissioned a local Beaux-Arts architect, Jacques André. A local industrial and member of the planning committee, Jean-Jacques Duval, then suggested André work with Le Corbusier. André felt honored to be able to work with the master and agreed, but Le Corbusier proceeded to draw up and present his own plan independently. Local inhabitants and officials vehemently rejected his plan, preferring a solution that would recall the historic fabric destroyed in wartime bombing.⁸ Despite international acclaim for Le Corbusier's project, including an endorsement letter by Philip Johnson, then director of the Department of Architecture at the Museum of Modern Art in New York, Dautry was not swayed to rescue it, and a lightly modified version of André's plan was implemented instead.⁹

Such failures are surprising in light of Le Corbusier's entanglements with the French state during the 1940s. A surge of recent scholarship has emphasized Le Corbusier's involvement with French fascist movements and the wartime, Nazi-collaborating government of Vichy.¹⁰ Some of his views were certainly fascist and anti-Semitic, but more constant and overarching was his belief in authoritarianism.¹¹ That did not mean, however, that authoritarian regimes automatically embraced his ideas. Vichy officials, in fact, did not, despite Le Corbusier's overtures. The regime's newly established urbanism committee in 1943 rejected Le Corbusier's candidacy, aligning itself with the approach of urbanists such as Henri Prost rather than the Athens Charter.¹² After Liberation, the new republic distanced itself from Vichy even though its administrators adopted many of the regime's technocratic approaches to urbanism. In a parallel move, Le Corbusier shed his now embarrassing flirtations with fascism and tried to reshape his position in France and his relationship with the state. Key to this repositioning was the politician Eugène Claudius-Petit. After meeting at a state-sponsored study trip to the United States in 1945, they became lifelong friends.¹³ A fervent advocate of modern architecture, Claudius-Petit supported Le Corbusier throughout the latter's career, and many if not all of the public commissions the architect secured in France were due to the politician's involvement.

It was largely because of such political support that Le Corbusier was able to realize the Unité in Marseille – arguably the architect's only contribution to French Reconstruction.

In August 1945, minister Raoul Dautry commissioned Le Corbusier for a collective housing block, as part of an experimental state-subsidized housing program, on a lot chosen in consultation with the municipality of Marseille. In the eyes of the technocratic Dautry, this historically “red” city, with a communist mayor, Jean Cristofol, would seem naturally receptive to a high-rise social housing type integrating collective amenities.¹⁴ At the same time, Le Corbusier’s concept seemed to dovetail with Claudius-Petit’s ambition of transforming housing into a “real public service.”¹⁵ It might well be that when Claudius-Petit became minister in 1948, he understood the Unité in such socialist terms, but in light of Le Corbusier’s political alliances at the time it is unlikely he did so himself. Moreover, despite being funded by the centralized state, the Unité’s apartments were sold off as private condominiums, further complicating any reading of the building as reflecting a singular ideology – whether socialist, technocratic, fascist, or liberal capitalist.¹⁶

Facing resistance, attack, and ridicule throughout the planning and construction, the Unité would take almost seven years to build. The construction site was threatened with closure because of lack of funds, and Claudius-Petit and Cristofol had to personally intervene.¹⁷ Throughout the process, the project faced public attacks by members of parliament and the national hygiene board, by architects, and even by the association of medical doctors of the department of the Seine. The critiques were less political-ideological than aesthetic, focusing on the project’s massiveness and density.¹⁸ There was even a lawsuit filed against Le Corbusier by the so-called Société d’esthétique générale de la France, denouncing the project as an attack on “the dwelling culture and landscape of France,” and a “violation against elementary rules of hygiene and security.”¹⁹ Their case was judged inadmissible, but it was enough for the popular press to create uproar. By contrast, international architecture journals uniformly celebrated the project, and CIAM organized visits to the construction site in 1949 from Bergamo and again in 1952 from Aix-en-Provence. At the building’s inauguration on 14 October 1952, Claudius-Petit, acknowledging the controversy, lauded the Unité as both an architectural and a political victory.

Despite Claudius-Petit’s continued support, the other Unités faced similar challenges. The second Unité at Rezé, near Nantes, was commissioned by a cooperative housing organization, but the initiative to hire Le Corbusier came from the lawyer Gabriel Chéreau, a member of ASCORAL who had defended Le Corbusier in the Marseille court case.²⁰ Despite much opposition and the local reign of the Beaux-Arts architect Michel Roux-Spitz in Nantes, the city provided loans for the project and the building was inaugurated in 1955.²¹ The third Unité, at Briey-en-Forêt, part of a master plan designed by Georges-Henri Pingusson, a follower of Le Corbusier, was built thanks to the support of politician Philippe Serre and the mayor, Pierre Giry, and was finished just before Giry lost the local election to a fierce critic of Le Corbusier.²² And even for the fourth Unité at Firminy, commissioned by Claudius-Petit himself, after he stepped down as minister and became the mayor of this historically industrial town, Le Corbusier could not be wholeheartedly engaged. Probably out of fear that his constituents would reject his designs, Claudius-Petit hired a team of mostly Beaux-Arts-trained architects for the master plan.²³ Le Corbusier designed only the civic center, stadium, cultural center, church, and three Unités, of which only one was finished, posthumously.

Despite Le Corbusier’s own claim that “since 1945, [he] led the architectural movement in France,” the challenging construction and controversial reception of his Unités and his failure to realize large-scale housing or urban projects in France demonstrate that his influence in France was limited.²⁴ At the same time, largely because of his prolific writing, his ideas loomed

large in architectural and political milieus, even if they were contested by many French architects and critics.²⁵ During the 1950s, however, there were signs that Beaux-Arts-trained architects were coming to terms with Corbusian modernism. The Cercle d'études architecturales, inaugurated in 1952, brought together Beaux-Arts and Prix de Rome-winning architects around the figures of Le Corbusier and Claudius-Petit.²⁶ And at the conference "The Architecture of Large Housing Areas," organized by the Conservatoire National des Arts et Métiers, architects were told it was of capital importance to visit the Unité of Marseille.²⁷ Just as Le Corbusier's position in French architectural and political milieus seemed both central and marginal at the same time, so was his Unité of Marseille both a paradigmatic example of and an exception to the larger production regime that reshaped France in the decades after World War II.

Techniques

Housing production in postwar France was, in significant part, the outcome of particular connections between state and industry forged in the late 1940s. During the first half of the century, home building was still a largely traditional and small-scale affair. In the immediate postwar years, however, state-led reconstruction efforts prompted a fundamental reorganization of the construction industry. The French government initially prioritized the rebuilding of infrastructure – roads, ports, bridges, and railways – over housing. This benefited large-scale firms specialized in concrete construction. By the end of the 1940s, in part because of discontent with an increasingly acute housing shortage, the ministry began to shift its attention to housing and encouraged the same large firms to expand their operations into the prefabrication of housing, to the detriment of small-scale builders.

Crucial to this development was a series of state competitions and experimental programs organized by the ministry of reconstruction and urbanism in the late 1940s and early 1950s. Their aim was to match large construction firms with teams of architects, who would collaborate on finding the most efficient industrial construction techniques for mass housing. By assuming the risks of innovation, the state prompted industry to develop prefabrication techniques that would only be economically viable for production in very large quantities. The competition of Strasbourg, for the construction of eight hundred housing units, had stringent requirements of cost and density, which led to repetitive schemes of blocks and slabs in most competition entries. The nominated competition entries demonstrated the advantages of heavy concrete prefabrication and were built across the nation in the 1950s.

The techniques themselves were not novel. Architects first began to use concrete panels for housing construction in the early 1900s, and Ernst May had used such techniques on a large scale for the housing estates of New Frankfurt. In the 1940s, companies such as Raymond Camus's developed patents for floor-to-ceiling concrete panels, to be fabricated in remote or on-site factories and lifted into place by cranes on rails (Figure 3.4). Camus became enormously successful with factories across France and globally, in large part because of French state commissions.²⁸ During the 1950s and 1960s, construction companies such as Camus's built an increasing number of large-scale housing projects. Even though they achieved higher productivity per man-hour and a reduction in construction time, their methods failed to meet cost and productivity objectives. They were not a product of the market but of France's political and administrative structure, shaped by large bureaucracies and government elites.²⁹



Immeuble HLM du Parc des Courtilières à Pantin
(S.E.R.P.E.C.) AILLAUD, Architecte

procédés industriels de construction

RAYMOND CAMUS



Cité de Méricourt (Camus-Génie Civil de Lens)

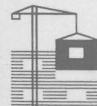


Groupe de Farebersviller (Camus-Dietsch)

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construits
depuis 1950

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Gain de temps

Souplesse de l'expression architecturale:
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les plus diverses : pavillons individuels,
ensembles de grand standing, groupes d'H.L.M.



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RAYMOND CAMUS & C^{ie}

CAMUS-DIETSCH
usine à Marienau-les-Forbach (Moselle)

C. G. C. L.
usines à COURCHELETTES (Nord)
et à Fort de Scarpe DOUAI (Nord)

S. E. R. P. E. C.
usine à MONTESSON (S.-&O.)

R. L. Dreyfus

FIGURE 3.4 Raymond Camus construction system. *L'Architecture Française* (October 1959): 205–206.

Le Corbusier also participated in the Strasbourg competition. His entry, featuring three parallel Unités on an otherwise open, park-like terrain, placed only fourth (Figures 3.5A and 3.5B). For the construction, he proposed prefabricated room-wide U-shaped concrete elements, but it remained unclear how the frame itself was to be produced. Why is it that the champion of industrialized architecture – who three decades earlier already promoted the revolutionary

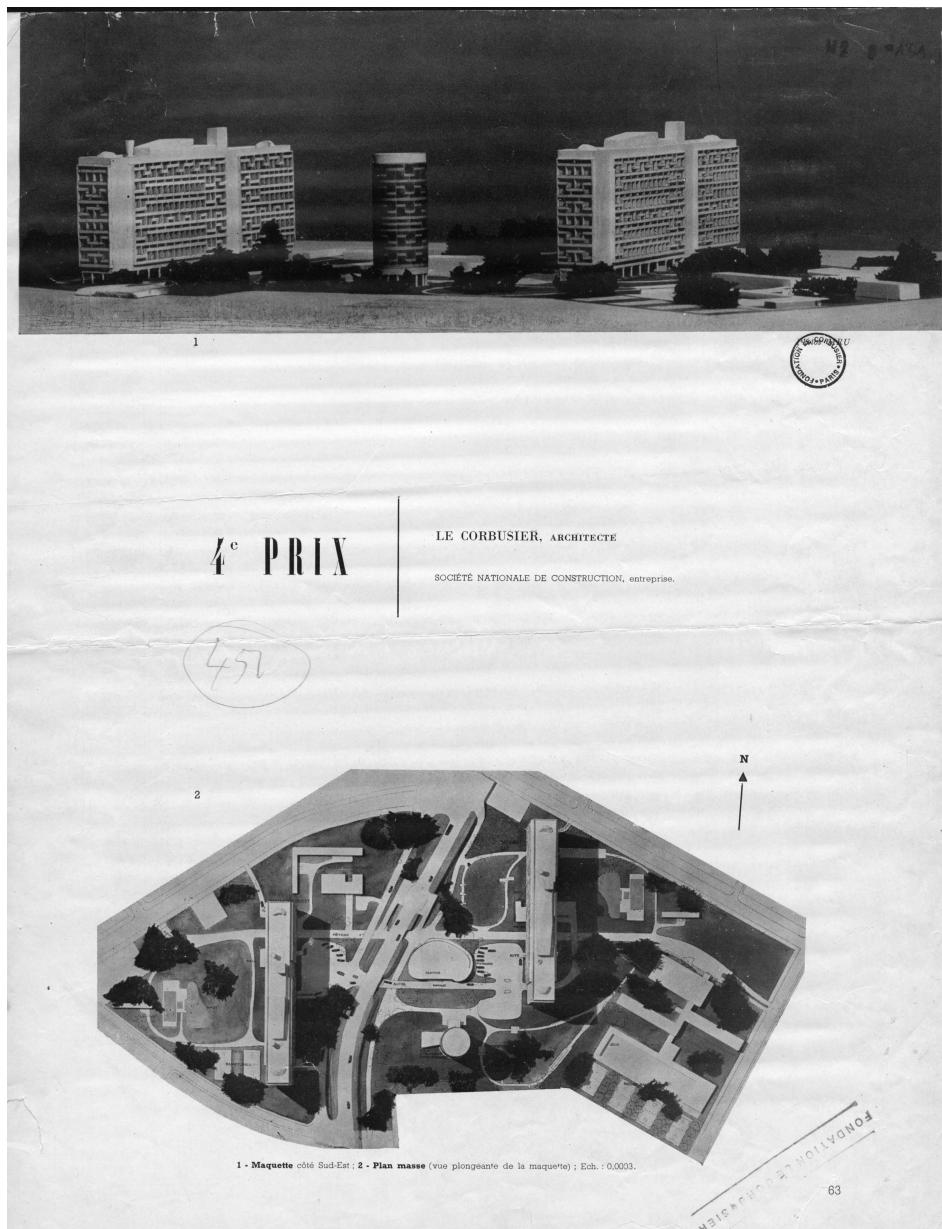


FIGURE 3.5A Le Corbusier's entry for the Strasbourg competition, 1951. Courtesy of Fondation Le Corbusier M2–5–131.

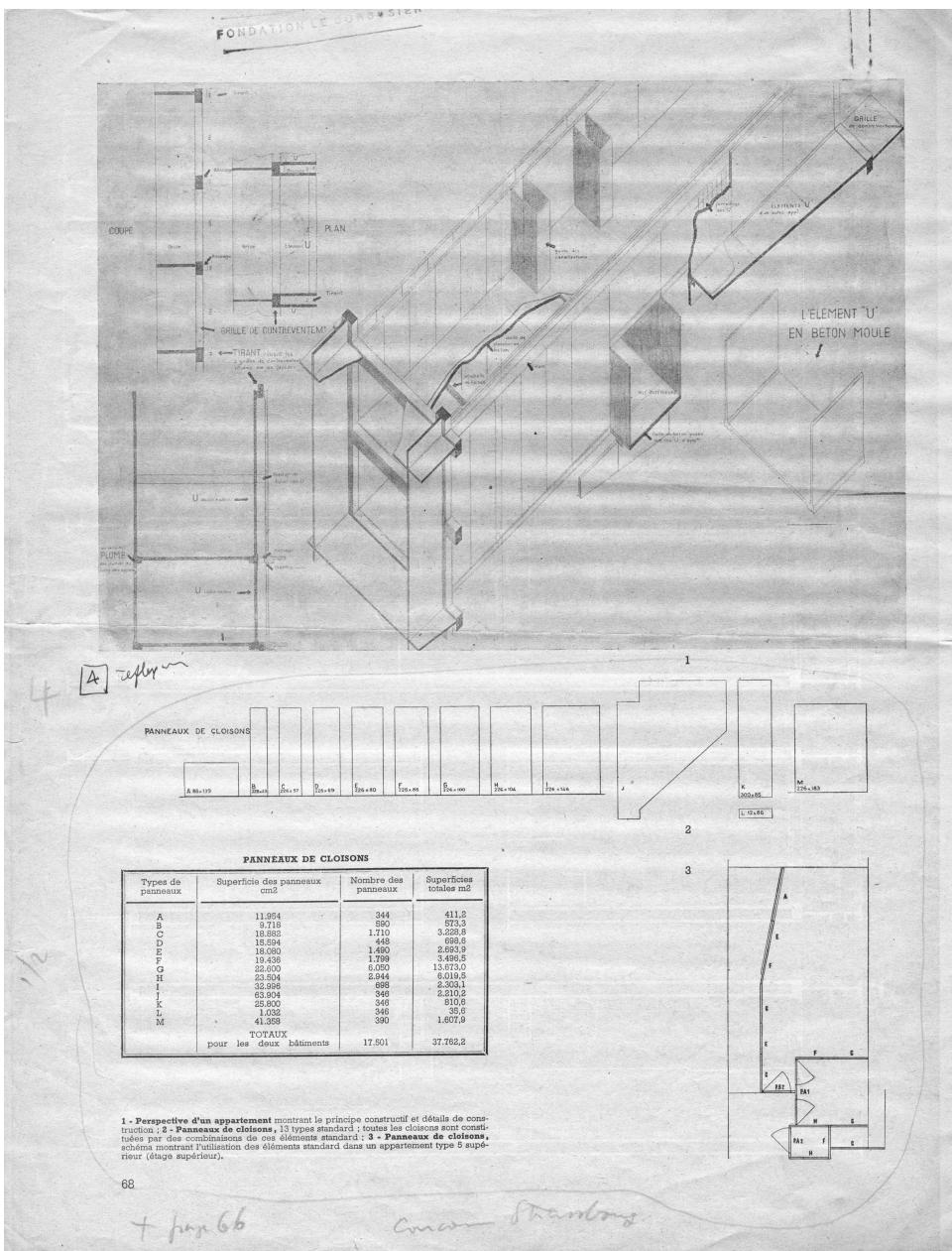


FIGURE 3.5B Le Corbusier's entry for the Strasbourg competition, 1951. Courtesy of Fondation Le Corbusier M2–5–131.

idea to produce architecture just like cars, in an assembly line – was so overtly sidelined? Le Corbusier's lack of success in postwar France was certainly not for lack of trying. In the late 1940s, the architect repeatedly offered his expertise to the ministry, on subjects that were central to its ambition for industrialized construction. Le Corbusier even asked Claudio-Petit to create a service within the ministry devoted to standardization along the lines of the Modulor, but without success.³⁰ He went as far as to offer the ministry a strategic plan for “developing a real industrialization of housing,” entirely for free.³¹ It did not garner a response, leading Le Corbusier to write letters complaining about having never been consulted, despite his expertise.³²

Considering his ambitions in the realm of industrialized construction, the Unité of Marseille was a surprisingly artisanal product. The original idea of the Unité was to have dwelling “cells” slotted into a three-dimensional structural lattice, like bottles in a bottle rack. Le Corbusier imagined the lattice in steel, but postwar economic restrictions did not allow for this.³³ During the planning phase, his engineer, Vladimir Bodiansky, was forced to shift to reinforced concrete for the structure. Construction advanced slowly, in part because of material shortages, and in part because dozens of small contractors were involved. This explains the marked differences in quality and texture of the poured concrete, particularly visible on the building’s undercroft (Figure 3.6). The building was eventually made out of an almost unbelievable mass of poured concrete, about which Lucio Costa would later comment: “it was an absurdity to



FIGURE 3.6 Le Corbusier, Unité d’Habitation, Marseille, Casting of the undercroft, 1945–1952. Courtesy of Fondation Le Corbusier.

erect such a mass in concrete, [...] such a primitive method.”³⁴ Primitive was also how state administrators looking to speed up housing production would have perceived the Unité at this time. How could a building which required so much manual labor be able to address France’s acute housing shortage?

Unable to employ his preferred technique, Le Corbusier turned the imposed use of poured concrete at the Unité to his advantage.³⁵ Asked why his building was so poorly executed, he exalted the roughness of the unequal joints, wood fibers, and knots impressed by the casting.³⁶ Looking back, Le Corbusier later claimed that *béton brut* was born at the Unité d’habitation at Marseille, “where there were 80 contractors and such a massacre of concrete that one simply could not dream of making useful transitions by means of grouting. I decided: let us leave all that brute. I called it ‘béton brut’.”³⁷ Yet despite this rhetorical move, Le Corbusier did not stop trying to industrialize the Unité in its subsequent iterations.³⁸ He insisted on the use of steel, or if not, prestressed concrete, but both turned out to be too expensive. The only innovation was the use of a load-bearing concrete wall structure per bay of 3.66 m, resting on inclined pillars.³⁹ The reason, then, why the Unité did not become the prototype for mass housing in France was not only political, but also technical: Le Corbusier and his team failed to find an efficient method of industrial production.

Asked by the international journal *Prefabrication* for a contribution to its first issue in 1953, Le Corbusier wrote that “[T]here will be no prefabrication if we do not dispose of a range of dimensions at the human scale and is this range is not adopted in the entire world.” He was obviously referring to his Modulor, an anthropometric scale of proportions first published 1947, and applied in the Unité de Marseille. “Prefabrication needs to be able to be undertaken spontaneously, isolatedly, individually, in all places on earth, and that it [...] is capable of adjusting automatically.”⁴⁰ This approach was anathema to how state and corporate industry approached prefabrication, namely based on economies of scale that were heavy, centralized, capital-intensive, and thus ultimately inflexible. Le Corbusier’s postwar approach to industrialization differed in fact fundamentally from that of French state and industry. The Modulor – and the short-lived revival of interest in human proportion during the immediate postwar decade more generally – can thus be seen as a way to counteract the growing dominance of the state-sponsored building industry in shaping the techniques and forms of housing.⁴¹ Prefabrication and industrialized building systems might have offered prospects of direct involvement for architects, but in reality they more often reduced architects’ role. Proportional systems such as the Modulor promised not just to re-humanize architecture, but also put the architect back at the center of housing construction. The transformation of French housing production in the postwar decades was based on the promises of industrialization to mass-produce housing units of approved, standard quality in inexpensive and expeditious ways. The Unité lacked such technological advance, despite Le Corbusier’s ideals of mass production going back to the early twentieth century. If Le Corbusier’s role was not so much in supplying the actual master plans or the concrete techniques of mass housing projects, it may lie in his articulation of the widely shared logics that made them possible.

Logics

Le Corbusier’s influence on the making of the banlieues is often attributed to his urban visions of the 1920s and 1930s. Riboud claimed that France’s postwar housing projects were poor copies of Le Corbusier’s Ville radieuse proposal, which he had begun working on in

1924 and published in France as a book in 1935.⁴² The Ville radieuse adopted the basic concepts of the 1922 Ville contemporaine – high-rise housing in abundant green space structured by a circulation grid – and formed the basis for his conception of the Unité. This urban vision was further synthesized in his widely read book *Les trois établissements humains* of 1945 (Figure 3.7).⁴³

At first sight, a large housing estate such as that of Sarcelles strongly resembles Le Corbusier's urban vision of blocks and slabs in a sea of green (Figure 3.8c). Its developer and landlord was the Société centrale immobilière de la Caisse des dépôts (SCIC, or Central Real Estate Company of the Deposits and Consignments Fund), established in 1954 to boost the construction of mass housing. Despite its notoriety as "Europe's largest construction site," the project of Sarcelles was built incrementally between 1955 and 1976 and not according to a comprehensive plan drawn up at the outset. This disjunction between the theory and reality of planning was a consequence of the difficulties of land acquisition during the 1950s. Its first phase, drawn up in 1955 by Beaux-Arts architects Jacques-Henri Labourdette and Roger Boileau, who remained in charge of future planning, was for about 440 housing units in four four-story slabs placed rectilinearly around a large green space

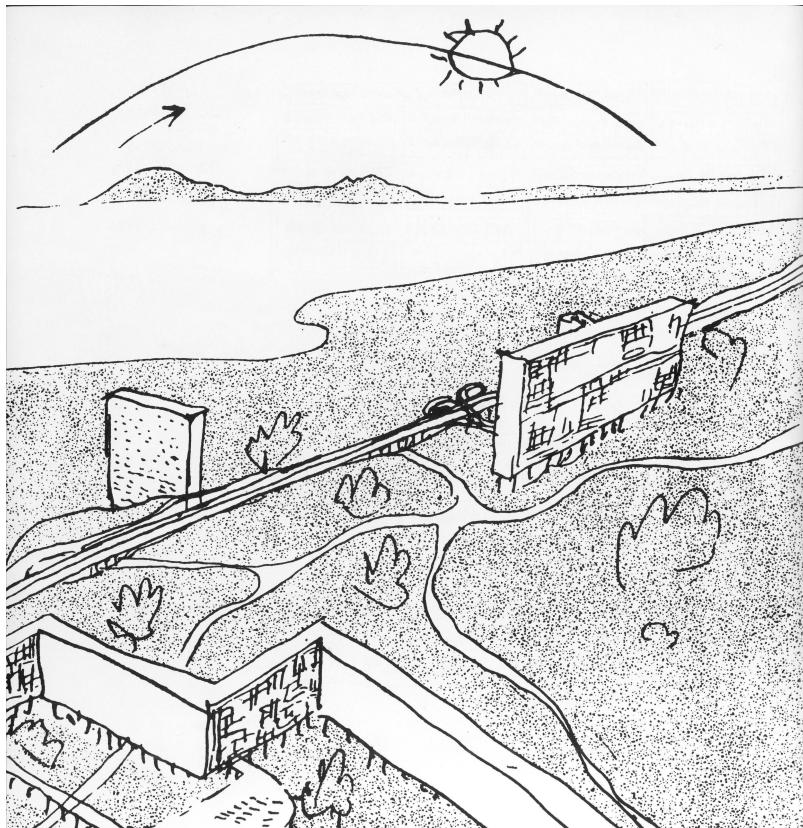


FIGURE 3.7 Sketch from Le Corbusier, *Les trois établissements humains* (Paris: Editions Denoël, Collection ASCORAL, 1945).

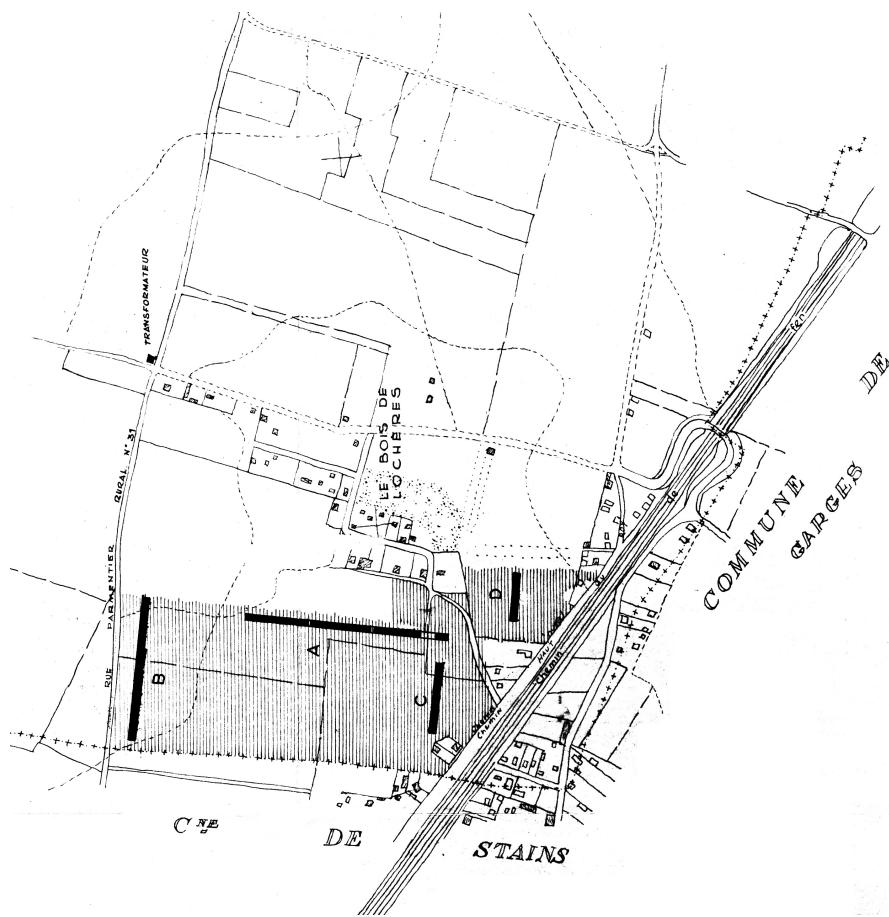


FIGURE 3.8A The grand ensemble of Sarcelles by Jacques Henri-Labourdette and Roger Boileau. First phase, built between 1955 and 1957. Courtesy of Archives municipales de Sarcelles.

(Figure 3.8A). A second phase of 1,180 units was begun in 1956 (Figure 3.8b). Unlike the earlier phase, plans for the second included an impressive collection of collective amenities – including a market, a commercial center, and several schools. Only in the early 1960s, when SCIC was finally able to purchase the necessary land, was an overall master plan drawn (Figure 3.8C). The plan indicated subsequent phases of development and set out a grid of roads delineating distinct neighborhood units. While the architects later claimed that the absence of a detailed master plan for Sarcelles was intentional, the strictures of private property and messiness of expropriation got in the way of even the most ambitious government projects. In typical projects, including Sarcelles, Épinay-sur-Seine, or Massy-Antony, the housing blocks were arranged in an orthogonal grid delineating the different neighborhood units, not unlike the pattern of an electronic chip. The dictum of light, air,

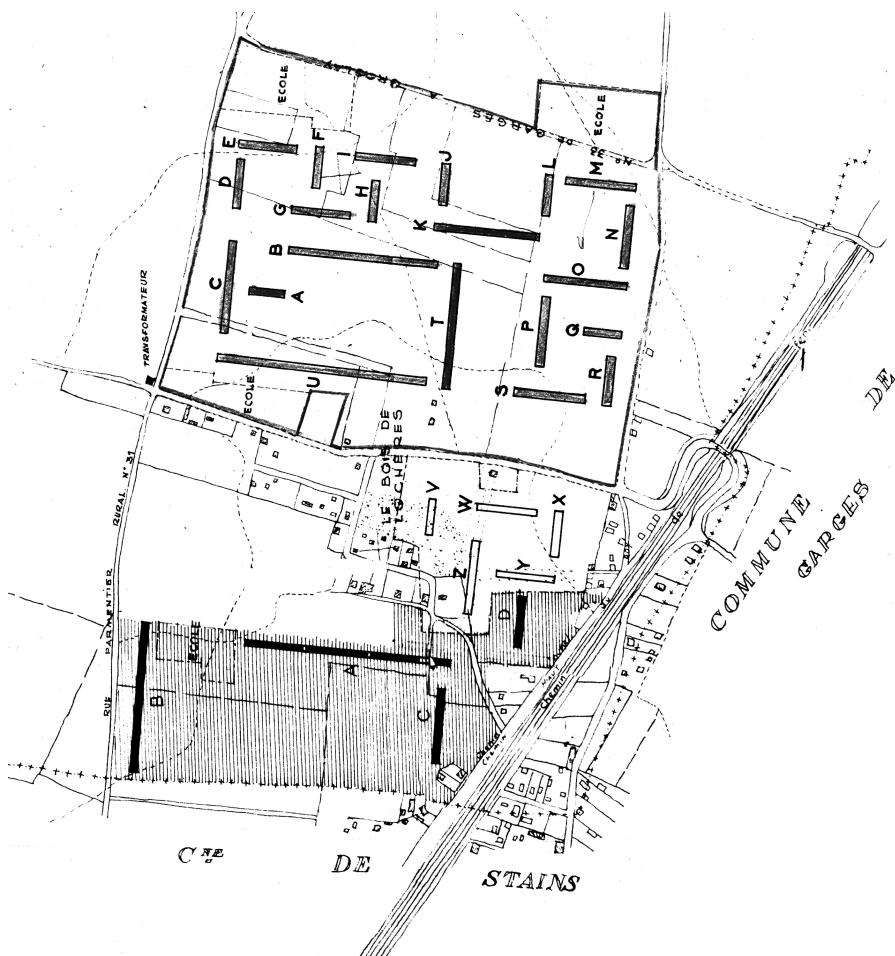


FIGURE 3.8B The grand ensemble of Sarcelles by Jacques Henri-Labourdette and Roger Boileau, second phase, plan of around 1958. Courtesy of Archives municipales de Sarcelles.

and openness created a spatial framework in which housing slabs and blocks as well as collective facilities could be plugged in as independent entities.

What tied Le Corbusier's urban vision to the concrete planning of postwar housing areas then, more than architects' formal imitations, was a particular rationality of land use. That rationality was not just an architectural one, and it was shared by state officials and housing organizations, those who ultimately commissioned the architects. Le Corbusier articulated this logic most clearly in a 1948 article published in the French demography journal *Population*, the readers of which were government officials and other social scientists. In this article, simply entitled "L'habitation moderne," Le Corbusier presented the Unité as a prototype whose mass production could solve the nation's housing crisis. His rational defense of collective living was fueled by a virulent condemnation of the single-family home and

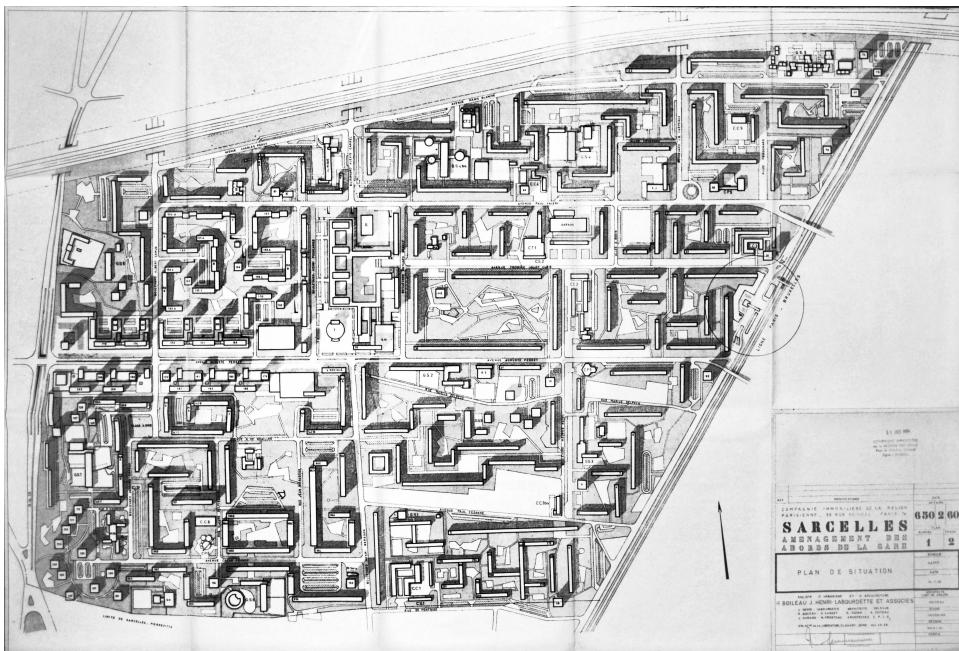


FIGURE 3.8C The grand ensemble of Sarcelles by Jacques Henri-Labourdette and Roger Boileau, master plan of around 1964. Courtesy of Archives municipales de Sarcelles.

its concomitant suburban fabric (Figure 3.9). This vision dovetailed with that of many state planners, for whom collective housing was the only efficient and modern solution to the acute housing shortage at the time. It also tied in with engrained cultural perceptions of suburban living as a petit bourgeois nightmare.⁴⁴ The interwar suburbs of Paris with their allotments of self-build cottages lacking basic road infrastructure and utilities confirmed such views.⁴⁵ It might not be a coincidence that Le Corbusier garnered the support of the French demographer Alfred Sauvy around this time. Sauvy visited the Unité in Marseille twice, and saw it as the perfect strategy for an orderly distribution of the French population over the national territory.⁴⁶ This would require the consolidation of suburban land and therefore the state-led reorganization of individual landownership. But the proposed reform of “chaotic” land ownership structures under liberal capitalism was not necessarily a socialist project; it was simply technocratic. Land consolidation through expropriation was exactly what French planning legislation made possible in the course of the 1950s, allowing authorities to curb land speculation and secure large areas of land for state-led housing and planning projects.

In contrast to the approach of state planners, however, Le Corbusier’s vision was still, perhaps first and foremost, focused on the architectural object. More precisely, his interest was in the relationship between the Unité’s qualities as a sculptural form and its role in the shaping of territory.⁴⁷ Resulting from an experimental government housing program, the Unité of Marseille is often understood as an isolated prototype. Yet throughout its planning, Le Corbusier

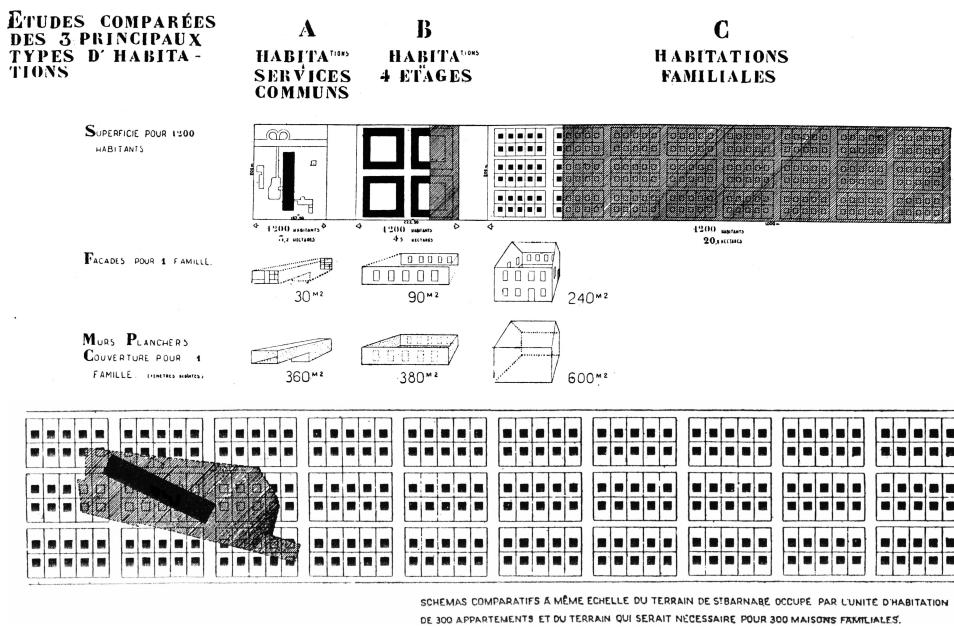


FIGURE 3.9 Land use rationality of the Unité d'habitation, containing the same number of dwellings as the suburban allotment, shown for comparison. Le Corbusier, “L’habitation moderne” *Population* 3, 3 (1948): 424.

worked on a master plan for “Marseille-Sud,” in which the Unité would fit (Figure 3.10). The plan was structured around a hierarchy of circulation networks, and contained three Unités. Despite having been commissioned by the ministry, Le Corbusier’s proposal was ignored and his work apparently left unpaid.⁴⁸ The Unité that was eventually built at the boulevard Michelet, however, was designed as a piece of this unrealized plan, with the boulevard as one of its circulation arteries.⁴⁹

Perhaps ironically, Le Corbusier’s urban vision for the Unité seemed closer to the ideals of state-led planning than its actual bureaucratic practices. Unlike the Unité of Marseille, part of an experimental program, and the one at Rezé, result of a unique commission, Briey-en-Forêt was more typical of bureaucratic production as it solidified in the 1950s. The urban plan, drawn by Pingusson, created the context for the insertion of the Unité. During its construction, however, the project was cut short, and several planned public amenities were never built. This was not uncommon, and the inhabitants of new housing areas often complained about the lack of amenities. Ultimately, Briey-en-Forêt’s Unité ended up as a solitary block in the middle of a forest, denying the fact that it was planned as part of a comprehensive new neighborhood. Even though the project fell short of Le Corbusier’s conviction that the architectural object could shape the territory, rather than vice versa, Pingusson effectively realized the pastoral ideal of an architecture embedded in nature (Figure 3.11).⁵⁰

The division between architectural design and urban planning in postwar France was not absolute, and rather a consequence of bureaucratic organization more than explicit policy.

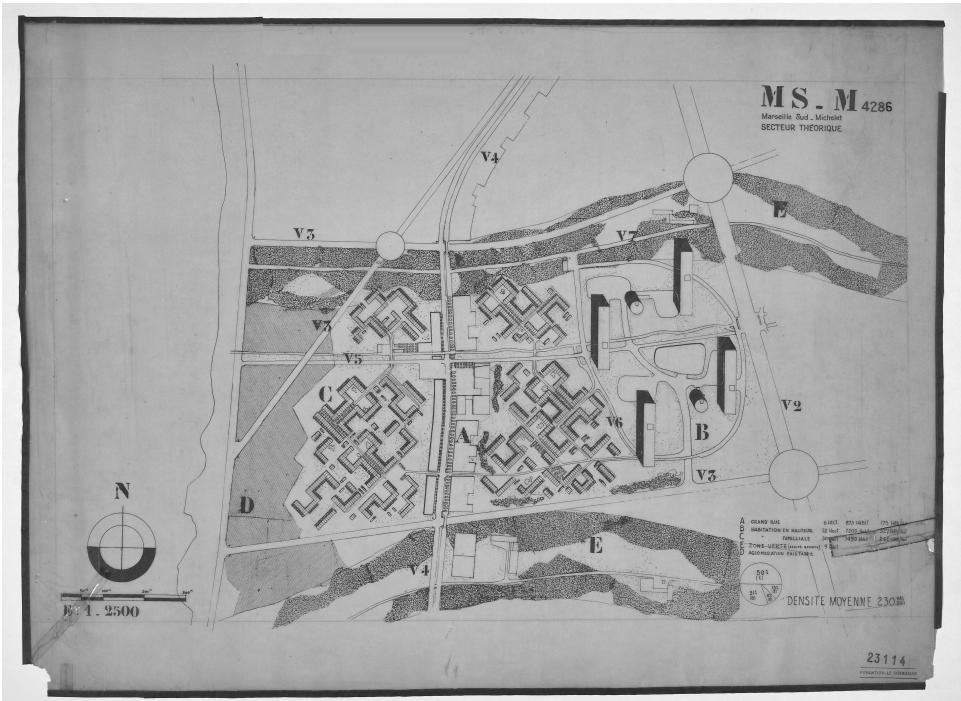


FIGURE 3.10 Le Corbusier, Project for Marseille-Sud, 1946. Courtesy of Fondation Le Corbusier.



FIGURE 3.11 Le Corbusier, Unité d'habitation, Briey-en-Forêt, aerial photograph, 1957–1961. Courtesy of Fondation Le Corbusier.

This became most evident in the planning of collective amenities. For the Unité in Marseille, the nursery school was initially planned to be on the ground, next to the block, just like the collective amenities at Sarcelles. Le Corbusier subsequently decided it should be on the roof, and despite explicit ministry demands to the contrary, it was built as such. For the other Unités, Le Corbusier continued to insist on having public amenities on the rooftop, but the nursery school at Briey-en-Forêt ended up being built on a plot next to the Unité. For typical mass housing projects, the budgets for housing and for collective amenities came out of separate ministries, which made programmatic mixing inside a single building complicated. The reasons for this were both financial and bureaucratic. The idea of integrating collective amenities was gradually lost in subsequent Unités – including Le Corbusier’s “street in the air.”⁵¹ Only in the late 1960s did the state begin to launch new programs explicitly aimed at functional integration.

As typical projects such as that of Sarcelles illustrate, Le Corbusier’s ideas about the rational organization of dwelling were broadly shared by government officials and architects, even if they did not share his approach to architectural form. The latter explains essential differences between the Unités (as planned and as built), and the typical production of suburban housing estates in the 1950s and 1960s. Most remarkably, Le Corbusier’s idea of a “city in a building” was anathema to the bureaucratic organization of housing and public amenities, internally divided within the apparatus of the welfare state. Le Corbusier’s influence, then, is evidenced not in directly shaping the bureaucratic production machine of French housing, nor in the formal imitation of his Unité as such, but rather in the underlying technocratic logic he articulated through his designs.

Repercussions

After state funding for the production of large-scale housing estates and new towns dwindled with the economic crises and restructuring of the 1970s, it seemed as if the social project of architecture had become a social problem. At the end of three decades of phenomenal economic growth in France, the repercussions of rising unemployment and institutional racism were increasingly anchored to a particular type of environment: the modern housing estate. As white middle class families moved out to newer, single-family home suburbs when they could, many of these estates gradually became the place of the immigrant poor. The new, privately developed suburbs boomed, while collective housing busted. Riots have taken place in France’s high-rise suburbs since the late 1970s, and the “hot summer” of 1981 at Les Minguettes in the suburbs of Lyon was the first to receive national media coverage. Since then, the housing estates have increasingly appeared in the popular imagination as no-go zones plagued by intractable violence, poverty, and crime. At the same time, France’s postcolonial youth have recast them both as the crucible of francophone hip-hop culture and as the symbol of their persistent exclusion from French society.

In this context, it is no surprise that modern architecture was vilified. Facing the unforeseen consequences of France’s rapid postwar growth, architects and politicians now denounced the architectural principles undergirding much of what had been built in previous decades. Lamenting the loss of traditional urbanity, a younger generation of architects rehabilitated traditional urban and architectural forms as the basis for suburban development. The housing projects of Ricardo Bofill in French New Towns, such as Les Espaces d’Abraxas in the New Town of Marne-la-Vallée, epitomize this shifting approach.

Despite the project's revolutionary claims, however, many basic features – from its prefabricated construction to the logic of the comprehensive master plan – did not fundamentally set it apart from its modernist predecessors. Architectural postmodernism postured as the savior of urbanity, while relegating modernism to the dustbin of history. In this process of epistemological effacing and reordering, the Athens Charter came to stand conveniently as pars pro toto for modernism at large.

Nevertheless, the fortunes of the banlieues and Le Corbusier's work in particular seem to have evolved in a peculiar countermovement. The more the banlieues degraded and the more its inhabitants revolted, the more Le Corbusier became canonized and his creations framed as works of art rather than built and lived environments. Le Corbusier increasingly became the business of museums and preservation, to the extent to which his entire oeuvre is now being put forward for inscription on the UNESCO World Heritage List.⁵² Meanwhile, the first of France's suburban housing projects was demolished in 1977 and the ambition to demolish the entire housing stock of France's troubled banlieues has only grown since. This divergence has also been reproduced in scholarship, with art historians revering Le Corbusier as an author and urban historians uncovering the problematic and complex genesis of the banlieues. Yet the question of influence – of Le Corbusier's role in the making of the French postwar suburbs – continues to resist any such neat categorization between original and imitation, between genius artwork and destitute housing.

The polemic around Le Corbusier has recently resurfaced, following the opening of an exhibition on his work at the Pompidou Center in 2015 and the publication of three books about the architect's politics.⁵³ Rather than a technocrat who would have worked for any regime that would build his projects, these books insist, Le Corbusier held explicitly fascist views and maintained close links with fascist politicians and thinkers. Despite their claims to novelty, these books leave tired assumptions surprisingly intact. Marc Perelman's *Le Corbusier: A Cold Vision of the World*, insists that Le Corbusier has

brought almost the entire Modern Movement into what I qualify as a cold direction. Moreover, the link between the ideas and realizations of Le Corbusier and the post-war architecture of slabs and towers, producing the so-numerous hopeless cities we know, cannot be dismissed because they would only amount to a dérive, to excesses or a derailment of a fundamentally generous idea [...] On the contrary, Le Corbusier's vision of the world, it seems to me, to be consistent with the most hated productions of the postwar period globally.⁵⁴

This assumption, that the modernism of the banlieues amounts to Le Corbusier, is essentially Riboud's argument of 1968.

Why is it that nothing has fundamentally changed in the debate, despite the recurring comebacks of Le Corbusier as the great hero and main villain of a now defunct modernism? Is it, as Antoine Picon has recently suggested, because heaping insults on Le Corbusier might defer an awareness of modernism's historical closure that is much harder to face?⁵⁵ Whatever the reasons, the duel between those revering and those denouncing Le Corbusier continues to deprive the debates about modernism of analytical power. This allows the Unité to be either excluded from critiques of mass housing – as architects have done since the mid-1950s – or to categorically blame Le Corbusier for the making of a suburban condition that is in fact much more complex in the making.

The problem with handing out blame is not that it would incriminate the wrong culprits, but rather that it reduces the history of a significant part of the urbanized world to a singular error. Similarly, the idea of a linear, one-directional influence, derived from the traditions of art history, does little to elucidate the complex relationship between Le Corbusier and the making of the banlieues. The architect's influence can be more productively understood as the inscription and transformation of formal and social ideas in fields far removed from architectural culture, but that were most directly implicated in the spatial transformation of postwar France. Such a shift in perspective might just offer one way out of simply blaming modern architecture, whether Le Corbusier's or not, for France's deeply entrenched social problems.

Notes

- 1 Christopher Caldwell, "Revolted High Rises," *New York Times* (November 17, 2005).
- 2 "Les grands ensembles en dominos, à la géométrie froide et sévère, construit partout en France, aussi bien dans les grandes villes que dans les petites, dérivent de ses enseignements. Pour s'en convaincre, il suffit de rapprocher l'image maintenant classique de ces ensembles en dominos, des croquis dont il a illustré ses livres." Jacques Riboud, *Les erreurs de le Corbusier et leurs conséquences* (Paris: Mazarine, 1968), 46.
- 3 Quote by M. Jean Niermans, "Ancien pensionnaire de l'académie de France à Rome, Architecte en Chef des Palais Nationaux," in *Les erreurs de le Corbusier et leurs conséquences*. Edited by Jacques Riboud (Paris: Mazarine, 1968), 43.
- 4 See Gérard Monnier, *Le Corbusier: Les unités d'habitation en France* (Paris: Belin-Herscher, 2002), 18.
- 5 Monnier, *Le Corbusier*, 172–179.
- 6 See Christine Desmoulins, *Bernard Zehrfuss* (Paris: Infolio, 2008); Robert Auzelle, *Technique de l'urbanisme* (Paris: Presses universitaires de France, 1953).
- 7 Rémi Baudouï, *Raoul Dautry, 1880–1951: Le technocrate de la République* (Paris: Baland, 1992), 305–308.
- 8 Baudouï, *Raoul Dautry*, 313–316.
- 9 Peter Clericuzio, "Le Corbusier and the Reconstruction of Saint-Dié: The Debate over Modernism in France, 1944–46," *Chicago Art Journal*, 20 (2010): 46–71.
- 10 François Chaslin, *Un Corbusier* (Paris: Le Seuil, 2015); Xavier de Jarcy, *Le Corbusier, un fascisme français* (Paris: Albin Michel, 2015); Marc Perelman, *Le Corbusier, une froide vision du monde* (Paris: Michalon, 2015).
- 11 See the response of Antoine Picon, director of the Fondation Le Corbusier: "Qui a peur de Le Corbusier?" (Interview with Antoine Picon), *Le Point* (April 25, 2015).
- 12 Danièle Voldman, *La Reconstruction des villes françaises de 1940 à 1954: Histoire d'une politique* (Paris: L'Harmattan, 1997), 62.
- 13 Benoît Pouvreau, "La politique d'aménagement du territoire d'Eugène Claudius-Petit," *Vingtième siècle: Revue d'histoire*, 79 (2003): 43–52.
- 14 Baudouï, *Raoul Dautry*, 306.
- 15 Eugène Claudius-Petit (*Journal Officiel*, March 5, 1945, 284–297), cited by Monnier, *Le Corbusier*, 33.
- 16 Monnier, *Le Corbusier*, 65.
- 17 Monnier, *Le Corbusier*, 54.
- 18 Anatole Kopp, *Le Corbusier et la Méditerranée* (Marseille: Parenthèses, 1987), 179–189; Rémi Baudouï, "Eugène Claudius-Petit (1907–1989), militant de la modernité," in *Hommage à Claudius-Petit (1909–1989), fondateur du corps des architectes-conseil de l'État* (Paris: Thot M, 2007), 29.
- 19 Georges Le Féve, "M. Claudius-Petit a inauguré hier à Marseille la Cité Le Corbusier," *Le Figaro* (October 15, 1952).
- 20 Monnier, *Le Corbusier*, 94.
- 21 Monnier, *Le Corbusier*, 102–103.
- 22 On Briey, see chapter 1 of Sandra Parvu, *Grands ensembles en situation: Journal de bord de quatre chantiers* (Geneva: Métis Presses, 2010).
- 23 See Eugène Claudius-Petit, "Firminy-vert," *L'architecture d'aujourd'hui* (April 1962). Fondation Le Corbusier X2–2–33. The article does not even mention Le Corbusier as designer.
- 24 Quoted in Geoffrey T. Hellman, "Profiles: From Within to Without – II," *New Yorker* (May 3, 1947), 46. Cited in: Mardges Bacon, "Le Corbusier and Postwar America: The TVA and 'Béton Brut,'"

- Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians*, 74, 1 (March 2015): 13–40. Taking Le Corbusier's claim at face value, American scholars continue to overestimate Le Corbusier's position in France.
- 25 M. Christine Boyer, *Le Corbusier, Homme de Lettres* (Princeton: Princeton Architectural Press, 2011).
 - 26 Robert Clarke, "Autour de le Corbusier et de M. Claudius-Petit les architectes français ont cimenté hier une union créatrice," *Ce Matin* (March 15–16, 1952). See also: *Fondation Le Corbusier X1–16–294: Cahiers du Cercle d'Etudes Architecturales* (1952, Numéro spécial).
 - 27 Fondation Le Corbusier X1–18–238, "L'architecture des grands ensembles – Conférences," *L'Architecture d'aujourd'hui*, (1954).
 - 28 Raymond Camus, "Camus Throughout the World," in *Housing from the Factory: Proceedings of the Conference, held at Church House, London, 4–5 October 1962* (London: Cement and Concrete Association, 1962); Maurice Revel, *La préfabrication dans la construction* (Paris: Entreprise Moderne d'Édition, 1966).
 - 29 See for example: Jean-Claude Croizé, "A Time when France Chose to Use Prefabricated Panel Construction Systems: The '4000 logements de la Région Parisienne' Programme (1952–1958)," in *Proceedings of the Second International Congress on Construction History [Volume 1]*. Edited by Malcolm Dunkeld, et al. (Exeter: Short Run Press, 2006): 877–886.
 - 30 "Letter from Le Corbusier to Claudius-Petit, 18 November 1948," Fondation Le Corbusier F2–7–140.
 - 31 "Proposition de mission à donner par le ministre à le Corbusier (mission gratuite mais officielle)," Fondation Le Corbusier E1–16–143.
 - 32 Letter by Le Corbusier to Claudius-Petit, 3 January 1950, Fondation Le Corbusier E1–16–142.
 - 33 Jacques Sbriglio, *L'unité d'habitation de Marseille: Le Corbusier* (Marseille: Parenthèses, 1992), 126.
 - 34 "C'était une absurdité d'ériger une telle messe en béton (...) un procédé tellement primitif," Lucio Costa, (1995), cited by Monnier, *Le Corbusier*, 60.
 - 35 He was also inspired by the texture of poured concrete in Tennessee Valley Authority projects. See Bacon, "Le Corbusier and Postwar America."
 - 36 He described the visual effect as a willful "play between crudity and finesse, between the dull and the intense, between precision and accident." Willy Boesiger, *Le Corbusier: Oeuvre complète*, Vol. 5, 1946–1952 (Birkhäuser: Basel, 1995), 191.
 - 37 Letter from Le Corbusier to José Lluis Sert, 26 May 1962, reproduced in: Eduard Sekler and William Curtis, *Le Corbusier at Work: The Genesis of the Carpenter Center for Visual Arts* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1978), 302.
 - 38 The architect relied on the technical expertise of the Atelier des Bâtisseurs (ATBAT), led by Vladimir Bodiansky and subsequently André Wogenscky, and after the latter left in 1956, on external engineering firms. See Monnier, *Le Corbusier*, 164.
 - 39 Monnier, *Le Corbusier*, 169.
 - 40 "Il faut que la préfabrication puisse être entreprise spontanément, isolément, individuellement, en tous lieux de la terre mais quelle puisse atteindre au but, c'est à dire le logis, l'immeuble de tous les horizons et qu'elle soit capable de s'ajuster automatiquement" Le Corbusier in: *Prefabrication, the International Monthly for New Building Techniques*, 1, 1 (November 1953), 29. See also "Letter from Prefabrication, the International Monthly for New Building Techniques, on 2 October 1953," Fondation Le Corbusier T1–8–297.
 - 41 Eva-Marie Neumann, "Architectural Proportion in Britain, 1945–1957," *Architectural History*, 39 (1996): 197–221.
 - 42 Le Corbusier, *La Ville Radieuse* (Paris: Éditions de l'Architecture d'Aujourd'hui, 1935).
 - 43 Le Corbusier, *Les trois établissements humains* (Paris: Editions Denoël, Collection ASCORAL, 1945).
 - 44 Susanne Magri, "Le pavillon stigmatisé: Grands ensembles et maisons individuelles dans la sociologie des années 1950 à 1970," *L'année sociologique*, 58, 1 (2008): 171–202.
 - 45 Annie Fourcaut, *La banlieue en morceaux: La crise des lotissement défectueux en France dans l'entre-deux-guerre* (Grâne: Créaphis, 2000).
 - 46 Letter from Alfred Sauvy (INED) to the Minister of Reconstruction (P. Lemaire), January 31, 1955, Fondation Le Corbusier Q1–13–658.
 - 47 This is the subject of analysis of Sandra Parvu, *Grands ensembles en situation* (Geneva: MétisPresses, 2011).
 - 48 According to the record, Claudius-Petit commissioned Wogenscky in July 1950 for a study of Marseille-Sud, but the contract was not recognized by the department, which failed to remunerate Le Corbusier. See Letter from Le Corbusier to Meyer Heine, MRY, September 25, 1952. Fondation Le Corbusier, O1–18–24.

- 49 Boesiger, *Le Corbusier*, 99.
- 50 See chapter 1 of Parvu, *Grands ensembles en situation*.
- 51 Sandra Parvu, *Grands ensembles en situation*, 44–46.
- 52 See “The Architectural and Urban Work of Le Corbusier: An Outstanding Universal Heritage of the ‘Modern Movement’.” Accessed from the *Fondation Le Corbusier Website*, www.fondationlecorbusier.fr/CorbuCache/2049_3253.pdf (accessed March 3, 2016).
- 53 Chaslin, *Un Corbusier*; de Jarcy, *Le Corbusier*; Marc Perelman, *Le Corbusier*.
- 54 “J'estime que l'architecte (...) a entraîné presque l'ensemble du Mouvement moderne dans ce que je qualifie de courant froid. Par ailleurs, le lien entre les idées et les réalisations de Le Corbusier et l'architecture de barres et de tours de l'après-guère, produisant les si nombreuses villes désespérantes que l'on connaît, ne peut pas être évacué parce qu'elles ne correspondraient qu'à une dérive, à les excès ou à un dévoiement d'une idée à l'origine généreuse. (...) La vision du monde de Le Corbusier me semble, à l'inverse, dans une grande cohérence avec les productions les plus détestables des années de l'après-Seconde Guerre mondiale.” Perelman, *Le Corbusier*, 11.
- 55 Antoine Picon, “Help! Le Corbusier Is back, or, the Difficulty of Being Postmodern,” *Le Visiteur – Revue Critique d'Architecture*, 21 (November 2015): 312–317.

PART II

Transfer



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4

EDVARD RAVNIKAR'S ECLECTICISM OF TASTE AND THE POLITICS OF APPROPRIATION

Vladimir Kulic

The capital of Slovenia is typically associated with Jože Plečnik, the architect who shaped the city so decisively that it is often dubbed “Plečnik's Ljubljana.” Such identification between an architect and his city is perhaps paralleled only by Antoni Gaudí and Barcelona. An impartial look, however, would reveal that Ljubljana was shaped just as extensively by another architect, Plečnik's most successful student, Edvard Ravnikar (1907–1993), who designed some of the city's most important urban spaces and buildings. Indeed, in the period after World War II, Ravnikar was for Ljubljana and for Slovenian architecture in general precisely what Plečnik had been during the interwar period: the most important national architect, the designer of key sites of Slovenia's nationhood, and a charismatic teacher responsible for educating generations of architects. Ravnikar's influence was truly profound: during his thirty-six years of official teaching at the Faculty of Architecture in Ljubljana, he mentored an astonishing 659 thesis projects, giving rise to a veritable “Ravnikar School” of disciples. In collaboration with his students, he was instrumental not only in bringing Slovenia's architectural profession up to date with the latest achievements of international modernism, but also in establishing there the separate disciplines of urban planning and modern design.¹

From the perspective of the current age of starchitecture, however, Ravnikar appears an unlikely candidate for such distinction. Instead of establishing an easily identifiable signature style, he built his career on serial appropriation, creating a highly referential oeuvre that hybridized an increasingly diverse range of source materials. His most important projects hold together elements, concepts, and approaches that are normally understood as incongruous – sometimes to the point of being mutually exclusive – to generate unlikely, difficult wholes suspended in a tense balance. Consider, for example, Ljubljana's Revolution Square (today Republic Square). Almost completely shaped by Ravnikar in several stages over a period of more than two decades, the square contains a variety of civic, commercial, commemorative, and infrastructural programs organized in a way that is both monumental and picturesque (Figures 4.1 and 4.9). Its twin towers dominate the city's skyline, but depending on the angle their appearance oscillates between two vastly different interpretations: are they prototypical modernist skyscrapers standing freely in an open homogeneous space, or a modern version



FIGURE 4.1 Edvard Ravnikar, View of Revolution Square (today Republic Square), Ljubljana, 1960–1983. Left: Maximarket department store. Center: Twin office towers. Right: Cankarjev dom conference and cultural center. Courtesy of Wolfgang Thaler.

of Ljubljana's many dual baroque bell towers, organically integrated into the historical urban fabric? The formal and material articulation of the complex similarly refers to several clearly recognizable sources that are rarely mentioned in the same sentence: Semperian tectonic tradition as filtered through Otto Wagner, the gridded logic of the mid-century curtain wall, brutalist structural expressionism, and the organic ripples and undulations of Alvar Aalto. Though eclectic, such a complex synthesis was no accident; it was the deliberate product of an erudite mind, shaped by a thorough knowledge of modern architecture and personal contacts with some of its leading figures.

Ravnikar was formed as an architect between his experience as a student and collaborator of Plečnik, and his brief stint at Le Corbusier's studio in Paris in the late 1930s. He quickly transcended being a mere epigone of his two teachers, but he remained faithful to their wider lessons for the rest of his career. Through Plečnik, he assimilated the tradition of the *Wagnerschule*, but also a very non-Wagnerian taste for picturesque, intimate urban space, which came from Camillo Sitte. From Le Corbusier, in turn, he learned technological and spatial experimentation and large-scale, rational urban engagement. Exposed to such wide-ranging influences, Ravnikar early on devised a strategy to mediate between them, rather than choosing one or the other. Over the years, he would continue applying that strategy to a broader and broader set of references, including the lessons of the Bauhaus and the Ulm School of Design, Scandinavian modernism, and the various inflections of brutalism. I propose that such proclivity to appropriation challenged the core modernist imperative of originality, yet it did

not result in derivative, secondhand work, but in new erudite syntheses. The success of such operations often owed to Ravnikar's ability to locate commonalities and overlaps between sources with seemingly little in common and to transform the meanings of certain architectural motifs by importing them from one context to another.

In some ways, Ravnikar's method may be compared to nineteenth-century eclecticism, in particular what Henry-Russell Hitchcock called "eclecticism of taste": "features of different styles used together on one building."² However, what set Ravnikar's work apart from historicist eclecticism was the fact that his borrowings were not from distant past, but modernist, often coming from his own contemporaries. Modernists, of course, adamantly disposed of "styles," which means that Ravnikar's work cannot be interpreted simply as the creolization of different form-languages. Instead, his recombinant appropriations often came from incongruent architectural categories, putting together, for example, formal elements from one source and the material palettes from another, or spatial concepts and compositional strategies normally associated with one movement and the tectonic sensibilities from another. The history of modernism provides us with few codified architectural vocabularies to easily identify such recombinations as unusual or "eclectic." For instance, who is to say that decorative brick cladding of Semperian provenance should not be applied to a megastructure? And yet, once such amalgamations are disentangled and their sources identified and named, their strangeness becomes apparent, if for no other reason because they rarely have precedents or descendants.

Unlike nineteenth-century eclecticism, Ravnikar did not seek to encode his buildings with explicit signifiers of the nation, but to generate a national architectural culture, eclectic in its sources, but still coherent. As such, his oeuvre had an even stronger political dimension than historicist eclecticism, further complicated by the existential conditions of working on the periphery of the developed world. Slovenia is a small nation – even today, its population barely surpasses two million – and throughout its history it had to negotiate the cultural and political signals coming from power centers outside of it. During the twentieth century, the location of these centers shifted away from the long-standing dominance of Vienna to expand in an increasing range of directions. Ravnikar spent most of his life in Ljubljana, but without ever moving he lived in at least six different states: in the Austro-Hungarian Empire before World War I; in the Kingdom of Yugoslavia between the wars; under Italian and, after September 1943, German occupation during World War II (which included his internment in Sicily); in postwar Yugoslavia between 1945 and 1991; and in independent Slovenia in his last two years. In addition, non-aligned socialist Yugoslavia, in which Ravnikar spent most of his professional life, was famously suspended between the East, the West, and the global South, which directly determined the framework for some of Ravnikar's most important commissions. Both Slovenia and Yugoslavia were a special kind of periphery, places that were peripheral to many centers, suspended between multiple and constantly shifting reference points with overlapping gravitational pulls, producing – synchronically or diachronically – complex patterns of interference instead of simple direct influence. Under such conditions, constantly negotiating referentiality to exogenous contexts is a common way of being; and yet, mastering the skills of appropriation, adaptation, and blending at Ravnikar's level was an exception rather than a rule, because it required special awareness of the multiple contexts that few practicing architects in the region were able to acquire.

With that in mind, it seems appropriate that a figure like Ravnikar would gain prominence in postwar Yugoslavia and work on commissions of special political significance, many of which explicitly engaged with the complexities of intra- and international

positioning. When the city of Gorizia was lost to Italy in 1947, Ravnikar devised the initial plans for Nova Gorica, Slovenia's first new town after the war intended to "shine across the border" in defiance of the loss.³ Practically at the same time, he also won the highest ranking at the competition for New Belgrade, the new capital of socialist Yugoslavia, which in turn required negotiating between the already established modernist tradition and the strong political influence of the Soviet Union. After Yugoslavia was expelled from the Soviet bloc in 1948 and re-established relations with the West, Ravnikar immediately made contacts with some of the leading practitioners in Switzerland, West Germany, and Scandinavia. When Yugoslavia opened its borders to international tourism in the early 1960s, he planned a series of high-end facilities for the southern Adriatic, aimed to attract upscale Western travelers; in the following decade, he adapted one of these projects to be built in Baghdad, a direct result of Yugoslavia's engagement in the Non-aligned Movement. Revolution Square was not only the architectural but also the political pinnacle of his career, as it negotiated Slovenian nationhood vis-à-vis Yugoslav federalism. In sum, mediating complex political relations was the core task of Ravnikar's key commissions and it became the ultimate political content of his architectural eclecticism.

From Plečnik to Le Corbusier

Ravnikar influenced modern Slovenian architecture to such a degree that he came to be seen as an heir to his own mentor, Jože Plečnik.⁴ The careers of the two architects indeed shared some unusual commonalities. Plečnik was himself an heir apparent to his own famous teacher, Otto Wagner, whose chair at the Vienna Academy of Fine Arts he was destined to take over until his ascendance was thwarted, presumably due to his non-Germanic origin. Plečnik nevertheless left his mark in Vienna, producing some of the most interesting early twentieth-century buildings there, after which he helped transform Prague into the capital of the newly independent Czechoslovakia. Plečnik was also responsible for some of the key sites – real or imagined – of Slovenian statehood, such as the National and University Library and his project for the Parliament of Slovenia, which remains a national icon even though it was never constructed. He was responsible for the education of generations of architects – known as "Plečnik's School" – who revered their mentor and extended his legacy well after his death. One of his students, Dušan Grabrijan, aptly summed up such sentiment in 1948: "I know that I cannot speak about architecture in Slovenia without starting with Plečnik, because we have almost no question today that is not somehow related to him – Plečnik laid the foundation of recent Slovenian architecture."⁵

Ravnikar originally began his studies of architecture abroad, at the Polytechnic in Vienna in 1926, only to realize that he could get a better education back home. He returned to Ljubljana in 1930 and eventually graduated under Plečnik's mentorship in 1935. Soon after graduation, he was hired to work on the construction drawings for Plečnik's most important building in the city, the National and University Library. Ravnikar's first independently realized project, the Ossuary for the casualties of World War I, built at Ljubljana's Žale Cemetery in 1939, emulates Plečnik though with a certain recombinant quality (Figure 4.2). The project draws from two different Plečnik projects: its massive stone rotunda is similar in basic form to the Church of St. Anthony of Padua in Belgrade, while its irregularly sized, rusticated blocks and front staircase are reminiscent of the Church of St. Michael in Barje. A massive column occupies the center of its circular plan, a motif clearly evocative of Plečnik's taste for



FIGURE 4.2 Edvard Ravnikar, Ossuary for the Fallen in World War I, Žale Cemetery, Ljubljana, 1939. Photograph by Vladimir Kulić.

subtly violating the rules of classicism, often by placing a column in the center of a façade or opening.⁶

The chief difference between Ravnikar and his teacher was the latter's increasing cultural and political conservatism.⁷ At the turn of the century, Plečnik was one of Vienna's most innovative architects; for example, his Church of the Holy Spirit in exposed reinforced concrete was one of the groundbreaking experiments of the period. In his later career, however, he moved away from such radicalism and grew suspicious of the Modern Movement, particularly of Le Corbusier. However, what connected Plečnik and Le Corbusier at the level of abstract principles was their common indebtedness to classicism; Ravnikar was amply aware of it, claiming that "Le Corbusier could not be imagined without a very extensive and thorough knowledge of the laws and rules of the classical ideal."⁸ In that context, it may be fair to say that Ravnikar's ultimate success was to rescue Plečnik's legacy from its own aesthetic conservatism through continuous hybridization with modernism's evolution, and through perpetual engagement with the ongoing technological and programmatic advancements. Such orientation and the accompanying ambiguity between reverence and transgression are explicitly articulated in the following statement from Ravnikar's unpublished diary: "Tradition is a preserved progress; progress is a continuation of tradition. A model, even though not perfectly adequate, for observing the relationship between tradition and progress is Plečnik."⁹

One wonders whether Ravnikar may have set out to improve on the “imperfect adequacy” of Plečnik’s model by tipping the balance towards the side of progress, which the old master was increasingly reluctant to engage.

With the Ossuary reaching completion in early 1939, Ravnikar left for Paris, where he spent the next three months working for Le Corbusier, an experience that would profoundly transform his subsequent work. He followed an already well-established path: Ravnikar was neither the first Yugoslav nor the first architect from Ljubljana to work at the studio at 35, rue de Sèvre. In addition to other young architects from Slovenia, Croatia, and Serbia, no less than seven of Plečnik’s graduates spent time there in the 1930s, enjoying special reputation for their outstanding drafting skills. Ravnikar was among the last to arrive; it is known that during his short stint in Paris he drafted several large perspectives, including one of a skyscraper for Algiers. Allegedly, the latter was rendered so skillfully that Le Corbusier left it unsigned in recognition of Ravnikar’s artistry.¹⁰

Soon after his return to Ljubljana in 1939, Ravnikar began working on his first “hybrid” project, the Modern Gallery, which he would not finish until 1951, but with only some limited variations to the original design (Figure 4.3). A simple white horizontal slab with a flat roof and a higher central bay, from afar the gallery could be easily mistaken for an austere functionalist building, even with its strictly symmetrical layout. The central portico reinforces that impression: its four columns are white undecorated cylinders and they support the concrete slab that doubles as a balcony with “ship railings” directly out of the functionalist repertoire. As one gets closer, however, the details reveal a rather different picture: most conspicuously, the walls are not smooth, but highly textured, clad in a patchwork of differently embossed and smooth stone blocks in an irregular pattern, whereas the small protrusions on the roofline evoke abstracted classical antefixa. Both are evocative of Plečnik – and decidedly un-Corbusian – as are the massive bronze front door and the granite colonettes in the middle of the large windows on the front façade.¹¹ The subdivision of windows into three (rather than two) vertical panes emphasizes the unusual position of the colonettes in front of the glass, a motif Plečnik used on the National and University Library, on which Ravnikar had collaborated just a short time before designing the Modern Gallery.

What saves the Modern Gallery from being an awkward pastiche is Ravnikar’s manipulation of the source motifs that decreases the contrast between the divergent form languages. The columns of the portico are thus more massive than what a proper functionalist would have designed in order to support a small canopy, whereas the colonettes within the windows are simpler than Plečnik’s, even if they have tiny capitals and bases. The wall cladding certainly brings to mind Plečnik, especially the way in which select blocks protrude from the surface to form islands of rough texture on a smoother background. But the underlying grid is Le Corbusier’s: with staggered vertical joints and alternating narrow and wider courses, it unmistakably evokes buildings such as the Centrosorus or the Pavillon Suisse.¹² In addition, a hidden window to the right of the main entrance is masked behind a façade slab perforated by a grid of circular openings – a distinctly Corbusian motif. The wall of the Modern Gallery is perhaps the first instance where Ravnikar goes beyond merely juxtaposing physical elements from divergent sources; instead, his combinatorial strategy involves different architectural categories, in this instance, the material sensibility of one origin and the organizational strategy of another. The resulting effect oscillates between its origins indeterminately, without preference for either, producing a new kind of architectural hybrid: not a mythological creature



FIGURE 4.3 Edvard Ravnikar, Modern Gallery, Ljubljana, 1939–51. Photograph by Vladimir Kulic.

stitched together from recognizable body parts of various animals, but a real biological hybrid that combines the genetic features of different species.

It is perhaps ironic that the balance of Ravnikar's borrowings tipped towards Le Corbusier's side precisely at the time when such references became politically problematic. Yugoslavia emerged out of World War II as the closest satellite of the Stalinist Soviet Union; in the official cultural climate of the first postwar years, Socialist Realist critics predictably condemned Le Corbusier as a leading proponent of "bourgeois formalism." However, like many prewar modernists, Ravnikar acquired a prominent position in new society because of his participation in the resistance movement, as he came to direct the new state-organized Slovenian Design Institute in Ljubljana. His urban plans from this period for the new cities of Nova Gorica and New Belgrade were both explicitly Corbusian. The latter directly translated the logic of the Radiant City for the needs of a socialist administration: it replaced the Radiant City's business center with the buildings of state and party administration and at the same time greatly amplified the original's inherent potential for monumentality.

The unbuilt projects for the Presidency of the Government and the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Yugoslavia, which were submitted as parts of the same proposal for New Belgrade, were similarly Corbusian in their formal and typological character, but again combined with Plečnik's taste for richly textured surfaces, giving the walls, as the jury put it, "a picturesque and decorative treatment" reminiscent of a "woven rug"¹³ (Figure 4.4). However, Ravnikar correctly sensed that the political moment required explicit ideological representation, which he provided in the shape of a figural group at the top of the skyscraper of the Central Committee. It is easy to imagine that this gesture was a concession to Socialist Realism, evoking the prototypes established by Boris

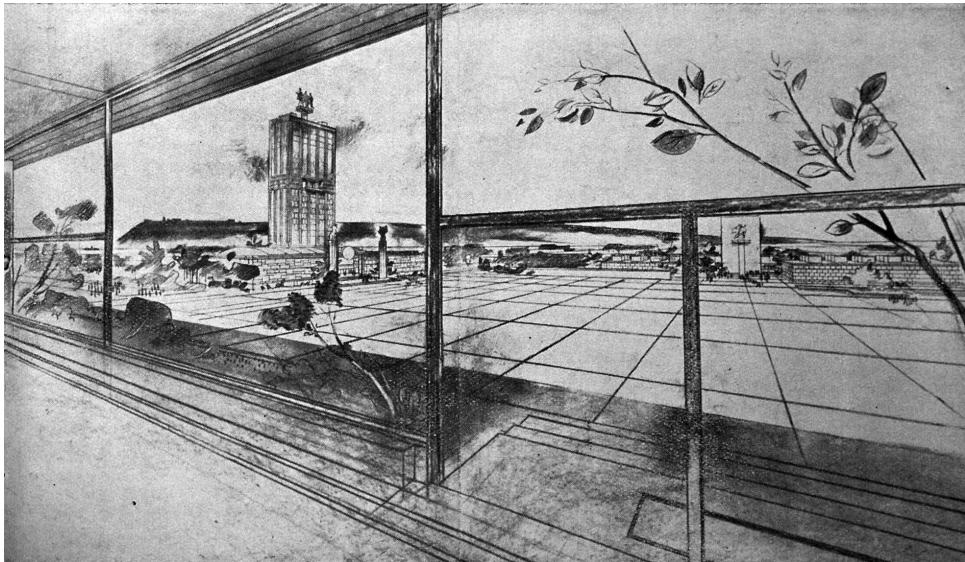


FIGURE 4.4 Edward Ravnikar: Competition entry for the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Yugoslavia, New Belgrade, 1947. Second prize, highest ranking. *Tehnika* 2, no. 6 (1947), front cover.

Iofan in the 1930s, most famously in his design for the Palace of the Soviets in Moscow. However, Ravnikar's architectural articulation was also of a Corbusian origin. With a wide plinth supported by a stubby cylindrical column, the arrangement was reminiscent of the sculptural group from Le Corbusier's project for the Palace of the League of Nations, but radically recontextualized in order to match the political requirements of the day. The design remained unbuilt because the Yugoslav communist leadership expected more literal adherence to Socialist Realism, but the ideological climate was about to change, opening the doors to much greater creative freedoms.¹⁴

Expansion

In June 1948, Yugoslavia was expelled from Soviet orbit for its alleged betrayal of communism, which set in motion a series of radical social and cultural reforms. Socialist Realism was quick to die. In addition to local modernist traditions, the increasingly numerous inflections of international modernism quickly found their way into the country. Throughout the 1950s, we find Ravnikar and his students at the forefront of such opening. Ravnikar represented Yugoslavia at the meetings of the International Union of Architects (UIA) and won a prize at the international competition for the island of Ruissalo in Finland, juried by Alvar Aalto. He welcomed Alfred Roth in Ljubljana and designed a line of furniture for a Slovenian manufacturer that he hoped to sell in Switzerland with the help of Max Bill.¹⁵ He established contacts with the Ulm School of Design,¹⁶ and he made several trips to Scandinavia, both of which greatly helped launch modern design in Slovenia as a discipline in its own right.¹⁷ He taught an extra-curricular class based on the Bauhaus program to a select group of students, which

was to become the basis for the famed “Stream B,” the short-lived curricular reform at the Faculty of Architecture in the early 1960s.¹⁸

Two masterpieces buttress this period of expansion: the Kampor Memorial Complex at the island of Rab, Croatia (1953), and the Municipal Assembly in the city of Kranj, Slovenia (1954–1960). Both are mature works that transcended the limits of his early career: they offer more complex syntheses, interpreting the source material more freely, and expanding the repertoire of Ravnikar’s eclectic tastes beyond the dichotomy of Plečnik and Le Corbusier. The Kampor cemetery was the turning point for such an expansion. Built to commemorate the Slovenes and Croats interned in an Italian concentration camp during World War II, it consists of an elongated burial ground organized along a processional stone path leading towards a view of the Adriatic Sea and enclosed by a rustic masonry wall. The path begins with an open-air enclosure containing two freestanding truncated columns and a massive stone urn, continuing through the burial ground past two slender obelisks, and ending with the “Museum” – a low vault covering two more urns and a mosaic by the artist Marij Pregelj (Figures 4.5 and 4.6). Replete with archaic classicizing references, the complex is a landmark piece of modernist regionalism that paralleled the work of other Mediterranean regionalists such as Dimitris Pikionis and Aris Konstantinidis in Greece; but its lush greenery may also bring to mind Erik Gunnar Asplund and Sigurd Lewerentz’s Woodland Cemetery, translated from Scandinavia to the Adriatic coast. Ravnikar first visited Sweden as a student at the Vienna Polytechnic in the late 1920s and he held Scandinavian architecture in high esteem all



FIGURE 4.5 Edvard Ravnikar, Kampor memorial complex, Island of Rab (Croatia), 1952–53. Enclosure at the entrance. Courtesy of Wolfgang Thaler.



FIGURE 4.6 Edvard Ravnikar, Kampor memorial complex, Island of Rab (Croatia), 1952–53. “Museum” and obelisk. Courtesy of Wolfgang Thaler.

his life; a deliberate reference to one of the most important sites of Swedish modernism seems entirely plausible in that respect.

Nevertheless, the Kampor complex still owes much to Ravnikar’s two formative influences.¹⁹ As with the façade cladding of the Modern Gallery, Ravnikar appropriates from Le Corbusier an organizational system, the *promenade architecturale*, which opens constantly shifting diagonal views arranged into carefully orchestrated sequences. However, the appropriation is now abstracted into a general principle, rather than taken over as an immediately identifiable image. In turn, the monoliths inside the entrance enclosure – an urn, two truncated columns, and a bench – have precedents in Plečnik’s work, most notably at the Hradčany Castle in Prague.²⁰ Nonetheless, reference-spotting does not fully explain the project. For example, the treatment of stone masonry, which ranges from finely hewn pieces to rubble, points again to an ambiguous area where Ravnikar’s sources converge, evoking both the material and textural richness characteristic of Plečnik and the rustic masonry that Le Corbusier began using in the 1930s. Furthermore, the two obelisks and the vault of the “Museum” conceal a technological departure uncharacteristic for either Plečnik or Le Corbusier: made of stone without the use of mortar, they are held together by embedded post-tension cables. A relatively new technology that gained popularity during the postwar reconstruction of Europe because it conserved steel, here the post-tension cables were used for aesthetic effect rather than material necessity. Enabling the structure to appear improbably slender, they moved Ravnikar’s tectonic expression into a new territory, anticipating a culture of technological and material experimentation that would acquire a prominent place in his mature work.

The experimental ethos acquired at Kampor a strong political connotation, inasmuch as it contributed to mythologizing the war as the symbolic origin of the postwar state. Built shortly after the 1948 break with Stalin, the cemetery was one of the first important memorials in Yugoslavia to discard the formulas of Socialist Realism, inaugurating a more open and innovative culture of commemoration. At that same time, Yugoslav socialism itself was transformed into an experiment: leaving behind the strictures of Stalinism, it was in the process of liberalization and radical decentralization, resulting in the system of self-management in economy and civic life. Ravnikar's second masterpiece of the 1950s, the Municipal Assembly in the historical town of Kranj, was built to facilitate this new social organization (Figure 4.7). A symbolic temple of civic life for the local community, "the most important building of Slovene modern architecture," as Ravnikar's student Aleš Vodopivec put it, the Kranj Assembly is a complex, challenging project that brims with architectural references.²¹ Bearing in mind its politically charged program, the way in which the project compresses the duality of "tradition" and "progress" clearly reads as a statement of historical legitimation for the new system; indeed, Ravnikar himself described it as a "reflection of society."²²

Referencing Plečnik acquired special resonance in Kranj, because the old master had made several urban interventions there just before Ravnikar began working on the municipal building. These picturesque insertions into the quaint historical fabric cast Plečnik as a traditionalist, a living link to the communal past. The Municipality building, in contrast, is located outside of Kranj's historical core, in a much more loose urban fabric, but Ravnikar



FIGURE 4.7 Edvard Ravnikar, Municipal Assembly, Kranj, 1958–60. Courtesy of Wolfgang Thaler.

sited it to form an intimate semi-enclosed stone-paved plaza, a Sitte-esque “urban room” reminiscent of the old town, albeit on a larger scale. The complex actually contains several buildings (including a residential section), but most of them serve as a neutral backdrop for the meeting hall, which occupies the middle of the block. As the site of the self-managing process, the meeting hall is the architectural and political centerpiece of the ensemble. From whatever angle it is approached, it is always seen obliquely, generating tension with its monumental symmetrical façade. Such positioning highlights the experience of passage towards the entrance and, in combination with the building’s temple-like appearance, almost inevitably brings to mind August Choisy’s famous analysis of the Athenian Acropolis, which inspired Le Corbusier’s concept of the *promenade architecturale*. Here is yet another instance of the unlikely overlap of Ravnikar’s two perennial sources, as Plečnik also knew Choisy’s work well and taught his methodology at the Ljubljana Faculty of Architecture.

The meeting hall is a curious and unprecedented hybrid, a “fusion of classical temple and alpine cabin,” as historian William J.R. Curtis put it.²³ Alternately, it can also be seen as fusing a modernist glazed box raised on *pilotis* with a temple *in antis* – one of Plečnik’s favorite building types – featuring a floating folded-plate roof for a “pediment” and a bronze “entablature” on top of the box. The impression fluctuates between these two readings without ever settling on either. The unusually shallow pitch of the pediment comes from Plečnik’s repertoire, best known from the Church of the Holy Heart in Prague. In turn, the *pilotis*, featuring oversized conical capitals executed in *béton brut* and a visible pattern of wooden formwork are almost directly appropriated from the interior of Le Corbusier’s Assembly Building in Chandigarh. The columns on the main façade are odd in number, with a smaller, thinner one sitting in the middle, thus displacing the entrance to the side. This is yet another instance of the violation of the classical rules of composition directly out of Plečnik’s book; but it is worth remembering that a *piloti* also stands right in front of the main entrance to the Villa Savoye.²⁴

Even more than at Kampor, however, there is much about the Kranj Municipality that cannot be explained either through references to Plečnik or Le Corbusier. Alvar Aalto also enters the synthesis here; perhaps the clearest reference to his work is found in the complex curving geometry of the railings and door handles, executed in brass rather than plywood²⁵ (Figure 4.8). The brass lighting fixtures in the main meeting hall, reminiscent of mistletoe, hang from the grid of the suspended ceiling; they descend from the fin-de-siècle proclivity to total design, but a more specific precedent may be found in the fixtures inside Otto Wagner’s Kirche am Steinhof (Figure 4.8). Indeed, with his ambition to reinvent traditional forms in self-consciously modern materials and technologies, in Kranj Wagner appears to have become a stronger model for Ravnikar than Plečnik. In contrast to the concealed post-tensioning cables at Kampor, the technological modernity of the Kranj Municipality is not only explicit, but also similar to Wagner’s in its eclectic use of materials and assemblies. The building features a wide range of materials: exposed concrete, whose treatment suggests that it was both cast in place and joined together from precast elements (Figures 4.8, two images to the right); large glazed walls, as well as translucent glass slabs; thin folded plates on the roof; and a variety of exterior and interior claddings. Concluding the twenty years of mediation between Plečnik and Le Corbusier, the project opened an entirely new chapter of experimentation with materials, technologies, and structural systems that would dominate the rest of Ravnikar’s career.

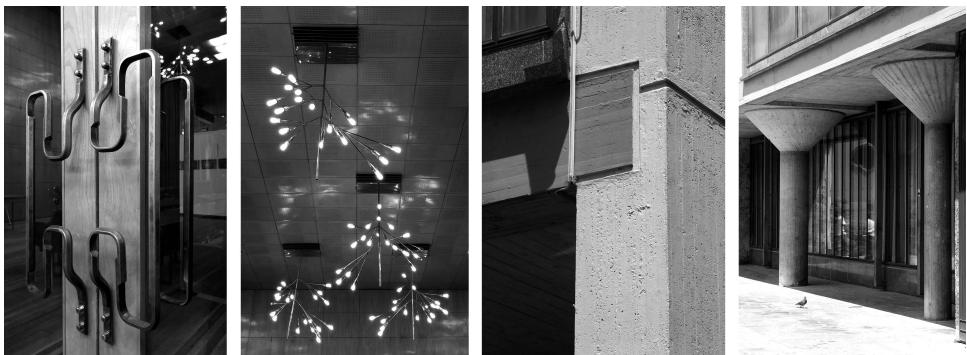


FIGURE 4.8 Edvard Ravnikar, Municipal Assembly, Kranj, 1958–60. Left to right: Brass door handle, Lighting fixtures in the meeting halls, Details of concrete structure. Photographs by Vladimir Kulic.

Beyond duality

In the late 1950s, Yugoslavia experienced economic growth unprecedented in its history, precipitating a building boom that would last for another two decades. The number and size of Ravnikar's commissions similarly grew, in addition to the many entries he submitted to the various architectural and urban planning competitions in the country and abroad. By this time, his work involved much more than appropriation, no matter how inspired or erudite, developing certain themes from his earlier work and making them characteristically his own – most notably, highly expressive structure in reinforced concrete, experiments with cladding in a variety of materials, and the desire to reconcile rational, "systemic" or megastructural, organization with the picturesque orchestration of urban experience.²⁶ Lessons of Team 10, brutalism, even Japanese Metabolism are all recognizable in Ravnikar's work of this period, but in a generalized way and fused together into an idiosyncratic synthesis. If his sources became more diverse in this period, so did the geographical range of his output, which became increasingly internationalized and was disseminated farther and farther from Slovenia, to include awarded projects at the competitions for Tronchetto in Venice and Espoo in Finland. Such expansion was enabled by and, in some instances, deeply entangled with political processes. For example, Ravnikar's projects for the Macedonian capital of Skopje were part of the highly internationalized efforts at rebuilding the city after the 1963 earthquake, facilitated by the United Nations; his work on the hospitality facilities in Montenegro was a direct outcome of the political project to facilitate the growth of upscale international tourism; finally, through the diplomatic channels of the Non-aligned Movement, one of the unrealized designs for Montenegro found its way to the banks of the Tigris, where it was constructed in the late 1970s as one of Baghdad's top luxury hotels.²⁷

However, Ravnikar's most wide-ranging synthesis of the period came together back home, in his magnum opus, Ljubljana's Revolution Square. It is the largest and the most formal square in the city, located at its very heart. Enclosed on one side by the somewhat older building of the National Assembly (architect Vinko Glanz, 1954–1959), Revolution Square is the symbolic center of Slovenian statehood, defined largely by the structures designed by Ravnikar: the twin office towers (originally intended for state and party administration), the

long low Maximarket department store, a bank, a public garage underneath the plaza, and the cultural and congress center *Cankarjev dom*. The project's conceptual, aesthetic, programmatic, and technological complexity mirrors the complexity of its political connotations, which summed up the unceasing evolution of the Yugoslav system vis-à-vis the federalist ideology of "brotherhood and unity" and its symbolic rootedness in the liberation war. When Ravnikar won the 1960 competition for the urban design of the square, the project was largely motivated by the need to find a place for "the central monument to the revolution," thus appealing to the generalized, pan-Yugoslav origins of the socialist state.²⁸ By 1976, when he began designing the last segment of the square, the cultural and congressional center named after Slovenia's pre-eminent national writer Ivan Cankar, the emphasis shifted to a pronounced expression of cultural identity, thus tying Slovenian statehood to the idea of the nation, rather than social revolution.²⁹ The public declaration of Slovenia's independence from Yugoslavia, which occurred at the square in 1991, cemented the "national" character of the space, and its subsequent renaming to Republic Square displaced the last traces of its original revolutionary connotations.

Ravnikar's design underwent a parallel evolution of its own: even though it always retained the general contours established in 1960, it slowly progressed from a rational, high-modernist collection of freestanding towers and pavilions towards a complex ingrown structure, where it is impossible to say where one part ends and another begins. At the center of the complex is a large ceremonial plaza organized around the axis of symmetry between the two towers, both triangular in plan, with tips pointed dramatically at each other to form a monumental gate, or a gigantic spatial joint (Figure 4.1). In contrast to the formal central space, the complex grows into its surroundings in a much more organic way, penetrating the neighboring blocks, as well as the underground, to generate a picturesque sequence of intimate urban rooms (Figure 4.9). If built according to the original 1960 proposal, the two skyscrapers likely would have been the tallest structures in Yugoslavia; but even in their significantly truncated form, they feature prominently on Ljubljana's skyline. Despite their dominant size, however, they are natural outgrowths of the lower masses; at their foot, where one would expect them to appear at their most assertive, their deeply cantilevered tips provide intimacy and shelter, defying the enormous masses above.

It would be difficult to find a precedent for the way in which Revolution Square compresses together urban archetypes that are normally considered mutually exclusive: the monumental and the picturesque; the freestanding modern skyscraper and the traditional block infill; sculpturally expressive form and meticulous detailing. Far removed from the Corbusian "tower in the park" model, Revolution Square is also more complex than the way in which some of its contemporaries resolved the insertion of a skyscraper into historical fabric, for example Alison and Peter Smithson in their Economist Building in London. Possible models need to be sought further back in history: Venice comes to mind for the way in which the Campanile of St. Mark's serves as a pivot for the two sides of the square, or for the way in which a large formal space opens up in the middle of a dense traditional city. Ravnikar indeed studied historical Venice and even used it as a precedent for his project for the center of Skopje; for Ljubljana, he developed similar perspectival studies.³⁰

Revolution Square's fractal-like complexity connects a range of scales into a continuous whole. The central plaza and the two towers assert their presence at the level of the entire city, but almost baroque undulations and the intricate façade treatments bring visual interest down to the scale of the detail. (Describing the complex as baroque is hardly a superfluous



FIGURE 4.9 Edvard Ravnikar, Revolution Square (today Republic Square), Ljubljana, 1960–1983. View from Maximarket department store towards the two office towers. Photograph by Vladimir Kulić.

analogy in Ljubljana, a city with a significant amount of baroque heritage, which Ravnikar obviously knew and appreciated.) The complex is at its most intricate close to the ground, where humans directly engage it; exemplary in that respect is the entrance to the western tower, articulated in elaborately patterned brickwork that produces a variety of ornamental effects (Figure 4.10). This was the theme that Ravnikar began developing in the early 1960s, transforming it over time into one of his signature elements. Some of the brickwork indeed uncannily resembles woven wicker, revealing the roots of the technique in the Semperian notion of the *Bekleidung* as developed from the art of weaving. Following the same line of reasoning, and building on the previous Wagnerian references, for the upper floors Ravnikar appropriated the riveted granite cladding of the *Postsparkasse* in Vienna and transformed it into a whole palette of systems (Figure 4.10). For the educated audience, the reference is unmistakable; but what Wagner's rivets were only meant to suggest, in Ravnikar's case becomes revealed literally: that the stone is a cladding attached to a substructure beneath. Throughout the complex we thus find the edges of granite slabs protruding from the surface, their thinness made obvious, in some instances even revealing a gap underneath. The upper floors of the skyscrapers feature one of the most idiosyncratic high-rise façade systems in modern architecture: granite slabs attached at several different angles in relation to the wall, including a series of vertical "fins" perpendicular to the façade plane, perhaps Ravnikar's variation on the

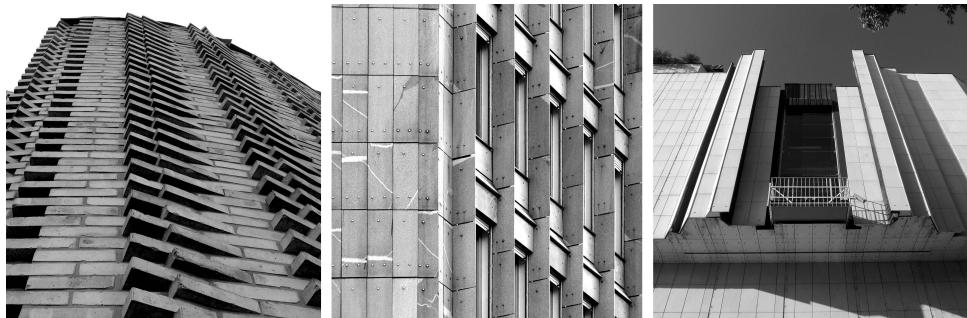


FIGURE 4.10 Edvard Ravnikar, Revolution Square (today Republic Square), Ljubljana, 1960–1983. Cladding variations left to right: Entrance to the western office tower, Façade of a tower, *Cankarjev dom*. Photographs by Vladimir Kulić.

themes of the Corbusian *brise-soleils* or Mies van der Rohe's curtain-wall mullions. Using the same basic system, however, a slight variation on the façades of the *Cankarjev dom* completely transforms this effect, as if in a magic trick: as the rivets disappear and the stone changes from gray to white, the reference suddenly shifts from Wagner to Aalto (Figure 4.10). Ravnikar greatly admired the Finnish architect, and the *Cankarjev dom* recalls Aalto's late works, such as the Finlandia Hall in Helsinki and the Opera House in Essen: geometricized undulations, cladding in white stone arranged in narrow vertical strips, and copper roofs with green patina. It is here that Ravnikar's eclecticism of taste reveals itself most intensely as a display of architectural erudition, as well as sheer pleasure in design.

In the context of its political connotations and of Ravnikar's own career trajectory, Revolution Square functioned as an elaborate metaphor for the organic integration of Slovenia's modern nationhood into its own historical development. It transcended the generalized dualisms of Ravnikar's early career, which attempted to unify "tradition" and "progress" as embodied in the figures of Plečnik and Le Corbusier; instead, it offered a far more complex vision that mediated a wide range of spatio-temporal frameworks. On the one hand, it reconciled local urban past, the traditions of Central European modernism, and socialist modernity across the historical ruptures that divided them. On the other hand, with its references to Otto Wagner and Alvar Aalto, it appealed to a particular kind of modernism capable of transcending its own peripheral position, while remaining intensely local, thus staking a special place for Slovenia within the nested structures of the Yugoslav federation and its international positioning.

Conclusion

Edvard Ravnikar's oeuvre is difficult to classify: unlike Le Corbusier, he was hardly an architectural revolutionary, but at the same time he was much less rooted in history than Plečnik. His work, no doubt, greatly evolved over time, but the direction of that evolution is similarly difficult to specify, because it always encompassed a tension between the more or less contradictory approaches. With his ability to mediate contradictions, it would perhaps be right to deem him reconciliatory, if that term did not suggest a certain binary opposition; instead, his method developed in a decidedly pluralist direction. That, in turn, is not to suggest that

he was an architectural omnivore ready to digest anything; his tastes were eclectic, but highly selective. Certain dominant themes of the second half of the twentieth century are thus conspicuously missing from his oeuvre: he never resorted to purely rational functionalism, to aesthetic minimalism, or to unmediated technological triumphalism. Instead, his eclecticism was carefully curated to encompass the traditions of the Mediterranean, the modern culture of Central Europe, and an affinity for Scandinavian regionalism – all inextricable constituents of architectural modernism, but also somewhat peripheral to its mainstream, perhaps in affinity with Slovenia's own peripheral position.

It is perhaps the fundamentally political need to navigate the periphery that lends sense to Ravnikar's seemingly directionless architectural evolution. Situated in a period of historical transition between tradition and modernity, in the cultural and geopolitical borderlands of European civilization, and in the political space between universalism of the socialist revolution and particularism of ethnic identity, his architecture was ultimately suspended amid a complex constellation of reference points. As these reference points shifted, Ravnikar sought to maintain balance, mediating between the varied and competing signals coming both from the heartland of modernity and its widening peripheries and ultimately constructing what Vodopivec called a “locally adjusted modernism” for Slovenia.³¹ Taken together, Ravnikar's ever-expanding professional frame of references thus appears to exhibit a certain isomorphism with the winding geopolitical path that Slovenia and Yugoslavia took between the interwar period and the end of the Cold War. That is not to say that his work should be reduced to a mere reflection of politics; instead, such isomorphism points to a mutually constitutive relationship, in which the world of politics determined the general conditions for the production of architecture, but Ravnikar in turn gave architecture a great deal of agency to shape these political conditions. The architectural identity he thus created for himself and for postwar Slovenia was constructed largely in relational terms, as he resisted succumbing to any of the gravitational pulls of large centers, developing instead a strategy of mediation that absorbed the received models and procedures and allowed for their recombination and blending. The result was an open-ended architecture that was at the same time highly referential and highly original, reveling in learning from others, but also self-conscious of its own freedom to reinterpret and reinvent.

Notes

This chapter is a greatly revised and expanded version of the paper titled “Edvard Ravnikar’s Liquid Modernism,” which was presented at the annual conference of the Association of the Collegiate Schools of Architecture (ACSA) in 2013. The author would like to thank Ana Miljački and Amanda Reeser Lawrence, who organized the ACSA panel, for their generous comments and suggestions, as well as for the invitation to contribute to this collection; to Aleš Vodopivec for sharing his insights about Ravnikar; to Matěvž Čelik, director of the Museum of Architecture and Design in Ljubljana, for access to Ravnikar’s papers; and to Bogo Zupančič for sharing his research about Plečnik’s students in Le Corbusier’s studio.

1 Ravnikar’s status has been continuously reinforced even after his death through an unbroken stream of publications devoted to his work. See, among other sources: France Ivanšek, ed., *Hommage à Edvard Ravnikar 1907–1993* (Ljubljana: France in Marta Ivanšek, 1995), 463–483; Peter Krečič, ed., *Edvard Ravnikar: arhitekt, urbanist, oblikovalec, teoretik, univerzitetni učitelj in publicist*, exhibition catalogue (Ljubljana: Arhitekturni muzej, 1996); Nataša Kosej, *Atlas Ravnikar: vodnik po arhitekturi Edvarda Ravnika* (Ljubljana: Docomomo Slovenija, 2007); Aleš Vodopivec and Rok Žnidaršič, eds., *Edvard Ravnikar, Architect and Teacher* (Vienna: Springer, 2010).

- 2 Hitchcock differentiated “eclecticism of taste” from “eclecticism of style,” which he defined as “different styles used contemporaneously but each building all in one style.” See Henry-Russell Hitchcock, *Modern Architecture: Romanticism and Reintegration* (New York: Da Capo Press, 1993 [1929]), 6, note.
- 3 See: Edvard Ravnikar, “Nova Gorica After 35 Years,” quoted in Vodopivec and Žnidaršič, *Edvard Ravnikar, Architect and Teacher*, 337.
- 4 For a clear articulation of such view, see: Boris Podrecca, “Cladding the City: Edvard Ravnikar’s Architecture,” in *Ibid.*, 51.
- 5 Dušan Grabrijan, *Plečnik in njegova šola* (Maribor: Založba Obzorja, 1968), 175–176.
- 6 Alberti famously demanded that a building should have an even number of columns, just like most animals have an even number of legs; a consequence is that a column should never occupy the center of a façade; see: Leon Battista Alberti, *The Ten Books of Architecture: The 1755 Leoni Edition* (New York: Dover Publications, 1986), 195–196. One of Plečnik’s favorite motifs was to place a column in the middle of a façade, often superimposed over an opening, most famously in the Column Hall inside the Hradčany Castle in Prague and in the Church of the Ascension in Bogojina.
- 7 On Plečnik’s conservatism, see “Everything Provokes Fascism: An Interview with Slavoj Žižek,” and Andrew Herscher, “Plečnik ‘avec’ Laibach,” *Assemblage*, 33 (1997): 58–75.
- 8 Quoted in Vodopivec and Žnidaršič, eds., *Edvard Ravnikar, Architect and Teacher*, 17.
- 9 Quoted in William J.R. Curtis, Tomaž Krušec, and Aleš Vodopivec, *Arhitekt Edvard Ravnikar, spominski kompleks na otoku Rabu, 1953* (Ljubljana: DESSA, 2004), 12.
- 10 For Plečnik’s students, including Ravnikar, in Le Corbusier’s studio, see Bogo Zupančič, *Plečnikovi študenti v Le Corbusierovem ateljeju ter nekateri drugi jugoslovanski arhitekti in gradbeniki na izpopolnjevanju v Parizu v letih 1925 do 1940* (Ljubljana: KUD Polis, forthcoming 2018).
- 11 Peter Krečić has already interpreted the project in reference to Plečnik’s work; see Krečić, *Edvard Ravnikar: arhitekt, urbanist, oblikovalec, teoretik, univerzitetni učitelj, publicist*, 10.
- 12 The original 1939 design explicitly refers to Le Corbusier, lacking Plečnik’s textured surfaces; for the perspective of the original design, see *Ibid.*
- 13 Quoted in Bratislav Stojanović, “Konkursi za Dom Centralnog komiteta KPJ i zgradu Pretsedništva Vlade FNRJ,” *Arhitektura* (Zagreb), 2, 8–10 (March, April, and May, 1948): 148.
- 14 For Ravnikar’s participation in New Belgrade competitions, see Vladimir Kulić, “Land of the In-Between: Architecture and the State in Socialist Yugoslavia, 1945–1965,” (Ph.D. dissertation, Austin: University of Texas at Austin, 2009), 142–169.
- 15 See Ivanšek, *Hommage à Edvard Ravnikar 1907–1993*, 21.
- 16 As a result, in 1955 he published an article about Yugoslav “anonymous” architecture both in Ulm and in Stockholm. See Edvard Ravnikar, “Jugoslaviens anonyme Architektur,” *Ulmer Monatsspiegel*, 10 (1955): 13, 15; and Edvard Ravnikar, “Primitiv arkitektur i Jugoslavien,” *Byggmästaren* (Stockholm), A5 (1955): 136–139.
- 17 See Martina Malešić, “Scandinavian Models for Slovenian Homes: Scandinavian Influences in Slovenian Housing Culture after WWII,” presentation at the conference Western Temptations in Cold War Times: International Influences in Yugoslav Architecture (1945–90), Ljubljana, 5 November 2015, available online at: http://videolectures.net/westerntemptations2015_malesic_scandinavian_models/ [accessed May 28, 2016]
- 18 See Bogo Zupančič, ed., *Smer B: reforma oblikovanja / The B Course: Reforming Design*, exhibition catalogue (Ljubljana: MAO, 2012).
- 19 The Slovenian architect Tomaž Krušec and the British architectural historian William J.R. Curtis have analyzed the Kampor complex in detail. See William J.R. Curtis, “Abstraction and Representation / The Memorial Complex at Kampor, on the Island of Rab (1952–53) by Edvard Ravnikar,” in *Arhitekt Edvard Ravnikar, spominski kompleks na otoku Rabu, 1953*. Edited by Curtis, Krušec, and Vodopivec, 17–35; and Tomaž Krušec, “The Kampor Memorial Complex on the Island of Rab,” in *Ibid.*, 37–69.
- 20 Curtis also suggests that the freestanding truncated columns may have been inspired by Giuseppe Terragni’s unbuilt project for the Danteum, even though it would have been a bitter irony if Ravnikar, himself a prisoner of Italian Fascism, referred to an Italian Fascist architect in a memorial to the victims of Italian Fascism. See Curtis, “Abstraction and Representation / The Memorial Complex at Kampor, on the Island of Rab (1952–53) by Edvard Ravnikar,” 31–32. There are more likely sources, such as the Pavilion of Yugoslavia at the 1937 World’s Fair in Paris. Designed by the Croatian

modernist architect and artist Josip Seissel, it featured four austere fluted columns with no entasis or capital at its entrance, not unlike those at Kampor. See Tamara Bjažić Klarin and Jasna Galjer, "Jugoslavenski paviljon na Svjetskoj izložbi u Parizu 1937. i reprezentacijska paradigma nove državne kulturne politike," *Radovi Instituta za povijest umjetnosti*, 37 (2013): 179–192.

- 21 See Aleš Vodopivec, "Edvard Ravnikar's Architecture: Locally Adjusted Modernism," in *Edvard Ravnikar, Architect and Teacher*. Edited by Vodopivec and Žnidarsič, 20.
- 22 See E.R. [Edvard Ravnikar], "Zgradba okrajnega ljudskega odbora v Kranju," *Arhitekt*, 2 (1960): 17–20.
- 23 See William J.R. Curtis, "Preface: Overlapping Territories: On Situating Edvard Ravnikar," in *Edvard Ravnikar, Architect and Teacher*. Edited by Vodopivec and Žnidarsič, 8.
- 24 I thank David Rifkind for pointing this out.
- 25 Early fan-shaped plans for the square clearly owe to Aalto; see Matevž Čelik, Maja Vardjan, and Bogo Zupančič, eds., *Pod skupno streho: Moderne javne zgradbe iz zbirke MAO in drugih arhivov*, exhibition catalog (Ljubljana: MAO, 2013). I thank Aleš Vodopivec for pointing out the shape of the door handles.
- 26 For the "taste for structure" in Ravnikar's and in Slovenian architecture in general, see Luka Skansi, "A 'Taste' for Structure: Architecture and Structural Figures in Slovenia 1960–1975," in *Unfinished Modernisations*. Edited by Maroje Mrduljaš and Vladimir Kulić (Zagreb: Udruženje hrvatskih arhitekata, 2012), 352–373.
- 27 For the full story, see Vladimir Kulić, "Building the Non-Aligned Babel: Babylon Hotel in Baghdad and Mobile Design in the Global Cold War," in "Socialist Networks," special issue of *ABE Journal*, 6 (2014); open access, available online at: <http://dev.abejournal.eu/index.php?id=924>
- 28 See M.Š., "Natečaj za ureditev novega Trga Revolucije v Ljubljani 1960," *Arhitekt*, 4 (1960): 54–58.
- 29 This evolution followed the decentralization of the Yugoslav federal state. Heeding the growing nationalist pressures, the 1974 Constitution further shifted many of the prerogatives of the federal state to the constituent republics, in effect replacing the concept of "brotherhood and unity" with "togetherness"; see Aleksandar Pavković, *Fragmentation of Yugoslavia: Nationalism and War in the Balkans*, 2nd edition (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2000).
- 30 See "Skopje Competition Submission," in *Edvard Ravnikar, Architect and Teacher*. Edited by Vodopivec and Žnidarsič, 238–240.
- 31 See Vodopivec, "Edvard Ravnikar's Architecture: Locally Adjusted Modernism," 15.

5

COLD WAR ADAPTATIONS

SIAL Školka's real and imaginary architectural dialogues with the West

Ana Miljački

Evidence of adaptation

In 1984 the Uran shopping center opened its glazed doors to the inhabitants of Česká Lípa in northern Bohemia. Its stylized, mostly opaque volumes punctured by large circular windows, formally reinforced and compositionally balanced by many smaller circular vents protruding from its ceramic tile façade, were likely not as exciting to the shoppers as the merchandise they painstakingly saved up to buy (Figure 5.1). And yet, this building, together with the Crystal culture house that would be constructed across the street six years later, presented a considerable departure from the safe “Brussels style” modernism reserved for such representative buildings in Czechoslovakia throughout the 1960s and early 1970s.¹ Both buildings had been on drawing boards since 1975, and for various political and economic reasons, it took a decade for one building and a decade and a half for the other building to be executed on the site, with some of the urban fabric in the area changing fundamentally in the interim.

Czech architectural historians as well as the architects have insisted that Uran's platonic shapes and elevational symmetry, as well as Crystal's ramps, slanted entry hall, “baroque” figuration of the park in the back, its acid green railings and mullions, resonate with some of the key architectural manifestations of postmodernism in Western Europe and America (Figure 5.2). The architects, Emil Přikryl of Uran and Jiří Suchomel of Crystal, have themselves over the years become ever more definitive about their interest (at the time) in the architecture of Louis Kahn and James Stirling, as well as Charles Moore, Robert Venturi, and a few others.² Czech historian Rostislav Švácha has written on numerous occasions of Přikryl's interest in Kahn, offering in the mid-1990s that he “tried to achieve a deeper understanding of the ideas and concepts behind the work of the American architect – without being properly prepared for this task.” Whereas when it came to solutions for specific problems, Švácha argued that Přikryl “found his model in James Stirling in whose glass-and-steel brutalism of the 1960s, inspired by Victorian engineering architecture, Přikryl and other SIAL members sensed a link between their machinism and Kahn's spiritual concept of architecture.”³ But Švácha also cautioned that historians should perhaps refrain from calling this work postmodernism, as it did not properly produce effects of humor and irony within its own context.⁴



FIGURE 5.1 Long back façade of the Uran shopping center, Emil Přikryl, 1980–1984. Courtesy of Emil Přikryl.

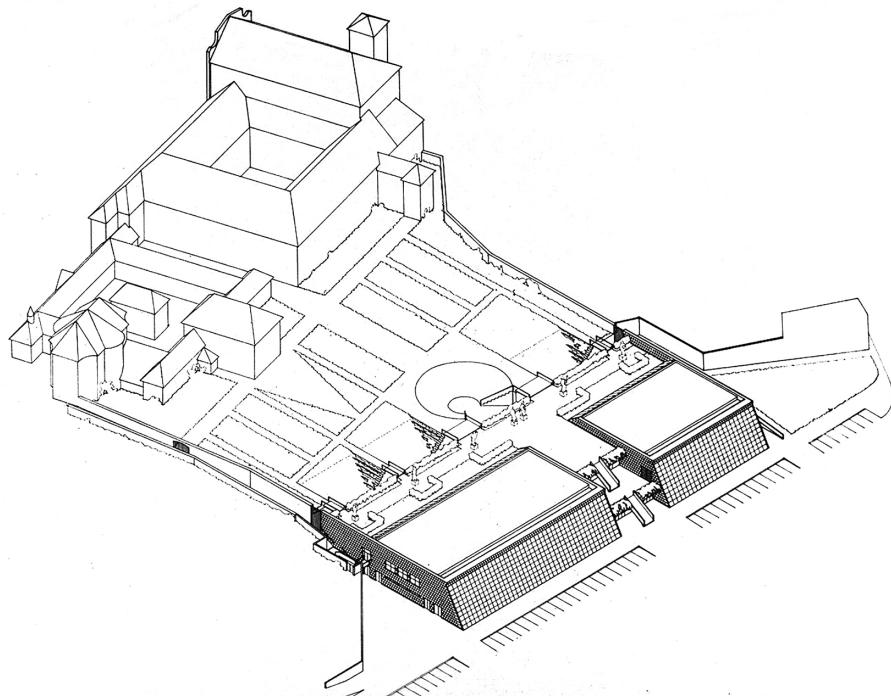


FIGURE 5.2 Axonometric drawing of the Crystal culture house, showing the landscaping in the back of the building in conversation with the monastery, formerly marking the edge of Česká Lípa's old town, Jiří Suchomel, 1979. Courtesy of Jiří Suchomel.

Both Přikryl and Suchomel belonged to the legendary group of architects, the independent office titled *Sdružení inženýrů a architektů Liberec* (The Liberec Association of Engineers and Architects) and most often referred to by its acronym SIAL. SIAL had peeled away from its local Liberec chapter of the national office of Stavoprojekt just months before the Warsaw Pact troops' dramatic entry into Prague in 1968.⁵ Though the organization was shorter lived than the construction of its most important project – the Ještěd teletower and hotel – its name and that of its pedagogical experiment Školka (kindergarten) are often used to refer to the body of work its members produced in the entire period bracketed by the crushing of Czechoslovak democratization efforts on one end and the Velvet Revolution of 1989 on the other. Having admired images of the Ještěd tower while still at school, both Přikryl and Suchomel joined Školka in 1969.⁶ By the mid-1970s, the previous decade's democratization had fully morphed into its de facto opposite project known as normalization – a return to an older version of normal: top-down socialism, free of the democratic ideals articulated in this context during the 1960s. Uran and Crystal were thus both conceived and built in the period of Czechoslovak normalization, termed retroactively as the era of “late socialism” by historian Paulina Bren, and coinciding with Fredric Jameson’s futurological “late capitalism” (whose “cultural logic” would be inextricably linked to Jameson’s periodizing definition of postmodernism)⁷ (Figure 5.3A, 5.3B). To anyone who lingers long enough on Přikryl’s 1985 axonometric drawings of the urban plans of the lower level of Česká Lípa – whose representational signals and additional semicircular and square building forms might launch one into hallucinating this project’s place in Heinrich Klotz’s vividly illustrated *Postmodern Visions* – Švácha’s caution about applying the label too quickly must be understood as an invitation to contextualize the nature of the formal allusions at play.⁸

Although the postmodernism of these specific works has been contested as often as it has been asserted, the ultimate construction of Uran and Crystal coincided with important debates on postmodernism in the local context. In 1978, architects Bořislav Babáček, Jiří Kučera, and Jaroslav Ouřecký translated and published excerpts from Charles Jencks’s *The Language of Postmodern Architecture* in the most important Czechoslovak architectural journal of the period, *Architektura ČSR*. In a series of defining texts on the topic published in *Umění a řemesla* and *Architektura ČSR*, the key writers on postmodernism in the context of Czech architectural discourse, Jiří and Jana Ševčíkovi, most often rely on Charles Jencks and Robert Venturi when framing the local scene.⁹ Excerpts from *Language of Postmodern Architecture* and *Complexity and Contradiction* were presented in Czechoslovak architectural journals, and both were translated in their entirety, illustrated by hand, and published through samizdat channels in Czechoslovakia. They circulated as precious samples of radical Western discourse, under the radar of Czechoslovak normalization, which is not to say that they were gobbled up uncritically, but that they entered Czechoslovak discourse without being officially sanctioned, at least until the mid-1980s.¹⁰ As architectural historian Maroš Krivý has suggested in his recent study of the ways postmodern discourse enabled a series of housing estate experiments in the 1970s and 1980s, forms of socialist realism and postmodernism coexisted in this period (sometimes indeed dovetailing together), and were certainly intertwined through their shared emphasis on the psychological dimension of the built environment and insistence on the communicative function of architecture.¹¹

But why should not the Czech theorization, adoption, and adaptation of architectural postmodernism expand its meaning and application? Does not the adherence to the First World definition and usage ensure its discursive hegemony, and persistence of the related

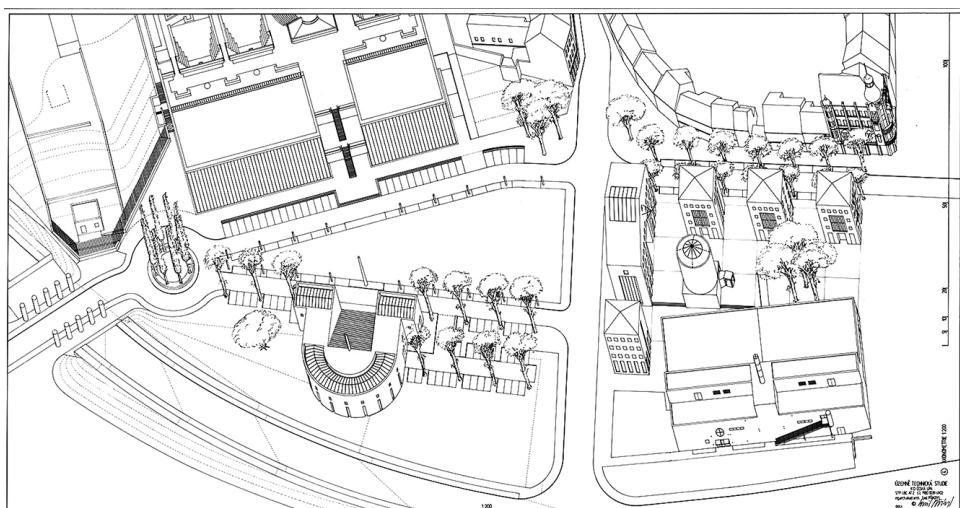
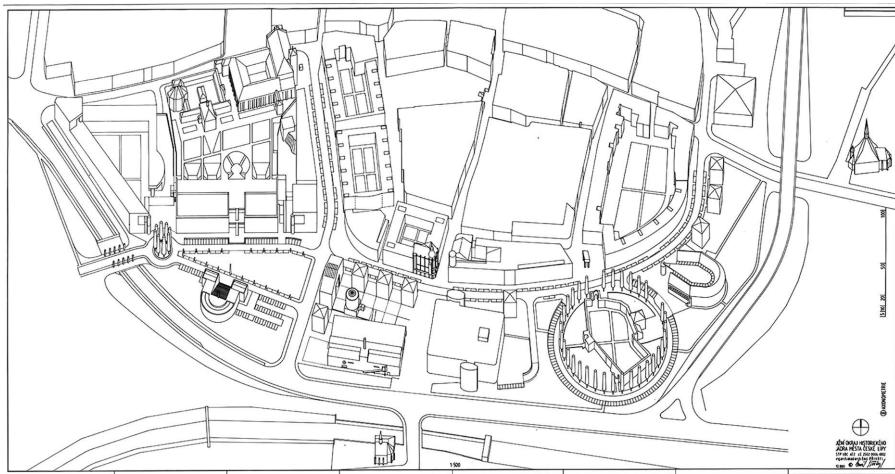


FIGURE 5.3A–B Axonometric drawings of the urban plan of the southern periphery of Česká Lípa including both Uran and Crystal and projecting a number of architectural elements that would complete this edge of town, Emil Přikryl, 1985. Courtesy of Emil Přikryl.

center-periphery model?¹² These questions have important political implications especially for the work produced at the time when allusion, quotation, and cultural translation traversed the same geopolitical boundaries that, in a very real sense, prevented the free movement of Second World authors and architects. But what if “the mechanics of usage” – as Boris Groys has termed the specific Second World deployment of its First World appropriations – of both postmodern discourse, and quotation or allusion in architecture possibly undertaken in this context, already embody specific and politically sophisticated mechanics of relation?¹³ This way of reframing the two Česká Lípa buildings, as well as much other work produced in this context, would lead to another set of questions. Could not the very claim of relation across the Iron Curtain – such as Přikryl’s “I Am a Kahnist,” or another of his colleagues Mirko Baum’s proposal that all the early work of their studio could be divided into the Archigram-inspired “machinist” and the “Venturian” strands, or the historians who speak of yet another member of the same studio producing the “first properly postmodern house” – be read as political? This paper proposes that indeed architects who were involved in SIAL’s Školka, and from 1972 on, its successor Atelier 2 of Stavoprojekt Liberec, produced their work in “imaginary” conversation with the contemporary developments in the West. This conversation across geopolitical contexts – on several occasions resulting in actual commissions or publications in the West, as well as eventual emigration by several members of the group – should be seen as politically relevant both in its inevitable adaptation of various architectural “sources” to the socialist reality and ideals of the Czechoslovak context, and in its dissident defiance of the discursive barriers erected by Czechoslovak normalization and the Cold War more generally.

Welcome to Česká Lípa

Česká Lípa was an important center of party and regime power, and significantly, a key center of the uranium industry in Czechoslovakia. Beginning with the countrywide nationalization of the architectural profession and the formation of the single national umbrella office of Stavoprojekt in 1948, and the same year its Liberec Stavoprojekt outpost, the architectural work in Česká Lípa was distributed through competition among the northern Bohemian offices, with the Liberec branch of the national organization of architects gaining a strong foothold in the city. As one of Stavoprojekt Liberec’s key architects suggested, Česká Lípa “could hardly resist” these architects’ proposals. As early as 1956 they were invited to produce relevant urban plans, renovate and build new schools, supermarkets, and prefab housing developments. In the early 1970s, during the fifth and sixth Five-Year Plans, the city experienced its economic and industrial peak and its ultimate expansion. Česká Lípa, whose uranium-inspired symbolic value was so great among the party leadership that its members had conjured up oversized and even “utopian dreams” about its future, quickly developed into a home to twenty thousand inhabitants.¹⁴ The injection of investments and imminent growth required further economic and urban planning. Architect Vladimír Syrovátko from the Liberec Stavoprojekt office, who had over the years produced several urban plans for the town, was invited again to work on a new proposal in 1977. Coinciding with the emergent interest in the image of the city, and an increasingly robust critique of the modernist planning of housing districts, his 1977 urban plan centered on the old town, imagining both architectural and urban renovation in conjunction with, and sometimes driving architectural production.¹⁵

Though the Stavoprojekt Liberec architects had a long-term relationship with Česká Lípa, the effects of normalization could have easily resulted in their dismissal. By 1975,

SIAL – under the guidance of Hubáček, Masák, Otakar Binar, and Jiří Špikla – and its pedagogical and organizational experiment Školka (kindergarten) – under the leadership of Miroslav Masák – were both absorbed back into the nationalized architectural network, the offices of Stavoprojekt Liberec, where they continued to operate under their internal moniker Atelier 2, as one among seven ateliers.¹⁶ Normalization's effects on the architectural field had left SIAL's key figures outside of the reconfigured professional leadership, and now marked for their reformist and other forms of non-party compliance. But the upgrading of Česká Lípa's status and concomitant urban development required these architects' immediate services regardless of their political standing, though their commissions would begin to thin out by the early 1980s.

Imagined and real communities

Against all odds, Hubáček and Masák managed Školka's continued operation on the spatial and organizational fringes of the state-subsidized office of Stavoprojekt Liberec, in the space of an old inn, *At Jedlová*.¹⁷ Přikryl and Suchomel spent a large part of the decade living and working at Jedlová separated by one cell (Figure 5.4). They had participated in Školka's early internal competitions, joined in the atmosphere of play, rivalry, and discussion, as well as self-education about architecture outside of Czechoslovakia, mostly through access to their half-British colleague John Eisler's architectural magazine subscriptions.¹⁸ Školka was literally meant as a training ground and an extension first of SIAL and later of Stavoprojekt Liberec's Atelier 2. Přikryl and Suchomel have both credited Hubáček and Masák for protecting them from the politics of SIAL and Stavoprojekt and the field at large, and providing room for the young architects to discuss and develop their individual views and tendencies in an atmosphere of play, and even (politically appropriately credentialed) commune.¹⁹ These young architects' orientation inward and the collective insistence on dealing with concrete commissions placed disciplinary issues at the center of their conversations. As I have argued elsewhere, it is important to understand all aspects of live-work at Jedlová as contributing to the production of a form of a parallel public in Czech dissident parlance.²⁰ Developing in parallel to and as a context for these architects' daily life and work, the dissident discourse produced a number of proposals for recasting political life in terms other than those served by the communist party. Among those was Václav Benda's "parallel polis," which stood for the idealized public sphere that he, with other Czechoslovak dissidents, believed needed to be cultivated in the shadow of the official normalization discourse, until it was robust enough to take over the official one.²¹ Jedlová, as the Školka members preferred to refer to their studio, numbered enough young architects to constitute a real community, a kind of an unofficial but very tangible and immediate public, which stood in stark political contrast to Czechoslovak normalization, and almost any (other) Stavoprojekt office.²² Though their work was not welcome in Czechoslovak architectural journals from the early 1970s onward, this circle of friends, galvanized by Hubáček's (politically shrewd) insistence on innovating through concrete architectural problems and Masák's enthusiasm for the collective, produced its own "parallel" discussion on architecture. It was fueled by their intermittent access to trends abroad but also deliberately not fully out in the open in the context of top-down, sanctioned discourse.

Over the course of the 1970s the Školka architects were absorbed into the mainstream production of the Stavoprojekt Atelier 2 through ever more robust architectural commissions, of which Česká Lípa's Uran and Crystal are examples. SIAL's, and eventual Atelier 2's, leader

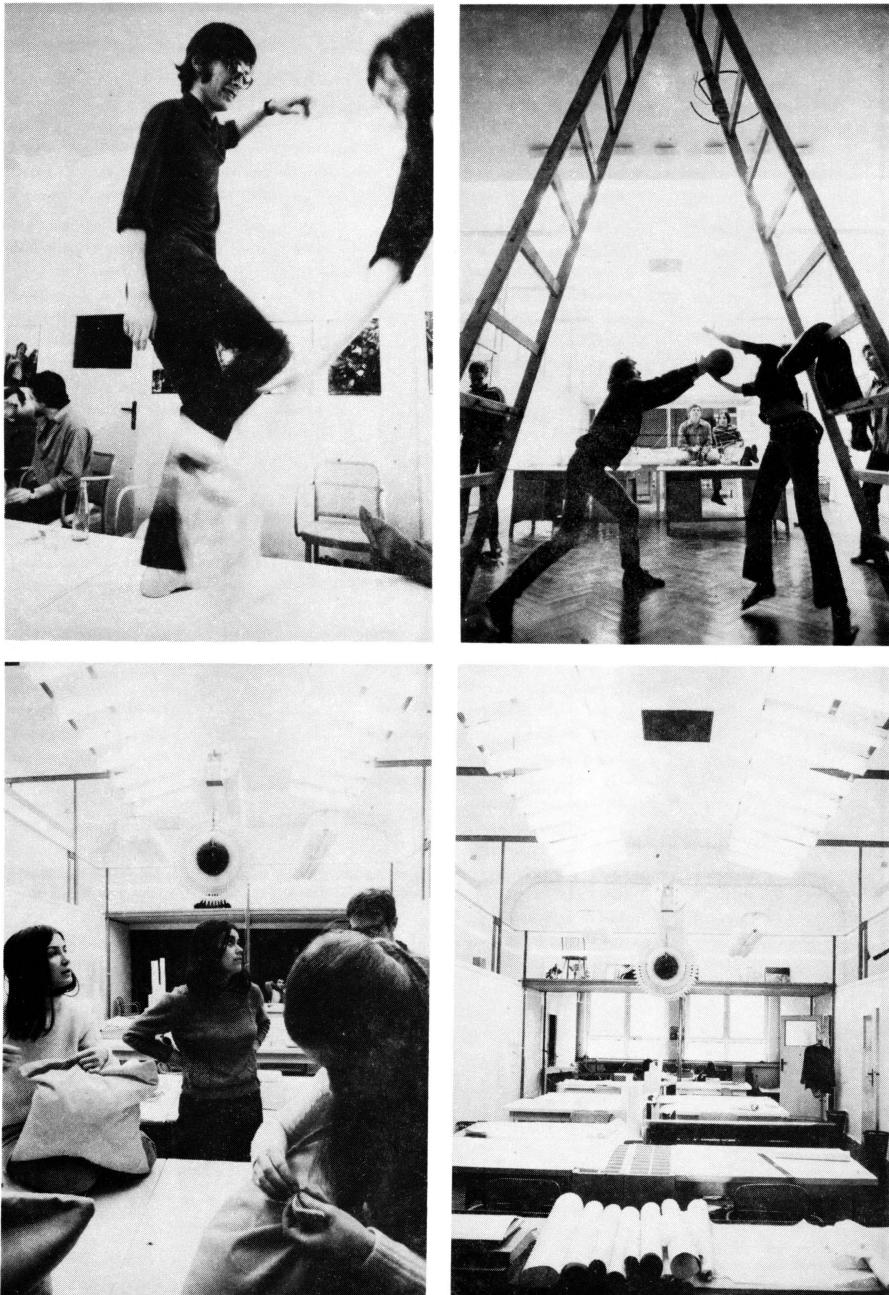


FIGURE 5.4 Daily life of the Školka members at Jedlová. *Atelier Sial* (Budapest: BME Kisz, 1982):11, courtesy of Miroslav Masák.

Hubáček assigned these two buildings – one situated on and accessed from the main level of this southern edge of town, from Jindřicha z Lipé street (formerly Gotwaldova), and the other hugging the hill towards the Augustinian monastery and the sectionally elevated old town – to Přikryl and Suchomel.²³ The architects promptly produced an urban plan that set their buildings in a conversation capturing an area of the lower terrace of Česká Lípa between them, with the two buildings formally reinforcing each other's horizontality and color palette (Figure 5.5).

Přikryl made two proposals for the Uran shopping center; the first one in 1975, which predated the 1978 urban plan, included a dramatic central double-height space cutting the building into two parts longitudinally, producing symmetry in both directions of the plan. The sketches of the interior show large graphic splashes animating the shopping environment (Figure 5.6). If this scheme had been executed, Přikryl's glazing details would have been in alignment with Suchomel's, but the project that was built included much less glazing. Both buildings relied on vibrant colors for their mullions and doors. As the status of Česká Lípa was upgraded and new urban plans were produced for the southern edge of town, including more program in the area, as well as a typical department store, Přikryl produced another scheme, in which the exclusion of the glazed atrium simplified the formal pallet of the building, eliminating triangular motifs as well as the symmetry in the short section. In a feat of architecture it also transcended its mandatory (state-stipulated) prefab system, MS 71, to send a signal of "medieval monumentality" to its contemporary architectural critics.²⁴ Its brick colored tiles covered up the seams of the MS 71 prefab system, allowing the building to appear more massive and archaic. For all the admissions and assertions of this building's indebtedness to both Kahn and Stirling, the "sources" are here so processed, so completely synthetically adapted to the task and circumstances at hand, that their signal is at best atmospheric. Local theories of translation, from prewar Czech linguistic structuralism on, insist on contextual specificity both on the side of producing and on the side of receiving, such that these atmospheric references would in fact demand to be seen as sources, deciphered and re-deployed from a specific point of view²⁵ (Figure 5.7A–5.7D).

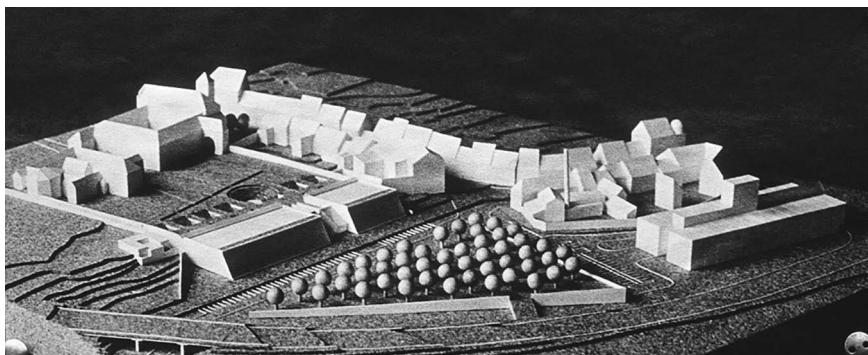


FIGURE 5.5 First study of the periphery of Česká Lípa including Uran shopping center and Crystal culture house, 1975–1976. Courtesy of Jiří Suchomel.

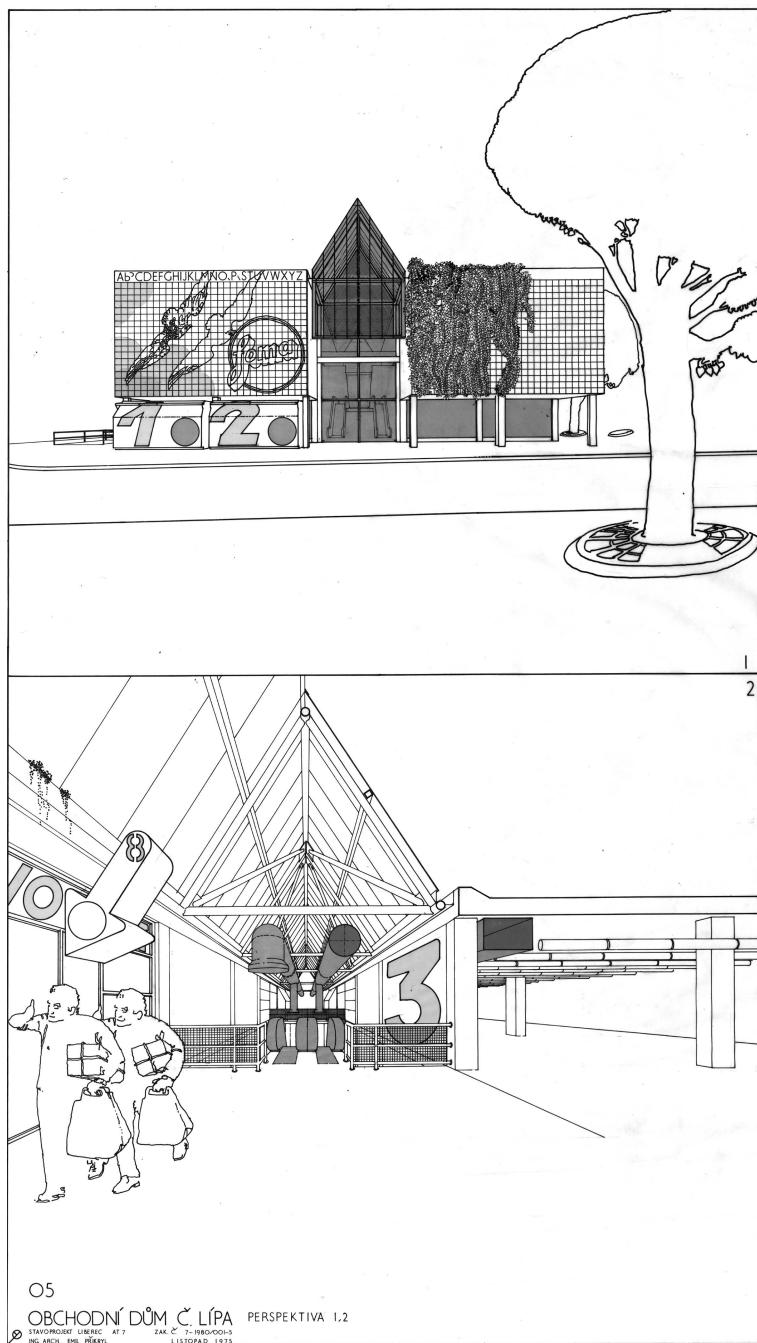


FIGURE 5.6 Elevation and interior perspective of Emil Přikryl's first scheme for Uran shopping center, 1975–1978. Courtesy of Emil Přikryl.

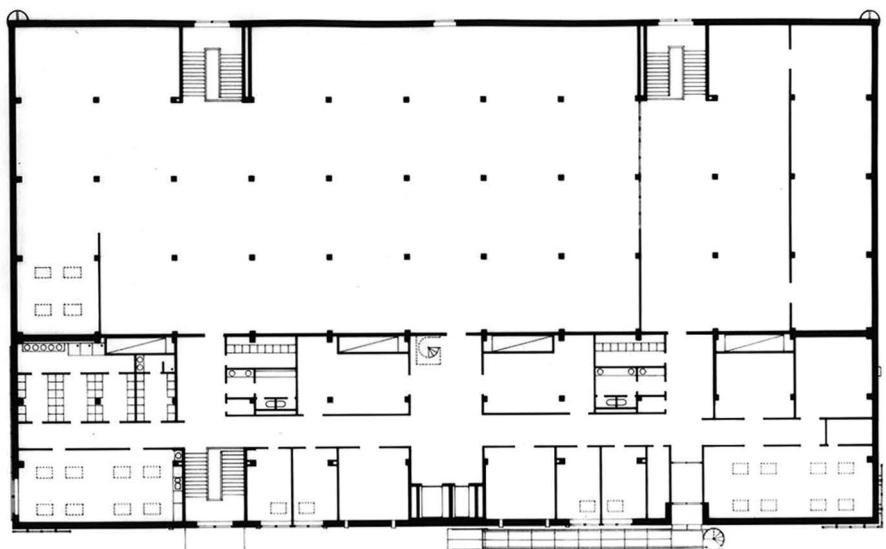
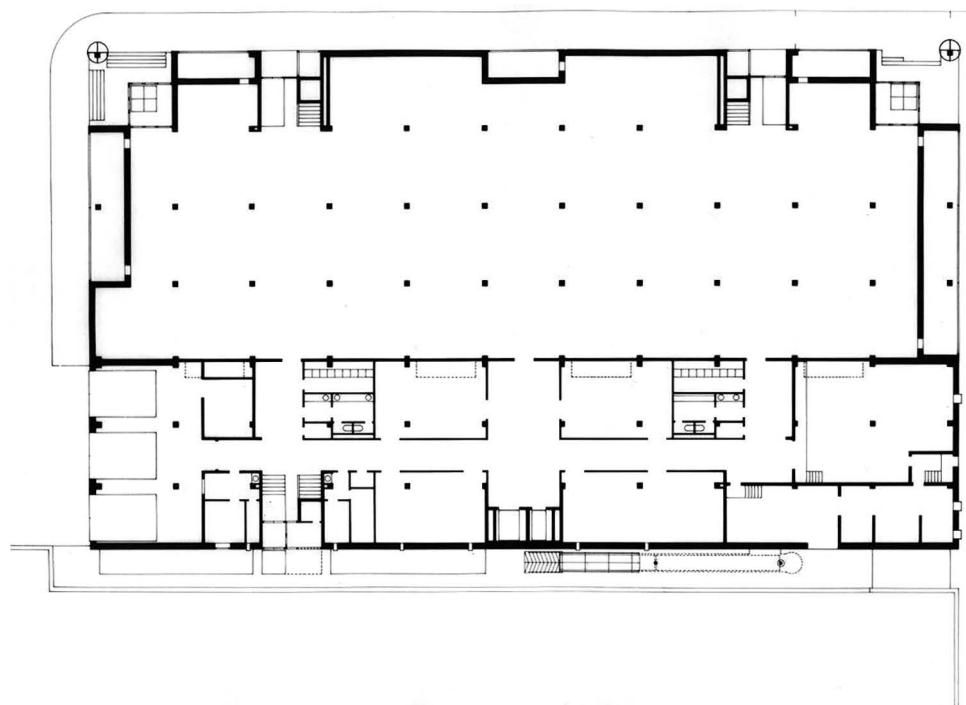


FIGURE 5.7A–B Plans of the final scheme for Uran shopping center, 1980–1984. Courtesy of Emil Přikryl.

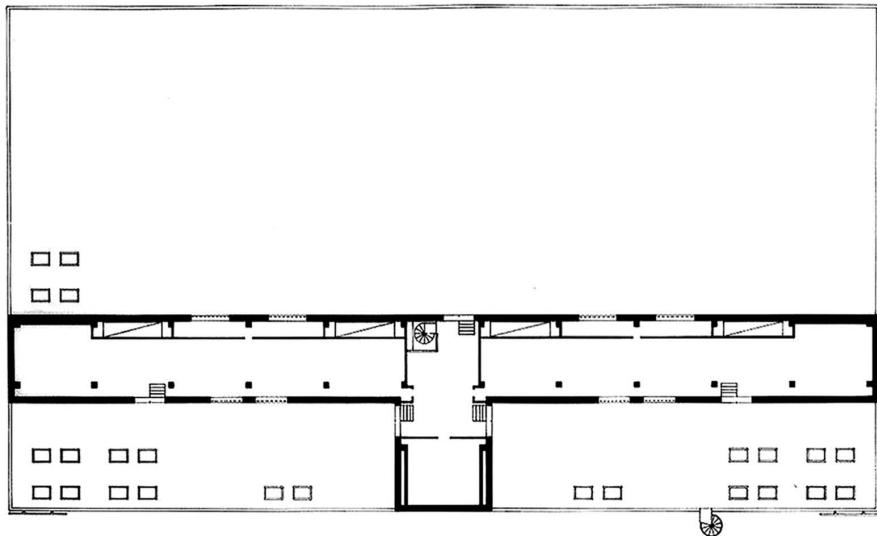


FIGURE 5.7C Plan of the final scheme for Uran shopping center, 1980–1984. Courtesy of Emil Přikryl.

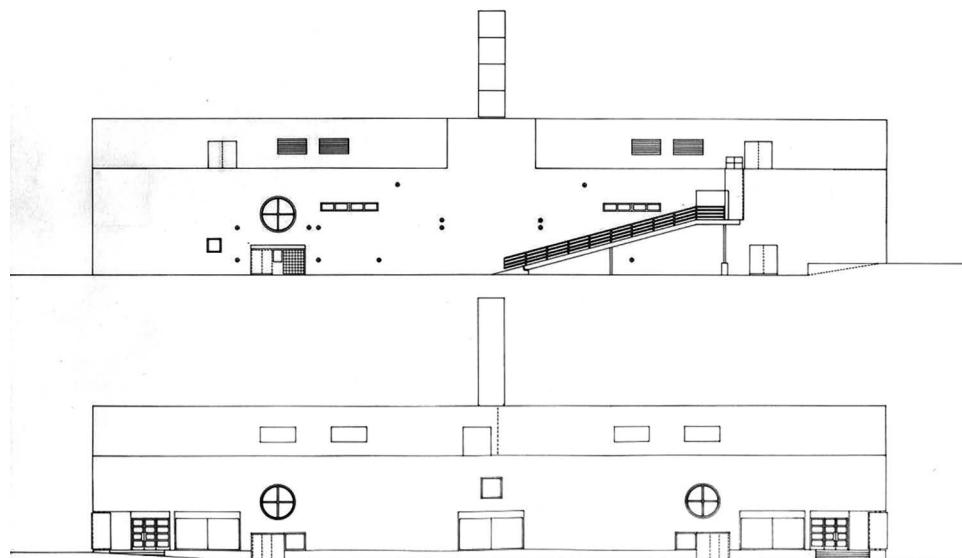


FIGURE 5.7D Long elevations of the final scheme for Uran shopping center, 1980–1984. Courtesy of Emil Přikryl.

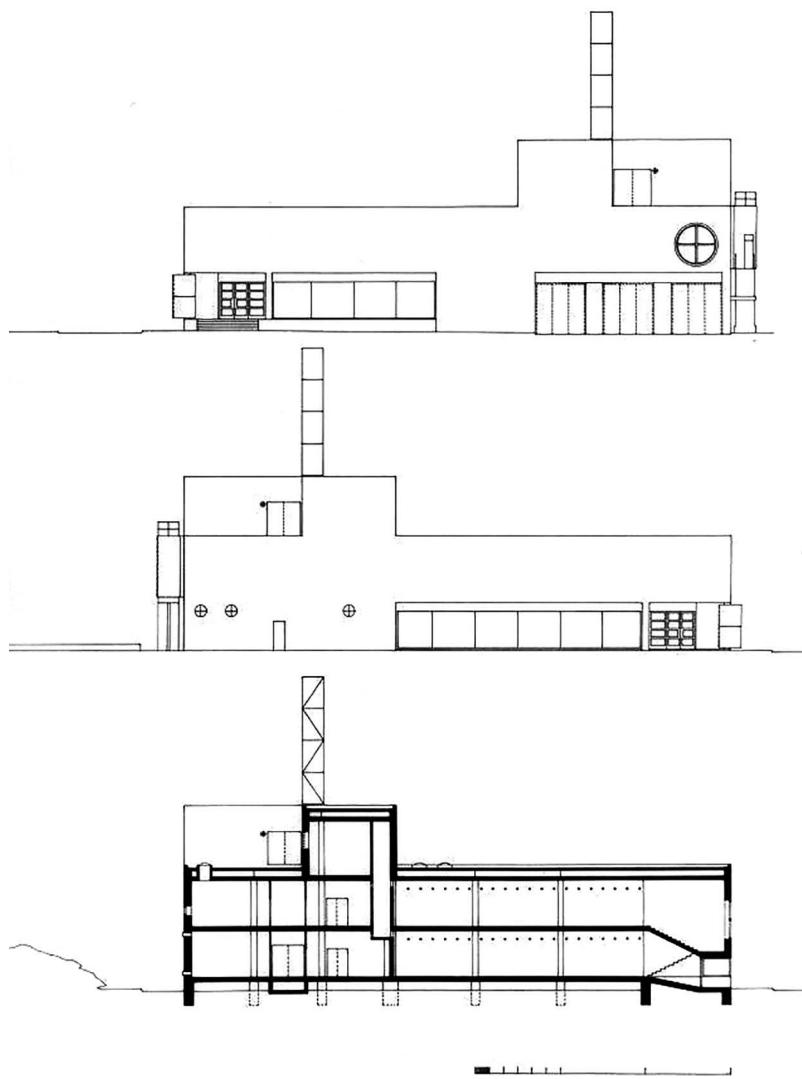


FIGURE 5.7E Short elevations of the final scheme for Uran shopping center, 1980–1984. Courtesy of Emil Přikryl.

In developing the Crystal culture house across the street, Suchomel stated that “the idea of the tilted façade was based on Stirling’s competition entry for the Derby civic center from 1970.” He was also especially taken by Stirling’s Staatsgalerie in Stuttgart, which he had not yet visited when he designed Crystal, as well as Přikryl’s recent and ultimately unbuilt project for a museum in Most, which Přikryl in turn linked to Venturi and Scott Brown’s National Football Hall of Fame²⁶ (Figure 5.8). Indeed Přikryl’s project

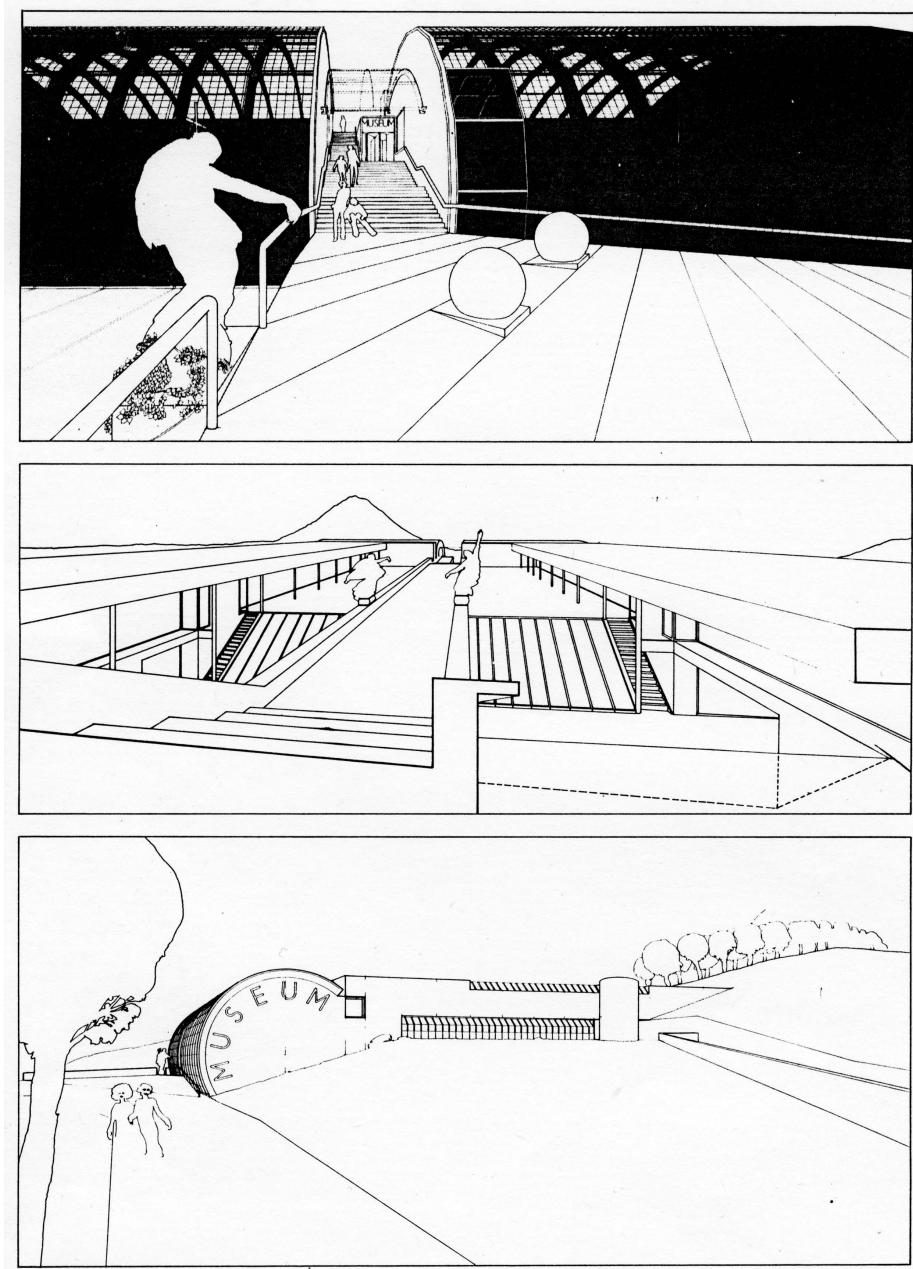


FIGURE 5.8 Perspectives of the Museum and Archive in Most, Emil Přikryl, 1975. Courtesy of Emil Přikryl.

for Most took cues from the rounded roof of the Football Hall of Fame (the shed), but not its paradigmatic billboard (decoration). Přikryl's museum project for Most echoed the parti logic of the National Football Hall of Fame, installing symmetry in plan organized by the main entry. Suchomel was himself taken by the promise of solar architecture at the time, and the building of the culture house attempts to do much with passive solar moves, insofar as those could be executed in the local construction terms. In order to test some of these ideas, Suchomel had set out to build a smaller solar home, whose form in many ways followed through on the logic of Venturi and Scott Brown's decorated shed, while the narrative of its performance had little to do with advertising and everything to do with passive solar performance.²⁷ Crystal's section and central symmetry around the entry door, parallel the parti and sectional logic of Přikryl's project in Most, with both projects indebted to a series of earlier Školka explorations in sectional extrusion²⁸ (Figure 5.9). The culture house is dimensioned as a true civic venue, with two theaters seating 630 and 174, a regional library, a restaurant, workshops, shops, and a set of passages carved into the hill in the back of the building, rendered in platonic concrete shapes and arrayed with a nod to the disposition of elements in the neighboring baroque monastery. The path to Crystal's construction was more arduous than to Uran's, plagued with interruptions and uncertainties. On top of dealing with criticism about Crystal's presence diminishing the monastery right above it, the lack of funds for the construction, and other projects on the table, in the midst of working on the project Hubáček named Suchomel his successor as the leader of the studio numbering upwards of sixty-five members (Figures 5.10A, 5.10B).

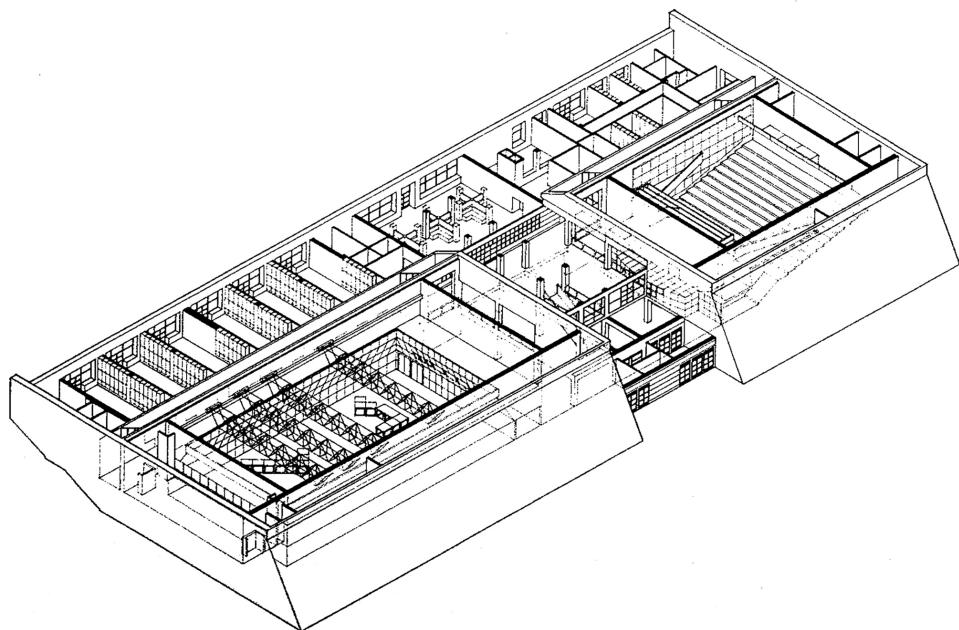


FIGURE 5.9 Isometric view of the interior of Crystal culture house, 1979. Courtesy of Jiří Suchomel.



FIGURE 5.10A Crystal culture house, Jiří Suchomel, 1976–1990. Photo by Jiří Suchomel.



FIGURE 5.10B Landscaping detail in the back of Crystal culture house. Photo by Ana Miljački.

In this period, when “design of residential buildings practically stopped being architecture” due to various policies on deploying prefab systems and typified typologies, these architects set their sights on the “imagined community” of world architects and on the architectural developments beyond their context.²⁹ Jiřina Loudová captured this sentiment in 1984: “We are receiving news from abroad about the developments of contemporary world architecture – both enthusiastic and critical. We do not want to and cannot stand outside world development.”³⁰ I use Benedict Anderson’s famous concept “imagined communities,” against the grain of its end point on the construction and logic of nationalism, but in line with him insofar as he insists on “imagined communities” being quite literally imagined.³¹ In Anderson’s terms, the community that SIAL and Školka members knew intimately, and with whom they began producing a world parallel to the official discourse, would qualify as a form of a “primordial village.” Beyond that tangible and intimately knowable scale of interaction, Anderson suggests, all communities are imagined. Nation is one such imagined political community, both finite and sovereign with a set of shared monuments, historical narrative, and rituals. It is not hard to imagine how architects everywhere, but especially in Eastern Europe during the Cold War, would have been motivated to imagine belonging to a “community” of world architects, who were, regardless of their different political and economic circumstances, cultural position, or relative agency, bound by a form of kinship. Rooted in expertise, this kinship was regularly confirmed through dissemination of ideas in print and at various international meetings throughout the Cold War. While SIAL and Školka’s internal cultivation of dialogue, play, and dedication to “concrete solutions” in architecture was one form of a “parallel public,” this larger, imagined community provided another. The style of imagining this community of world architects, traversing the Iron Curtain, was cosmopolitan in nature; it relied on the conceptual possibility of communicating, or what Esra Akcan has referred to as translatability.³² It was also for the most part one-directional, and in this context necessitated by the very fact of its relative invisibility in the West. It is important to recover the Czech architects’ “need to demonstrate membership in the Western cultural groups” as not merely a trivial impulse that inevitably resulted in the simplification of postmodernism in the Czechoslovak context, but instead precisely what makes the work produced in this imaginary dialogue locally specific.³³

All Školka architects, Přikryl and Suchomel among them, belonged to the group that Ševčík described in 1985 as the youngest generation in the “extraordinary three generational constellation” that made up SIAL and Školka.³⁴ He thought their contribution to the atelier was indisputable, with the work of the young generation leading, not “through beautiful compositions, pure artistry, proportions and abstract play with shapes, but instead through rather more ‘ordinary’ devices,” including “building envelopes, and technological equipment,” all elements of their more machinic impulses. But he also suggested the work was changing in response “to the new wave in architecture.”³⁵ As the key sign of the shift, he cited the firm’s design for the reconstruction of the Trade Fair Palace in Prague (in which the team Masák, Binar, Eisler, and Hubáček opted for restoring many of the building’s famous modernist aspects) and the successful entry into the urban design competition for Berlin district Tegeler Hafen in 1980 produced by Emil Přikryl, Jiří Suchomel, Martin Rajniš, John Eisler, and Dalibor Vokač. Suchomel described Tegeler Hafen and the architects’ subsequent work in Berlin as one of the last Školka-style collective projects of the group.

Real conversations with the West

The Tegeler Hafen competition in Berlin and the project that eventually came out of it were contemporaneous with Uran and Crystal. They are especially important when it comes to understanding the mechanics of the ideas flowing in and out of Czechoslovakia in the mid-1970s and 1980s, and especially Přikryl's and Suchomel's work. The notion that they might participate in a competition that was taking place on the occasion of the IBA exhibition in Berlin and the opportunity to do so were both presented by Mirko Baum, who while at Školka held the room between Přikryl's and Suchomel's at Jedlová, and having left the country a bit earlier found himself working at the time in the Berlin architectural office of Joseph Paul Kleihues.³⁶ Kleihues was in turn directly involved with the organization of the IBA exhibition, and eventually both IBA GmbH's director and the key proponent of the need for supporting "typical Berlin forms," "the image of the city," and "the art of building," in the process of "critically redeveloping" West Berlin's identity and architectural cohesion.³⁷

Competition entries across "the Wall" were not common, and actually working in the Western context on behalf of a Czechoslovak architectural firm even less so; thus, the opportunity to test how well their work would fare in this context was both unprecedented and enticing. The international jury for the competition, including Kenneth Frampton, Richard Meier, and Rem Koolhaas, awarded the Czech team a second place shared with Ralph Erskin, right between Charles Moore in first and Arata Isozaki in third. This long shot, a probe in the form of a competition entry projected onto less familiar, greener pastures, resulted in an actual commission for the architects of Stavoprojekt Liberec. Three of them – Přikryl, Suchomel, and Eisler – would go on to produce an apartment block for the IBA exhibition 1983–1985. Their apartment block did not inherit the key elements of the architects' runner-up urban plan, its rational grid populated by housing units and carved by larger circular openings. The architects were constrained to a single housing block. While the street façade included a dramatic half-circle balcony supported by a massive cantilever that signaled the building's axis of symmetry, and was clad in the obligatory brick, the interior of the housing block at Wohnpark Victoria was rendered in a more muted white and punctured by carefully figured rectangular and circular windows. The window game as well as the horizontal brick striping that accentuated the structure of floors may have been distant echoes of Loos's work in Prague (Villa Mueller) and Vienna (Red Vienna being of particular interest at this time for its iconographic and communicative content). However, echoing the consensus among other Czechoslovak historians, Vendula Hnídková, only a few years ago suggested that "although the designers renounced any conscious 'quotation,' it is impossible not to see that some aspects betray a subconscious inspiration from the work of James Stirling."³⁸

The Wohnpark Victoria housing was recently characterized as a kind of a "postmodern meal" by Přikryl, and even Švácha and Potůček, more cautious than most about using the label, have dubbed it "SIAL's foremost Post-Modern built project."³⁹ This commission was crucial for the three architects who had worked on it in Berlin. First of all, it confirmed that their ideas worked in translation, or that their work fit in the Berlin context; in fact it was a perfect response to the veteran critic Otakar Nový's 1984 assertion that Czech architects

play quite comfortably only on home playgrounds with domestic league and division rivals, but we forfeit international matches in our industry both at home and abroad – which might be a useful tactic from the point of view of eliminating risks of loss, but

from the point of view of the socialist cultural offensive it is ineffective and morally and politically deficient.⁴⁰

Second, it exposed them to the system of architectural production in which production of profit mattered more than the ideological content of buildings, even though their own project was but a mild example of that.⁴¹ The real connections they made while working on their project resulted in the possibility to publish in foreign journals, with Uran appearing in *Casa-bella* shortly thereafter⁴² (Figure 5.11). John Eisler would emigrate to the U.S. after this project in order to work for Richard Meier, while others were encouraged by the successful outcome of their participation in the IBA competition to try their luck on other foreign competitions,

Emil Přikryl	
Náprstková 9,	Stavoprojekt Liberec
110 00 Praha 1	Voroněžská 13
Czechoslovakia	460 00 Liberec, Czechoslovakia

Mr Vittorio GREGOTTI
CASABELLA
20129 Milano - via Goldoni 1
ITALY

Dear Mr Gregotti,

Hereby I send you the required photos and descriptions:

- 1) Description of villa - Prague
 - 2) Five photos of shopping centre - Česká Lípa
 - 3) Description of shopping centre - Česká Lípa
- I hope it is not too late.

I was happy to meet you.

Yours sincerely,
Emil Přikryl

October, 26th, 1984

FIGURE 5.11 Emil Přikryl's letter to Vittorio Greggotti in 1984, on the occasion of Uran's publication in *Casabella*. Courtesy of Emil Přikryl.

often in conjunction with colleagues who had emigrated and now had established a base somewhere across the Wall. But it is instructive to consider why this building in Berlin seems easier for architects and some historians to call postmodern than the ones in Česká Lípa.

In their attempt at a typology of contemporary architectural production in 1987 Czechoslovakia, Jana and Jiří Ševčíkovi read Uran and Crystal as products of a particular kind of tendency towards abstraction that for these architects went through a project in ennobling technological innovation to the poetics of spatial disposition, always keeping the historicizing project of postmodernism at a distance.⁴³ Historians Švácha, Radomír Sedlaková, and Petr Kratochvíl have all subsequently spoken of these buildings and the SIAL architects' restraint in both turning to Western stylistic influences and historicism, as well as a return to sources in Czech functionalism.⁴⁴ Švácha characterized them as exhibiting "a tendency to refer to the functionalism of interwar design. With their displaced austere lines, these neo-Functionalists' quotations matched the moralistic criterion while, simultaneously, evoking the lost golden age of the First Republic."⁴⁵ But postmodern tropes in Berlin have been easier to pronounce as postmodernism than those in Czechoslovakia, and for some important reasons. The First World and the Second World contexts are not easily commensurable. It is far less complicated to describe the relationship between Uran and Crystal (and many other Czech) buildings, as well as all the Czech writing on postmodern architecture, and their Western "sources" as allusion, inspiration, and quote, than to decipher the specific boundaries of a cultural trend and its underpinnings. Each of these terms, freely used by Czech architects and historians, indeed evidences the kind of agency and activity that British art historian Michael Baxandall used precisely to expand the vocabulary describing and the imagination regarding the correlation between "source material" and the new work produced in relation to it.⁴⁶ He proposed in 1985 that thinking in terms of influence was the curse of art (and architecture) history, because of its "wrongheaded grammatical prejudice about who is the agent and who the patient" – for when we say that X influenced Y, or First World influenced the Second, this assumes some form of action on the part of the First World. Baxandall proposed that instead historians should understand Y, in this case Second World architects, as "the actor." The evidence of agency and of the productivity of the imaginary and real conversations the Second World architects and intellectuals conducted with their First World counterparts begins to challenge the model of discourse – and more broadly, the model of history – in which the Second World is seen as failing to catch up to the First, or conversely as its exotic other. Historical differences and geopolitics actually make a difference, but they are also always intertwined.⁴⁷ Even what may have seemed as a one-way conversation in a politically divided world is a form of connection with the capacity to rewrite our simplistic understandings of that division itself.

Notes

- 1 On Brussels style, Lenka Tichá, "Středoevropská architektura v letech 1956–1963 a 'brusselsky styl,'" *Umění*, XLIX, 2 (2001): 151.
- 2 Other sources come up in writing and conversations, as well. Most notably, Příkryl brings up Charles Moore's Sea Ranch, but also Aldo Van Eyck, the Amsterdam School, Frank Lloyd Wright, Plečník and Venturi and Scott Brown, most recently in an email exchange with the author, July 23, 2016.
- 3 Rostislav Švácha, "The Energy of Geometry," in *Emil Příkryl a jeho škola*. Edited by Sona Ryndová and Rostislav Švácha (Prague: Galerie Jaroslava Fragnera, 1995), 43.
- 4 Rostislav Švácha, "Czech Architecture 1989–2007," in *Architecture V4 1990–2008; Czech Republic, Slovakia, Hungary, Poland*. Edited by Ján Stempel (Prague: Kant, 20090), 13.

- 5 I don't have room here to rehearse the entire narrative of nationalization, which begins with the 1948 communist takeover of power. Suffice it to say that the entire field of construction was reorganized then, and all Czechoslovak architects became employees of the Czechoslovak Building Works design arm Stavoprojekt. In 1951, Stavoprojekt separated from the Czechoslovak Building Works and became an independent "national enterprise." The ministry in charge of Stavoprojekt changed a few times, and the further reorganization of Stavoprojekt involved its decentralization in the 1960s with the introduction of regional semi-autonomy, allowing for regional design institutions Stavoprojekt, Liberec, Stavoprojekt, Ostrava, Stavoprojekt, Prague, etc., operating now more as a network, of entities that occasionally competed with each other for work. For a more detailed description of this see Ana Miljački, *The Optimum Imperative, Czech Architecture for the Socialist Lifestyle, 1938–1968* (London: Routledge, 2017) and Kimberly Elman Zarecor, *Manufacturing a Socialist Modernity: Housing in Czechoslovakia, 1945–1960* (Pittsburgh: Pittsburgh University Press, 2011).
- 6 Přikryl described the admiration for the Ještěd teletower and hotel building among his colleagues at school before setting off to join SIAL in Liberec, while Suchomel wrote about his dilemma about emigrating to Germany where he was working permanently, or going back to Czechoslovakia to join a group of architects who seemed to have a lot of interesting work in Liberec. Both of these accounts were presented in interviews with architects in Miroslav Masák (ed.), *Architekti SIAL* (Prague: Kant, 2008), 139, 174.
- 7 Paulina Bren, *The Greengrocer and His TV: The Culture of Communism after the 1968 Prague Spring* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell UP 2010) and Fredric Jameson, *Postmodernism, or, The Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1990).
- 8 Heinrich Klotz, ed., *Postmodern Visions. Drawings, Paintings, and Models by Contemporary Architects* (New York: Abbeville Press, 1984).
- 9 They also invoke Christian Norberg Schultz's theories and C. Ray Smith's *Supermannerism*. See for example, Jana and Jiří Ševčíkovi, "Postmodernismus a my I: Nabídka postmodernismy v krizi soudobé světové architektury," *Umění a řemesla*, 4 (1987): 20–22; Jana and Jiří Ševčíkovi, "Postmodernismus a my II: Situace doma-pokus o typologii," *Umění a řemesla*, 4 (1987): 61–66.
- 10 There are at least two key articles by veteran contributors to architectural journals that weigh in on the topic from the point of view of "realistic and socialist direction." Both Zdeněk Kostka and Otakar Nový found merit in the Czech postmodern turn in architecture and called for a deeper understanding and engagement with it. Zdeněk Kostka, "Kam bude směřovat architektura," *Výtvarná kultura*, 4 (1984): 11–17; Otakar Nový, "Moderní a postmoderní architektura," *Architektura ČSR*, 43 (1984): 157–164.
- 11 Maroš Krivý, "Postmodernism or Socialist Realism? The Architecture of Housing Estates in Late Socialist Czechoslovakia," *JSAH*, 75, 1 (March 2016): 74–101.
- 12 The anthropologist Katherine Verdery has theorized an aspect of this discursive order persisting as a form of Cold War epistemology, in *What Was Socialism, and What Comes Next?* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996). Architectural historian Carmen Popescu laments the persistence of this type of power relation in contemporary historical work in her "At the Periphery of Architectural History," *ARTL@S BULLETIN*, 3, 1 (2014): 14–23.
- 13 Boris Groys, *Total Art of Stalinism: Avant-Garde, Aesthetic Dictatorship, and Beyond* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1992).
- 14 Jitka Kubištová, "SIAL v České Lípě," *Umění*, 59, 1 (2011): 59–95.
- 15 According to Jitka Kubištová, the 1970s construction in Česká Lípa was also helped by the new city architect Václav Šuk, who attempted to educate the local denizens about the value of architecture in his weekly column dedicated to the topic, while also, for better or for worse, heading the process of coordinating urban development, see Kubištová, "SIAL v České Lípě."
- 16 See, Rostislav Švácha, ed., *SIAL, Liberec Association of Engineers and Architects, 1958–1990: Czech Architecture Against the Stream* (Prague and Olomouc: Arbor vitae and Muzeum umění Olomouc, 2010. English edition, 2012); Miroslav Masák, ed., *Architekti SIAL* (Prague: Kant, 2008); and Ana Miljački, *The Optimum Imperative: Czech Architecture for the Socialist Lifestyle, 1938–1968* (London: Routledge, 2017).
- 17 Suchomel suggested that among the members of this group "Školka" had less purchase than Jedlová.
- 18 John Eisler's magazines consistently come up as the description of these architects' key sources in Western architectural development. Numerous interviews with members of SIAL and Školka, including one with John Eisler himself confirm this. He proposed that he would be the first to read through his precious news from the West and then his magazines would make rounds through

- the whole studio. See John Eisler interview: "Pro zahraničí jsem představovali pokračování modernistické architektury," in *Architekti SIAL*. Edited by Miroslav Masák (Prague: Nakladatelství Kant, 2008), 67–69.
- 19 Miroslav Masák's early Školka manifesto, "Námět činnosti 'školky' architektů při SIAL," Manuscript dated September 10 1969, in Miroslav Masák's personal archive.
 - 20 See Ana Miljački, "Playing in the Time of Normalization: SIAL's Školka Experiment and Architectural Dissidence," in *Architecture and the Paradox of Dissidence*. Edited by Inez Weizman (London: Routledge, 2013).
 - 21 Václav Benda et al., "Parallel Polis, or an Independent Society in Central and Eastern Europe: An Inquiry," *Social Research*, 55 (1988): 211–260.
 - 22 But even here, the lines between "official" and "unofficial" are exceedingly hard to draw, for Školka emerged in opposition to the practices of the day but was eventually supported logically and financially by them.
 - 23 Crystal's narrative is a bit more complicated, as the very first solution for the building was provided by a different architect from the same group, Václav Králíček who had to abandon the project in 1974. Jitka Kubštová, "SIAL v České Lípě," 65.
 - 24 Jan Sapák, "Obchodní dům Uran," *Československý architekt*, 31, 23 (1985): 3.
 - 25 Zuzana Jettmarová, "Czech and Slovak Translation Theories: The Lesser Known Tradition," in *Tradition versus Modernity: from the Classic Period of the Prague School to Translation Studies at the Beginning of the 21st Century*. Edited by Jana Králová, Zuzana Jettmarová et al. (Prague: Charles University, 2008), 14–43.
 - 26 Email exchange with Suchomel, July 6, 2016, and Přikryl's exchange with author, July 23, 2016.
 - 27 See Jana Stará, "Solar Home in Ondřejov," in *SIAL, Liberec Association of Engineers and Architects, 1958–1990: Czech Architecture Against the Stream*. Edited by Rostislav Švácha (Prague and Olomouc: Arbor vitae and Muzeum umění Olomouc, 2010, English edition, 2012), 134–137.
 - 28 What the architects themselves and local historians have lovingly referred to as sausage buildings.
 - 29 Radomíra Sedláčková, "The Seventies," in *Česká architektura 1945–1999* (Prague: Obec architektů, 1995), 59.
 - 30 Jiřina Loudová, "Postmodernismus, skutečnost a mýtus," *Architektura ČSR*, 42 (1984): 155.
 - 31 Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (London: Verso, 1983).
 - 32 Esra Akcan, *Architete in Translation: Germany, Turkey, and the Modern House* (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2012).
 - 33 Jakub Potůček and Rostislav Švácha, "Between Environmentalism, Post-Modernism and the New Modernity," in Rostislav Švácha, ed., *SIAL, Liberec Association of Engineers and Architects, 1958–1990: Czech Architecture Against the Stream* (Prague and Olomouc: Arbor vitae and Muzeum umění Olomouc, 2010, English edition, 2012): 156.
 - 34 Jiří Ševčík, "Aktuální tendence v České architektuře 70.–80. Let," lecture from March 13, 1985, printed in Jana Ševčíková and Jiří Ševčík, *Texty* (Prague: Tranzit.cz and VVP AVU, 2010), 111–121.
 - 35 Ibid.
 - 36 According to Jiří Suchomel, a wave of emigration from the studio started in 1978 and lasted until 1983. Email exchange with author, July 6, 2016.
 - 37 These are all terms quoted from an editorial that Kleihues and his colleague Woold Jobst Sidler advocated for in their series of articles: "Models of the City," in *Berliner Morgenpost*. Quoted and discussed in Wallis Miller, "'Models for a City.' Housing and the Image of Cold-War Berlin," *JAE*, 46, 4 (May 1993): 205.
 - 38 Vendula Hnádková, "IBA Apartment Block, John Eisler, Emil Přikryl, Jiří Suchomel, 1983–1985," in *SIAL, Liberec Association of Engineers and Architects, 1958–1990: Czech Architecture Against the Stream*. Edited by Švácha, 185.
 - 39 Jakub Potůček and Rostislav Švácha, "Between Environmentalism, Post-Modernism and the New Modernity," 143–169.
 - 40 Otakar Nový, "Moderní a postmoderní architektura," 157.
 - 41 The architect's friend Mirko Baum would describe his time in Kleihous's office as sobering in that sense.
 - 42 "Centro commerciale a Česká Lípa 1978–1983," *Casabella*, 512 (April 1985): 12–13.
 - 43 Jana and Jiří Ševčíkoví, "Postmodernismus a my II: Situace doma – pokus o typologii," *Umění a řemesla*, 4 (1987): 61–66.

- 44 Radomíra Sedláková, “Nový funkcionalismus” and Petr Kratochvíl “Léta osmdesátá,” in *Česká architektura 1945–1999* (Prague: Obec architektů, 1995): 73–79 and 61–71. Across a larger body of his writings Švácha developed the notions of “Czech architecture’s austerity,” and in SIAL’s case he and Potůček argued that it was Hubáček who insisted that his younger colleagues would not be served well if they simply jumped into a dialogue with Western architectural developments as if they were not operating in a context with vastly different technological possibilities. See Jakub Potůček and Rostislav Svácha, “Between Environmentalism.”
- 45 Rostislav Švácha, “Czech Architecture 1989–2007,” in *Architecture V4 1990–2008; Czech Republic, Slovakia, Hungary, Poland*. Edited by Ján Stempel (Prague: Kant, 2009), 13.
- 46 Michael Baxandall, *Patterns of Intention: On the Historical Explanation of Pictures* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1985).
- 47 I am paraphrasing Dipesh Chakrabarty, *Provincializing Europe: Postcolonial Thought and Historical Difference* (Princeton and London: Princeton University Press, 2000).

6

TRANSLATION THEORY AND THE INTERTWINED HISTORIES OF BUILDING FOR SELF-GOVERNANCE

Esra Akcan

No other question occupies a number of architectural historians today more than the need to write a globally inclusive account of the past. Many scholars have long acknowledged the limits of the monophonic and monochronic narrative that prioritizes sequential practices between white male architects and defines modern architecture as if it was invented exclusively in Europe and North America. At the same time, however, the recent tendency to write the global history of architecture by perpetuating art history's nineteenth-century field categories such as "Islamic," "Asian," or "Chinese" architecture has little to offer, as this model conceives of the world as separated into a few self-contained and often hierarchical geographical zones, and is therefore too vulnerable to maintaining the same geopolitical framework that produced the canonical narrative in the first place.

Translation theory offers a model for critically evaluating both of these problematic positions. Recent theories have presented countless reasons to reject the conventional notion of translation as a "neutral bridge between cultures," or as a secondhand copy that fabricated the myth of the "original." When translation is defined as the process of transformation that takes place with the transportation from one or more places to another of people, ideas, objects, technology, information, and images, it avoids passive metaphors and depoliticized explanations. This definition of translation inevitably invites for the consideration of, first, the sociopolitical context, and second, the agency of all parties in cross-geographical vectors. Translation understood this way advocates for a commitment to a new culture of translatability from below and in multiple directions for truly cosmopolitan ethics and global justice.¹ By extension, the model for "global" or *intertwined history* that comes out of this translation theory would present a much more connected world. It would present an account of the past which acknowledges that places are affected by each other even when they seem segregated; architectures are reciprocally translated rather than disseminated from one center as if the rest was purely derivative. Whether there was a peaceful or a violent, a collaborative or a competitive, an espousing or a defying conversation, an intertwined history perceives each location in a given time and place in some relation to other locations.

Building on the preceding translation theory, this chapter emphasizes methodological gestures for a geopolitically conscious global history of architecture, while discussing focused

examples that illuminate architecture's place in the construction of people's sovereignty around the world. Even though self-governance or self-rule is a geographically and historically dissimilar signifier, it is commonly understood as the transformation of the sovereign power to the people from a monarchic or colonial order. Securing the citizen rights by law, collective decision-making, and control of the rulers by the ruled are usually the major principles of this concept of popular sovereignty. In what follows, as the chapter deliberates over the inventions, hierarchies, and shifting identity markers of self-governance via a few examples during the enlightenment revolutions, the colonization and decolonization processes, and the formation of nation-states, respectively, it will demonstrate the explanatory power of translation in understanding modernity in its long history on the one hand, and expose the contradictions of this history, culminating in what has recently been called the crisis of sovereignty, on the other hand.

Before moving to the case studies, it would be fitting to observe that the established history of self-governance has obscured the global network of people's revolutions and hence the intertwined invention of this concept itself. The assumption that the world is divided into a few distinct civilizations has been used to justify the postulation that modernity was an exclusively European and North American invention which was disseminated to the rest of the world and thereby erased other presumably frozen architectural cultures, or at least rendered them unworthy of scholarly study.² Nowhere is this claim as firmly posited as in the narratives that show purely Western origins for the invention of people's sovereignty during the enlightenment revolutions, and the foundations of modern sociopolitical and legal order. It is a curious fact that many histories mention the French and the American Revolutions separately as big leaps of humanity, but they seldom spare a word for the other enlightenment revolutions that were happening simultaneously. Few would argue that the people's revolutions are among the most important chronological markers of human history. They have been the benchmarks of self-governance and popular sovereignty. The French Revolution, culminating in the "Declaration of the Rights of Man and the Citizen" of 1789, and the American Revolution, culminating in the Bill of Rights of 1791, which founded republics based on the enlightenment values of freedom, equality, and human/citizen rights, are seldom discussed together as part of a global network of people's revolutions. Moreover, rarely are other important people's revolutions that took place during the very same years included in this global network, such as the declaration of the Haitian Constitution in 1801 (effective with minor changes in 1805).

Additionally, established histories often buttress triumphalist narratives, failing to confront history critically and register the hypocrisies of these revolutions. For instance, they are usually silent about the fact that women were the last to gain political rights during the French Revolution. The status of slavery exposes a similar contradiction within the American Revolution, which secured many civil liberties including freedom of speech, the press, and religion, but maintained the notion of slavery.³ The Haitian Revolution is a marker in human history precisely because it brought about the first constitution to both declare people's sovereignty and abandon slavery. Despite its retreat into a hegemonic rule in short time, the Haitian Constitution was evidence that the ideals of freedom, equality, and self-governance were embraced by its citizens to come. To these enlightenment values it also added the full and perpetual abandonment of slavery, rectifying one of the most appalling contradictions of enlightenment.⁴ It is therefore telling that the intertwined history of the Haitian Revolution or the Caribbean Enlightenment in general, and the similar transformations happening in Europe at the time, has been a topic of scholarly interest only recently. A handful of scholars has only just shown

the possible influences that the abandonment of slavery from below during the Haitian Revolution could have had on enlightenment thinkers.⁵

The architectural symbols of these revolutions exist within a similar hierarchy in established history. A comparison between Marc-Antoine Laugier's and Jean Jacques Rousseau's theories of origin, in the way the former identified architecture's beginning in the primitive hut and the latter defined human nature with the character of the savage man, would show both authors' importance in the emergence of the idea of human nature as a free and equal being, eventually circulating in the air during the French Revolution.⁶ When one looked for the architectural symbols of this step toward self-governance, one would think of Jacques-German Soufflot's Church of St. Genevieve (1757–1791), and its transformation into the Panthéon of Paris in 1791 in the hands of the architect Quatremere de Quincy, its path to becoming the secular monument of the French Revolution, and its turning into the temple dedicated to the people, to nationhood, and to citizenry. While thinking of the American Revolution in architectural terms, one would immediately reflect on the University of Virginia (1817–1826), built by Thomas Jefferson, one of the founding fathers, the author of the Declaration of Independence, and the third president of the United States. The architectural references in the campus Rotunda and Pavilions, with porticos and pediments designed with a permutation of Doric, Ionic, and Corinthian orders, would remind one of Jefferson's intention to establish free America as a successor of the European Enlightenment, and American architecture as an inheritor of European Antiquity and the Renaissance. However, one would be short of buildings if one were to discuss the Haitian Revolution with architectural examples, as these are barely researched or recognized in the discipline. The Sans-Souci Palace in Milot under Henri Christophe's rule, which is in ruins today, is one such architectural example that



FIGURE 6.1 Sans-Souci Palace of Haiti, Milot, 1810–1813.

is waiting for more scholarly attention and an exploration into its direct or indirect relation to thinkers such as Toussaint Louverture, whose enlightenment ideals are acknowledged to have prepared the intellectual background of the Haitian Revolution.⁷ In the minds of many, such as the King's advisor Baron Valentin de Vastey, the building was an edifice to African pride, "erected by descendants of Africans, [to] show that we have not lost the architectural taste and genius of our ancestors who covered Ethiopia, Egypt, Carthage, and old Spain with their superb monuments"⁸ (Figure 6.1). The stairs and the pyramidal stepping volumes that accentuate the hill on which the palace is situated, the monumental grandeur of the stones, the artificial springs and the system of waterworks, and the quality of the building must have reminded the advisor of the ancient pyramids and temples, as well as the "birth of civilization."

An intertwined architectural history that shows the co-emergence of the French, the American, and the Haitian Revolutions is therefore much more than a whimsical gesture, but a breaking down of a symbolic system that has long maintained the foundations of the Eurocentric established history. The following examples on architecture's relation to self-governance throughout the twentieth century are also testimonies to the long-lasting effects of the same reason that caused the disavowal of the global network of people's revolutions.

Uganda and "Graduation to Full Citizenship"

While intertwined history creates an alternative model to the world's division into fixed identity categories, it is necessary to demonstrate that these translations have hardly been smooth and egalitarian, in order to avoid a false celebration of globalism as an ideologically neutral or benign borderlessness. "Global" histories that ignore conflicts depoliticize the discourse and fall short of writing a critical history or identifying better practices out of these struggles. Ample examples can instead be found to define translation as a contested contact zone, if one presents together industrialization in Europe and colonization in Africa and Asia, or Western and Eastern Blocs' visions of the Cold War. Such presentations confirm that there is no shortage of manifest or latent imperial imagination, symbolic violence, and rivalry in the intertwined histories of architecture and urban planning.

Colonization was as big a contradiction as slavery because local habitants of the colonized territories were denied their sovereignty. Recent scholarship has demonstrated the geopolitical and racial hierarchies operating in the translation of the city planning models and architectural design strategies during the making of the colonial cities of North Africa under French and Italian rule, and India under British rule.⁹ It is telling to compare these colonial architectural visions to those of the protectorate and independent governments to register different architects' compliant or subversive involvement in the geographical hierarchies relating to self-governance.

Ernst May's practice in Uganda under the British protectorate is a revealing case. A student of Raymond Unwin, and the director of the housing programs in Silesia and Frankfurt, Ernst May was a major architect of the garden city movement and the modernist collective housing. The *Siedlungen* of the Frankfurt housing program (*Das Neue Frankfurt*), with their continuous and horizontal building blocks, large horizontal windows, white surfaces, flat roofs, extensive balconies, and large green areas in between buildings are some of the finest examples of modernist public housing – a program that is one of the most significant architectural inventions to cope with unequal distribution of wealth, where many modernist formal, functional, and sociopolitical ideals were created and practiced.¹⁰ The translation of these ideas during May's practice in Africa happened on

a number of *scapes*.¹¹ First, there was the translation of technologies, like the “hook-on-slab” (1946), a precast reinforced concrete system with a pointed vault, which would have served as a standardized system for speedy and efficient construction in Nairobi, much like the experimentation with the prefabricated construction elements at Praunheim *Siedlung* (1926–1927) in Frankfurt.¹² Similarly, in the Delamere Flats of Nairobi (1938–1951), May adapted the Frankfurt Kitchen (1926) originally designed for the Frankfurt program by Margarete Schütte-Lihotzky.¹³

As he translated his ideas to Uganda and Nairobi, May seems to have shared the deceptively benign conviction that modernization was a linear progress leading to advanced civilization. No project exposes this conviction as clearly as the Kampala Extension Scheme (1945–1947). Uganda was under the British protectorate at the time, granted some local governance but under the British rule as the sovereign state, which was followed by the riots for independence at the end of the 1940s, the preparation for independence in the 1950s to be finally achieved in 1962. After the protectorate government asked May to develop the area Kololo-Naguru in 1945, the architect prepared an extensive report with detailed maps delineating his plans for the green areas, traffic, sewerage, storm water drainage, electric, and water supply. In preparing these plans, May doubtlessly employed city planning as a modernization device.

What is most revealing, however, is May’s map for the “social structure” (Figure 6.2). Even though May saw Kampala as “a beautiful garden city . . . due to the favorable topography of the site” and thanks to the foresighted plans of 1929 by A.E. Mirams, F.S.I., F.R.S.I.,¹⁴ he also noted that “the science of town planning has advanced with great strides,” and the plan had to be adjusted in relation to modern traffic measures, and, most importantly, in relation to the urban zoning and architecture for the different “races”—a term that had already acquired violent connotations with the National Socialist rule in his home country. While the earlier scheme mostly laid out the European settlement plans, May followed the segregated zoning, but also put emphasis on designing the Asian settlements, and most importantly “on developing the organized civic life of the African so that he may graduate to full citizenship.”¹⁵ Throughout the report, May worked with the assumption that Africans were not yet equipped to be full citizens, but that architecture could prepare them to become so:

The planner must, for this reason, organize the town in such a way as to enable the primitive members of the community gradually to take their share in the administration of smaller or bigger units of the town; a development which is bound to take some time. I do not claim that the suggested social scheme presents a final solution for this difficult problem. It is meant to be a contribution to the many endeavors being made in our day to awaken the African gradually from his lethargy, and to make him capable of sharing in the responsibilities of directing his own affairs, so that he may become a member with equal rights in the society of nations. [...] It is up to the African to make the best possible use of the help and instruction given to him by the Protectorate Government and by his more advanced co-citizens to prove that he is capable of mastering the gigantic task of bridging the gap which still separates him from a full share in the duties and benefits of modern civilization.”¹⁶

Accordingly, May framed the city zoning scheme as a set of hierarchically organized administrative and social groups—the Family Group, the Neighborhood Group, the Community, and the Township—moving from the smallest group with one hundred families that shared smaller social amenities such as the nursery, children’s playgrounds, and health centers,

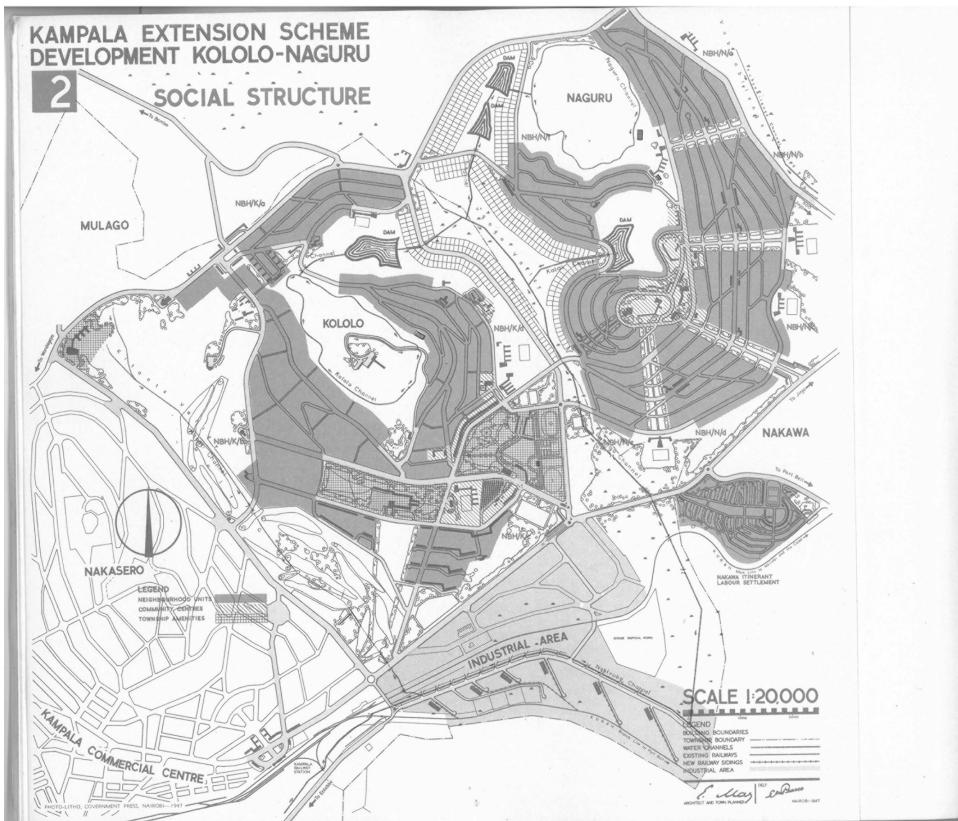


FIGURE 6.2 Ernst May, “Social Structure” Plan, Kampala, Uganda, 1945–47. Ernst May, *Report on the Kampala Extension Scheme, Kololo-Naguru*, (Prepared for the Uganda Government. Printed by Government printer Nairobi) September 1947, n.p.

to larger and mixed-race communities with shopping centers, higher education units, and administrative centers, so that the African population “learned” self-governance by voting on the decisions in the smallest group and gradually moving to higher administrative structures. At the same time, May followed the government mandate that aimed to secure the growth of the European generations by secluding them from the African and Asian children. Accordingly, May’s report endorsed the decision to send European children out of the country during their secondary education, because the “climate” was “not considered suitable for the education of [European] children beyond the age of 12.”¹⁷

In other architectural decisions, May sustained his conviction that the Africans needed European guidance and protection for smooth transition to urban governance, “to reduce the alarm that the African may feel at the contrast between his traditional native village life and the life of the town.”¹⁸ He defended the green and recreation areas as the “essential contribution to the efforts made to induce the African laborer to become more stable, and to cease wandering back to his native village.”¹⁹ For the architectural design of dwellings, May declared his intention as to “achieve architectural harmony in a town composed of

different racial elements.”²⁰ He proposed different housing types for each “race,” depending on which continent they were associated with, reserving the largest, flat roofed, white-washed houses with functionally identified rooms, modern amenities, kitchens, lavatories, ample balconies, and separate garages for the Europeans; two- to four-room mid-sized, pitched-roof houses with separate functional rooms and kitchens for Asians; and the smallest, traditional-looking, one- to three-room houses with functionally undifferentiated rooms and a veranda for the Africans (Figure 6.3).²¹ Consistent with his racial differentiation of aesthetic choices, May’s civil buildings and city apartments presented an expression stylistically more attuned with the New Architecture in Germany. One of the most visible examples of this tendency was the City House of Kampala (1938–1939) which was strikingly similar to the Römerstadt housing of Frankfurt with its round corner, horizontal ribbon windows, and whitewashed walls (Figures 6.4A and 6.4B). In conclusion, May’s paternalistic approach towards Africa and his perception of European architecture as a civilizing device consistently guided him in urban and architectural decisions, from the city plan to dwelling types to architectural style.

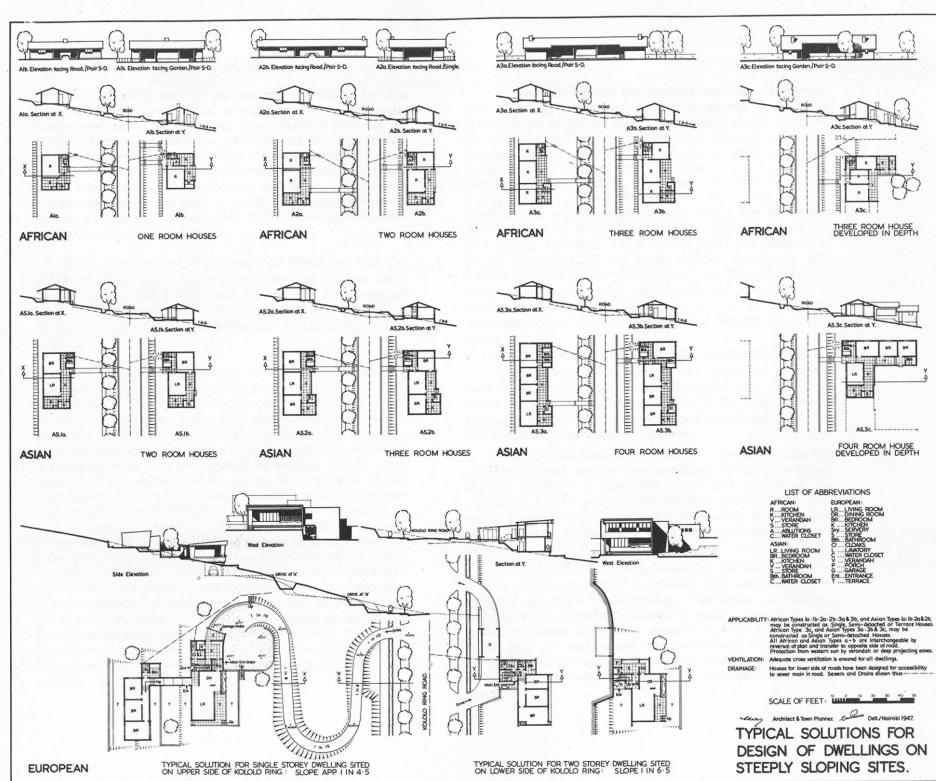


FIGURE 6.3 Ernst May, Dwelling Types, Kampala, Uganda, 1945–47. Ernst May, *Report on the Kampala Extension Scheme, Kololo-Naguru*, (Prepared for the Uganda Government. Printed by Government printer Nairobi) September 1947, n.p.



FIGURE 6.4A Ernst May, et.al, Römerstadt Housing, The New Frankfurt Housing Program, 1927–28. Photograph by Esra Akcan.



FIGURE 6.4B Ernst May, City House, Kampala, Uganda, 1938–39. Photograph by Philipp Sturm, 2011.

Turkey and architectural declarations of independence

Countless examples may be mentioned to discuss architecture's place in marking the declarations of self-governance especially in the aftermath of World War II, as more and more independent nation-states were founded after the collapse of the old empires or colonial rules, including the government compounds in Ankara, Chandigarh, Brasilia, Bangladesh, Baghdad, and Kuwait by a set of established architects such as Bruno Taut, Clemens Holzmeister, Le Corbusier, Oscar Niemeyer, Lucio Costa, Louis Kahn, Walter Gropius, and Jørn Utzon. Many of the symbols of republican revolutions were undertaken by architects invited from abroad. I will continue referring to foreign architects' involvement in this process, as this allows for a good comparison to the colonization periods, but this is not meant to undermine the contribution of local architects. Self-governance in the hosting country and the acknowledgement of local sovereignty put an end to the inequalities during the colonial and protectorate periods, but this did not mean that the involved experts left behind their mental frameworks premised on the hierarchic division between the colonizer and the colonized, the European and the Middle Eastern, the Western and the Eastern, the civilized and the underdeveloped, or the advanced and the backwards. In this context, architects who were subversive of these hierarchies while critically participating in the construction of people's sovereignty deserve attention. Bruno Taut's practice in Turkey, particularly his unbuilt project for the National Assembly, in the context of the nation-building process and the construction of the new republican capital is a case in point.

Founding the Republic of Turkey in 1923 in the aftermath of World War I and the collapse of the Ottoman Empire, the Kemalist rulers invited architects from the German-speaking ally countries and replaced the few local descendants of the Armenian architects of the late Ottoman Empire. The Berlin-based architect and planner Herman Jansen prepared master plans of several cities, including the new capital Ankara, by translating the garden-city model. Under the same program, many foreign and Turkish architects including Taut, Ernst Egli, Theodor Jost, Martin Elsaesser, Paul Bonatz, Seyfi Arkan, and Şevki Balmumcu designed the architectural symbols of the new modern nation-state, including its government buildings, schools, universities, hospitals, museums, and houses. Kemalist cultural politics can well be seen as demonstrating a confidence in the smooth translatability of Europeaness into Turkey. At the same time, however, building a sovereign nation-state demanded the revival of some allegedly national roots. The frequently pronounced search for both modern and national architecture motivated many invited foreign and Turkish architects.

The National Assembly building was the result of an international architectural competition (1937–1938) with fourteen participants. (Taut ended up not submitting his project due to a shortage of time.) In addition to the functional requirements, the competition brief requested "the construction of a monument that would represent and embody the needs of the twentieth century and the presence of the Turkish Republic with an architectural style and composition of perfection, purity and harmony."²² The building was to be placed within the compound of the government center, whose location had already been marked in Jansen's master plan, and next to buildings designed by the Austrian architect Clemens Holzmeister. Apart from the Ministry buildings in the government center in Ulus, Holzmeister had already built the Presidential House overlooking this complex from the Çankaya slopes (1929–1938). He had thereby given architectural expression to a country that aspired to represent itself as a modernizing and powerful nation-state, while simultaneously avoiding association with

the architectural forms of the Ottoman Empire. Retaining the triangular site plan in Jansen's master plan, Holzmeister had proposed eight U-shaped and H-shaped buildings for the government center, placed symmetrically on two sides of the monumental axis, which was eventually crowned by the National Assembly. The unbuilt monumental gate building with its large span was meant to be both a legible symbol of state authority in its reference to the Triumphal Arch, and an indicator of Turkey's technological progress (Figure 6.5). The Ministry buildings in the government center, as well as Holzmeister's other institutional buildings around the city, were harmonized with each other through the use of flat roofs; lack of arches, domes, and ornaments; and, most uniquely, the repetition of projected masses that formed compositions with cubes. A new term, "Viennese cubic architecture," was promptly coined by contemporary architects and critics who perceived these buildings as marking the beginning of a new era, especially when compared to the Ottoman revivalism of the earlier period.²³ Despite their flat roofs and unornamented façades, these buildings employed quite conventional architectural tools for representing order, stability, and authority, such as symmetry, massive blocks, elevated and centrally located entrances, colonnades, and hierarchy of spaces. Their façades were punctured by vertical windows with traditional proportions rather than large glazed surfaces; their ground plans were composed of conventional closed rooms with solid interior walls, rather than an open or free plan conception. Falsifying Lewis Mumford's well-known motto – "if it is a monument it is not modern, if it is modern it is not a monument" – architects working for the new sovereign nation-states throughout the twentieth century found varying expressions of modern monumentality.²⁴

The architectural jury for the National Assembly competition was employed to suggest the best three projects from which the Turkish republican government would make the final choice. The competition process did not pass without criticism in architectural circles of

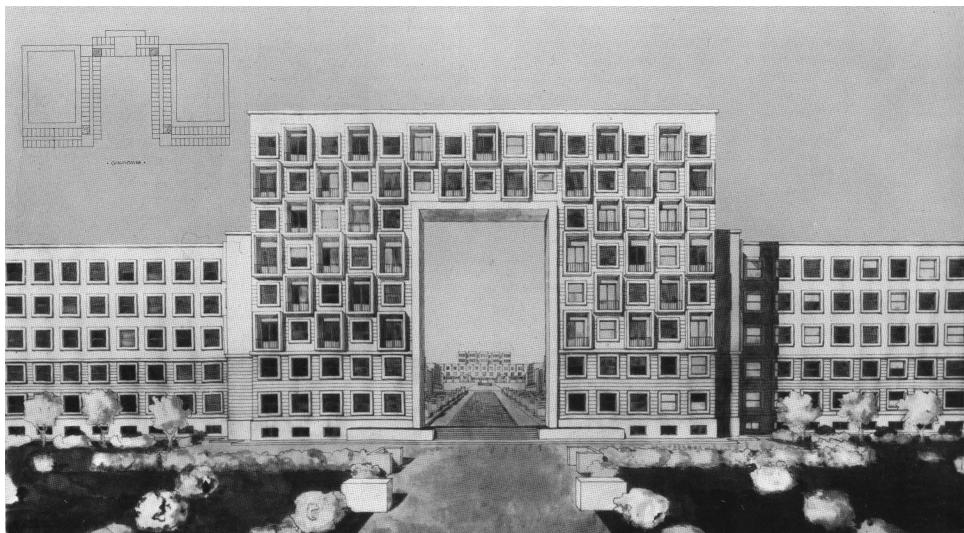


FIGURE 6.5 Clemens Holzmeister, Drawing of the Gate Building (Ministry of Customs and Monopolies) for the Government Center, Ankara, 1934. Clemens Holzmeister, *Bauten, Entwürfe und Handzeichnungen* (Salzburg: Anton Pustet, 1937).

Turkey. The editors of the principal professional magazine *Arkitekt* criticized the fact that the architectural competition was held between invited entries rather than an open call; that the entries and the process were not shared with the public; and that the Turkish architects were initially prevented from entering the competition and allowed only after petitions were submitted, albeit with half the time for preparation.²⁵ During the process, the jury found that the only two projects that stayed within the financial restrictions were unsatisfactory in their architectural merits, so they selected the three best entries regardless of this constraint, listing the pros and cons of each project in relation to its building plan and organization, architectural style, financial measures, and placement on the site.

The multiple suggestions that emerged out of this competition display the lack of agreement over how to represent people's sovereignty in a newly independent nation-state in the east of Europe and west of Asia. (Figure 6.6). Like the first-prize winner Holzmeister, who eventually built the National Assembly as a culmination of his decade-long work for the government center, the other first-prize co-winners Albert Laprade and Alois Mezara used post-and-lintel colonnades without column capitals or decoration, a symmetrical layout, and figurative and triumphalist sculptures aggrandizing the entrance on the symmetrical axis. This marked the increasing acceptance of an abstracted classicism in Turkey during the 1940s; it was seen as appropriate to visualize ruling power, while being sufficiently distant from both Western and Ottoman references, as well as sufficiently close to the Turkish heritage now perceived as the inheritor of ancient Greece where Turkey settled. In contrast, Jozef Vago's project was too reminiscent of the old Ottoman rule with Seriate order, as it looked nothing like but a mosque with two minaret towers at the

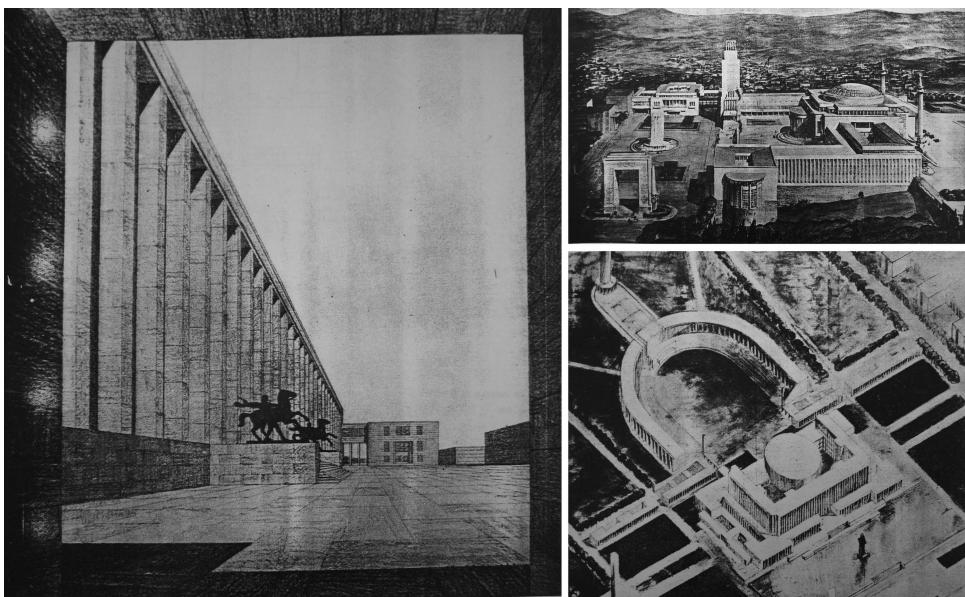


FIGURE 6.6 Competition entries for National Assembly Building, Ankara, Turkey, 1937. Left: Alois Mezara, top right: Jozef Vago, bottom right: Seyfi Arkan. "Kamutay musabakasi program hulasasi," *Arkitekt*, no. 4 (1938): 99–129.

sides of the symmetrical entrance, and a large dome over the assembly hall. The architect must have been unaware of the importance of the separation of religion and state for the new regime, protected with the secular constitution.

Two unselected projects by the Turkish architect Seyfi Arkan and German émigré Bruno Taut offered noteworthy ways by which architectural space could participate in the making of people's sovereignty. Despite the shorter time allowed for his preparation, Arkan proposed one of the finest entries with an elliptical mass for the assembly hall completed by another half-elliptical outdoor colonnaded amphitheater situated across the building. All four sides of the complex were treated as entrance façades for different constituencies such as the president, the ministers, and the press, putting particular emphasis on the entrance for the general public. A large public space at the highest point of the site circled by the amphitheater was designed as an agglomeration area where citizens could meet governmental officials. Arkan's project not only represented the shift of power from the Ottoman Sultan to the Republic, but also prepared the public space where sovereignty of the people could, in theory, be practiced.

Taut's project, placed on an elevated hill, also responded to the making of the new sovereignty and the republican constitution (Figure 6.7). Among the points that the architect made in his explanation, the concepts of the city crown and climate-specific architecture stand out, and gain relevance in the context of Taut's broader practice in Japan and Turkey, where he lived after being exiled from Germany due to the rise of Nazism.²⁶ At first sight, Taut's suggestion to build a city crown in Ankara may look like he is imposing the same idea of his 1919 book *Die Stadtkrone* too unreflectively into a new place and time. His choice of a pyramidal composition with stepping volumes and multiple sets of stairs leading to the accentuated hill may seem as if he is too compliant with the idea of central power and hierarchy. As a matter of fact, Taut's work in Turkey disappointed many. His colleague from the Berlin housing program Martin Wagner, who was also in Turkey at the time, complained

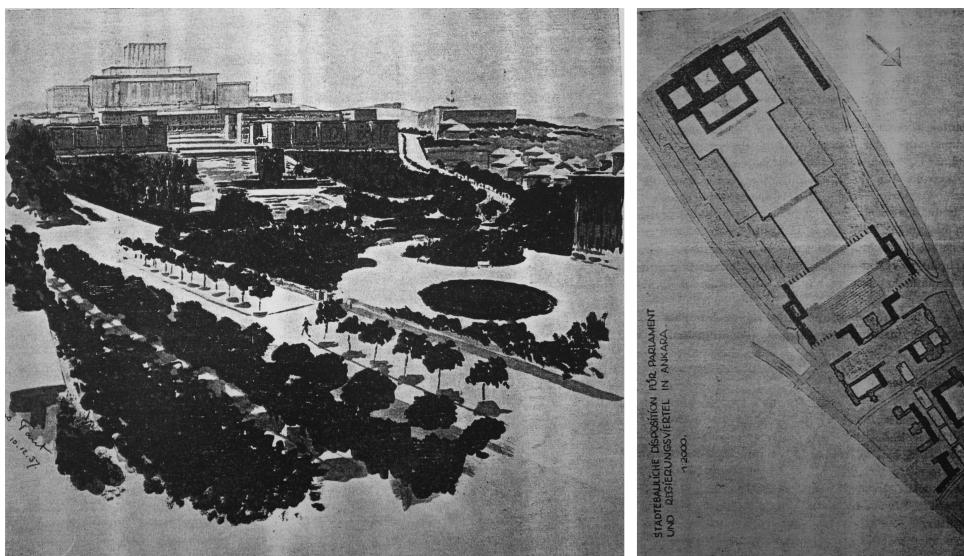


FIGURE 6.7 Bruno Taut, Competition entry for National Assembly Building, Ankara, Turkey, 1937. “Mimar Bruno Taut (Kamutay musabakasi program hulasasi),” *Arkitekt*, no. 4 (1938): 130–132.

in a letter to Walter Gropius: “Taut is stuck with Renaissance principles and he can’t find a way towards the New! I am very disappointed . . . It is a shame for such an avant-gardist.”²⁷ However, when put in the context of his writings, one may see Taut’s project as an extension of his intention to carve out an alternative path compared to colleagues like Wagner, who held paternalistic and didactic attitudes in Turkey, similar to those of May in Uganda. In a letter to May himself around the same time, Wagner wrote: “The Orient is too poor for me . . . the Turks (and possibly all Asians) in front of machines and capital are like a child playing with a dangerous cigarette lighter.”²⁸

Taut’s diary confirms that the architect was preoccupied with the design of the National Assembly building in the last months of 1937 and first months of 1938, conversing with Sedad [Eldem] and Seyfi [Arkan], and writing a letter to the minister which shows his earnest desire to receive the commission.²⁹ Around the same time in January and February 1938, Taut noted his impressions of his trip to Edirne in his diary, and his conversations with the respected art historian Celal Esad [Arseven] about Mimar Sinan’s Selimiye Mosque, where the two resembled the building to a city crown. This shows that Taut’s suggestion to build a city crown in Ankara was not simply an untranslated imposition of his German ideas to Turkey, but, in his eyes at least, inspired by what he observed in the local context. Moreover, Taut offered to elevate the National Assembly on a hill like a city crown as an architectural expression of Turkey’s new constitution. In determining the National Assembly’s position in relation to the Presidential House, Taut wrote:

Should the Presidential House look less impressive architecturally than the National Assembly, or should the National Assembly look less impressive than the Presidential House? I was told that according to Turkey’s constitution, both had to be represented equally.³⁰

The Presidential House had been built by Holzmeister on the Çankaya slopes overlooking the ministry buildings like an intentionally displaced part of the government center. This quotation demonstrates that Taut offered to build the National Assembly as a second city crown in Ankara to symbolize the separation of powers and thereby the end of the monarchic rule. This was nothing short of giving physical appearance to self-governance, namely to a new country governed by constitutional law rather than a single ruler. Taut’s project gains newfound relevance in today’s Turkey, where the increasingly authoritarian Justice and Development Party (AKP) government changed the constitution and collected the governing powers under one head of state.

Taut’s proposal to design the National Assembly around a series of courtyards is equally indicative of his determination to theorize a climate-specific architecture. What distinguishes Taut’s notion of climate, despite its unresolved optimism and risks of ethnocentrism, is that he conceived it as a category to help attain universality.³¹ If Taut’s countless articles and books written in Japan and Turkey are of any guidance to make sense of this project, one would come to understand the architect’s gestures as his attempts to call for a cosmopolitan ethics, defined in opposition to European modernism’s claim to global relevance. During the opening talk of his exhibition at the Istanbul Academy of Fine Arts, where he taught and directed the architecture program, Taut linked his own intellectual growth to Immanuel Kant’s humanism.³² In his essay “Perpetual Peace” (1795), Kant had defined cosmopolitan law as the legal order and the ethics of hospitality as the moral groundwork that would establish what he called perpetual peace, a peace that is not attained because enemies have temporarily consumed their available resources or because they have decided to provisionally suspend hostility, but a peace

that annihilates the possibility of any future war.³³ This was a cosmopolitanism predicated on the confidence that enlightened reason would accomplish the task of peace, because human rationality was universally shared, and because every human being was capable of acting in relation to universal maxims.³⁴

Taut's books written in Japan and Turkey criticized the Western Orientalist perceptions of these countries on the one hand, and the current modernization processes undertaken in these countries themselves on the other hand.

The West only saw what it understood, and relished [the East] the more as it appeared to be an exotic, piquant curiosity.³⁵ The intention [of my book] has been to show that strange and unaccustomed ways have very natural and simple reasons. Whosoever looks at these ways as something exotic, behaves like a child in the zoo gaping in front of the glass cage. But such a sentimental and romantic approach to the unfamiliar is as unjust as it is unreasonable, since human beings all over the world are endowed with an equal amount of reason.³⁶

During his life in Japan and Turkey, Taut became conscious of the risks of Orientalism. Furthermore, the architect commented on basic problems that he saw in non-European countries. He asserted in his text "Melancholie," for instance, that a depressive mood governed the non-Western artistic scene,³⁷ due to a fundamental dichotomy (*Zwiespalt*) that caused some sort of "depression" and "resignation." The recent indications of this dichotomy, he argued, were largely due to the perceived gap between the East and Europe, the declining state of Eastern traditions as mere "exotic museum pieces," and the perceived opposition between the traditional ways of living and European modernism.³⁸ A feeling of insecurity, Taut observed, unsettled his non-European colleagues, which in turn threw them into a fundamental dilemma between what he called "slavish imitation of foreign styles" and "uninspired nativism."³⁹

As a response to these conditions, Taut wrote his major treatise *Mimari Bilgisi* (*Lectures on Architecture*). A book written in Istanbul and published in Turkish, it defined universal principles of architecture as a rational engagement with technique, construction, function, and proportion – much like the Kantian confidence in reason for achieving universality – but suggested to respond to geographic differences with climate-specific buildings.⁴⁰ Taut criticized those who rejected foreign influences in rejuvenating domestic norms.⁴¹ Yet, he advocated foreignizing translations that would be, he said, "no false Internationalism, no uniformization of the world (Weltuniformierung), no dullification (Langweilmachen) of the whole earth"; but a hybridization that would "make both sides richer."⁴² Throughout *Lectures on Architecture*, he was quite direct in his criticism of what he called *Allerweltsarchitektur*, which one may think as a claim to global sameness.⁴³ The word *cosmopolitan* instead not only assured openness to the foreign, but also defied the Orientalist segregations between "East" and "West."

The stronger the belief that East and West belong together, the stronger the energy to get to know the foreignness in one's nature. With the growth of this energy, the melancholy will sink down to the grave it deserves.⁴⁴

Taut's theorization of what I name as cosmopolitan architecture presented an important alternative to the far more common use of architecture as a colonizing device or "civilizing" tool.

Kuwait and shifting identity-markers

Taut's call for cosmopolitan ethics remained an exception and an unheard cautionary warning in the context of the rising nationalism in Turkey, where claims to essentialist identity and untranslatability took new forms throughout the twentieth century. In established histories and contemporary criticism, the local and the foreign are usually presented as oppositional antidotes of each other, and many narratives take one side for the sake of the critique of the other, at the expense of turning a blind eye to contradictory practices, or without registering the multiple micropolitical forces that tilt the arrow of justice in unpredictable directions. Instead, the historical evidence of translation illustrates that each case is far more nuanced than explanations that assume a pure global or a pure local architecture, as if these could exist. One of the productive ways to demystify the narratives that claim either exclusively Western-based or essentialist nation/community/religion-based explanations is to take equal distance from convictions about smooth, unilateral translatability ("from the West to the rest") on the one hand, and convictions about untranslatability on the other hand. If exposing inequalities and underlining critical practices in a hierarchical context is one aspect of a geopolitically conscious global history, showing the historicity of identity claims is another. Nothing indeed demystifies essentialism as productively as exposing the shifting identity-markers of history.⁴⁵ Juxtaposing the government center in Kuwait of the 1970s with the one in Turkey of the 1930s will concretize this discussion.

After gaining independence in 1961, the rise of Kuwait as an international power in the Persian Gulf motivated the consequent building boom in the 1970s. Upon the suggestions of a multinational advisory committee, an astonishingly large number of internationally known architectural firms were invited to design landmark buildings. The list included Candilis/Josic/Woods from France for residential neighborhoods, Kenzo Tange from Japan for the National Airport, Raili and Reima Pietilä from Finland for the extension to the Sief Palace, Mohamed S. Makiya from Iraq for the design of the State Mosque, Malene Björn from Sweden for the iconic Kuwait Towers, Arne Jacobsen from Denmark for the design of the Central Bank, and many Polish architects such as Andrzej Bohdanowicz, Wojciech Jarząbek, and Edward Lach for the design of housing and offices.⁴⁶ In the context of the British-dominated building construction in the Gulf during these years, Kuwait's invitations from multiple nations stand as an exception.

Among Kuwait's mid/late century modernist buildings, Jørn Utzon's National Assembly (1972–1983) provides a telling example of architecture's place in constructing self-governance.⁴⁷ The building was commissioned after an international architectural competition in which Utzon participated when he was in Hawaii, communicating long-distance with his employee, the Turkish architect Oktay Nayman, who was then in London and who prepared the drawings.⁴⁸ Despite changes to the number of sweeping roofs and the placement of the mosque between the competition and the built version, the design concept remained largely unchanged (Figure 6.8).

Utzon's National Assembly is like a city-in-miniature or a modern *souk* situated along the Gulf Sea, accentuating the water's blue with its pure white surfaces. Its square layout is composed of inner streets and two-story modules organized around courtyards that make up an architectural fabric out of which two technologically advanced tent-like structures rise expressively.⁴⁹ Preoccupied with the idea of "additive architecture" at the time, Utzon combined both additive and monolithic features in the Kuwait National Assembly, by preparing

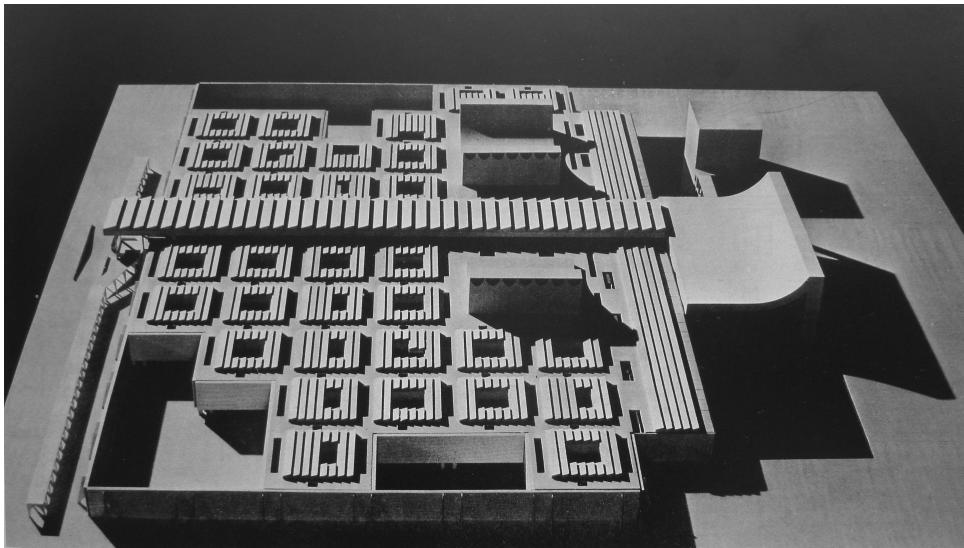


FIGURE 6.8 Jørn Utzon, Competition Entry for National Assembly Building, Kuwait City, 1972. Courtesy of Utzon Architects Associates.

the stage for new additions of modules if needed, while establishing a composition with legible monumental elements overall (Figure 6.9). In his essay “Additive Architecture,” written in 1970, Utzon recommended the additive structure for its multiplicity and flexibility in responding to different program requirements over time.

When you work with additive principle, you can without difficulty respect and honour all demands for plane shapes and spatial shapes, and all demands for expansion and changes. . . [Y]ou can avoid offending the rights of existence of the individual components. They all find expression.⁵⁰

The main spine in the Parliament Building is a covered inner street extending between the city and the sea, giving entrances to the different government departments in the modules on one side, and the main assembly hall on the other, while opening up at one end into the grand semi-open public space along the Gulf. This memorable large space of $40\text{ m} \times 82.5\text{ m}$ receives the breeze from the water and is covered with a swooping canopy, similar to the roof of the assembly hall (Figure 6.10). While speaking about this space, Utzon formulated his climate-based characterizations of the monarchic “Arab culture”:

The dangerously strong sunshine in Kuwait makes it necessary to protect yourself in the shade – the shade is vital for your existence – and this hall which provides shade for the public meetings could perhaps be considered symbolic for the protection a ruler extends to his people. There is an Arab saying: “When a ruler dies, his shadow is lost.”⁵¹

The design-generating concept was thus sun protection, which was materialized with the introverted character of the complex, as well as the use of repetitive courtyards, covered inner

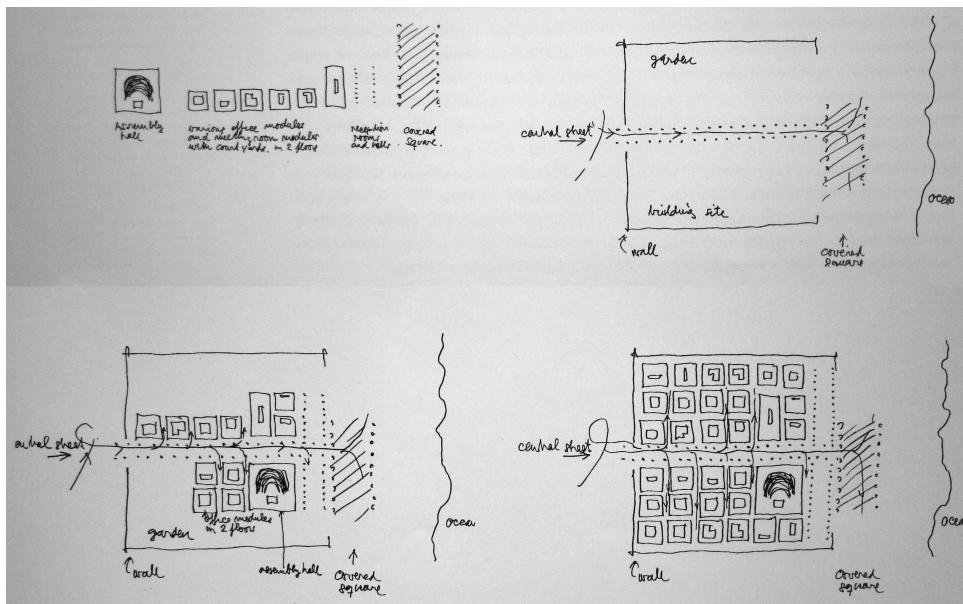


FIGURE 6.9 Jørn Utzon, Diagrams for National Assembly Building, Kuwait City, 1972–83. Courtesy of Utzon Architects Associates.



FIGURE 6.10 Jørn Utzon, National Assembly Building, Kuwait City, 1972–83. Photographs by Esra Akcan.

streets, and tent metaphors. In addition, Utzon's design strategies were often seen as intentional cultural references to "Islamic architecture." Utzon himself had declared that the additive structure was partially inspired by the bazaars. "To enlarge an edifice without damaging its original meaning . . . the Arabs have resolved this difficulty with the structure of their bazaars, low houses which allow continuity in respect to this intention."⁵² Of the Kuwait National Assembly building itself, Utzon explained:

All departments of the complex . . . are arranged along a central street [and] consist of modules of various sizes, built around small patios or courtyards, connected to the

central street via side streets. Each department can be extended at any time by adding modules. . . . These free-flexing outer boundaries of the system are very much related to traditional Islamic bazaar architecture.⁵³

Many critics have claimed the influence of “Islamic architecture” in Utzon’s other buildings, such as the Low Cost Housing in Skane (Sweden 1954), Kingo Houses and Fredensborg Houses (Denmark, 1957, 1965), Bank Melli in Tehran (Iran, 1958), Farum Town Center and School at Herning (Denmark, 1966), given the architect’s taste for single-story fabric with courtyards and a pattern of shallow-domed cells and wind catchers.⁵⁴ According to Hans Munk Hansen, who visited Isfahan with Utzon while working on the Melli Bank, this city provided the model for the Kuwait National Assembly. In a letter to Nayman, Utzon included a picture of the Isfahan and told him to draw “arches as beautiful as these.”⁵⁵

In his own writings and the recollections of his colleagues, it becomes clear, however, that Utzon actually acquired a large palette of influences from diverse places around the world, including Morocco and Mexico, where he traveled in his formative years, as well as China and Japan, to which he was exposed through books and mentors.⁵⁶ The inspiration for the fixed podium and flying roof that served as a design concept for many of Utzon’s canonic public buildings, including the Sydney Opera House, has been traced to his sketches of domestic architecture in China.⁵⁷ In his text “Platforms and Plateaus,” Utzon declared that Yucatan and Mayan architecture, as well as the podiums of India and Middle East, had a powerful effect on him.⁵⁸

The replacement of Utzon’s cosmopolitan erudite palette with “Islamic architecture” found a convenient context in the Kuwait of the 1970s and 1980s, where disillusionment with the post-oil urbanization patterns had inspired a turn to cultural references. To give one example, the contemporary architecture critic Stephen Gardiner introduced the iconic Kuwait Towers, (architect: Malene Björn, 1969–76), built as part of the city’s new water delivery system, as “an Islamic symbol of the space age.”⁵⁹ Government commissions required foreign architects to refer to a vague notion of “Islamic architecture.”⁶⁰ Climate specificity has hardly been out of the purview of the architects of the modern period, especially mid-century modernists practicing in South America and India as well as Iraq, Lebanon, and Turkey. During the interwar and postwar periods, the identity marker to explain place-specific architectural elements was either the nation-state or the specific climatic condition of the location in a given country. However, it is telling to observe that the word “Islamic” replaced “national” in the later decades. Beginning in the late 1970s, the term “Islamic architecture” became a catch-all phrase to designate or self-identify diverse practices in several countries, which aligned with the rise of postmodern architectural style around the world and a new interest in making references to historical buildings.⁶¹

Moreover, in Utzon’s eyes, the large covered urban plaza along the Gulf Sea was the quintessential place where Arabic democracy would be actualized.

And the huge roof should then stand in such a way that it could protect the functions that were very important in the parliament, that is to say the meeting between the Amir and the people. . . . It’s such that the Amir comes out and speaks to the crowd. But then people congregate there under the huge protecting roof; there they will be able to talk to the Amir by means of loudspeaker systems, and he will be able to speak to them, and they will be able to see him on a huge screen, a vast image corresponding to his voice.

You've presumably seen on television when Khomeini and this enthusiastic crowd that gathers around him. And so there is a direct link between the Amir and each individual member of the Arab community, which we don't really know here. Our beloved Erhard Jacobsen has said: "Just vote for me and I'll see the rest!" That is our democracy.⁶²

This text is perhaps the most indicative of Utzon's romantic perceptions about his building's immediate power in delivering "Islamic democracy," which he saw as a more direct participatory system than "our [Western] democracy." By the time of this statement, Utzon's expectations about what would happen in the Kuwaiti Parliament had proven to be illusionary: after the first elections in 1962, the seats of the parliament continued to be disbanded periodically by the Amir who remained the sovereign power; only a small section of the Kuwaiti population had been allowed to vote (about 10 percent), and women had not been able to vote until 2005. A vehicular road for the unloading of the officials' cars now stands underneath the swooping canopy of the democracy plaza.

Juxtaposing the missed opportunities for cosmopolitan ethics and democracy in the two government centers in Turkey and Kuwait shows the co-option of identity-markers into ethno-purist assumptions, which rely on nothing but convictions about untranslatability. There was no shortage of claims to untranslatability during these translation movements, endorsed by architects from many citizenships. Conviction about untranslatability, here, does not refer to the post-structuralist demystification of the humanist ideals of translatability, but instead to the claim that there are core cultural values that cannot be transferred smoothly into others, and hence cannot be hybridized with others. In Turkey, it was common to complain about foreign architects' inability to understand "Turkishness." Many critics and architects wrote essays in professional journals, and even organized a political march about this claim.⁶³ Differentiating "culture" and "civilization" as the untranslatable and the translatable attributes of a nation respectively was another ubiquitous narrative (usually by referring to Ziya Gökalp's philosophy), endorsed also by some German architects in the country at the time.⁶⁴ In Kuwait, Saleh Al-Mutawa said "the architects . . . from abroad did not take the time to study the cultural needs of the people of Kuwait," and proposed to seek for the essences of Kuwaiti traditional architecture as an alternative.⁶⁵ During the first and second decades of the 2000s, "Islamic architecture" instead of "national architecture" has become the identity marker for the increasingly authoritarian government in Turkey with equally purist claims to untranslatability. The shifts explained in this part present the urgency to create a non-polar history today that is critical of the Eurocentric or Orientalist practices on the one hand, and of the authoritative local governances or ethno-purist communities on the other hand.

The episodes of an intertwined architectural history presented in this chapter show that the task of theory does not end but begins with acknowledging translation, and that it is necessary to bring to the fore different concepts in the making of a terminology, such as global networks, global inequalities, traveling scapes, appropriating and foreignizing translations, cosmopolitan ethics, translatability and untranslatability claims, and shifting identity-markers. Showing the connections between the American, French, and Haitian Revolutions reveals the global construction of enlightenment values, rather than maintaining the canonic myth that the Enlightenment and its heir modernity was a purely Western invention. Discussing the German and Danish architects Ernst May, Bruno Taut, and Jørn Utzon's translations in Uganda, Turkey, and Kuwait together exposes architects' submissive or subversive participation in the global inequalities between places, as well as the making of the people's

sovereignty in these places. Observing the shift of identity-markers during several translation movements demystifies the ethno-purist claims in history, confirming in turn how translations constantly hybridize places. All of these cases not only present translation's importance in the architectural designs of self-governance, but also the paradox of the concept of "self" in self-governance, and hence the crisis of modern sovereignty itself. Ever since the first declarations of modern popular sovereignty, the unsubstantiated link that stitches natural and civil rights, "man" and "citizen," birth and nationhood, has continued to operate in the definition of nationhood and citizenship rights. Recently, the limits of this concept of sovereignty have been put into question from a number of perspectives, including those exposed by the refugee crisis that has shown that the current human rights regime deprives non-citizens of rights, and those exposed by the empire of multinational corporations during the global capitalist period that has created a new sovereign power, much more commanding than any force before and hence a bigger obstacle to self-governance than ever before.⁶⁶ That is why the intertwined history of architecture's relation to self-governance is also entwined with governmentality on a global level.⁶⁷

Notes

- 1 My book *Architecture in Translation* has offered a way and vocabulary to understand the global movement of architecture by employing the notion of translation both in language and visual fields. The research for this book has convinced me that there is enough evidence to rewrite the past in a much more intertwined way by foregrounding multiple contacts between places that had previously been assumed distinct, even though these contacts have hardly been smooth or egalitarian. Esra Akcan, *Architecture in Translation: Germany, Turkey and the Modern House* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2012).
- 2 For example the nineteenth- and twentieth-century architectures of countries in West Asia and North Africa (or Middle East to use the common term) is usually excluded both from the surveys of Modern Architecture and of Islamic Architecture, claiming that this period and place belongs to neither field.
- 3 As Frederick Douglass expressed it crisply: "With them, justice, liberty and humanity were "final", not slavery and oppression ... This Fourth of July is yours not mine. . . . Would you have me argue that man is entitled to liberty, that he is the rightful owner of his own body? You have already declared it. Must I argue the wrongfulness of slavery?" Frederick Douglass, "What to the Slave Is the 4th of July," 1852, <http://teachingamericanhistory.org/library/document/what-to-the-slave-is-the-fourth-of-july/>.
- 4 The first three articles of the Haitian Constitution read: "1. The people inhabiting the island formerly called St. Domingo, hereby agree to form themselves into a free state sovereign and independent of any other power in the universe, under the name of empire of Haiti; 2. Slavery is forever abolished; 3. The citizens of Haiti are brothers at home; equality in the eye of law is incontestably acknowledged." "1805 Haitian Constitution," <http://faculty.webster.edu/corbretre/haiti/history/earlyhaiti/1805-const.htm>.
- 5 For example, Susan Buck-Morss re-interprets Hegel's master-slave dialectic from the perspective of the Haitian Revolution, of which Hegel was doubtlessly aware by reading the daily papers. Paul Miller discusses the reception of European thinkers by the Hispanic Caribbean literary writers, who exposed the contradictions and the opportunistic economic prosperity that was granted to the West with the persistence of slavery. Susan Buck-Morss, *Hegel, Haiti and Universal History* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2009); Paul Miller, *Elusive Origins: The Enlightenment in the Modern Caribbean Historical Imagination* (Charlottesville and London: University of Virginia Press, 2010).
- 6 Marc-Antoine Laugier, *An Essay on Architecture*, trans. W.A. Hermann (Los Angeles: Hennessey & Ingalls, 1977). Jean Jacques Rousseau, *Discourse on the Origin of Inequality* (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing, 1992, original: 1755).
- 7 Not to be confused with the Sans-Souci palace in Potsdam (although more scholarship on this may reveal dimensions of intertwined history), or Sans-Souci, the former slave who was influential in the revolution but killed by King Christophe, the monumental building in Milot was constructed as an

- edifice to show the strength of the independence struggle to the Western colonizers. Michel-Rolph Trouillot, *Silencing the Past: Power and the Production of History* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1995), 36.
- 8 Trouillot, *Silencing the Past*, 36.
 - 9 See especially: Janet Abu-Lughod, *Rabat: Urban Apartheid in Morocco* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1980); Paul Rabinow, *French Modern* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1980); Thomas R. Metcalf, *An Imperial Vision. Indian Architecture and Britain's Raj* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1989); David Prochaska, *Making Algeria French* (Paris: Editions de la Maison des Sciences de l'Homme and Cambridge University Press, 1990); Gwendolyn Wright, *The Politics of Design in French Colonial Urbanism* (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1991); Zeynep Çelik, *Urban Forms and Colonial Confrontations* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997); Jean-Louis Cohen, Monique Eleb, *Casablanca: Colonial Myths and Architectural Ventures* (New York: Monacelli Press, 2002); Mark Crinson, *Modern Architecture and the End of Empire* (Burlington: Ashgate, 2003); Brian McLaren, *Architecture and Tourism in Colonial Libya* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2006); Mia Fuller, *Moderns Abroad: Architecture, Cities and Italian Imperialism* (New York: Routledge, 2007).
 - 10 The literature on the New Frankfurt housing program is extensive. See, for instance: Christoph Mohr and Michael Müller, *Funktionalität und Moderne: Das Neue Frankfurt (1925–1933)* (Köln: Fricke im Rudolf Müller, 1984); Thomas Elsaesser, Christina Gräwe, Jörg Schilling and Peter Cachola Schmal, eds., *Martin Elsaesser und das Neue Frankfurt* (Berlin: Ernst Wasmuth Press, 2009); Martina Heßler, “The Frankfurt Kitchen: The Model of Modernity and the ‘Madness’ of Traditional Users, 1926 to 1933,” in *Cold War Kitchen: Americanization, Technology and European Users*. Edited by Ruth Oldenziel and Karin Zachman (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2009), 163–184; Susan Henderson, *Building Culture: Ernst May and the New Frankfurt Initiative, 1926–1931* (New York: Peter Lang Publishing, 2013).
 - 11 I am borrowing the term *scapes* from Arjun Appadurai, who used it to explain the modes of cultural flows around the globe Arjun Appadurai, *Modernity at Large: Cultural Dimensions of Globalization* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1996).
 - 12 For May in Africa, see: Eckhard Herrel, *Ernst May: Architect und Stadtplaner in Afrika 1934–1953* (Frankfurt: DAM, 2001); Claudia Quiring, Wolfgang Voigt, Peter Cachola Schmal, and Eckhard Herrel, eds., *Ernst May. 1886–1970* (Munich: Prestel, 2011).
 - 13 Susan Henderson, *Building Culture*; Martina Heßler, “The Frankfurt Kitchen”; Esra Akcan, “Civilizing Housewives versus Participatory Users: Margarete Schütte Lihotzky in the Employ of the Turkish Nation State,” in *Cold War Kitchen: Americanization, Technology and European Users*. Edited by Ruth Oldenziel and Karin Zachman (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2009), 185–207.
 - 14 Ernst May, *Report on the Kampala Extension Scheme, Kololo-Naguru* (Prepared for the Uganda Government. Printed by government printer Nairobi), September 1947, 2.
 - 15 “Socially the Mirama scheme was concerned predominantly with the layout of areas for European settlement. The Kololo-Naguru scheme maintains the emphasis on new settlement areas for Europeans and Asians, but at the same time lays considerable stress on developing the organized civic life of the African so that he may graduate to full citizenship.” Ibid., 2.
 - 16 Ibid., 5–6.
 - 17 Ibid., 8.
 - 18 Ibid., 6.
 - 19 Ibid., 10.
 - 20 Ibid., 18.
 - 21 In Kai Gutschow's interpretation, this exposed May's adoption of the colonial imagination with a paternalistic twist: “According to May, this curious mix of modern amenities and very traditional planning would help Africans undertake their evolution from pre-industrial nomad to productive modern city dweller. He hoped his plan would be didactic, a kind of ‘teacher’, or *Erzieher*, that would encourage certain cultured behaviors. May's colonial outlook is only thinly veiled by his desire to educate and ‘improve’ the local conditions.” Kai K. Gutschow, “The ‘New Africa’,” in *Ernst May: 1886–1970*. Edited by Claudia Quiring, Wolfgang Voigt, Peter Cachola Schmal, and Eckhard Herrel (Munich: Prestel, 2011), 197–213.
 - 22 “Kamatay musabaki program hulasasi,” *Arkitekt*, 4 (1938): 99–129. Quotation: p. 99.
 - 23 For instance, the fact that Atatürk chose Holzmeister as the architect of his own presidential residence in addition to the Ministries was described as the end of an era both by Sedad Eldem and *Arkitekt*'s editor Zeki Sayar. The same sentiment was expressed by the Austrian Ambassador Norbert von Bischoff. Sedad Eldem, *50 Yıllık Meslek Jübülesi* (İstanbul: Mimar Sinan Üniversitesi, 1983), 49;

- Norbert von Bischoff, *Ankara. Eine Deutung des Neuen Werdens in der Türkei* (Vienna: A. Holzhausnes, 1935), 101–102; İlhan Tekeli and Selim İlkin, eds., *Mimar Kemalettin'in Yazıtları* (Ankara: Tarih Vakfı, 1997).
- 24 Lewis Mumford, *The Culture of Cities* (New York: Harcourt Brace and Co, 1938), 438.
 - 25 “Kamutay musabakasi program hulasası,” *Arkitekt*, 4 (1938): 99–129. Quotation: p. 100.
 - 26 Attributed to Bruno Taut, “Mimar Bruno Taut (Kamutay musabakasi program hulasası),” *Arkitekt*, 4 (1938): 130–132.
 - 27 (Transl. by EA) Martin Wagner, Letter to Walter Gropius. August 29, 1937, quoted in Manfred Speidel, “Bruno Taut: Wiren und Wirkung,” in *Atatürk için Düşünmek: İki Eser: Katafalk ve Anıtkabir: İki Mimar: Bruno Taut and Emin Onat* (İstanbul: Milli Reasürans T.A.Ş., 1997), 54–62.
 - 28 Martin Wagner, letter to Ernst May, May 1, 1937, Istanbul. Martin Wagner Papers, Letters 26, Akademie der Künste, Berlin.
 - 29 Bruno Taut, Istanbul Journal (Manuscript). *Akademie der Künste*, Nachlaß Taut, Mappe III, 18.
 - 30 Attributed to Bruno Taut, “Mimar Bruno Taut (Kamutay musabakasi program hulasası),” *Arkitekt*, 4 (1938): 130.
 - 31 This is evident in his words “the more architectural forms are appropriate to the climate, light and air of their place, the more they are universal.” Taut, “Japans Kunst: Mit europäischen Augen gesehen,” 92. For more discussion, see Akcan, *Architecture in Translation*, Chapter 5.
 - 32 Bruno Taut, “Ansprache zur Eröffnung der Taut – Ausstellung in Istanbul am 4.6.1938,” 260. Rosemarie Bleitter also suggests that the humanism of Kant, developed particularly in “Perpetual Peace” made a strong influence on the young Taut. Rosemarie Bleitter, “Bruno Taut And Paul Scheerbart’s Vision: Utopian Aspects of German Expressionist Architecture,” (PhD dissertation, Columbia University, 1973).
 - 33 Immanuel Kant, “Perpetual Peace: A Philosophical Sketch,” in *Political Writings*. Edited by H. Reiss; translated by H.B. Nisbet, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 93–130. Originally written in 1795. For informative essays, see especially: James Bohman and Matthias Lutz-Bachmann (eds.), *Perpetual Peace: Essays on Kant’s Cosmopolitan Ideal* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1997); Allen W. Wood, “Kant’s Project for Perpetual Peace,” in *Cosmopolitics: Thinking and Feeling Beyond the Nation*. Edited by B. Robbins and P. Cheah (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1998), 59–76.
 - 34 The two other formulas were: “So act that you treat humanity, whether in your own person or in the person of any other, always at the same time as an end, never as a means. [...] Act in such a way that you treat every human being as a member in the kingdom of ends.” Ibid., 429. “Act under the idea of the will of every rational being as a will giving universal law.” Ibid., 431.
 - 35 Ibid., 175.
 - 36 Ibid., 75.
 - 37 Taut, “Japans Kunst: Mit europäischen Augen gesehen.”
 - 38 Ibid., 12–13.
 - 39 Ibid., 265.
 - 40 Taut conceived the notion of climate as a category to help attain universality, as is evident in his words “the more architectural forms are appropriate to the climate, light and air of their place, the more they are universal.” Ibid., 92.
 - 41 In “Japans Kunst” Taut had argued that a fruitful modern architecture in Japan would be the result of a synthesis with European influences. Taut, *Japans Kunst*, 206.
 - 42 Ibid., 206.
 - 43 Taut, *Mimar Bilgisi*, 46.
 - 44 Taut, “Japans Kunst: Mit Europäischen Augen Gesehen,” 24.
 - 45 Also see: Esra Akcan, “Translations of Architecture in West Asia During the Twentieth Century,” in *The Companion to Islamic Art and Architecture: Blackwell Companions to Art History Series*. Edited by Gülrü Necipoğlu and Barry Flood (Blackwell, forthcoming).
 - 46 See for instance Stephen Gardiner, *Kuwait: The Making of a City* (Essex: Longman, 1983). Yasser Mahgoub, “Kuwait: Learning from a Globalized City,” in *The Evolving Arab City: Tradition, Modernity and Urban Development*. Edited by Yassir Elsheshtawy (London and New York: Routledge, 2008), 152–183; Lukasz Stanek, “Mobilities of Architecture in the Global Cold War: From Socialist Poland to Kuwait and Back,” *International Journal of Islamic Architecture*, 4, 2, (2015): 365–398; Nasser Golzari, *Architecture and Globalisation in the Persian Gulf Region*. (Farnham, UK: Routledge, 2016).
 - 47 For more on Utzon, see especially: Sigfried Giedion, “Jørn Utzon and the Third Generation,” *Space Time and Architecture*, 5th edition (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1995, or 1941 5th edition,

- 1967), 668–695; Kenneth Frampton, *Studies in Tectonic Culture* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1996), 296; Francois Fromonot, *Jorn Utzon: Architect of the Sydney Opera House* (Milan: Electa, 2000); Richard Weston, *Utzon: Inspiration, Vision, Architecture* (Hellerup, Denmark: Edition Blåndal, 2002); Khaled al-Sultany, *Architectural Intertextuality: Architecture as Acceptance of the 'Other'* (Copenhagen: Royal Danish Academy of Fine Arts, School of Architecture Publishers, 2012).
- 48 Weston, *Utzon*.
- 49 The technological ambition to cover the large spans and high spaces of the assembly hall and the public plaza under these tent-like structures by using tapered round piers and prefabricated catenary vaulted beams (each weighs 500 tons) was meant to be a proof of the new Kuwait's progress.
- 50 Jørn Utzon, "Additive Architecture," *Arkitektur*, 1 (1970). English Translation in Weston, *Utzon*, 276.
- 51 Utzon, quoted in Frampton, p. 296; a similar quotation in Weston, p. 327: "On going through the project for a last time before starting building, the desire was expressed to save money by doing away with this hall, but at a meeting with the originator of the project for the new parliament, 'the Speaker of the Parliament', I told him that this great hall was intended as a symbol of the relationship between leaders and people in Arab countries. The shade was protection. I had been told that when a leader died, it was said that 'his shade fell away'. You cannot live in the desert lands without shade."
- 52 Originally published as Utzon's Interview in Danish newspaper: *Politiken*, October 1978. Quoted in: Francois Fromonot, *Jorn Utzon: Architect of the Sydney Opera House* (Milan: Electa, 2000), 199.
- 53 Jørn Utzon: "The Importance of Architects," in *Architecture in an Age of Skepticism*. Edited by Lasdin, D. (London: Heinemann, 1984), 214–233, quote: 222.
- 54 See especially Weston, *Utzon*; al-Sultany, *Architectural Intertextuality*.
- 55 Weston, *Utzon*, 305.
- 56 See especially, Weston, *Utzon*; Chen-Yu Chiu, "Jørn Utzon's Radical Internationalism: Nordic Grounding and the Emulation of China," *Nationalism and Architecture*. Edited by Raymond Quek, Darren Deane, and Sarah Butler (Burlington: Ashgate, 2012), 185–197.
- 57 Chiu, "Jørn Utzon's Radical Internationalism."
- 58 Jørn Utzon, "Platforms and Plateaus: Ideas of a Danish Architect," *Zodiac*, 10 (1962): 112.
- 59 Gardiner, 124.
- 60 Nezar AlSayyad, "Introduction," in *Modernism and the Middle East: Architecture and Politics in the Twentieth Century*. Edited by Sandy Isenstadt and Kishwar Rizvi (Seattle and London: University of Washington Press); Stanek, "Mobilities of Architecture."
- 61 For more discussion, see Esra Akcan, "Global Conflict and Global Glitter: Architecture of West Asia," in *A Critical History of Contemporary Architecture (1960–2010)*. Edited by Elie Haddad and David Rifkind (London: Ashgate, 2014), 311–337; Esra Akcan, "Translations of Architecture in West Asia during the Twentieth Century."
- 62 Jørn Utzon, Tape-recorded letter to students in Aarhus from Majorca, 6.5. 1988. Reproduced in: Weston, *Utzon*, 413.
- 63 A photograph of this march was appropriated as the cover of the following issue: "Türkiye'nin Sosyal Ekonomisi ve Mimarlık," *Mimarlık*, 1–2 (1974).
- 64 Akcan, *Architecture in Translation*, chapter 4.
- 65 Saleh, Al-Mutawa, *History of Architecture in Old Kuwait City* (Kuwait: Al-Khat, Saleh). Quoted in: Yasser Mahgoub, "Kuwait: Learning from a Globalized City," in *The Evolving Arab City: Tradition, Modernity and Urban Development*. Edited by Yassir Elsheshtawy (London, NY: Routledge, 2008), 152–183, quotation: p. 158.
- 66 See for instance Giorgio Agamben, "Beyond Human Rights," *Open*, 15 (2008): 90–95. (English version published in *Means Without End: Notes on Politics* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2000), 15–28; Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri, *Empire* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2000); Wendy Brown, *Undoing the Demos: Neoliberalism's Stealth Revolution* (New York: Zone Books, 2015); Étienne Balibar, *Citizenship*, trans. Thomas Scott-Railton (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2015).
- 67 For governmentality, see Michel Foucault, *The Government of Self and Others: Lectures at the Collège de France 1982–1983*. Edited by Arnold I. Davidson; translated by Graham Burchell (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010).

PART III

Rights



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7

ARCHITECTURE AND COPYRIGHT

Rights of authors and things in the age of digital reproduction

Ines Weizman

No more original genii! Let us repeat ourselves again and again! Let one house look like the other! Indeed for doing that one would not be published in the magazine *Deutsche Kunst und Dekoration* and one would not be appointed to become the professor at the arts and crafts college, but one will have served one's time, oneself and one's people and humanity well. And by that, one's native country!

—Adolf Loos, *Vernacular Art* (1914)¹

"No more original genii"

In 1914 Adolf Loos published "Heimatkunst" (Vernacular Art). Like much of his writing, this essay reads like lecture notes. Indeed, he had given a talk with this same title on November 20, 1912, to the Akademischer Architekten Verein (the Academic Architects Union) in Vienna.² (Figure 7.1) During that talk, Loos embarked on a lengthy discussion about the influence of Italy and Germany on the architecture of the Austro-Hungarian Empire. He concluded with an appeal to architects not to aim for originality, but rather to "repeat themselves." Loos, otherwise known as a non-conforming modernist who aimed to confront Viennese culture and its bourgeois conservatism, presented himself here as a worrying traditionalist, "frightened" that contemporary architects subscribed to German building magazines and favored "imports from Magdeburg and Essen to Vienna," a tendency he called "Munichisation."³ Loos rejects the decadence of "reproducing old styles," but also specifically opposes the contemporary architecture of "transparent glass houses, which betray their interiors already from far."⁴ He seems to be reacting to the success of Paul Scheerbart's fantasy treatise "Glass Architektur" (Glass Architecture), which was also published in 1914 and had been much debated in German-speaking architectural circles at the time. Scheerbart had famously dedicated his book to the architect Bruno Taut, who in the same year completed a glass pavilion at the Werkbund Exhibition in Cologne, an exhibition whose brief was to celebrate the new potentials of building materials offered by the industry, in the case of Taut's pavilion that of the glass industry. Hence, while Loos's contemporaries envisioned a borderless glass



FIGURE 7.1 Poster of Lecture “Heimatkunst” presented by Adolf Loos on 20th November 1912 to Akademischer Architekten Verein, Vienna. Courtesy of Wien Museum, Vienna.

environment that in its sheer mesmerizing, atmospheric beauty would represent world peace, and trusted that the latest technological developments would soon enable floating continents and crystalline mountain settlements,⁵ the self-acclaimed modernist shook his head in disbelief at such willful gestures, and rather insisted on the reproduction of vernacular architecture. In another essay, written in 1913, Loos had already advised on how to build in the mountains:

Do not be afraid to be criticized for being old-fashioned. Changes in the old way of building are permissible only when they are improvements. Otherwise stick to things as

they always have been. For truth, even if it be hundreds of years old, has a closer connection with our inner being than the untruth marching along beside us.⁶

As the Austro-Hungarian Empire entered World War I, which would eventually break it apart, Loos defended his native country with vernacular architecture, which is “always readily at hand and no one should be afraid to use it.”⁷

On the other hand, Loos shared with his avant-garde colleagues in the first two decades of the twentieth century the view that architecture as a mass product would have global influence – a calculation that challenged the meaning of the creative act and the role of the author. While in theory, the death of the author was much discussed as a symptom of modernism and as a role model in post-modernism, in practice, the premonition of the loss of influence of the author in processes of mechanical reproduction also fostered the necessity for a framework of some legal protection of a copyright holder. When Loos presented his House on Michaelerplatz in Vienna in 1911 he not only surprised the establishment with the features of a new functionalist architecture that had shed its ornaments, but, as his later writing would argue, he also declared the use of ornament a crime, advocating a new framework for architecture: the law.

This chapter investigates the relation between large-scale, global architectural replications as they became possible at the beginning of the twentieth century through new and ever more efficient technologies of reproduction; new international political influences; and potential modes of practice that cope with those replications. Although intellectual property and patent law have been little discussed as driving forces in modern architecture, we can see in the history of modern architecture how architects, in the wake of new technical possibilities in mechanical reproduction (and even more so in the age of digital reproduction), began to claim a stronger stake in their works. Authors were concerned with personal rights and their artistic distinctiveness – think of the protagonist in Dostoevsky’s novel *The Double*, who was desperately trying to regain his former place in society from which his perfect doppelganger had expelled him.⁸ Similarly the appearance of an architectural doppelganger – a copy of a building – is experienced as something uncanny, a ghost or potential precursor of imminent death.⁹ Architectural copies can be ignored, or dismissed as low art, but they always disturb the nature, meaning, and esteem of the “original.”¹⁰

The authors/inventors of products and processes of mass production and replication tried to secure not only authorial rights, but also a role in the control of objects and things that threatened to take command of their reproduction through an unauthorized series of appropriation, or modes of automation. The one-hundred-year history of the relation between architecture and copyright that concerns me here points to two entangled paradigms of architectural modernism: standardization and automation. The first relates to material efficiency in systems of production; the second, to its machinic reproduction. When architecture gives birth to architecture, buildings to buildings, where copying is the means of reproduction, copyrights become the most fundamental and inalienable of thing-rights, potentially beyond and in spite of those of their makers. It is this spectrum that extends from mechanical to digital reproduction that forms the backdrop of this analysis.

Anonymous reproduction

Sigfried Giedion’s 1947 book *Mechanization Takes Command: A Contribution to Anonymous History* is an encyclopedia of the ways in which mechanization has entered our everyday life, but

also how these processes of innovation are intertwined, creating shared authorship. Giedion describes the modern movement as a movement in which objects are being developed within a certain approximation, a logic in which things become able to “take command”:

No single country, no one person, has created our furniture or the equipment of the house. Each land contributed its atmosphere, its talents, whenever an idea was being worked out. This co-operation guarantees the validity of the whole development. [. . .] As in all periods, there is continual give and take, an unconscious but active collaboration.¹¹

As an example, Giedion meticulously reconstructs the story of the tubular chair that began with Michael Thonet’s bentwood chair in the mid-nineteenth century, and then was developed by Marcel Breuer as a singular tubular steel chair in 1926. The idea was adapted as stooling for the auditorium in Walter Gropius’ Bauhaus building in Dessau; subsequently found another version in Mart Stam’s house in the Weissenhof settlement at Stuttgart in 1927; and shortly after in a further iteration by Mies van der Rohe, who developed a tubular chair for his house in the same settlement – a long trajectory which Marcel Breuer eventually used for further improvements on the chair.¹² Even if Mies claimed to be “the first to recognize and exploit the springiness of the steel tubing,” for which he was later granted patent rights in the U.S.,¹³ Giedion’s point was less the looming intellectual property conflict of authors in an age of mechanical reproduction than the fact that “the idea of the cantilever chair was in the air.”¹⁴ Giedion’s later analysis in this book on the mechanization and automation of the household alludes to a future in which things – now anonymously – become somehow animated, taking command over humans and in which humans become only the technical prosthesis to their functioning.

Yet while in the modern movement, as Giedion stated, “the slightest item of furniture must participate in the new architectural spirit,”¹⁵ authors – despite their friendship and collegial feelings – were keen to distinguish their authorship from such cooperation, especially as their products were designed for mass production. Particularly, if we look at the new social agendas of modern mass housing developments, we can see an intersection between social and societal interests and the authors’ need to secure both personal rights, as well as income.

Modern architecture offered the technological possibilities of type and reproduction. Seen in historical terms, one could argue that the emergence of modern architecture coincides with the development of copyright law, at a moment when modernism sought to distance the author from authorship, the building from uniqueness, and potentially to unmesh the individual from mass production. The development of modern architecture, its production, seriality, and export across seas are necessarily entangled with the laws of copyright. One could even argue that it was copyright law that “allowed” architecture to be copied, replicated, mass-produced, and exported across the world. New copyright regulations appeared exactly at the moment when new practices and new architectural works were reacting to and advancing the condition of modernity.

Architecture and copyright

Copyright is generally understood as the consequence of a certain conferring of an identity of a maker on an object, a thing, a structured assemblage, or a building. It is the right to copy,

replicate, duplicate, and receive the financial benefits of this act. In every period, copyright differently reflects on the existing means of production and reproduction, and on our relation to auratic or less auratic multiplications.¹⁶ Copyright law does restrict the unhampered freedom of copying in its various forms, but the decision as to whether a copy can be permitted or prohibited is made as an interplay between the right of an individual originator and a form of collectivity or the common. Thus, copyright disputes put into motion a complex back-and-forth between authors, experts, lawyers, and activists, as well as of surviving relatives who might seek financial benefit or aim to preserve a certain ethos of an estate. Rarely they originate with the authors who have produced the originals, but often these disputes are post mortem.¹⁷ As such, copyright disputes bring private and political interests (i.e., a society's relation to art and architecture) into visibility.¹⁸ Copying thus functions as a barometer of sorts, framing both the condition of the subjects of copyright as well as the technologies of their (re)production.

Hippodamus of Miletus, the Greek architect who famously designed the Athens harbor of Piraeus in 451 BC and who became known as the inventor of the grid plan for Miletus, was the first to raise a concern that is still central to intellectual property law today. Hippodamus not only inaugurated a new era of city planning, but was also the first to ask for copyright in design.¹⁹ His plan for Miletus was reused numerous times for city plans already in his lifetime, and the abstraction of the grid, which enabled it to be easily reproduced almost anywhere, suggested the need to regulate its reproduction. Aware of the success of his organizational scheme, Hippodamus proposed that a society should reward those individuals who create things useful for its members.²⁰ While Hippodamus quite pragmatically believed in innovation, and that individuals should be rewarded for their ideas and their efforts, Aristotle fiercely criticized the architect in his *Politics*, and worried that by rewarding individuals for doing good, they might do good merely for the reward rather than for the benefit of the state. For Aristotle, this tension between individual interests and the good of the community meant a weakening of the state. He opposed the idea of encouraging innovations in all fields, including law. Law should not change too quickly as it would diminish the individual's habit of obedience to law that is so valuable to a state. The notion of "utility" should not be introduced into judgments about what is desirable. "The better state, according to Aristotle, is one where citizens obey the law not because it is their interest, but because it is good to do so."²¹ Inherent in the motive of the public good is the notion that, in certain circumstances, the needs of the majority override those of the individual, and that the citizen should relinquish any thoughts of self-interest in favor of the common good of society as a whole. Architecture is a professional service and is always also a part of our shared/public environment. Ideas about how society can be innovated through changes in the spatial layout of the city are expected from the architect, even without a contractual agreement. As Aristotle's critique shows, at the core of patent and copyright law we can see a tension between civil obedience (for the public good) and the problem of rewarding individual efforts to innovation (essentially also for the public good). Already the Greeks had a problem with the paradox that social benefits via technological progress are achieved by means of private rewards.

What makes modern copyright and its historiography so difficult to grasp within the culture of copying and appropriation is that it has to be differentiated across both time and space. It is applied differently in different countries and has evolved across time.²² Wars, catastrophes, and migrations have created a world society that is reflected in copyright law. In modern international copyright law, which evolved in the late nineteenth century as part of

the increased political frictions between nation-states, the state defines the rights of authors both in their lifetime and beyond death. Yet the law often lags behind the reality that it seeks to regulate, and so it is the case with the various modes of copying. Seeking to comprehend, harness, and regulate ever-increasing innovation in reproductive forms, the culture of the copy and that of law co-evolved. While the culture of the copy embraces the vast potential and abundance in which ideas, variations, and expressions of an original can find new forms of existence, the question for its legal limits is posed with attempts to regulate something that always threatens to break out of regulatory control. The following sketches out some of the potential meeting points at which copyright law has reacted to or shaped the development of modern architecture.

Copyright is applied in accordance with the country in which the author is a citizen, but not outside of its borders. The Berne Convention for the Protection of Literary and Artistic Works (1886) was initiated by an appeal by a group of authors famously led by Victor Hugo. It was the first international agreement to protect, primarily, the rights of writers. After further meetings in Berne in 1896, in Berlin in 1908, again in Berne in 1914, and a concluding meeting in Rome in 1928, the convention dealt with not only works from the literary world but also from the scientific and artistic domain, including musical compositions, drawings, paintings, and only very late with photography and architecture. As early as 1907, Germany incorporated architecture into its copyright law, the so-called Kunsturhebergesetz (Art Copyright Law). In the same year, the Deutscher Werkbund (German Association of Craftsmen) was established with the intention to integrate traditional craftsmanship in industrial mass production, while also aiming to underscore the artist or architect as the originator of a work.²³ In the United States, the Copyright Act of 1909 did not yet include architecture, but “drawings or plastic works of a scientific or technical nature.”²⁴ In Great Britain in the 1910s, lawyers began to make a case for including “architectural works” to be recognized as subject matter, and considered a tribunal composed of architectural experts to judge copyright in architecture.²⁵ Yet, while architects, lawyers, and judges were unsure about whether and how to argue that architecture had an artistic character that could be protected by copyright law, Loos, still rather opposed to those international efforts, argued in his famous 1910 essay “On Architecture”: “Only the tomb and the monument are works of art.”²⁶ For him, all other architectures were merely functional, meant to serve a purpose, without claims to the author as a genius and hence not copyrightable by most copyright laws – which aligned with his own attitude about the copying of vernacular architecture.

Architectural patents

The history of intellectual property rights in architectural modernism, besides copyright law, also includes the development of patent law and trademark law. Patent law represents exclusive rights over a technical invention or a developed product granted by a sovereign state to an inventor for a limited time, during which the details of the invention do not have to be disclosed to the public. The history of modern architecture is replete with architects applying for the patent protection of their inventions, design details, and construction methods. Patents are meant to reward an inventor with a profit for an invention, and as such encourage innovation. On the other hand, patents also benefit society as they make publicly available precise descriptions of new inventions, which enter the public domain when the patent expires. So a patent is a kind of agreement between an inventor, an architect, and the public by which

the architect/inventor receives a limited control in exchange for disclosing the invention to the public.

In 1921, Loos filed a patent for “House With One Wall” (Figures 7.2 and 7.3). This patent describes a method of construction in which a prefabricated concrete party wall already bears the horizontal timber joists for the floors and the façades without the need for a foundation for the two façades. His invention, he writes in his patent application, will be cost-effective, reducing materials and labor, and will “enable the construction of cheap dwelling houses or of buildings to be used as business/storage/factory premises or for agricultural, military or other functional purposes.”²⁷ The scheme for these small, simple two-floor row houses that could be mass-produced captured Loos’s vision of “reproduction without originality,” but also promised to gain him royalties – perhaps a steady income that, at the time, he so dearly needed. Loos had to submit the application for his patent to both the German and Austrian patent offices. While both patents were granted, it is not known whether his invention was ever used in either country.

Interestingly, the history of the protection of architecture through copyright law was preceded by difficulties in accepting the necessity and modes of protection for photography. Until 1908 photography was not considered to be worth protection through the law. Still ambivalent about its value, Walter Benjamin problematized the role of the artwork, particularly photography in the mechanical age.²⁸ The mechanical reproduction of reality through the shutter of a camera corresponded to the casts and molds of concrete that – so the experts at the time argued – could not possibly leave a trace of subjectivity on its products. Legal scholar Bernard Edelman has shown how in nineteenth-century France photographs were at first considered to be mere mechanical reproductions of reality, and hence in the public domain. It was only when photography became accepted as an artistic practice that it received legal protection, and “the real as object in law [became] susceptible to appropriation, sale and contracts.”²⁹ When it was privatized, considered artistic, and protected by the law, photography also became suspected of “stealing the soul,” and of essentially turning persons into things.³⁰

Whereas it took decades to accept that the mechanically reproduced image contains traces of the subject and thus a proprietary relation to copyright, discussions to do with the replication of objects in three dimensions took a different trajectory. The cast courts in the Victoria and Albert Museum in London explored a completely different relation to objects than the British Museum, only a short distance away. While the British Museum had to conquer, raid, dismantle, ship, rail, and recompose the actual monuments and artifacts stolen or collected from across the empire, the cast court took a more contemporary attitude towards reproduction. In the hands of the Italian artists, wax experts, and plasterers, the monuments they copied became a media form. Yet, their reproduction soon gave rise to legal disputes about their ownership.

In a particularly enlightening essay, Mari Lending shows how already shortly after the death of the prominent master caster practicing in London, Domenico Brucciani, in 1880, the company that continued the business of Brucciani & Company began to file lawsuits against competitors who tried to make new molds from casts that the heirs of Brucciani had sold after the masters death.³¹ These “copyrighted copies,” Lending states, got their grounding in a legal initiative led by Henry Cole, director of the South Kensington Museum (from 1899, Victoria and Albert Museum), which was signed by fifteen European crown princes during the 1867 International Exhibition in Paris, only a year after Hugo’s first public claim for the protection of copyright. Cole’s “Convention for Promoting Universally Reproductions of Works of Art for the Benefit of Museums of All Countries,” in which he aimed to encourage the

Adolf Loos
11. Februar
1921

Bauart
„Haus mit einer Mauer“ Blatt I

Fig. 1

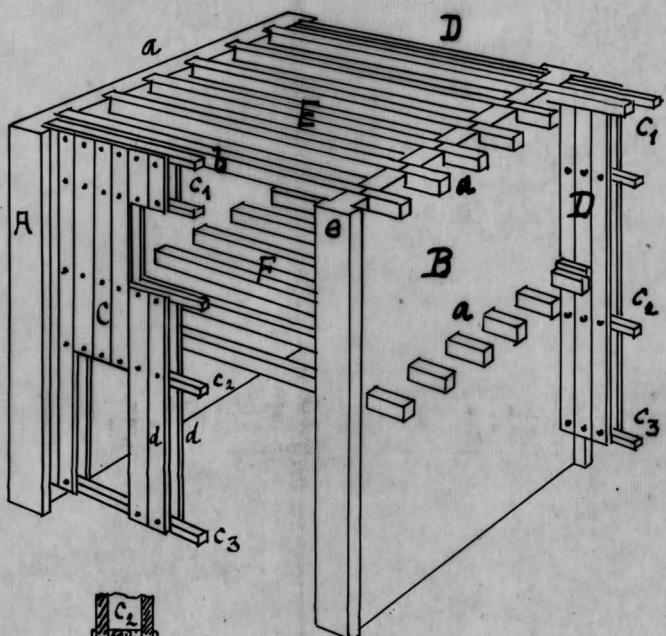


Fig 2

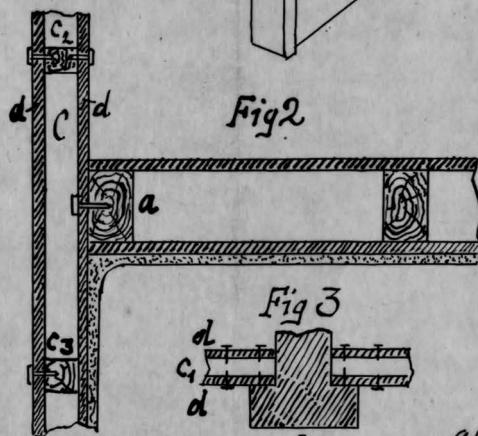
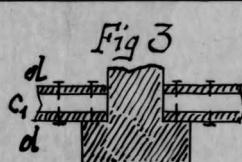


Fig 3



ges. Adolf Loos

2127 R

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FIGURE 7.2 Adolf Loos, Construction Scheme for “House With One Wall” as submitted to the patent office, Vienna, 1921, ALA702. Courtesy of the Albertina, Vienna.

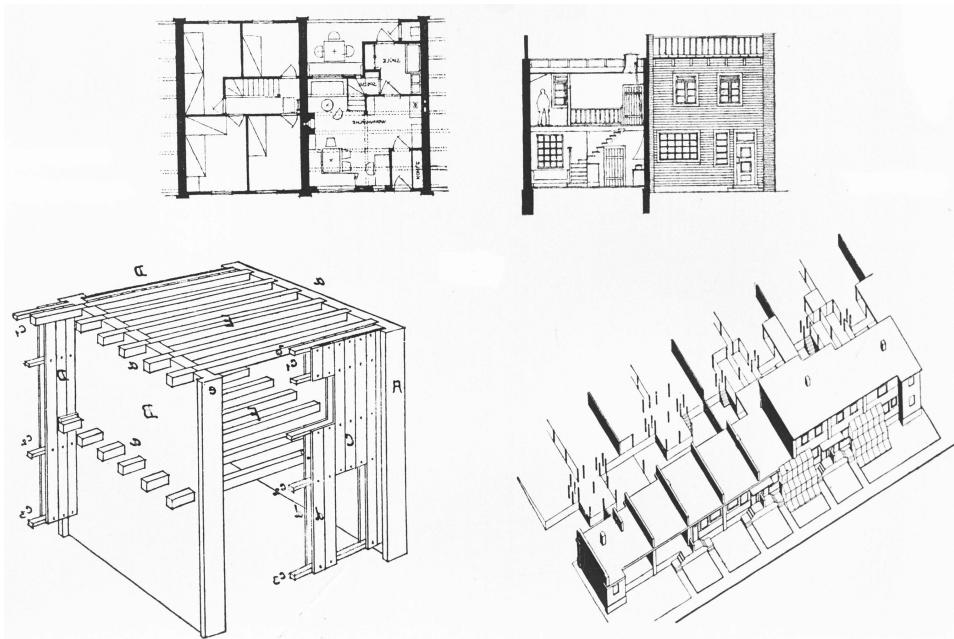


FIGURE 7.3 Adolf Loos, Construction Scheme for “House With One Wall” as submitted to the patent office, Vienna, 1921, ALA3188. Courtesy of the Albertina, Vienna.

production of monuments in media such as casts, electrotypes, and photographs, still ignored the requests of Hugo or those of the heirs of Brucciani.³² This discussion about the potential mass production of plaster casts for the preservation of historic monuments prefigures the characteristic reproducibility that the modern concrete cast will enable.

One could argue that the numerous revisions to copyright laws, such as the Berne Convention, were stimulated and shaped by political, economic, and cultural shifts that were themselves often inspired by new creative works and technological innovations. Since the communication and computation revolution starting at the end of the last century, copyright issues are rarely resolved exclusively within a single country. This is not only a result of the expansion of global design culture, new access to work online, or to global media forums, but also to the architects themselves working abroad, migrating, and to the multiple passports they may hold.

The nature of these controversies can be traced back to the pre–World War I era of early modernism. This threshold period, a new architectural era in which media, new building technology, and techniques of mass production started to emerge, also saw the development of modern copyright and intellectual property laws. Early debates around these laws were already becoming interwoven with wider geopolitical developments.

Early copyright claims in modern architecture

One of the first controversies in respect to copyright in architecture broke out over the design of the Théâtre de Champs-Elysées in Paris. In 1910, Henry van de Velde, the Belgian architect – who

had become by that time a well-respected leader of the arts and crafts movement in Europe and director of a school that he had founded in Weimar to promote this style – was invited to design a theatre in Paris. According to his clients, the theatre was to rival the decadent performances in the Garnier Opera and was to attract “European and American friends of theatre and music through radically new architectural and decorative design.”³³ Van de Velde had experimented with theatre design for two unrealized projects in Weimar and was keen to develop a total work of art that involved the performance space and its audience. Enthusiastic about the job, he developed a series of plans for Paris and even undertook a tour through Germany to study the latest developments in theatre design.³⁴ His assistant Marcel Guilleminault developed detailed plans from sketches Van de Velde brought from Weimar.³⁵ Yet from early on in the design process, Van de Velde sensed trouble. His clients had wished for a theatre to be “in the Italian tradition,” which they interpreted to favor the audience’s exposure to itself – over an equal view of the stage from everywhere in the hall. However, Van de Velde developed an elliptical shape for the seating area that allowed equal views on the stage. This was not easily received; his proposals for the façade had to be revised several times. In March 1911 he submitted his final drawings. Because the ground condition on the site turned out unsuitable for foundations, Van de Velde consulted the firm of A.&G. Perret for structural advice. August Perret’s company at that time was already known for its use of reinforced concrete, and was a go-to for difficult cases like this. But instead of taking the role of the structural engineer, Perret used the opportunity, probably during Van de Velde’s absence, to change the entire design. He replaced the steel structure with reinforced concrete, redesigned the seating area in a cylindrical shape so that all spectators could see each other, and adopted the principal features of the marble-clad façade by Van de Velde, while making sure to treat the marble in such an essential way that it almost appeared like concrete. He kept, however, the overall organization and design as it was developed by the Belgian architect. The theatre opened spectacularly on May 29, 1913, with a performance of *Le Sacre du Printemps* by Igor Stravinsky, danced by the renowned Ballet Russe, and August Perret is generally credited as its architect.

Van de Velde was shocked by such a blunt act of plagiarism, and more so because he probably felt that his clients may have made their decisions on nationalist grounds. Indeed, the preference for a French author of one of the most important public buildings in Paris might be understood as a sign of the nationalist storm that was unleashed a year later in the Great War. And perhaps, given such political animosity, Van de Velde was discouraged from pursuing his claims legally. In principle that should have been possible according to the Berlin Act of 1908, which included architecture (Article 2) and photographic works (Article 3) in the International Convention for the Protection of Literary and Artistic Works.³⁶ Perhaps it was the next meeting of the members of the Berne Convention in March 1914, which expanded the list of signatories by eight states and explicitly defined the protection of all “works of authors who are subject to the jurisdiction of one of the contracting countries,” that prompted the art historian Jacques Mesnil to emphatically recall how Van de Velde was wronged.

In the May/June issue of *L’Art Flamand et Hollandais* of the same year, Mesnil, a fellow-Belgian and friend of Van de Velde’s, accused Perret of deceitfulness and plagiarism (Figure 7.4).³⁷ He was particularly critical of the changed layout of the seating area and the façade, while its proportions and organizational structure had been incorporated without crediting the Belgian architect.³⁸ Mesnil writes: “The façade [...] is not calculated to make me enthusiastic, for it is stiff and devoid of rhythm, and reminds one rather of wood marquetry than of a monumental work of stone.”³⁹

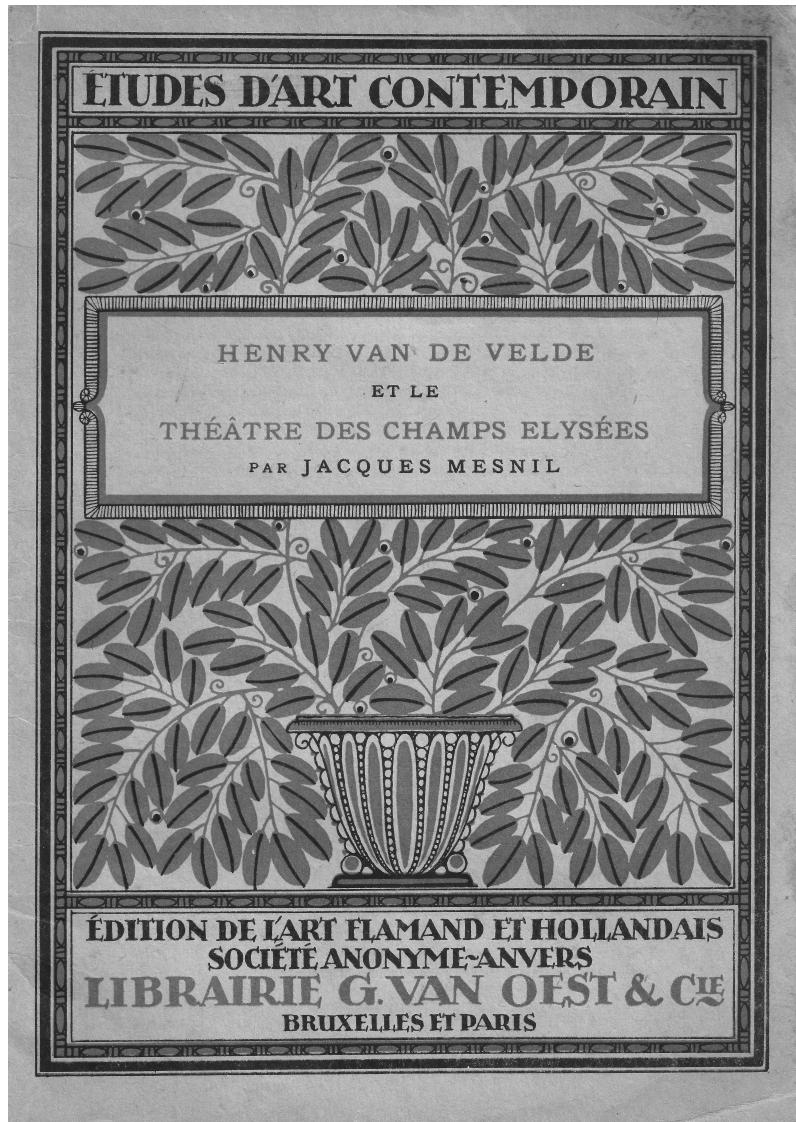
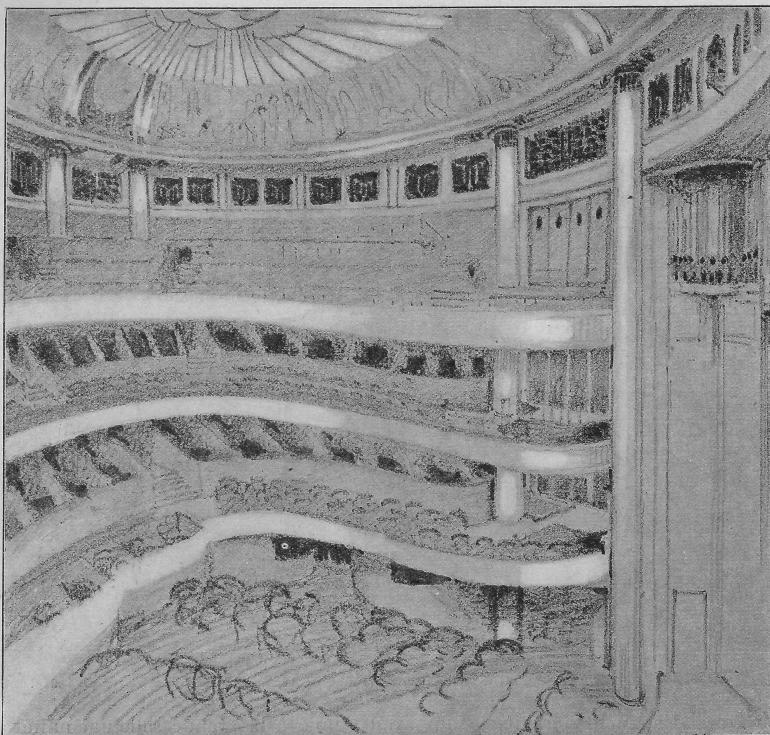


FIGURE 7.4 Cover, Jacques Mesnil, “Henry van de Velde et le Théâtre des Champs Elysées” (Brussels and Paris, 1914).

In his *Concrete: The Vision of a New Architecture*, Peter Collins, writing forty-five years later about Perret’s mastery of the new building material, rejects Mesnil’s “spiteful and chauvinistic article” and points to the date of Van de Velde’s drawing from March 11, 1911 – a week after Auguste Perret had established the new and definitive structural rhythm of the plan.⁴⁰ He writes (see Figures 7.5 and 7.6):

The differences between this drawing and the executed design are not revolutionary, but for that very reason are all the more eloquent of the justice of Perret’s claims;

HENRY VAN DE VELDE ET LE THÉÂTRE DES CHAMPS ELYSÉES

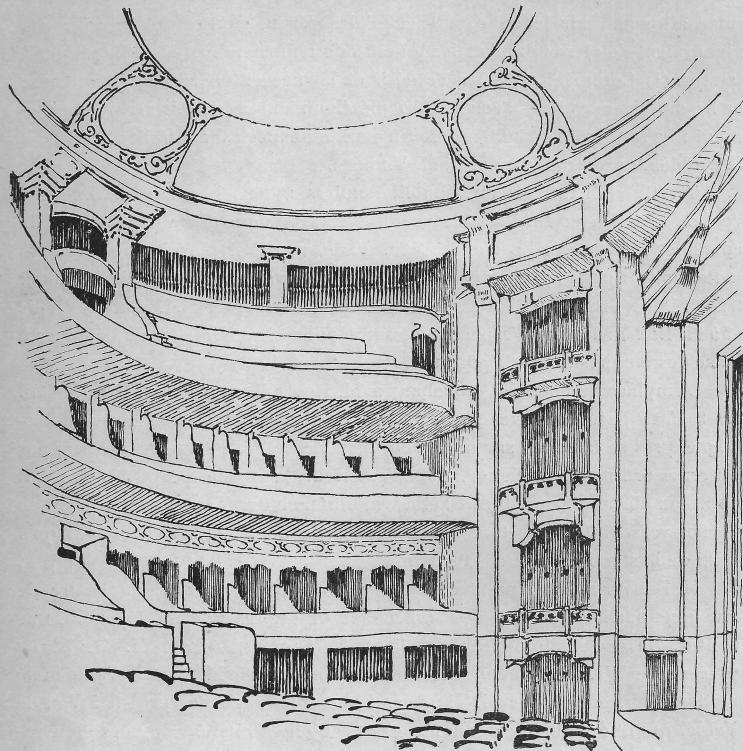


A. et G. PERRET, architectes : Théâtre des Champs Elysées. Vue de la Salle ; (croquis d'après nature).

Plus j’observais et plus j’étais intrigué. Il semblait que dans la construction de l’édifice plusieurs volontés contradictoires se fussent trouvées en lutte et que dans l’exécution les intentions de l’artiste créateur eussent été trahies. Aussi se fit-il dans mon esprit une clarté soudaine lorsque je lus par hasard dans un des journaux hebdomadaires de Paris, plus libres que les quotidiens de dire des vérités « désobligeantes », que le véritable auteur du théâtre des Champs Elysées était Henry van de Velde. Ceci venait confirmer mes doutes. Mais le problème me paraissait assez intéressant pour être étudié à fond ; je résolus d’en rechercher avec soin les éléments et de me procurer tous les documents nécessaires à en fixer les données. Je ne tardai pas à y réussir. Le présent travail est le fruit de l’analyse combinée de ces documents et de l’œuvre elle-même.

FIGURE 7.5 Sketch of interior view of the Théâtre des Champs Elysées by A. and G. Perret, 1911.
In Jacques Mesnil, “Henry van de Velde et le Théâtre des Champs Elysées” (Brussels and Paris, 1914).

HENRY VAN DE VELDE ET LE THÉÂTRE DES CHAMPS ELYSÉES



HENRY VAN DE VELDE : Vue de la Salle, d'après le projet non exécuté.

* * *

M. Gabriel Thomas, qui fut l'initiateur principal de l'entreprise, appartient au mouvement que l'on est convenu d'appeler la néo-renaissance catholique. Ses idées sur l'œuvre à réaliser étaient d'ordre tout à fait général : il voulait édifier un théâtre « de bien être » qui fût en même temps, pour me servir du langage ad hoc, un temple de la musique. Pour qui sait ce que parler veut dire, il y avait entre ces deux conditions un désaccord irréductible. Le temple de la musique, c'était le théâtre à l'instar de Bayreuth, où l'on viendrait écouter religieusement, dans un silence recueilli et respectueux, de véritables œuvres d'art, vers lesquelles l'attention du public serait tendue toute entière. Le théâtre de « bien être », c'était le théâtre où les snobs

FIGURE 7.6 Sketch of interior view of the Théâtre des Champs Elysées by Henry Van de Velde, 1911. In Jacques Mesnil, "Henry van de Velde et le Théâtre des Champs Elysées" (Brussels and Paris, 1914).

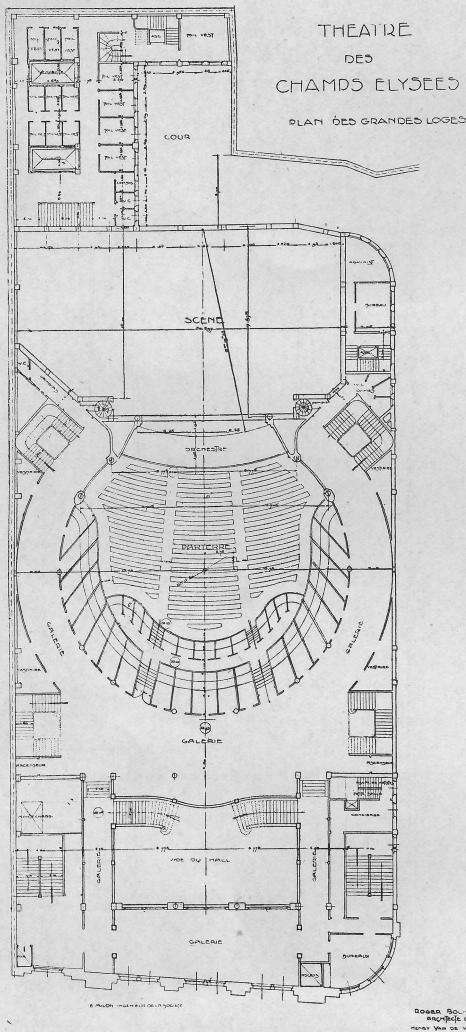
the revised composition is more clearly articulated, the fenestration more uniformly arranged, the proportions are more disciplined, the detailing is more refined; in fact every change bears witness to the hand of a master correcting a rough and not particularly competent sketch.⁴¹

Without trying to reopen the case, and without claiming it to be a case for the courts, this passage shows two things: on the one hand, copyright disputes require a highly detailed and investigative architectural analysis of documents, plans, photographs, and media. An architectural expert would have to reconstruct in detail the “act of design,” practicing a historical analysis as a form of “architectural re-enactment” that might well differ from what we would conventionally understand as architectural historiography. On the other hand, the dispute between Perret and Van de Velde marks not only a moment in which architecture, in its increased proximity to and collaboration with the industry and new building methods, introduces seriality and reproduction on a large scale, but also one in which the architect is challenged in relation to the law (Figures 7.7 and 7.8).

It was against this backdrop that the Perret brothers began in 1920–1921 to patent their casting methods for reinforced concrete; that Le Corbusier tried to patent his 1914 *Maison Domino*; and that Adolf Loos filed a patent for his low-budget social housing projects for Vienna. Ernst Neufert filed patents for inventions of building elements and wall segments.⁴² Walter Gropius even filed a patent for a prefabricated house in copper, which he had developed in collaboration with the Eberswalde-based firm Aron Hirsch & Son. The use of this highly resistant, recyclable, and easily formable material had promised to be a production success that could be exported all over the world, and the returns for the use of this patent would have been a profitable business had not the economic crisis in Germany in the early 1930s made copper almost unaffordable.⁴³ More than anything else, these attempts reflected architects’ belief that they were designing products that were endlessly reproducible.

Van de Velde’s case is different, in that it is not a patent but a copyright case. He did not pursue his case, despite the new international legal agreement. There might be several reasons, one of which might simply be that he feared to claim author’s right, as a Belgian residing in France and in Germany, which would have conflicted with the national legislations of these three countries at a tense political moment shortly before the outbreak of World War I. For, although the International Copyright Convention was an agreement between states, the laws still had to be ratified, which meant that they had to become legal directives in their respective nations.⁴⁴ As a result, in those early war-shattered years of the international convention, the rights of foreigners were potentially considered to discriminate against local authors, and made the adoption of those conventions very slow. In her comprehensive analysis of the development of globalization of intellectual property and the structures of international cooperation between 1886 and 1952, Isabella Löhr reconstructs the conflicts of leading bureaus that worked to establish copyright conventions during the political conflicts of the two world wars, insisting on their political neutrality.⁴⁵ Only after World War II, with the Brussels Act of 1948, was the harmonization of the law undertaken. For example, in 1908 the Berne Convention set the copyright protection scheme to last until fifty years after the death of the author, while most signatories still used a term of thirty years in their own national legal systems. In 1948 those nations agreed to increase their protection to fifty years, which shows the importance of the Convention in setting guidelines for national legal systems of the Contracting States.⁴⁶ In 1952 the Universal Copyright Convention, an alternative to the

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HENRY VAN DE VELDE et R. BOUVARD : Plan à la hauteur des premières loges. Projet non exécuté. (Fin mars 1911).

bâtiments entre lesquels s'encadre la façade ont une très grande importance. Il est absurde en art d'appliquer en toutes circonstances une seule théorie,

qui l'encadrent sont alignés sur les doubles poteaux qui forment les soutiens principaux de la grande salle. Mais nous avons vu qu'il en était de même dans le projet de Van de Velde, où les lignes reliant les poteaux, entre lesquels sont pratiquées les entrées de la grande salle, aboutissent à l'extérieur au même endroit et correspondent en façade aux mêmes « pylônes » montant d'un jet du sol jusqu'au toit. D'ailleurs cela ne justifie en rien l'abaissement des côtés et la forme adoptée par MM. Perret, forme qui, encore une fois, résulte d'habitudes d'esprit prises à l'école et nullement d'une conception logique de la construction. Comme je viens de le montrer, la façade ne pouvait annoncer la structure de la grande salle, dont elle était séparée par une partie d'ordonnance toute différente. Dans un cas semblable il est impossible de tenir compte uniquement de la structure interne, et l'endroit où s'élève le monument, les

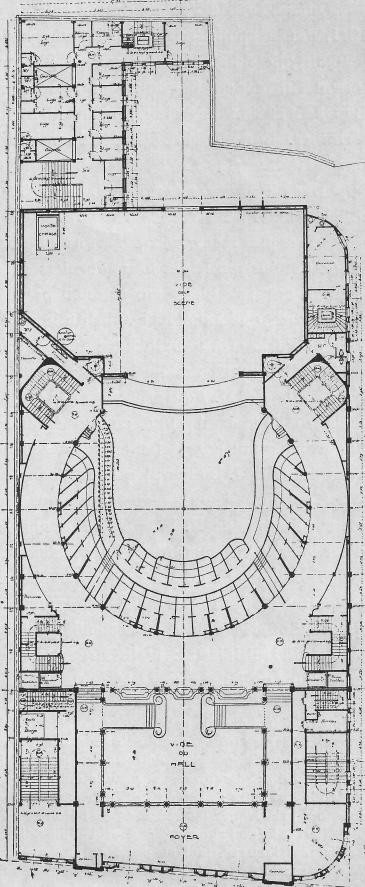
FIGURE 7.7 Interior plan of the Théâtre des Champs Elysées by Henry Van de Velde, 1911. In Jacques Mesnil, "Henry van de Velde et le Théâtre des Champs Elysées" (Brussels and Paris, 1914).

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aussi excellente soit-elle : c'est un travers singulièrement répandu, aujourd'hui que les théories surabondent et que l'instinct sûr et la réflexion suivie sont également rares. Que de laideurs nous fera-t-on subir en architecture en invoquant la logique et la raison ! Que d'erreurs commettra-t-on sous prétexte d'adapter les édifices à leur destination !

Avant la venue de Van de Velde, le mode de construction n'avait pas été définitivement fixé. On avait en vue un bâtiment en fer et en pierre et Van de Velde fut invité à étudier le problème dans ce sens. Ce fut lui qui conseilla l'emploi du béton armé, plus économique et permettant certaines hardies irréalisables par les autres procédés. Comme il n'était pas aisément de trouver à Paris un constructeur expert en ce genre de travail, Van de Velde se mit lui-même en quête et découvrit les frères Perret, qui avaient la pratique du béton armé et qu'il soutint auprès de la commission directrice. Ici quelques précisions sont nécessaires, car dans tous les articles publiés sur le théâtre des Champs Elysées les faits ont été présentés d'une manière incomplète, inexacte et souvent totalement erronée⁽⁴⁾.

(4) Nous avons déjà vu comment M. Jamot présentait la question. Voici d'autres exemples. M. Brincourt dans *l'Architecture*, 17 mai 1913 : « M. Thomas poursuivant sa



A. et G. PERRET, Architectes :
Plan du théâtre à la hauteur des premières loges.

FIGURE 7.8 Interior plan of the Théâtre des Champs Elysées by A. and G. Perret, 1911. In Jacques Mesnil, “Henry van de Velde et le Théâtre des Champs Elysées” (Brussels and Paris, 1914).

Berne Convention, was signed in Geneva by forty states, including the U.S. and twelve Latin American states, those states that disagreed with the Berne Convention. In 1967, also as a response to the states that had recently gained independence from their colonial states, the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO), an agency of the United Nations, was founded to include the largest number of signatories to international copyright standards. In 1988, the U.S. joined the International Copyright Convention, allying it to some degree with U.S. copyright law. The most important achievement of the convention was that authors and artists became automatically protected – without the need for “registering” their claims – and it defined that the signatories recognize the copyright laws of other countries in the same way they would recognize the copyright of their own citizens. In this series of revisions to the conventions, in the expanding list of countries that signed it, one can begin to comprehend a traceable shadow of the ever more complex and expanding global exchange of goods as well as ideas.

Conclusion – thing-rights

Contemporary intellectual property is tasked with protecting the rights of authors over their objects. While patents protect an invention or a product for an average of twenty years, copyrights over art works including architecture extend from the moment of production until between seventy and seventy-five years after the death of the author – an average lifetime. From the point of view of the artwork, this is an enslavement that extends to about a life and a half of a human. During that time, all its reproduction is dictated by a single rights holder. Yet if we acknowledge the advancement of contemporary and near-future digital production and reproduction technologies, we might also consider copyrights as rights of things. If the rights of objects were inherent to them rather than to their authors, it would liberate their circulation as autonomous entities. Every object is haunted by its potential or actual double, or multiples, which come into being as replicas, simulacra, reproductions, or fakes – a production series in which gradual differentiations and mutations may occur.

Architecture is a special kind of object, if it is an object at all. Sometimes it has an envelope and we can capture it with our eyes completely. But architecture is also a thick layer of relations, technologies, services, and infrastructure that acts and interacts in the world. It is, one could say, a quasi-subject – one that has some of its characteristics but is never fully a subject. We talk a lot about the agency of the architect, but what about the agency of architecture? If architecture has agency, it might also have liability and could be tried and perhaps even punished – similar to the Ancient Greeks who had a special court for dealing with inanimate objects. Miguel Tamen tells the story of a rival of Theagenes, an athlete from the island of Thasos, who whipped Theagenes’s bronze statue every night, until the statue, presumably upset, fell on him and crushed him to death. The statue was tried, convicted, and sentenced to be cast into the sea, though the Oracle later advised that it be reinstated to its previous site.⁴⁷ Law professor Christopher Stone reasoned: “I am quite seriously proposing that we give legal rights to forests, oceans, rivers and other so-called ‘natural objects’ in the environment – indeed, to the natural environment as a whole.”⁴⁸ The trials of inanimate objects have been long abolished. We know about ancient and medieval trials where sculptures, vehicles, building parts, and animals were tried and “executed.”⁴⁹ Tamen also tells about a Russian bell that was in 1892 brought back from the Siberian exile to which it was sentenced in 1591.⁵⁰ Today, we could imagine buildings much like Madelon Vriesendorp’s skyscrapers that make love, get

out of bed, stand up, present the case, are called to testify, cross-examine each other, and render verdicts among themselves. Architectural representations – drawings, models, animations – are not presented, but presenting, not disputed as evidence in a courtroom, but disputing.

Notes

- 1 Arts Council of Great Britain, *The Architecture of Adolf Loos: An Arts Council Exhibition* (London: Arts Council of Great Britain, 1987), translation of Adolf Loos article “Vernacular Art” (1914), 110–113, Original in German: “Genug der originalgenies! Wiederholen wir uns unaufhörlich selbst! Ein haus gleiche dem andern! Man kommt dann zwar nicht in die ‘deutsche kunst und decoration’ und wird nicht kunstgewerbeschul-professor, aber man hat seiner zeit, sich, seinem volke und der Menschheit am besten gedient. Und damit seiner heimat!” in Adolf Loos, “Heimatkunst,” *Trotzdem Essays 1900–1930* (Innsbruck: Brenner, 1931), 144.
- 2 Burkhard Rukschcio and Roland Schachel, *Adolf Loos: Leben und Werk*, published by Graphische Sammlung Albertina (Salzburg: Residenz, 1982), 178–179. Rukschcio and Schachel write that the article in the collection of Loos’ writings *Trotzdem* was wrongly dated because the lecture was in 1912. However, we could assume that the lecture was transcribed for the publication in 1914. There is also no indication that Loos contested the dating of the publication by the Brenner publishing house in 1931.
- 3 Arts Council of Great Britain, *The Architecture of Adolf Loos*, 113.
- 4 Ibid.
- 5 Paul Scheerbart, *Glasarchitektur* (Berlin: Sturm, 1914).
- 6 Adolf Loos, “Rules to Buildings in the Mountains,” in *On Architecture*. Edited by Adolf Loos (Riverside, CA: Ariadne Press, 2002), 123.
- 7 Arts Council of Great Britain, *The Architecture of Adolf Loos*, 113.
- 8 Fyodor Dostoyevsky, *The Double*, Translated by George Bird (London: Harvill Press, 1957).
- 9 Ines Weizman, “Architectural Doppelgängers,” in *AA Files*, 65 First Edition. Edited by Thomas Weaver (London: Architectural Association, 2012), 19–24.
- 10 Ines Weizman, “(Interview),” in *Experimental Preservation*. Edited by Thordis Arrhenius (Zürich: Lars Müller Publishers, 2016), 80–85.
- 11 Siegfried Giedion, *Mechanization Takes Command: A Contribution to Anonymous History* (New York: W.W. Norton & Co. (1947) 1969), 484.
- 12 Ibid., 493–494.
- 13 Ibid., 496.
- 14 Ibid., 494.
- 15 Ibid., 484.
- 16 Ines Weizman, “Architectural Doppelgängers,” 19–24.
- 17 Ines Weizman, “The Three Lives of Modern Architecture: Wills, Copyrights and Their Violations,” in *Place and Displacement: Exhibiting Architecture*. Edited by Thordis Arrhenius et al. (Zürich: Lars Müller Publishers, 2014), 183–196.
- 18 Ines Weizman, “Fahrenheit 2400: The Second Life of Luis Barragán,” in *The Proposal*. Edited by Jill Magid (Berlin: Sternberg Press, 2016), 136–148.
- 19 Robert P. Merges and John F. Duffy, *Patent Law and Policy: Cases and Materials*, Contemporary Legal Education Series (Charlottesville, VA: Michie, 1992), 1.
- 20 Ibid.
- 21 Ibid., 2.
- 22 See the most comprehensive study so far on trans-Atlantic differences on the history and practice of copyright. Peter Baldwin, *The Copyright-Wars: Three Centuries of Trans-Atlantic Battle* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2014).
- 23 F. Schwartz, *Der Werkbund: Ware und Zeichen 1900–1914* (Dresden: Verlag der Kunst, 1999), 236.
- 24 Only the Copyright Act of 1976 explicitly included “architects’ plans and drawings”.
- 25 “Given the desirability of affording copyright to architecture, it is surely inevitable that a tribunal composed of experts in matters architectural should be set up to settle such knotty pints as would be raised by the Act,” G.G., “Architectural Copyright,” *Country Life*, October 13, 1910. This reference

- is taken from a lecture presented by Jose Bellido in a workshop we coorganized with Alain Pottage at the LSE, June 6–7, 2013.
- 26 Arts Council of Great Britain, *The Architecture of Adolf Loos*, translation of Adolf Loos article “Architecture” (1910), 104–109.
 - 27 Adolf Loos, “House with One Wall,” in *On Architecture*. Edited by Adolf Loos (Riverside, CA: Arikne Press, 2002), 144–148.
 - 28 Walter Benjamin, “The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction,” in Walter Benjamin, *Essays and Reflections*. Edited and with an introduction by Hannah Arendt (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1968), 217–251.
 - 29 Bernard Edelman, *Ownership of the Image: Elements for a Marxist Theory of Law*. Translated from the French by Elizabeth Kingdom; Introduction by Paul Q. Hirst (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1979), 37.
 - 30 Florian Schneider, “A Matter of Theft: Some Notes on the Art of Stealing Souls,” in *Manifesta 7: The European Biennial of Contemporary Art, 19 July–2 November 2008, Trentino, South Tyrol, Italy, Cinisello Balsamo* (Milano: Silvana, 2008), 200.
 - 31 Mari Lending, “Traveling Portals,” in *Place and Displacement: Exhibiting Architecture*. Edited by Thordis Arrhenius et al. (Zürich: Lars Müller, 2014), 197.
 - 32 Ibid., 199.
 - 33 Henry van de Velde, *Geschichte Meines Lebens* (Munich: Piper, 1962), 328.
 - 34 Ibid., 331.
 - 35 Ibid., 330.
 - 36 The Berlin Act was signed by the fifteen countries: Belgium, Denmark, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, Liberia, Luxembourg, Monaco, Norway, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Tunisia, and the United Kingdom.
 - 37 Jasques Mesnil, “Henry van de Velde et le Théâtre des Champs Elysées,” in *Etudes d’Art Contemporain* (Brussels, Paris: Librairie G. Van Oest – Edition de l’art flamand et hollandais, 1914).
 - 38 The result was so critical that even the editors of *Wachsmuts Monatshefte* who published an article on the new construction in 1925 only presented a side elevation of the building rather than the front elevation, *W.M.B.*, Heft 8, 1925, p. 323.
 - 39 Ibid. Jasques Mesnil, “Henry van de Velde et le Théâtre des Champs Elysées,” 40.
 - 40 Peter Collins, *Concrete: The Vision of a New Architecture by Peter Collins* (Montreal & Kingston, London, Ithaca: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 1959), 192.
 - 41 Ibid.
 - 42 Ines Weizman, “Exception to the Norm: Buildings and Skeletons in the Work of Ernst Neufert,” in *Perspecta 49, Quote* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2016), 136–148.
 - 43 Only when the Nazi seizure of power forced Jewish families to leave Germany as quickly as possible, the Hirsch company could, in a sinister move, revise its business model: According to a capital transfer agreement signed in mid-1933 by the German Economic Ministry with the British Mandate in Palestine, it became for a short time possible to send property to Palestine in the form of goods. For the émigrés, who were forbidden from leaving Germany with currency, this meant that the transportable houses could provide a home ready for them upon their arrival. It also meant that their savings could be safely invested in the material of copper. Today four copperhouses have remained of the original fourteen in Haifa. See more on the history: Friedrich von Borries and Jens-Uwe Fischer, *Heimatcontainer: Deutsche Fertighäuser in Israel*, Originalausgabe (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp Verlag, 2009).
 - 44 Isabella Löhr, *Die Globalisierung Geistiger Eigentumsrechte: Neue Strukturen Internationaler Zusammenarbeit 1886–1952*, 1, Aufl. (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2010), 70.
 - 45 Ibid.
 - 46 Ibid., 73.
 - 47 Miguel Tamen, *Friends of Interpretable Objects*, Revised edition (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2004), 79.
 - 48 Ibid., 79.
 - 49 Ibid., 77.
 - 50 Ibid., 79.

8

SUFFICIENT ORIGINALITY

The legal contours of creativity
in architecture

Sarah M. Hirschman

Trek Leasing, Inc. v. United States

In 2000, a new U.S. Post Office (USPS) opened in Kayenta, Arizona (Figures 8.1 and 8.2). The building, designed under contract with the USPS by APMI Builders, integrated the latest of the national agency's design criteria, as outlined in a handbook that included plans, schedules, and design details required for every consumer post office facility.¹ Everything from the size of the mail organizing shelves to the consumer-facing retail area was prescribed in detail. In keeping with the guideline to incorporate local features into the appearance of individual buildings, the look of the Kayenta Post Office was designed to fit in with nearby buildings.² While working to design the Kayenta Post Office, APMI Builders had access through their client to drawings of and information about another USPS building in nearby Fort Defiance, Arizona, designed by Trek Leasing, Inc. That the final design for the Kayenta Post Office was remarkably similar to that of the earlier Fort Defiance example raised few eyebrows at the time of permitting and construction.³ Two years after the Kayenta Post Office opened, Trek Leasing filed an action alleging architectural copyright infringement by the U.S. government as holder of APMI's contract to design the Kayenta Post Office⁴ (Figures 8.3 and 8.4).

Knowing that the interior layout and composition of spaces for a post office are largely the function of following USPS's Small Standard Building Design (SSBD) guidelines and thus not copyrightable, Trek instead rooted its claim in the Fort Defiance building's overall appearance and "shell."⁵ There was no dispute that the two post offices were designed in the same vernacular style as the buildings around them (popularly known as the Bureau of Indian Affairs [BIA] Pueblo Revival Style), so properly defining the hallmarks of this style and the options it left for displays of creativity and innovation became the focus of the arguments surrounding copyright infringement in this case.

In June 2005, the United States Court of Federal Claims granted a motion for summary judgment, finding that the design of Trek's Fort Defiance Post Office did not display originality sufficient to warrant copyright protection, foreclosing any claims of subsequent infringement. The court found that once the "elements taken from the USPS drawings and the BIA Pueblo Revival architectural style are removed, no reasonable fact finder could conclude that



FIGURE 8.1 Fort Defiance Post Office, constructed by Trek Leasing, 1998. Photograph by Brian Walski, 2016.



FIGURE 8.2 Kayenta Post Office, constructed by APMI, 2000. Photograph by Brian Walski, 2016.



FIGURE 8.3 Windows in the BIA/Pueblo Revival style at the Fort Defiance Post Office. Photograph by Brian Walski.

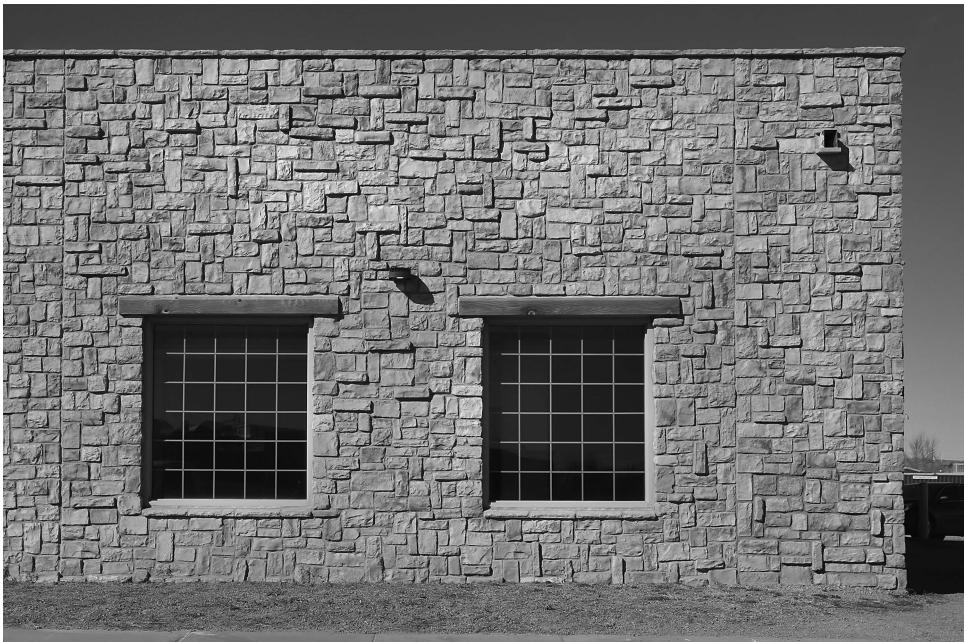


FIGURE 8.4 Windows in the BIA/Pueblo Revival style at the Kayenta Post Office. Photograph by Brian Walski. From the United States Court of Federal Claims' 2005 Motion for Summary Judgment: "It is uncontested that the window sills and lintels on both post offices project slightly from the wall and that the lintels are visible and made of wood. It is also uncontested that the color of the lintels is dark brown on Fort Defiance and a light, natural-colored hue at Kayenta. This color difference is significant because Plaintiff admits that the color of the lintels can 'impart a distinct look to a building.'"

Kayenta is substantially similar to Fort Defiance.”⁶ The need to define a sufficiency of originality most frequently comes up in copyright cases involving compilations or collections of facts, like *Feist Publications, Inc. v. Rural Telephone Service Co., Inc.*, where the copyrightability of a phone book was in question.⁷ Following *Feist*, the Copyright Office defines sufficient originality for a submitted work as “independently created by the author,” and in possession of “at least some minimal degree of creativity,” noting that “even a ‘slight amount’ of creative expression will suffice.”⁸ Trek countered the finding of insufficient originality in the Fort Defiance building with its own reckoning of architectural creativity – an enumeration of decisions, broad and specific, made in the course of design. In response, the court then performed a detailed analysis of the two buildings, producing a linear, causal narrative of the design process in its own, legal language. For each observable feature, the court sought to determine whether the exigencies of budget, recognizable style, or function effectively overrode the architect’s agency, which would render them uncopyrightable.

Trek’s appeal of the summary judgment finding spurred further review and a site visit, where the court compared the plaintiff’s claims with its own impressions (those of a “discerning observer”) in the field.⁹ The court sought out elements in the Fort Defiance structure that surpassed hallmarks of the BIA Pueblo Revival style and requirements of function and finance to stand alone as original and protectable. If found, these remaining components could then have constituted the basis of originality against which the same elements in the Kayenta building would have been compared (Figures 8.5 and 8.6).

In a “Comparison of the Elements” produced by the court, each building’s design was broken out into component parts for careful review. For example: “Upon viewing the works in person, the Court can see a difference in the color of the muntins that has a significant effect on the appearance of the structure.”¹⁰ Additional categories of the court’s detailed analysis included “walls and roof,” “window sills and lintels,” “ceilings and porches,” and “canales,” the rain gutters that protrude beyond parapets. For each of these categories, the judge’s final decision addressed the plaintiff’s assertions of originality in closely observed detail. Discussing the building’s material, he noted, “The use of stone is not protectable because it was dictated by the architectural style. Furthermore, the use of faux stone is not protectable because it was dictated by financial considerations.”¹¹ Similar consideration was given to other observable aspects of the building’s design.

The final area of the court’s analysis was “overall structure,” an umbrella category meant to capture the comprehensive effect of a work of architecture, as distinct from its parts in isolation. Unfortunately for the plaintiff, the court found that there was hardly any room for creativity from the start, and that the overall appearance of the Fort Defiance building was foremost a consequence of its assembled uncopyrightable elements. In his decision, the judge declared:

Plaintiff had little room to change the selection and arrangement of the materials: muntins must be placed in windows; lintels must go over doorways and windows; the capstone must sit atop the parapet; and canales must be situated to drain the roof.¹²

Trek had not shown *sufficient originality* in its Fort Defiance post office design to warrant copyright protection.

The discipline of architecture does not typically recognize (nor is it invested in) a line separating sufficient from insufficient originality. This purely legal threshold identifying when a work of architecture becomes a protectable piece of intellectual property is defined and



FIGURE 8.5 Front door at the Fort Defiance Post Office. Photograph by Brian Walski.



FIGURE 8.6 Front door at the Kayenta Post Office. Photograph by Brian Walski. From the United States Court of Federal Claims' 2005 Motion for Summary Judgment: "The outdoor latilla ceilings, although the same at both post offices, have been recognized, even by Plaintiff, as being common to the BIA Pueblo Revival Style, even though they are not standard to the style."

enforced from outside. Further, the legal framework that informs this important distinction is linked to the time and particular politics that brought it about. Until 1990, when the Architectural Works Copyright Protection Act (AWCPA) was passed, there was no such thing as copyright for architecture in the U.S., and no legal notion of impermissible copying of architecture beyond direct document reproduction. When in 1988, after nearly one hundred years of stalling, the U.S. finally joined the Berne Convention, the most comprehensive copyright treaty in the world, its mandate to extend copyright protection to architecture was a footnote, a legal technicality that legislators couldn't quite describe or define. The enactment of the AWCPA finalized U.S. compliance with Berne and imprinted into law the positions and biases of those involved in the new law's development. Because architectural creativity had never been legally defined before, and because it needed to swiftly be protected by law, the testimonies of Michael Graves, the Frank Lloyd Wright Foundation, and the American Institute of Architects (AIA), as well as the research work of Copyright Office staff member Bill Patry and Columbia Law Professor Jane C. Ginsburg had more influence than might ordinarily be expected. Their input immediately impacted the wording of a law that explicitly regulates the practice of architecture and remains unchanged today. This investigation focuses on the 1990 AWCPA hearing as a pivotal moment in the recent history of architecture. It highlights how the values of one era (or of one era's thinkers) can become embedded permanently in a law. While suits like *Trek* go a long way toward refining and developing case law for litigating architectural originality, they still only build on the AWCPA's base. The final roadmap for locating architectural originality is forever imprinted with the values expressed in the 1990 hearing and baked into the law.

The Berne Convention Implementation Act of 1988

Throughout the twentieth century, U.S. legislators feared that Berne adherence would undermine the scrappy common law logic of U.S. copyright protections set in place to encourage and reward innovation. Many argued that Berne adherence would be tantamount to accepting the European copyright philosophy of *moral rights*, which reward producers of original content with the right to control it.¹³ The fear was that the moral rights attitude embedded in Berne would shift the nature of American incentives away from directly marketable, useful items. The U.S. sent delegations of observers to Berne Convention conferences from the start in the 1880s, but never actually joined.

The benefits of staying out of the Berne Union outweighed the inconveniences so long as the U.S. wasn't producing works sought out abroad. This changed as the U.S. became a significant culture producer, reproduction technology advanced, and entertainment product became the country's most important export.¹⁴ Throughout the twentieth century, American publishers, increasingly interested in protecting their own works, began to affect a so-called back-door entry into Berne coverage, publishing American books in Berne member countries like Canada as a way to enjoy broad international protection.¹⁵ That Americans were receiving the benefits of Berne without taking on its responsibilities began to create serious diplomacy issues for foreign officers in the early 1980s, and they pushed for change. When President Reagan signed the Berne Convention Implementation Act of 1988, the earlier rhetoric against moral rights faded and the issue was repackaged as a triumph against precisely the same kind of outlaw behavior the U.S. had until recently practiced: "Reagan said the law

would provide U.S. artists protection from ‘international pirates who make their living by stealing and then selling the creative accomplishments of others’”¹⁶ (Figure 8.7).

From the first Berne Convention draft, the mandate for architectural copyright was a major sticking point for U.S. lawmakers. The arguments against copyrighted architecture in 1909, when the first major revision and consolidation of existing copyright acts took place – that protection wasn’t necessary for creating an incentive to produce work, that architecture’s functionality precluded any aesthetic artfulness in its overall form, and that artistic elements separable out from any useful parts already could be covered by protections for artworks – were rehashed throughout the twentieth century, stopping abruptly in the 1980s, when joining Berne became inevitable.¹⁷ On the sixth and final day of Berne Implementation hearings, copyright scholar and Stanford law professor Paul Goldstein testified that existing copyright law covering sculptural works separated out from useful articles (like buildings) and architectural plans as graphic works might suffice for minimal Berne compliance.¹⁸ Professor Goldstein was joined by former Register of Copyrights Barbara Ringer in his hesitance to declare a definitive need for new architecture legislation.¹⁹ They both urged further study. In order to not derail Berne accession after two years of hearings, all mentions of built works of architecture were removed from the bill as marked up and passed. And because the Berne Convention was determinedly not self-executing, separate legislation for any increase in protection for architecture, or at least a thorough study of the matter, was in order. This spurred the 1990 House Subcommittee hearings on the AWCBA, an investigation into the state of architecture practice, value, and protection.

The course charted from Berne feasibility study to final ratification of the AWCBA in 1990 illuminated a range of ideas and assumptions about architecture that hadn’t previously been explored or addressed publicly. The process of teasing apart, amending, and clarifying proposed legal definitions for “architectural works” exposed what peculiar strains of architectural ideas had rooted themselves in lawmakers’ imaginations. In asking questions about where the protected work should reside, lawmakers opened up a range of topics in architectural thinking that are rare in public discourse. What is it exactly that architects sell? Buildings? Drawings? Ideas? Where does originality reside in all of that, and what is the role of constraining parameters like building codes, zoning, even client wishes and budget? What about a building that was constructed differently from how it was intended, or what if it was altered? What about a building that is never built, or one built from incomplete plans? In providing answers, everyone who testified or commented on the AWCBA’s development had an effect on the language that legally binds practice today.

The Architectural Works Copyright Protection Act of 1990

Prior to 1990, architects who believed their ideas had been stolen needed to show that infringers had created direct mechanical copies of their architectural drawings – copyright covered construction documents in the same way it covered maps or charts as graphic works. There was very little an architect could do if she simply suspected copying or indeed if a building was built from plans that hadn’t actually been copied.²⁰ Copyright did not extend to the building depicted in plans, or made from them. When methods of duplication like tracing or mimeograph were time-consuming and costly and physical drawings were unique instruments of service, this blanket coverage for graphic works effectively prevented unauthorized construction. But as technology developed and methods of printing, duplicating,



FIGURE 8.7 October 31, 1988, Beverly Hilton Hotel, Los Angeles, CA. President Ronald Reagan, just after signing the Berne Convention Implementation Act of 1998, with Chuck Norris, Charlton Heston, Robert Stack, Merv Griffin, and Arnold Schwarzenegger, among others. Courtesy of the Ronald Reagan Library.

and transferring files became more accessible, protection of architectural drawings *as drawings* came to have almost no effect on built works of architecture.

The Hearing on the Architectural Works Copyright Protection Act took place on March 14, 1990, before the House Subcommittee on Courts, Intellectual Property, and the Administration of Justice, headed by Representative Robert Kastenmeier (D-WI). To incite interest in and support for the Act, Kastenmeier peppered his summarizing introduction of it on the House floor with references to recognizable buildings:

Mr. Speaker, this is important legislation because of the central role works of architecture play in our daily lives, not only as forms of shelter and as investments, but also as works of art....

The sheer number of visitors to the Capitol speaks eloquently to the success of that symbol....

Paris is almost synonymous with Notre Dame, the Eiffel Tower, and for lovers of high-technology architecture, the Pompidou Centre. Sometimes cities come to be identified principally through their landmarks. Who can think of Sydney, Australia, without envisaging Jorn Utzon's beautiful Sydney Opera House, a work whose soaring features were transplanted and adapted by Eero Saarinen in the TWA Terminal at JFK Airport, and again, closer to home, at Dulles Airport.

The surrealistic architecture of Antonio Gaudi in Spain clearly reveals architecture's poetic nature, a point made by renowned critic Ada Louise Huxtable, who wrote

that architects can make ‘poetry out of visual devices, as a writer uses literary or aural devices. As words become symbols, so do objects; the architectural world is an endless source of symbols with unique ramifications in time and space.’

Mr. Speaker, the point of this all too brief review of the creative nature of architecture is to give some indication of the subject matter of this legislation. My bill, in keeping with the Berne Convention, is intended to cover an architect’s artistic expression. It does not encompass methods of construction, or purely functional elements comprised of standard features, such as plain doorways, arches, windows, or roofs, nor to the Levittowns of the country.²¹

As iconic touchstones, the many buildings Kastenmeier cited helped build his case for architectural copyright as a kind of analogue to protections for fine arts. Because these buildings were so recognizable and famous, it followed that they should deserve special protection.

If the Berne Implementation hearings touched only lightly on architecture, the AWCPA hearing was focused on describing the precise nature and needs of the profession in 1990. To that end, the subcommittee called in a cast of experts to testify: Michael Graves was asked to speak about the status of copying and influence in architecture; Richard Carney, the president of the Frank Lloyd Wright Foundation, spoke about his group’s belief in the need to extend architectural copyright to as yet unbuilt buildings; and the AIA, represented by David Daileda, expressed the professional association’s reticence in establishing too-strong copyright protections for fear that they would damage architect/client relations.

In the end, the AWCPA was a short piece of legislation, consistent with Congress’s goal to affect only the minimum changes required to achieve Berne compliance. It amended the Copyright Act to include “architectural works” as a covered subject matter and it defined the “architectural work” as “the design of a building as embodied in any tangible medium of expression, including a building, architectural plans, or drawings. The work includes the overall form as well as the arrangement and composition of space and elements in the design, but does not include individual standard features.”²² George H.W. Bush signed the Architectural Works Copyright Protection Act of 1990 as Public Law 101–650 on December 1, 1990.²³

The hearing

Representative Kastenmeier actually brought two bills before the House. The first, H.R. 3990, proposed broad but thin protection, recognizing a new copyright category for “architectural works,” and was in the same spirit as what was eventually ratified.²⁴ The second, H.R. 3991, proposed to reserve copyright protection for a very narrowly defined subset of “exceptional” works, avoiding the creation of a new subject matter for architecture entirely by creating a caveat within the “useful article” definition that would read:

A “useful article” is an article having an intrinsic utilitarian function that is not merely to portray the appearance of the article or to convey information, *except that one-of-a-kind buildings and other three-dimensional structures that possess a unique artistic character are not useful articles.*²⁵

When an item has a function, U.S. copyright logic holds that that function should be freely available. Designs for items like scissors, lamps, or teapots can only be protected insofar as they have decorative or unusual elements separate from their operations. Legislators stumbled over the usefulness question because architecture does perform a function. By confronting this recurring logical knot in one proposed piece of legislation, and by providing a tidier and more straightforward formulation for protecting architecture in another, Kastenmeier hedged his fellow subcommittee members toward a simple and broad act.

Kastenmeier was supported in his preparation of the two proposals by the U.S. Copyright Office, then headed by Ralph Oman. Following the ambivalence shown and general lack of information about architectural copyright protection at the 1988 Berne adherence hearings, Kastenmeier instructed the Copyright Office to prepare a report to inform his committee.²⁶ Bill Patry, a young lawyer in the Copyright Office, took on the project, producing a 343-page review (“The Report on Works of Architecture”) covering everything from historical architectural thought to contemporary perspectives on influence and the use of precedents. Driven by a great personal interest in the topic, Patry collected and summarized his findings to help legislators understand the business and art of architecture.²⁷ Patry’s admiration for certain architects of the time is clear in the report, which contains frequent editorial asides.²⁸ More than just a résumé of legal precedents and historic legislation, this comprehensive document included sections on how the architecture profession operated as well as examples of important architecture worth protecting.

Patry also coordinated the public hearing on the proposed law, extending invitations to interested parties and architects he admired about a month before the hearing. Richard Carney of the Frank Lloyd Wright Foundation shared his group’s hope (eventually realized) that unbuilt designs would be considered works of architecture. Representing AIA, David Daileda articulated the organization’s long-held concerns about attribution, citing the effectiveness of contracts for policing ownership of documents and a fear of unintentional infringement in the course of ordinary practice. Daileda also added the interesting (and unusual among potential copyright holders) request that the new law not include the right to prevent alterations to a work, for fear of complicating the architect/client relationship (Figure 8.8).

When AIA had first been called upon to respond to the question of architectural copyright during hearings on Berne Convention accession, the professional organization was wary. Quotation, influence, and repetition are hallmarks of the discipline, and the AIA was notably unconvinced that copyright protection would help rather than hinder the creative process. In response to preliminary Senate queries about Berne adherence, AIA’s counsel Dale Ellickson provided an analysis of the subtle ways copying was essential to progress:

The present system permits architects to experiment by incorporating new stylistic ideas developed by others, but expressed in each architect’s own and different way into their drawings. The end result is often a structure which is distinctly different but similar to this predecessor. It is also worth nothing [sic] that the proposed system could have a significant negative impact on the widely lauded concepts of stylistically homogenous neighborhoods and regional architecture, since it would encourage the work of individual architects, rather than geographic areas, to become similar.²⁹

In this 1986 exploration of the topic, architectural copyright was feared for potentially limiting architects' free use of one another's ideas and inspirations, and local consistency in the form of stylistic homogeneity was a respectable goal.

A professor of copyright law at Columbia Law School, Jane C. Ginsburg assigned the text of H.R. 3990 to her copyright law class for analysis in the months leading up to the hearing. With her students, Ginsburg developed fact patterns to test the limits of proposed architectural copyright language. She found inconsistencies in the way protectable works were to be conceptualized for architecture versus other types of works, and criticized the proposed bill's narrow focus on specific media. Ginsburg made the important point that "in copyright law generally, the 'work' exists independently of the form of its fixation: A song is a copyrightable musical composition whether it is fixed in sheet music or on a sound recording."³⁰ Following her logic, an architectural work would be copyrightable whether fixed in building, drawings, or model (a distinction that would invariably please the Frank Lloyd Wright Foundation). Ginsburg shared her findings with Kastenmeier in a letter that was then entered into the hearing record and impacted the terms used in the final legislation.

The implications of Ginsburg's proposal were not immediately obvious because her solution was so simple. Her notion of architectural works residing somewhere outside of their physical manifestation provided, for the first time, a logic to encompass the whole range of what architects produce – drawings, models, or buildings, it's all architecture. Like a song existing equally in a recording or in notation, the building is as much an embodiment of the

10/AIA MEMO APRIL 1990

GOVERNMENT AFFAIRS

AIA to Congress: Protect architectural designs



Advising Congress of the importance of proposed copyright protection laws for architects, COF-PAES Chairman David A. Daileda, AIA, is flanked by AIA counsel David Perdue (left) and federal liaison Albert Eisenberg. (Christopher Cortright)

FIGURE 8.8 American Institute of Architects (AIA) representatives testified before the House Subcommittee, sharing their concerns about the Architectural Works Copyright Protection Act as proposed. Reproduced with permission of the American Institute of Architects.

design of an “architectural work” as a rendering or an elevation may be. Ginsburg’s take also made protection much simpler – if a design could be embodied equally in a building or in plans, then infringement could, too. No longer would proof of direct physical or mechanical copying be required to constitute a violation. With overall design being protected rather than a particular instance of it, architectural drawings would be recognized as much more than works on paper.

The overlap of protection for drawings as “Pictorial, Graphic, or Sculptural” works with protection for drawings as embodiments of architectural works, Ginsburg suggested, would not only not be problematic, it might actually be productive. The AIA and the Frank Lloyd Wright Foundation seized on Ginsburg’s formulation because it created a relationship between the two- and three-dimensional aspects of architecture that hadn’t been previously connected. For architects, Ginsburg’s proposal carried an interesting conceptual weight because it recognized design outside of the artifact, placing value in the in between nature of much architectural practice. By expanding the notion of design beyond drawings or buildings and pointing out that this strategy is common across other copyrighted subject matter, Ginsburg deftly steered the subcommittee towards Berne-compliant (and practically meaningful) language that departed from what Kastenmeier had originally drafted.

With the legal and industry perspectives well represented by motivated outside participants, the Copyright Office sought architects who could broadly elaborate on the nature of design. Patry pursued a number of expert witness leads, inviting Robert Venturi, Michael Graves, and Ada Louise Huxtable to speak before the subcommittee, but only Graves and his team were willing to participate on such short notice.³¹ Patry was well-versed in Graves’s rhetoric, and discerned a productive alliance between some of his writings and potentially useful (Berne-compliance-oriented) legal maneuvers for wording the law. That Graves ended up presenting the hearing’s only account of design authorship is noteworthy precisely because much of his well-published writing and thinking centered on reconfiguring the notion of authorship to begin with. Had Berne compliance spurred new coverage for architecture at any other time, or had Venturi or Huxtable been available to testify, Congress might have come away with a very different take on the place of originality, allusion, precedent, and reference (Figure 8.9).

Graves’s work clearly distinguished him from the other architects at the hearing, who were talking more about construction budgets and contracts than shadow play and inspiration. That Graves’s “buildings were of a painterly, sculptural nature. . . . colorful, fanciful . . . whimsical,” was of particular interest to Patry, who felt that “they were very easy to see as architecture as an artistic expression.”³² In the context of a hearing where the conceptual separability of functional from decorative form was to be debated, painterliness provided a productive complication of the easy form/function binary. More stolid, less expressive examples might not have hit the important point that Patry wanted to make sure Representatives heard – that architecture should be recognized as an entirely separate form of artistic product. If the objective was to show buildings as recognizably artistic expressions that were also thoroughly architectural, the examples Patry prompted Graves to show in his slide lecture – the Portland Building, the Humana Building, the Swan and the Dolphin Hotels – were tailor-made for the occasion.³³ Indeed, other work might not have aligned so directly with the hearing’s mandate to show how architecture could not be considered just another “useful article.”

Graves was the AWCPA hearing headliner of sorts, testifying first and giving a slide lecture outlining his take on how architectural creativity should be supported and encouraged. Before launching into his presentation, he offered some perspectives on the two proposed bills. Like AIA, Graves's concern with H.R. 3990 as originally drafted was that it didn't limit the rights granted with architectural copyright *enough*; he felt that in many cases contracts already adequately governed issues of intellectual property, and that further limitations encompassed within the copyright law would complicate the architect/client relationship. His opinions on H.R. 3990 focused on the toll the law would have on the profession if it weren't to permit full rights of alteration and destruction for building owners, regardless of copyright. If the limitations on copyright did not include granting owners these rights, he ventured, fearing a loss of control in their property, owners would simply require an assignment of copyright as a matter of contract, rendering the newly won rights moot.

For the hearing, Patry had asked Graves's office to prepare remarks related to ideas from his writings and lectures that seemed particularly well-suited to the hearing topic. "A Case for Figurative Architecture," an influential essay published with Graves's first monograph, contained the kernel of his theory of meaning in architecture as largely rooted in metaphor and reference to an earlier, almost primal, knowledge. In it, Graves wrote:

Understanding the building involves both association with natural phenomena (for example, the ground is like the floor), and anthropomorphic allusions (for example, a column is like a man). These two attitudes within the symbolic nature of building were probably originally in part ways of justifying the elements of architecture in a pre-scientific society. However, even today, the same metaphors are required for access to our own myths and rituals within the building narrative.³⁴

This type of argument would productively complicate the rigid original/copy distinction that the subcommittee would otherwise have encountered listening to industry concerns from groups like AIA. Rather than lauding uniqueness, Graves endorsed concepts like *myth* and *ritual* that valued historical allusion over recognizable icons. Just as Representative Kastenmeier presented H.R. 3991, the bill that would have protected only "one-of-a-kind buildings" with "unique artistic character," for the purpose of promoting its opposite, the inclusive and broad H.R. 3990, Graves's argument shifted focus from recognizable icons to historical precedent and urban fabric.

Per Patry's suggestion, Graves's testimony introduced new terms to complicate the simple functional/non-functional binary that formed lawmakers' understanding of traditional protectability. Graves talked about the *symbolic* function of architecture, something that bridged aesthetics and performance, and used this as justification for treating architecture as an entirely new legal category. As described in the legislature's summary of the hearing:

Mr. Graves explained his design efforts by describing two types of architectural language, "internal" and "poetic." Internal language is "intrinsic to building in its most basic form – determined by pragmatic, constructional, and technical requirements." Poetic language is "responsive to issues external to the building, and incorporates the three-dimensional expression of the myths and rituals of society." The intent of the legislation is to protect only what Mr. Graves calls "poetic language."³⁵

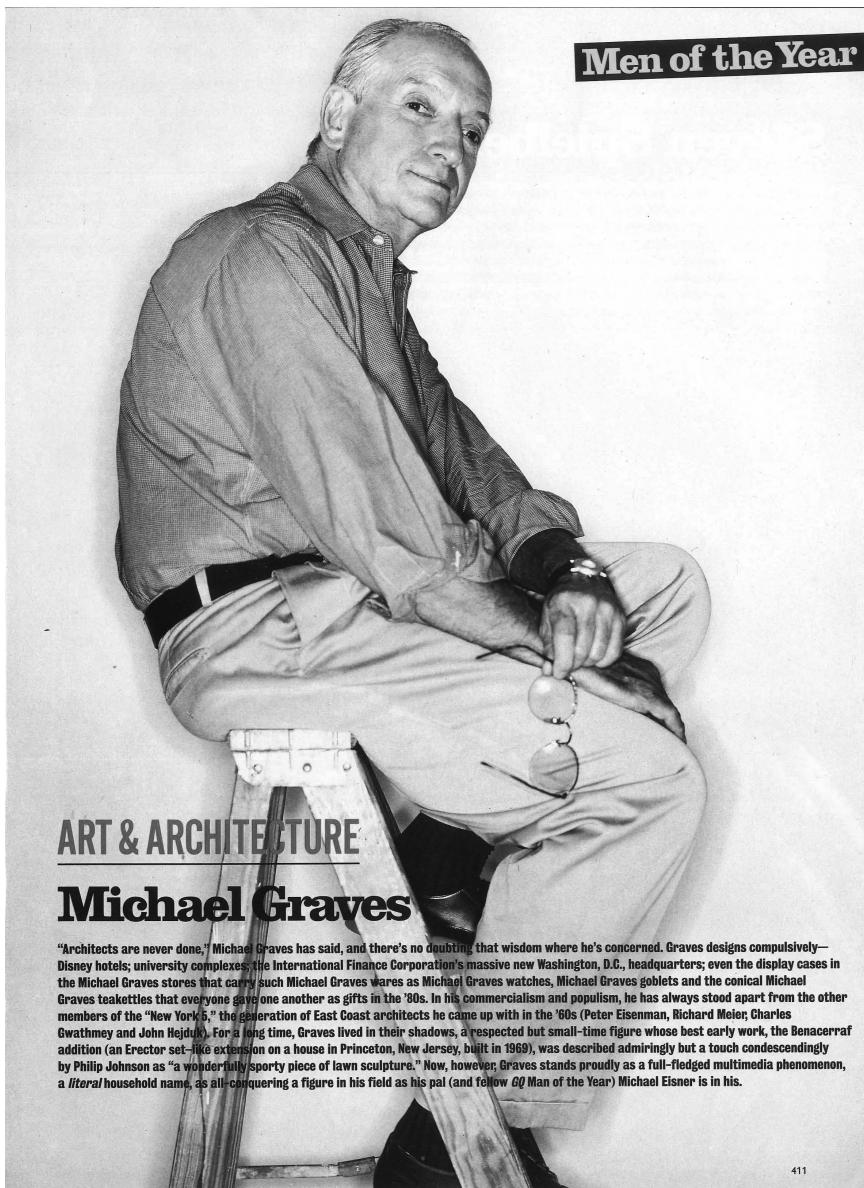


FIGURE 8.9 In 1997, Michael Graves, along with David Duchovny, Tom Cruise, Wolfgang Puck, and Michael Eisner, was chosen to be one of GQ's "Men of the Year." His popular reach far surpassed that of his contemporaries in architecture. Courtesy of David Kamp.

Usefully Congress stopped short of describing exactly how that “poetic language” could be expressed.

Also significant was a distinction Graves drew to confound the simple notion of functional versus artistic or expressive elements present in H.R. 3991. He suggested that there was a cultural function to certain aspects of what lawmakers were calling “artistic expression” that extended beyond the individual architect to signify broader symbolic issues like shelter, security, and permanence. Architecture, as a public art, served a more complex web of needs and functions than simply staying upright and providing shelter. Graves used slides to illustrate the principles of the International Style take on function and form, arguing that the movement’s reliance on mechanistic inspiration voided a cultural history of symbolism and meaning-making in architecture. As an antidote, he showed examples of his own firm’s work, reading the buildings as sensitive and responsive in opposition to the coldness and anonymity of the preceding examples. This independence from modernism and return toward something supposedly innate is an important part of Graves’s argument, because he firmly opposed H.R. 3991’s separating out of the individualistic (or spectacular, or “object building”) from the fabric that he contended made the city livable. In this formulation, Congress’s simplistic notion of function was identified as *pragmatic* function, with the culturally invested new term of *symbolic function* something else entirely³⁶ (Figure 8.10).

Part of why Graves’s presentation at the AWCPA hearing was so effective in persuading Representatives to consider architecture in another light was that it was so cloaked in the markers of education. Though he disclaimed his testimony as the opinions of a single architect, Graves fully encouraged an authoritative reading of his ideas by presenting them in lecture format. “I would like to take you back to school a moment,” Graves told the subcommittee after bringing the lights down for a slideshow, “because there are some issues that I will try to get across to you that are particular to the legislation and the wording and meaning that we as architects will use in the future.”³⁷ Graves provided lawmakers with a new vocabulary to describe the conditions they could encourage with their copyright law, promoting context, history, and a particular angle on the symbolic. He presented twenty-two pairs of slides, building up a case against the International Style binary of function and form in favor of his own multiplicity of terms and motivations. Graves argued for a return to a cultural history of symbolism and meaning-making in architecture that embraced gray area rather than focusing on specific inspirations. Graves’s version of architectural process, the one Representatives could promote with a properly worded new law, could aim at regaining this lost history.

Setting up a rhythm with his first pair of slides, an 1814 painting by G.F. Kersting on the left and a photograph of the interior of Le Corbusier’s Villa Savoye on the right, Graves drew his viewers’ attentions to appealing qualities in older examples, drawing out and qualifying what he identified as natural tropes that weren’t present in the modernist ones. He noted the “capacity to tell stories” in the Kersting, while Le Corbusier’s composition inverted “the language of not just classicism but humanism as we know it today.”³⁸ The stakes were high, then – lovingly quoted historical forms would support social narratives, while more recent examples were dangerously abstract and anti-humanist (Figures 8.11–8.15).

In his second slide pair, Graves showed the monumental door on Thomas Jefferson’s Pavilion No. 9 at the University of Virginia (UVA) compared with a sliding glass door at Newark Airport. In a bid to show how persuasive good architecture could be, and how meaning could be signaled without recourse to accessories, Graves remarked upon the performance of the UVA door as *door*. Of Newark Airport’s dematerialized automatic door, he noted with

derision that “idiot flowers” had to be affixed to the clear glass to prevent people from walking into it, so unfamiliar (and thus unsuccessful) an architecture it was. The confusion that leads people to walk into doors was presented as a negative symptom of the Modern zeal for the new and disdain for users. Throughout his slide lecture, Graves indicted recent architectural thought for similar crimes of hubris:

there was an interest, because of technology, that we could do things that we hadn't been able to do before; that we could change the code, change that that [sic.] the society and the culture [sic.] had been given for the last 4,000 or 5,000 years, and invert that code into a new private abstract code.³⁹

Instead, he offered a plea for the alternative.

Following seven pairings of early nineteenth-century and mid-twentieth-century examples, Graves presented pairs of images of his own work to illustrate the principles of design and culture worth protecting through copyright: “I'd like to show you very quickly buildings that are of an entirely different character.”⁴⁰ Because the legislation under review was going to define architectural intellectual property, everything in Graves's slideshow was a comparison to and citation of great historical works. His entire argument for recognizing symbolic, in addition to pragmatic, function in architecture was about promoting the continuity of a culture that stretched back to ancient times but had

Slide Pairings Presented by Michael Graves at AWCPA Hearing, March 14, 1990		
	Left	Right
1.	G.F. Kersting. “Girl Embroidering” 1814	Le Corbusier, Villa Savoye. Poissy, 1925, living room
2.	Thomas Jefferson. University of Virginia, Charlottesville. Pavilion IX door	Newark Airport door. Newark, New Jersey
3.	City Hall. Portland, Oregon	Ladovski. “Temple for the People”
4.	Richard Bradley, Architectural Conservatory	Piano and Rogers. Centre Pompidou, Place Beaubourg, Paris
5.	Belsize Park Road, London, entry door, c. 1810	Belsize Park Road, London, entry door. c. 1955
6.	Phoenix Municipal Center. Phoenix, Arizona, City Hall façade study	Edward Durrell Stone, Palo Alto City Hall
7.	Crown American Corporate Office Building. Johnstown, Pennsylvania. ¾ view	Acock Schlegel, Architects, Spectrum
8.	Walt Disney World Dolphin Hotel and Walt Disney World Swan Hotel. Lake Buena Vista, Florida, site model	Bernini, dolphin fountain
9.	Swan Hotel. View from crescent lake	Gondola Chair. French. Early 19 th c. Jacob Desmalter
10.	Dolphin Hotel, dolphin fountain court	Villa Lante. Rome, fountain
11.	Swan Hotel, restaurant lobby	Swan Hotel, lobby foyer
12.	Swan Hotel, view at prefunction lobby	Swan Hotel, “Garden Grove Café”
13.	vernacular housing, Lake Como	vernacular, Brussels
14.	historic view of Louisville street	The Humana Building, Louisville, Kentucky, overhead view of model
15.	falls of the Ohio River	Humana, perspective of fountain and entrance
16.	Humana, view of entrance	Humana, view of loggia
17.	Humana, detail of front façade	modern facades (advertisement)
18.	Humana, ¾ view from Main Street	19 th c. water tower promenade
19.	Humana, ¾ view of terrace	Humana, view of terrace
20.	Hugh Stubbins, Federal Reserve Bank of Boston, Boston, Massachusetts	Humana, view from Main Street
21.	Marcel Breuer, Whitney Museum of American Art. New York, New York, existing view	Whitney addition. View of 1988 scheme model
22.	The Portland Building. Portland, Oregon, view from 4 th Avenue	The Portland Building in context

FIGURE 8.10 Tables of slide pairings presented by Michael Graves at the Architectural Works Copyright Protection Act (AWCPA) hearing, March 14, 1990.

lately been subsumed by technological concerns. The “myths and rituals” of society he hoped to access through careful arrangement of familiar historical forms like the “door, the window, and the wall” would be primal, recognizable, and inherently meaningful.⁴¹

Leading with a comparison of his Dolphin Hotel for Disney with a Bernini fountain in the Piazza Barberini in Rome, Graves gave both a stirring argument for direct symbolic quotation and a strange testimony for the planned endurance of the Disney Corporation’s



FIGURE 8.11 Slides from Michael Graves’ lecture on architects’ creative process and ideas, presented before the Congressional Subcommittee. Courtesy of the U.S. Government Printing Office/Public Domain.

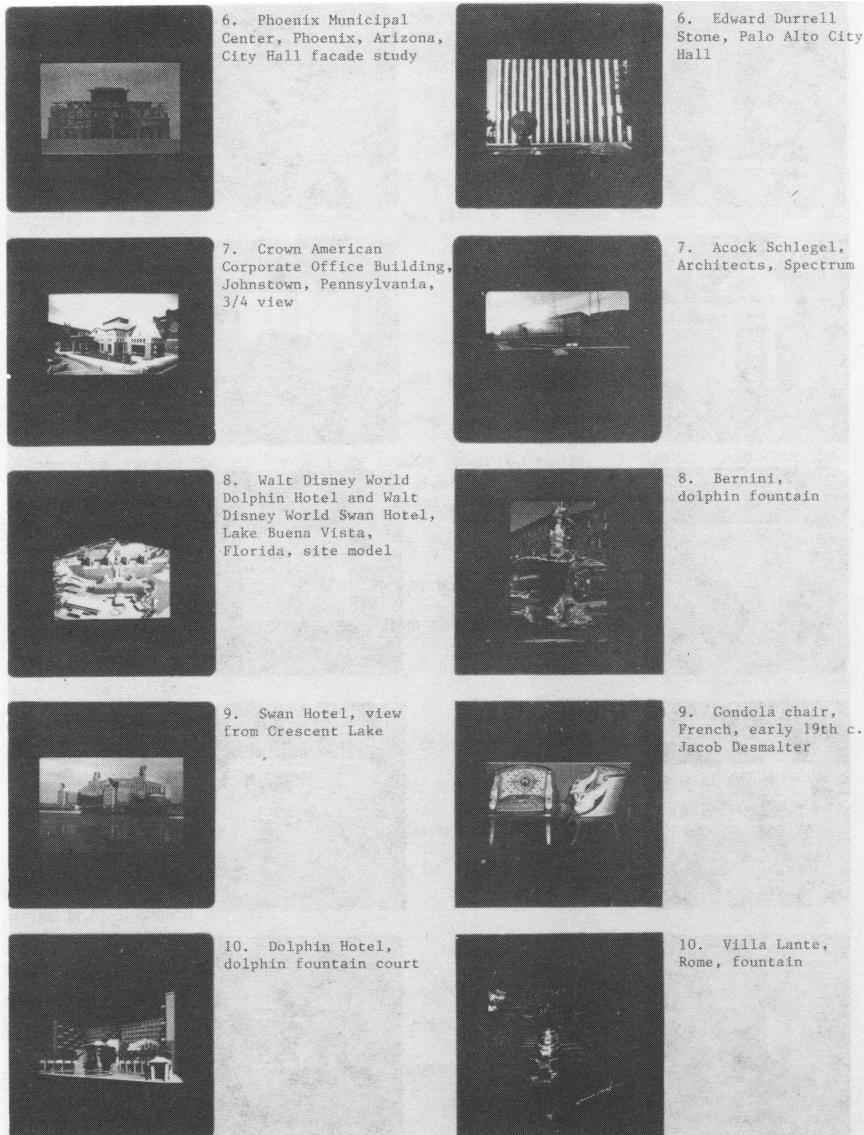


FIGURE 8.12 Slides from Michael Graves' lecture presented before the Congressional Subcommittee. Courtesy of the U.S. Government Printing Office/Public Domain.

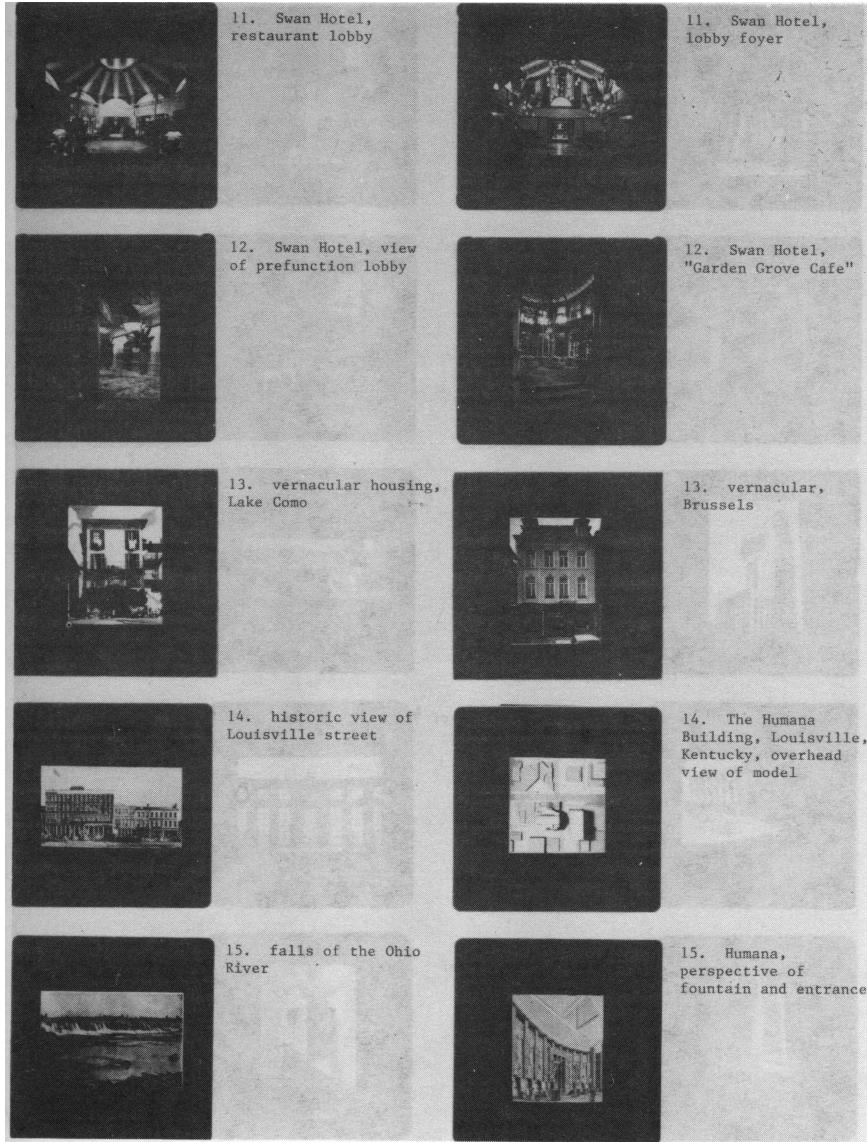


FIGURE 8.13 Slides from Michael Graves' lecture presented before the Congressional Subcommittee. Courtesy of the U.S. Government Printing Office/Public Domain.



FIGURE 8.14 Slides from Michael Graves' lecture presented before the Congressional Subcommittee. Courtesy of the U.S. Government Printing Office/Public Domain.

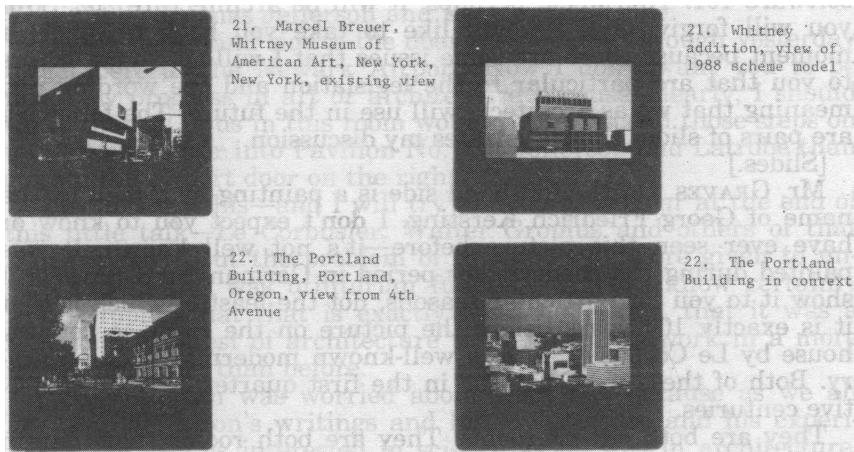


FIGURE 8.15 Slides from Michael Graves' lecture presented before the Congressional Subcommittee. Courtesy of the U.S. Government Printing Office/Public Domain.

dreams in Orlando.⁴² That his historic examples depicted robust public or urban architecture and not themed resorts is telling. The Dolphin and the Swan were presented as examples of the type of character that Graves believed distinguished between a “good building and a bad building,” but they were also vacation destinations within a fantastical complex.⁴³ The allusions to Bernini, Percier, and Fontaine would enhance the richness and the legibility of the final composition.

The rest of Graves’s slides were shown in a similar vein – one of his own works paired with an important architectural precedent or natural phenomenon. Short on the heels of his thirteenth pairing – two images of “vernacular housing” in Lake Como and Brussels – Graves presented his Humana Building in Louisville, Kentucky, working in images of the nearby Ohio River for further context. He closed with two images of the Portland Building, pointing out each of its neighboring buildings as abstract and cold, aggressively rejecting “an architecture that might represent the front door to a city, the front door to government, the view to the Willamette River – all the things that are near and dear to us.”⁴⁴

Graves’s formulation, promoting architecture as part of a larger urbanistic and historical system, was actually quite radical in the context of previous congressional discussions about providing protection for architecture. Throughout the Berne implementation hearings and preparations for the AWCPA hearings, the imperative for protection focused on famous and recognizable buildings. Graves flipped that around to argue that the protection-worthy value in architecture was a city’s fabric, precisely the opposite of the icon or landmark. Graves was convincing because his formulation tied the cultural and social conditions of even the most ordinary neighborhoods to historic models of urban fabric in places like Florence. His shift of perspective and acknowledgment of the ordinary as important may in fact be to thank for the broadened and inclusive definition of architectural works that was ultimately ratified. As a sort of aside acknowledgment of the Guggenheim and Sydney Opera House examples that had previously served as inspirations, Graves noted that anything of great singular significance would achieve landmark status, protecting it much more thoroughly than copyright ever could.

In his testimony, Michael Graves countered the hearing's march of famous twentieth-century buildings by introducing the historic cities where he preferred to lodge value, where he felt architecture's social impact could truly be lodged. Knowing that the nod of copyright would grant legitimacy to and create incentives for architecture that falls under a particular definition, Graves questioned how many recognizable buildings one might want to encourage in a city. The distance between the examples lawmakers first came up with to support architectural copyright (the Guggenheim and the Pompidou Centre) and the ones that Graves advocated (Florence and Washington, DC) showed how critically expert witnesses could affect the development of meaningful legislation. Where initially Kastenmeier was holding up Gaudi's and Utzon's work in contrast to "the Levittowns of the country," with Graves's help, a somewhat more complicated reading of the field emerged.⁴⁵ Leave the Guggenheim and other "object" buildings that you might see at a World's Fair to be protected by landmark boards, Graves urged; the "common fabric of the city" is what promotes the "continuity of culture."⁴⁶

Levittowns and tract developments brought up an important issue in the regulation of copying in architecture because they challenged the idea of the original in their scripted repetition. It is exactly in planned developments where the repetition or syndication of architecture most starts to resemble the economies of reproduction that govern commonly copyrightable products like books and records. Kastenmeier's reference in his introduction aligned these developments with "purely functional elements comprised of standard features, such as plain doorways, arches, windows, or roofs," suggesting that the Levittown's quotidian appearance and repetition effaced the fact of its having been designed at all.⁴⁷ But the Levittown wasn't so much debased as unrecognized as architecture, and the important work of the hearing was to understand that the right to control the production of copies of architecture stood separate from the way a culture valued a neighborhood of copies.

Insufficient originality as fair use

In a legal landscape where a Levittown, an iconic building, and an historic city are all vying for legitimacy, there is nothing clear about where the line delimiting originality sufficient to warrant copyright protection could or should be drawn. In the end, thanks to Patry, Graves, and Ginsburg, and despite Kastenmeier's initial statement to the contrary, Levittowns, planned developments, and tract housing were all covered by a broad and inclusive copyright law that placed value as much on the social aspects of architecture as on the aesthetic.⁴⁸ Just as Patry predicted, protection for a conceptually driven, expressive Graves building is easy to imagine. Less clear is where the line of protection should be drawn when elements of a building are repeated by design.

In the twenty seven years since enactment of the AWCPA, the vast majority of architectural copyright lawsuits have involved tract or model home developments, simply because they are designed for repetition. Architectural copyright is now painted as a tool to protect the hardworking architect from copycats or rogue clients cutting corners, but it's important to remember that AIA initially objected to copyright for architecture for fear that practicing architects might find themselves unintentionally violating the law in the normal course of business. And, just as Michael Graves later emphasized, AIA felt that some degree of repetition and familiarity among buildings was to be desired rather than combatted. The flip side of protectability, though, is freedom.

As cases like *Trek Leasing* are decided, and the list of buildings like the Fort Defiance Post Office found insufficiently original for copyright protection grows, the U.S. legal system is catching up with the discipline. In light of AIA's initial objections to restrictions on copying, it seems that the more important copyright concept to come out of determining *sufficient originality* is actually its inverse, being clear about what forms, tropes, styles, and examples are up for grabs. Rather than an indictment of an individual architect for a lack of vision or inspiration, perhaps a legal finding of originality insufficient to warrant copyright protection instead should herald another addition to the pantheon of architectural fair use, an architecture so embedded in context, history, and outside factors that it *can't* stand on its own. Perhaps the strength of the bar set for sufficient originality is in how much lies below, and perhaps this depth can be plumbed with freedom for inspiration freed from fear of accidental copying. A finding of insufficient originality should be welcomed as a device to promote fair use within architecture, a reconfiguration of the normal terms, and a resistance to reductive values imposed from outside the discipline.

Notes

- 1 United States Postal Service, "Handbook AS-503: Standard Design Criteria," June 10, 2010; "Handbook AS-504: Space Requirements," July 1999; "Handbook AS-506: Architect/Engineer Project Requirements," March 2000.
- 2 "Building styles that are not responsive to regional and local design influences are inappropriate." USPS, "Handbook AS-506: Architect/Engineer Project Requirements," March 2000, 5.
- 3 Importantly, because *Trek Leasing's* Post Office was built on the Navajo Reservation in Fort Defiance, it was only *leased* to the federal government after its development. On non-reservation lands, such buildings would be owned by the government and purpose-built, but in this case, where a federal building was located outside of its own territory, the standard "work for hire" exception to copyright could not apply. Most of the time, the copyright in a building designed for a federal agency is held by that agency as a matter of contract, which is why there aren't more infringement claims between buildings designed for the same very specific and regulated use.
- 4 *Trek Leasing, Inc. v. United States*, 2005. No. 02-1345 C (Fed. Cl. June 30, 2005).
- 5 The 'merger doctrine' is a copyright concept that ostensibly guards against the protection of abstract ideas – it holds that if, given a set of functional factors, only a single design is possible, then that design expression is merged for all copyright purposes with the idea underlying it. But because an idea can't be copyrighted, this singular, inevitable conclusion based on it can't either. If a building project is constrained by outside factors like budget, code, program, or even design guidelines, as there are for a USPS facility, to the point of having only a single possible design solution, then that solution could not be protected.
- 6 *Trek Leasing, Inc. v. United States*, 2005. No. 02-1345 C (Fed. Cl. June 30, 2005). Page 13 of 16: "3: Comparison of the Elements."
- 7 *Feist Publications, Inc. v. Rural Telephone Service Co., Inc.*, 1991. No. 89-1909 (Supreme Court of the United States).
- 8 U.S. Copyright Office, Compendium of U.S. Copyright Office Practices § 101 (3d ed. 2014), Chapter 300: 10, Sec. 308.2.
- 9 As the court notes in *Trek Leasing*, the generally accepted "ordinary observer" test for copyright infringement (whereby a court speculates as to whether an ordinary observer with no special knowledge or preparation might discern similarity between two objects or buildings) did not apply in this case, "since the Plaintiff's work incorporates sources other than its original expression" (*Trek Leasing*, p. 12 of 16).

Indeed, the Plaintiff noted the need for more than superficial comparison, agreeing that "Since the Fort Defiance design taps the body of public domain design elements, perhaps the analysis of its originality may call for a 'more discerning' ordinary observer test' for substantial similarity" (*Trek Leasing*, p. 12 of 16).

The two archetypal observers, ordinary and discerning, are critical in determinations of copyright infringement, though both roles are played by the court. In the *Trek Leasing* case, the careful

analysis required in a finding by a discerning observer instigated a site visit to both buildings in question and a detailed building-element-by-building-element breakdown of findings.

- 10 *Trek Leasing*, p. 14 of 16.
- 11 *Trek Leasing*, p. 13 of 16.
- 12 *Trek Leasing*, p. 16 of 16.
- 13 Jane C. Ginsburg and John M. Kernochan. "One hundred and two years later: the U.S. joins the Berne Convention." *Columbia – VLA Journal of Law & the Arts*, Fall 1988, 27.
- 14 Ginsburg and Kernochan, 3.
- 15 Ginsburg and Kernochan, 3.
- 16 May Lee, "Reagan Signs Kastenmeier Copyright Bill," *Los Angeles Times* (November 1, 1988).
- 17 U.S. Copyright Office, "The Report of the Register of Copyrights on Works of Architecture," *Library of Congress* (Washington, DC, 19 June 1989), 71–140.
- 18 "Berne Convention Implementation Act of 1987: Hearings Before the Subcommittee on Courts, Civil Liberties, and the Administration of Justice of the Committee on the Judiciary," House of Representatives, 100th Congress, First and Second Sessions, H.R. 1623; June 17, July 23, September 16 and 30, 1987; February 9 and 10, 1988; Serial No. 50. (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1988), 679.
- 19 "The design of a useful article, as defined in this section, shall be considered a pictorial, graphic, or sculptural work only if, and only to the extent that, such design incorporates pictorial, graphic, or sculptural features *that can be identified separately from, and are capable of existing independently of*, the utilitarian aspects of the article." 17 U.S. Code §101: definition of "Pictorial, graphic, and sculptural works" (emphasis added).
- 20 *Demetriades v. Kaufmann*; 680 F Supp. 658 (S.D.N.Y. 1988); 690 F Supp. 289 (S.D.N.Y. 1988); 698 F Supp. 521 (S.D.N.Y. 1988).

"The recent case of *Demetriades v. Kaufmann* illustrates the problem that arises when *Baker* is applied to architecture. There, the defendants managed to obtain, without the plaintiff-architect's knowledge, the original plans for an elaborate, custom-designed home. They copied the plans and subsequently built a virtual duplicate of the first house. The court held that the copying of the plans was an infringement, but the use of the plans was not, because, according to United States law, a building based on a copyrighted plan is not a copy of the plan. The court in the *Demetriades* case recognized the problem inherent in its holding, conceding that 'the principle utility of architectural plans is in their use,' not in their two-dimensional reproduction. Nonetheless, the court refused to give this view legal effect." In Natalie Wargo, "Copyright Protection for Architecture and the Berne Convention," *New York University Law Review*, 65, 403 (May 1990): 450.

- 21 Kastenmeier, Hon. Robert W. "Introduction of the Architectural Works Copyright Protection Act," *Congressional Record* (Wednesday, February 7, 1990), 191–193.
- 22 P.L. 101–650, 17 USCA § 101 "Architectural Works Copyright Protection Act."
- 23 H.R. 5316 (101st): Judicial Improvements Act of 1990 became P.L. 101–650 (HR 5316), December 1, 1990, Judicial Improvements Act of 1990.

Excerpts include:

SEC. 702. DEFINITIONS.

- (a) ARCHITECTURAL WORKS. – Section 101 of title 17, United States Code, is amended by inserting after the definition of "anonymous work" the following:

"An 'architectural work' is the design of a building as embodied in any tangible medium of expression, including a building, architectural plans, or drawings. The work includes the

overall form as well as the arrangement and composition of spaces and elements in the design, but does not include individual standard features.”

SEC. 704. SCOPE OF EXCLUSIVE RIGHTS IN ARCHITECTURAL WORKS.

- (a) IN GENERAL. – Chapter 1 of title 17, United States Code, is amended by adding at the end the following:

“§120. Scope of exclusive rights in architectural works

- “(a) PICTORIAL REPRESENTATIONS PERMITTED. – The copyright in an architectural work that has been constructed does not include the right to prevent the making, distributing, or public display of pictures, paintings, photographs, or other pictorial representations of the work, if the building in which the work is embodied is located in or ordinarily visible from a public place.
- “(b) ALTERATIONS TO AND DESTRUCTION OF BUILDINGS. – Notwithstanding the provisions of section 106(2), the owners of a building embodying an architectural work may, without the consent of the author or copyright owner of the architectural work, make or authorize the making of alterations to such building, and destroy or authorize the destruction of such building.”

- 24 “Architectural Design Protection: Hearing Before the Subcommittee on Courts, Intellectual Property, and the Administration of Justice of the Committee on the Judiciary, House of Representatives, 101st Congress, Second Session on H.R. 3990: Architectural Works Copyright Protection Act of 1990 and H.R. 3991: Unique Architectural Structures Copyright Act of 1990,” March 14, 1990; Serial No. 80. Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1990, 4.
- 25 “Architectural Design Protection: Hearing Before the Subcommittee,” 8.
- 26 “The Report of the Register of Copyrights on Works of Architecture.”
- 27 Unpublished interview with Bill Patry, December 4, 2014, Stamford, CT.
- 28 “The Report of the Register of Copyrights on Works of Architecture,” 212: “The twentieth century, for a variety of reasons, does not possess architecture that impresses vast numbers of people with the same awe as Chartres. But buildings such as William Van Alen’s Art Deco Chrysler Building in New York City draw tens of thousands [of] admiring visitors each year. Such buildings speak to us in an artistic language we appreciate, a communication that has nothing to do with functional necessities.”
- 29 Dale R. Ellicksen, on behalf of the AIA in response to Mathias’ questions, August 13, 1986, in “The Report of the Register of Copyrights on Works of Architecture,” *U.S. Copyright Office, Library of Congress* (Washington, DC, 19 June 1989), 110.
- 30 Jane C. Ginsburg, Letter to Rep. Kastenmeier, dated 2/22/90, included in “Architectural Design Protection: Hearing Before the Subcommittee,” 186.
- 31 Unpublished interview with Bill Patry, December 4, 2014, Stamford, CT.
- 32 Unpublished interview with Bill Patry, December 4, 2014, Stamford, CT.
- 33 Unpublished interview with Karen Nichols, Principal of Michael Graves Architecture, December 8, 2014, Princeton, NJ: “Of course Michael was being prompted by Bill Patry to say, oh please address this, bring in this argument, talk about that, show this building, show this project, and so we put [the lecture] together, from standard lectures that he would typically give. They weren’t telling us what to say, they were just saying your ideas are interesting to us for this and this reason, can you express that, explain it, perhaps elaborate on it.”
- 34 Michael Graves, “A Case for Figurative Architecture,” in *Michael Graves: Buildings and Projects 1966–1981*. Edited by Karen Vogel Wheeler, Peter Arnell and Ted Bickford (New York: Rizzoli, 1982), 11–13.
- 35 H.R. Rep. No. 735, 101st Cong., 2nd Session, 1990, in USCCAN, 6950.
- 36 Michael Graves, prepared statement, “Architectural Design Protection: Hearing Before the Subcommittee,” 21.
- 37 Michael Graves, prepared statement, “Architectural Design Protection: Hearing Before the Subcommittee,” 21.

- 38 Transcript of Michael Graves's testimony in "Architectural Design Protection: Hearing Before the Subcommittee," 30.
- 39 Transcript of Michael Graves's testimony in "Architectural Design Protection: Hearing Before the Subcommittee," 32.
- 40 Transcript of Michael Graves's testimony in "Architectural Design Protection: Hearing Before the Subcommittee," 34.
- 41 Unpublished interview with Michael Graves, December 8, 2014, Princeton, NJ.
- 42 It is not insignificant that Michael Eisner was part of the same GQ "Men of the Year" cohort as Graves in 1997.
- 43 Transcript of Michael Graves's testimony in "Architectural Design Protection: Hearing Before the Subcommittee," 34.
- 44 Transcript of Michael Graves's testimony in "Architectural Design Protection: Hearing Before the Subcommittee," 32.
- 45 Hon. Robert W. Kastenmeier, "Introduction of the Architectural Works Copyright Protection Act," *Congressional Record*, Wednesday, (February 7, 1990), 191–193.
- 46 Michael Graves, prepared statement, "Architectural Design Protection: Hearing Before the Subcommittee," 23.
- 47 Hon. Robert W. Kastenmeier, "Introduction of the Architectural Works Copyright Protection Act," *Congressional Record* (Wednesday, February 7, 1990), 191–193.
- 48 "For works such as tract housing, a single work is one house model with all accompanying floorplan options, elevations, and styles that are applicable to that particular model." United States Copyright Office, "Circular 41: Copyright Claims in Architectural Works," *Library of Congress* (September 2012), 2.

9

ARCHITECTURAL PATENTS BEYOND BUCKY FULLER'S QUADRANT

Kevin Emerson Collins

Copyrights and patents are two distinct types of intellectual property that grant architects exclusive rights to prevent appropriation by clients and other architects of two distinct aspects of their designs.¹ Framing the architect as a freethinking artist, akin to a painter or sculptor, copyright law protects the imaginative, original expression embodied in the visual and spatial features of an architectural design. In contrast, patent law frames the architect as a hard-nosed problem-solver, akin to a mechanical engineer or material scientist, and it protects the novel, functional features of architectural designs that “do” things. Yet, while copyright and patent protect the two sides of the architect’s integrated, artistic-yet-practical personality, architects and lawyers alike almost always talk about copyrights, not patents, when the conversation turns to the intellectual property of architecture. Architectural patents languish in copyright’s shadow, garnering little to no attention from either group.

On one level, copyright’s dominance over patent in architectural circles makes perfect sense: copyright is clearly the more commonly used right in architectural practice. Most architect-owner contracts address copyright ownership in some way, and, following the enactment of the Architectural Works Copyright Protection Act in 1990, copyright infringement allegations between architects are on the rise, at least in some sectors of the construction industry. In contrast, patents have little impact on architects’ daily practices. Few architects today apply for patent rights to protect their designs, and fewer still are charged with patent infringement.

On a deeper level, however, the lack of attention to patent law in architectural discourse is puzzling. Over the last 150 years, the United States Patent and Trademark Office (PTO) has issued patents on innovations that are in line with the innovations that design-minded architects regularly make when offering their services to clients.² The quantity of these patents is not by any means large enough to argue that architects have regularly sought patents, but it is large enough to illustrate the breadth of the PTO’s view of what constitutes a patentable, architectural invention. This chapter illustrates this expansive conception of what constitutes a patentable architectural “technology” in the eyes of the PTO and thereby suggests that patents, legally speaking at least, could have played a much larger role in the professional lives of architects during the twentieth century than they actually did.

The PTO's expansive conception of architectural patents

There are two fundamental requirements that do the bulk of the work to limit the nature of the architectural designs that may be patented. First, a patentable design must be innovative: it must be significantly different from prior designs that have already been conceived and shared with the public.³ Second, it must be useful or functional.⁴ This utility requirement differentiates patentable inventions from copyrightable artistic works: patentable inventions must act like a technology and “do” something, or, more accurately, they must “do” something other than merely satisfy the public’s aesthetic, symbolic, and cultural preferences.⁵

Strong interpretations of both of these requirements likely anchor architects’ conception of what can be patented. That is, the common belief among architects is perhaps that patentable architectural designs must be, first, revolutionary or visionary (really new), and, second, an engineering advance in construction technology that makes a building resist gravity (technological in a conventional sense).⁶ One way to capture this conception is to suggest that the work of Buckminster Fuller anchors architects’ understanding of patentable architectural design. Fuller – or “Bucky” as he was commonly known – was a visionary structural innovator interested in, among other things, bringing the construction industry of the mid-twentieth century into the era of mass production. He wanted house design to reflect car and airplane design, and for houses to be built the way cars and airplanes were being built. He was also a serial patent filer. In the late 1920s, he filed for patents on an early version of his Dymaxion house – a house with a central compression pier and suspended floors ringing the pier.⁷ In the 1930s, he patented a prefabricated, die-stamped bathroom, initially conceived as part of the Dymaxion house.⁸ In the 1940s, he patented a circular, structural-shell shelter called the Dymaxion Deployment Unit that was inspired by corrugated-metal grain bins (Figure 9.1).⁹ Spanning the 1950s and 1960s, he patented several iterations of his most famous design, the geodesic dome (Figure 9.2).¹⁰ Although each of his patented designs takes on a different problem and offers a different solution, they all embody structural innovation. They provide architectural advances in a gray zone where architecture transitions into mechanical and manufacturing engineering.

If Fuller’s designs were paradigmatic of all patentable architectural innovation, then patents could have played only the minor role in architectural practice that they actually played during the twentieth century. Few architects of the era were either as visionary or as engaged with structural innovation as Fuller. However, while Fuller’s work provides clear examples of patentable architectural design, the belief that it is broadly representative of patentable architectural design is sorely misguided. The record of issued architectural patents demonstrates that the PTO’s view of patentable architectural design was accommodating enough throughout the twentieth century to include architectural designs much like those that are regularly generated by challenging architectural practices.¹¹ More specifically, the PTO’s expansive conception of architectural patents results from liberal interpretations of each of the two fundamental requirements for patentability introduced earlier.

First, concerning the innovation requirement, the liberality is simple to capture: an architectural design need not be a revolutionary or visionary departure from the status quo to be patentable. How much innovation a design embodies as a quantitative matter is roughly a scalar variable. Designs can be more or less innovative. The PTO places the threshold for patentability at a smaller quantum of innovation than one might expect. Many patented

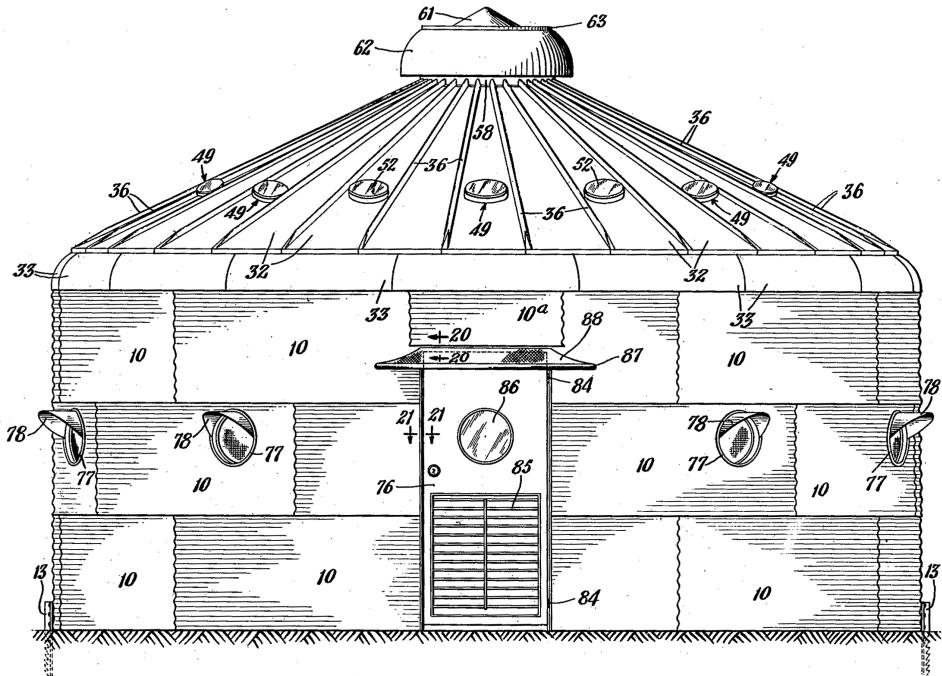


FIGURE 9.1 Dymaxion Deployment Unit, U.S. Patent No. 2,343,764.

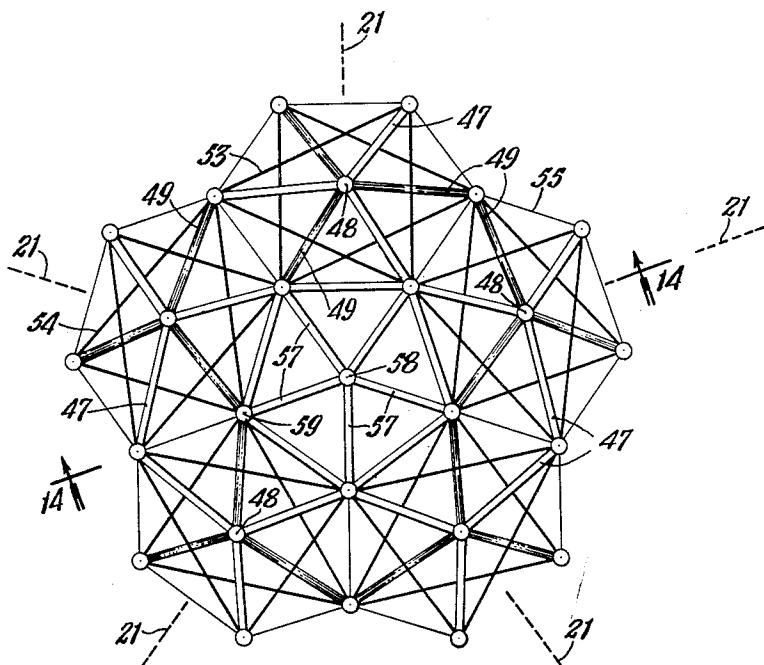


FIGURE 9.2 Geodesic Dome Structure, U.S. Patent No. 2,682,235.

architectural designs embody incremental and rather mundane innovations that only take architectural design a small step forward.

Second, concerning the utility or functionality requirement, the liberality in the PTO's conception of patentable architectural design manifests in an acceptance of a number of qualitatively different aspects of architectural design as useful, functional technologies.

A patentable architectural innovation need not involve an improvement to a construction technology as conventionally conceived, such as a building's structural system. It may alternatively involve an innovative, static *disposition of space*, that is, novel arrangement of spaces as represented in floor plans, sections, or their three-dimensional equivalents.¹² The perhaps unexpected reality is that space, too, is a functional, patentable technology at the PTO.¹³

The distinction between patents on construction technologies and dispositions of space is important to underscore. Construction-technology patents claim building-system technologies as conventionally conceived. Some claim innovative building materials; for example, Pilkington and Bickerstaff patented the process of making float glass and revolutionized building cladding.¹⁴ Others, like Fuller's patents, claim innovative ways of combining building materials into a building system. Leroy Buffington received his infamous skyscraper patent that, he argued, claimed perhaps the most fundamental shift in construction technology of the late nineteenth century: a metal frame with metal shelves attached thereto for supporting a veneer of masonry or other like material (Figure 9.3).¹⁵ (However, Buffington's claims were eventually construed to be much narrower, encompassing only a system of tapering columns and insulation for reducing "the undue expansion and contraction of the iron or steel frame on account of heat and cold.")¹⁶ Beyond the curtain wall, many of the other technologies for assembling building materials that launched or enriched architectural modernism – including cast-iron structural systems¹⁷ and both poured-in-place¹⁸ and precast concrete (Figure 9.3)¹⁹ – were patented. Material-assembly patents also routinely encompass methods and products involved in prefabricated building construction.²⁰ Patents on construction technologies like these cover how a building is built. They do not grant an inventor exclusive rights to any particular formal or spatial arrangement in an architectural design. Buildings with radically different spatial parts and that accommodate different programs like theaters, libraries, and single-family houses can all infringe the same construction technology patent.

Patents on dispositions of space, in contrast, lay claim to habitable, volumetric voids, not the techniques for constructing the solids that shape the voids.²¹ Designers have claimed floor plans, and occasionally sections, for many different types of buildings including, but not limited to, airport terminals, apartment complexes, burial crypts, single-family homes, schools, shopping malls (Figure 9.5), factories, doctors' offices, parking garages, pharmacies, prisons, senior living facilities, and restaurants.²² A.B. Valk, a prominent church architect at the turn of the twentieth century, even claimed a layout for a combination church and Sunday school or, dressed up in patent jargon, an "Edifice Adapted for Use for Ecclesiastical or Religious and Scholastic Purposes" (Figure 9.6).²³ Patents on dispositions of space do not require a commitment to any particular structural system. Houses made of wood, brick, stone, and glass can all infringe a single patent claiming a particular domestic distribution of space.

In sum, the combination of the PTO's quantitatively low threshold for the amount of innovation required and its qualitatively liberal definition of what constitutes a useful technology means that one need not be Bucky Fuller to design patentable architecture. Fuller's work represents only one quadrant of the field of patentable architectural designs. In Figure 9.7, the *y*-axis represents the degree of innovation, and the *x*-axis represents the distinction between construction

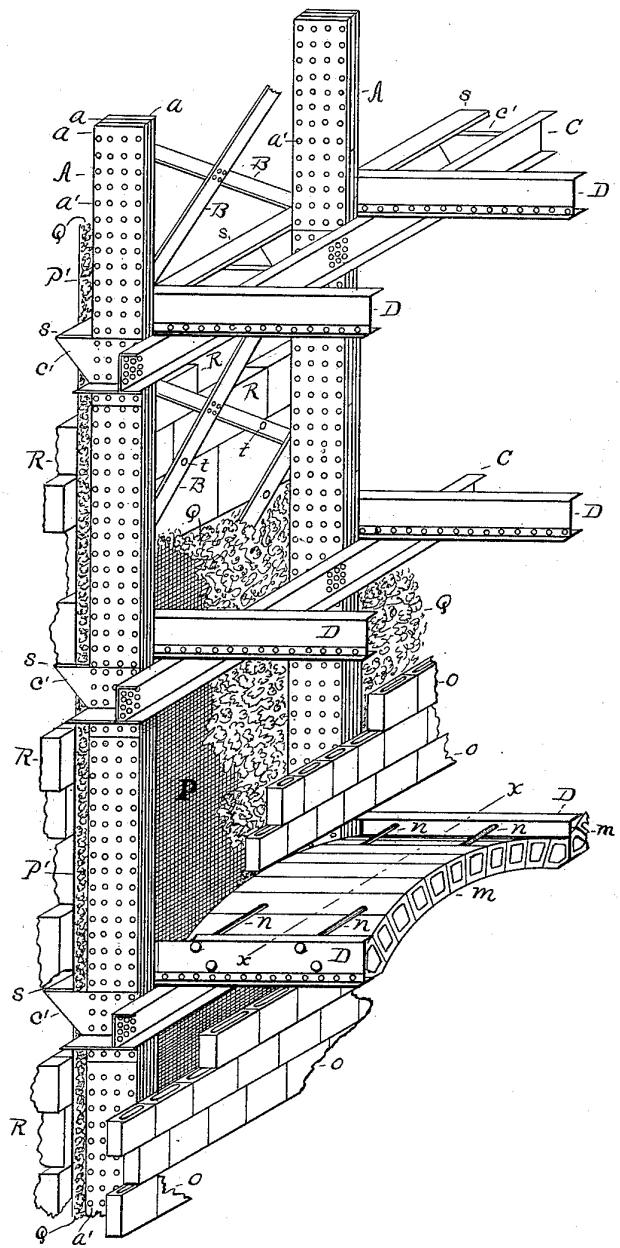


FIGURE 9.3 Buffington's Skyscraper Construction Technology, U.S. Patent No. 383,170.

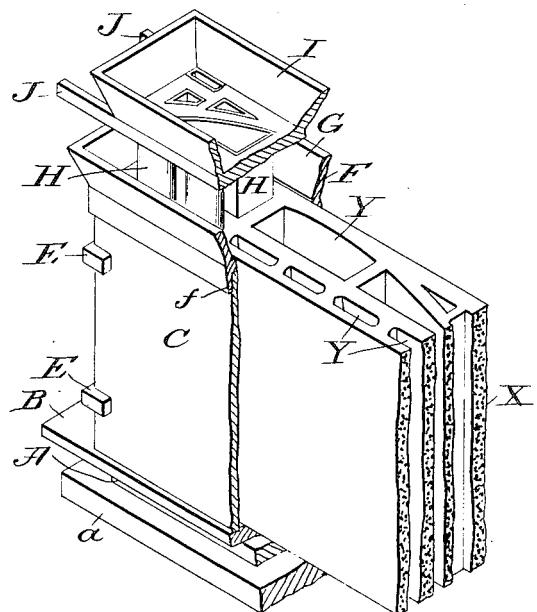


FIGURE 9.4 Atterbury's Hollow-Core Precast Concrete, U.S. Patent No. 828,833.

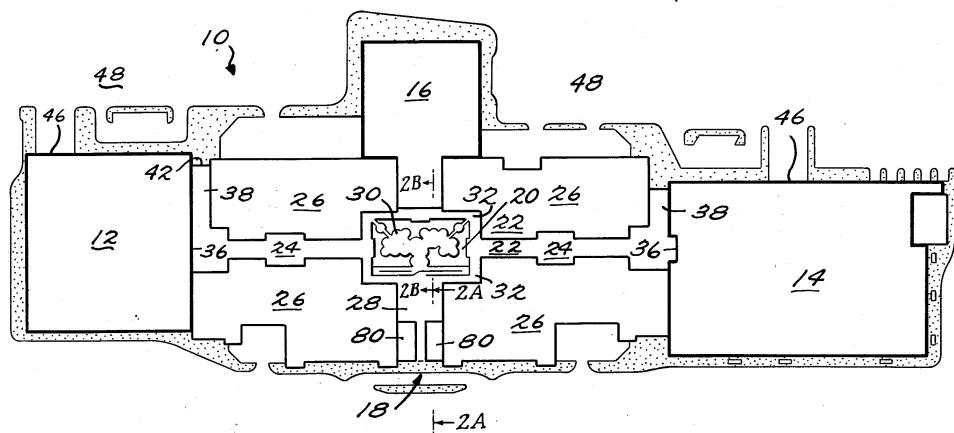


FIGURE 9.5 Shopping Mall Layout, U.S. Patent No. 3,992,824.

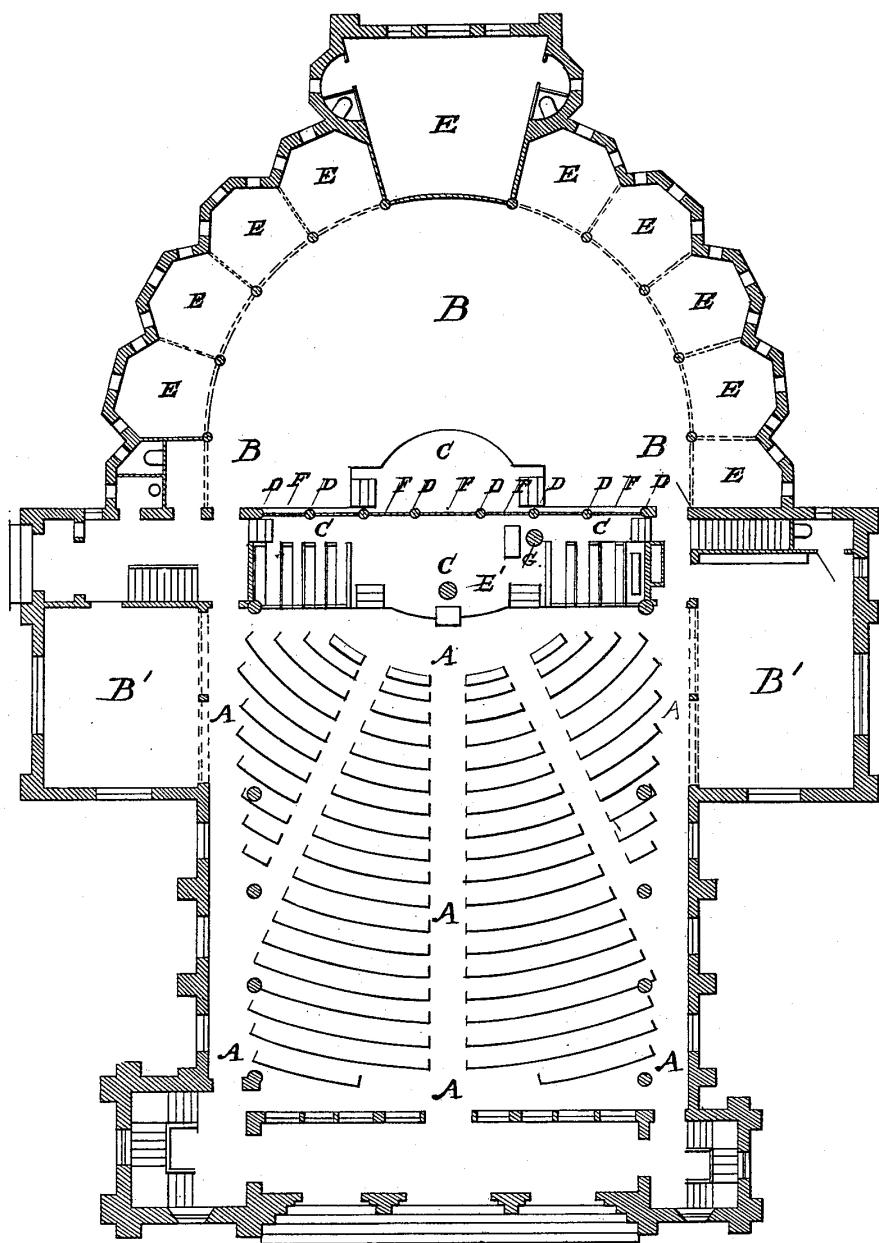


FIGURE 9.6 A.B.Valk's Church Design, U.S. Patent No. 723,426.

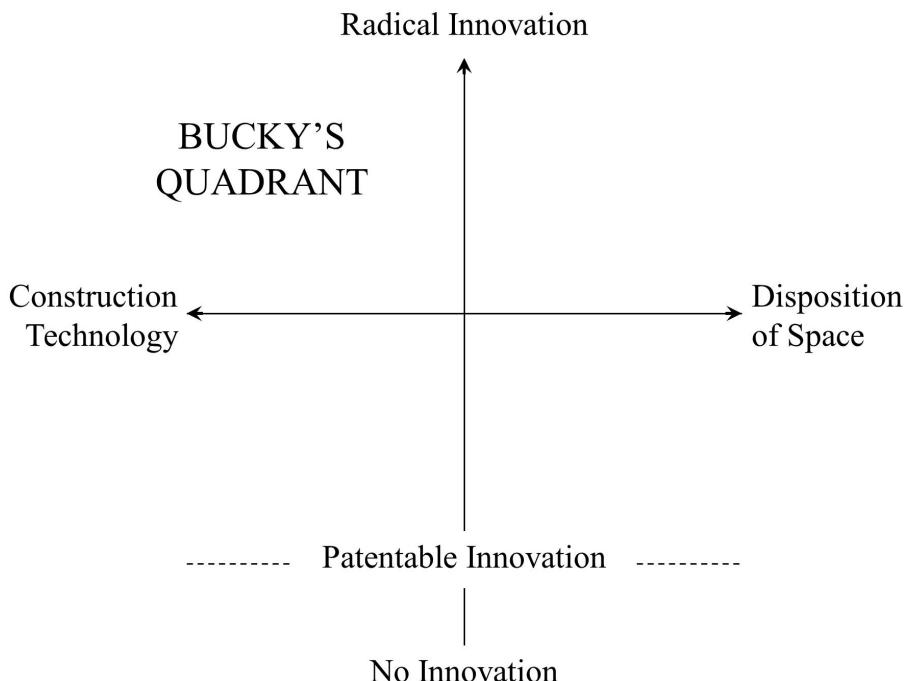


FIGURE 9.7 Bucky's Quadrant in the Field of Patentable Architectural Designs.

technologies and dispositions of space. Bucky's Quadrant is the upper-left portion of the field, but the PTO issues patents on architectural designs that fall in the other quadrants of the field as well. In the eyes of the PTO, architectural designs may be less revolutionary than Fuller's work (although they must still be innovative to some degree) and concerned solely with dispositions of space (rather than construction technologies), and yet they may still qualify for patent protection.

Dispositions of space as useful, functional technologies

Innovative construction technologies are clearly functional. They clearly “do” things in the sense that is required for patent protection: they resist gravity, keep out the elements, and temper the interior environment. What may be less intuitive is the utility of a disposition of space. What are the innovative things that floor plans, sections, and the like “do” that make them a patentable, functional technology, rather than simply a copyrightable artistic work?²⁴ Most importantly, they accommodate and enable the human activities specified in a program. That is, they have *programmatic affordances*: they allow some human behaviors and patterns of human activity to occur more easily than others. To recognize the programmatic affordances of a disposition of space, only a weaker and less controversial iteration of the modernist “form follows function” credo, stripped of its determinist and aesthetic connotations, is needed: space facilitates behavior.²⁵ It is in this eminently practical sense that dispositions of space are functional, patentable inventions, provided that they are sufficiently different from prior dispositions of space.

The PTO's record of issued patents provides a wealth of examples of programmatic affordances that illustrate how a disposition of spaces can enable innovative functions and “do” innovative

things. A dedicated elevator for an apartment owner in a high-rise building is a functional innovation because the owner can get to a parking space quickly and privately.²⁶ A housekeeper can put away laundry more easily if closets open from the back into a laundry facility and from the front into a bedroom.²⁷ A guest can perform business tasks in a hotel room more effectively if the hotel room has been designed to accommodate such tasks.²⁸ A live/work unit can have separate personal and professional entrances only if a building is designed to accommodate two separate entrances to a unit (Figure 9.9).²⁹ A new site plan “does” many things, including preserving (or blocking) lines of sight (Figure 9.8).³⁰ A new configuration of apartment units within an apartment building “does” something by increasing acoustic privacy³¹ and reducing the amount of “wasted” public square footage that cannot be rented.³² Some dispositions of space also “do” something innovative by increasing the efficiency with which a long-standing programmatic activity can be accommodated and thus reducing construction costs.³³

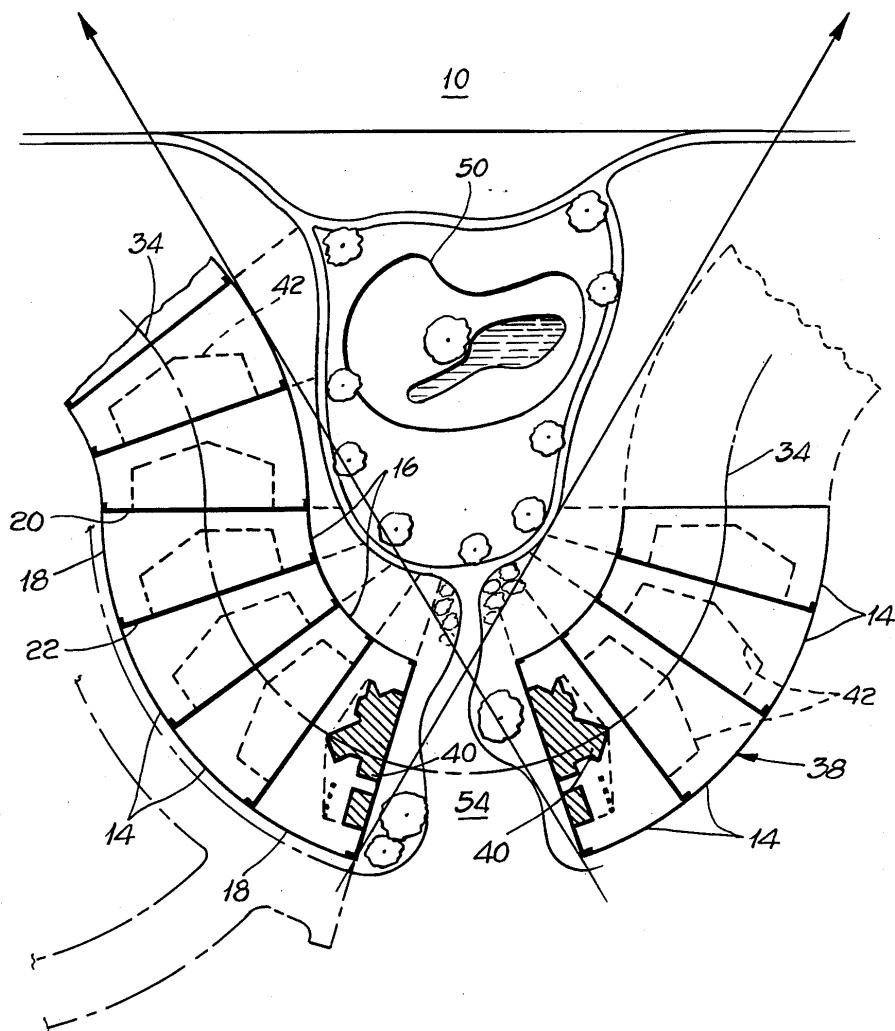


FIGURE 9.8 Building Arrangement Maximizing Views, U.S. Patent No. 4,852,313.

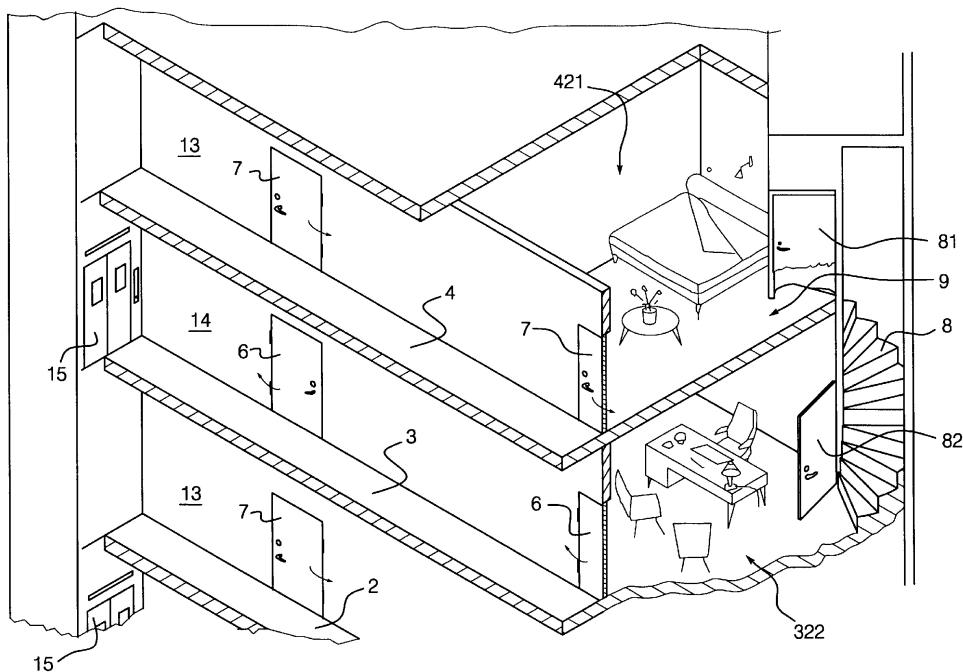


FIGURE 9.9 Mixed-Use Building with Live/Work Units, U.S. Patent No. 6,155,012.

Following are four case studies of issued patents in dispositions of space that fall outside of Bucky's Quadrant, in either the upper-right or lower-right quadrant of Figure 9.7, depending upon one's assessment of the size of the advance over the technological status quo at issue. These patents were not chosen because they are exceptional. To the contrary, they are representative of many issued patents on innovative dispositions of space.³⁴

Opera house boxes: Oscar Hammerstein I

Oscar Hammerstein I, the grandfather of Oscar Hammerstein II of Rogers and Hammerstein fame who made many contributions to the great American songbook, was a self-made real estate developer and theater manager in New York City during a forty-year career spanning from the end of the nineteenth century into the early twentieth century. Hammerstein built no fewer than four opera houses and four theaters in New York City, running from uptown on 125th Street in Harlem to what was then the heart of New York's cultural scene on 34th Street, and another two in Philadelphia and London. Known as the Father of Times Square, he built the first theater on 42nd Street and followed it up with two more in the immediate vicinity. John Philip Sousa described Hammerstein as the man who "has done more for music than any other man in America."³⁵

Hammerstein not only financed theaters, but he also helped to design them. The third of Hammerstein's theater projects, and his second opera house, was the Manhattan Opera House

on 34th Street between Broadway and 7th Avenue, completed in 1892.³⁶ In the words of one biographer,

Oscar's Manhattan Opera House could most aptly be described as looking like the love child of the Casino Theater and the Metropolitan Opera House. Like the Met, it was jam-packed with boxes. Like the Casino, the décor was an Arabic hallucination of spires, minarets, and tiles.³⁷

It was the practical design of the Manhattan Opera House's boxes on the mezzanine level, perched over the top of the back of the orchestra seats and underneath the lower of two balconies, that Hammerstein patented.³⁸

Before Hammerstein's innovation, theaters with boxes had full mezzanine levels. That is, the floor slab at the mezzanine level extended from the back wall of the theater space forward to just underneath the front lip of the balcony. Hammerstein's design turned the mezzanine level into a thin arc of habitable floor curving around the theater and extending only four or five feet in front of and behind the columns that held up the front edge of the balcony. Because the

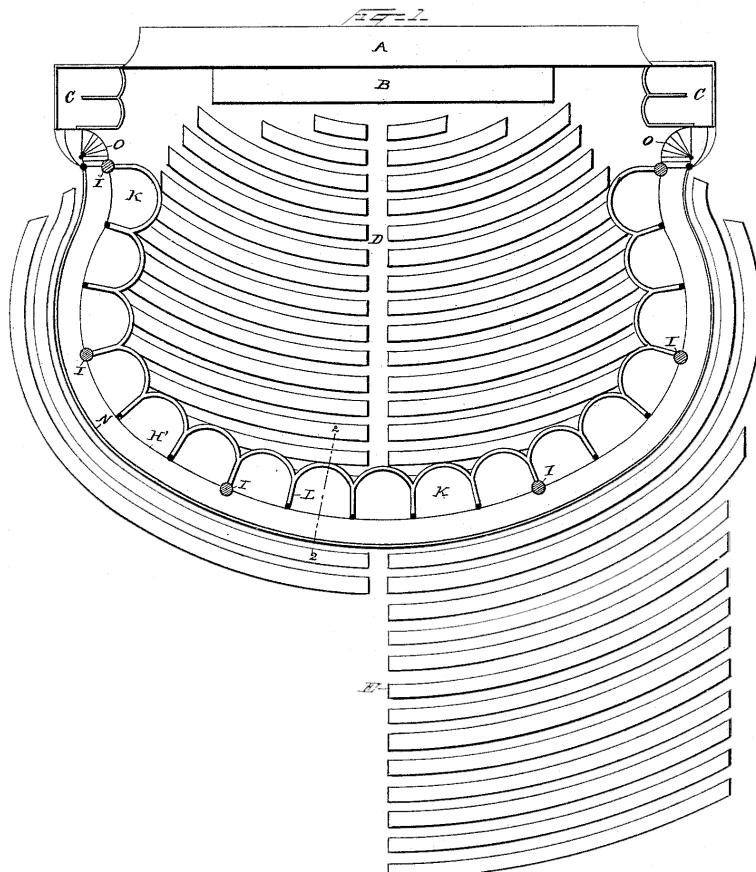


FIGURE 9.10A Hammerstein's Theater-Box Mezzanine, U.S. Patent No. 469,472.

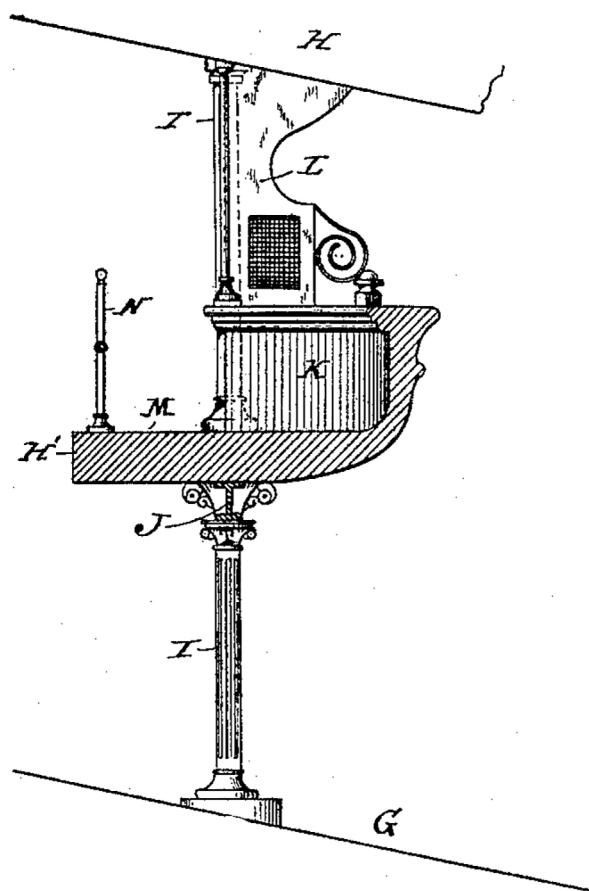


FIGURE 9.10B Hammerstein's Theater-Box Mezzanine, U.S. Patent No. 469,472.

boxes could no longer be accessed directly from the back of the theater, stairs at either end of the arc led up to a continuous landing that ran the entire length of the mezzanine level behind the columns. The boxes occupied the segmented space in front of the columns. Hammerstein rerouted access to the boxes and was thus able to eliminate most of the mezzanine floor over the back of the orchestra. During the theater's construction, the *New York Times* noted, “the mezzanine box tier . . . resembles a series of boxes hanging under the balcony, and forms an entirely novel feature of theatrical architecture”³⁹ (Figures 9.10A and 9.10B).

Hammerstein framed his new disposition of space as a patentable invention because it “did” something in that it accomplished a practical goal: it reduced the overall size of the building needed to accommodate a given number of seats in a theater.⁴⁰ “The object of the invention is to preserve the arrangement of boxes or stalls heretofore located on the mezzanine-floor, while at the same time reducing the proportions of the building, and hence its cost of construction.”⁴¹ Moving from the stage to the back of the theater, the orchestra floor slopes up to enhance sight lines. In the pre-Hammerstein design with the full mezzanine

level, the height of the mezzanine had to be set by the minimum ceiling height required in the back row of the orchestra seating. In the Hammerstein design, there is no mezzanine level over the seats farthest to the back of the orchestra, meaning that the mezzanine level, and thus all of the balconies, could be located at a lower height while still accommodating the same number of seats in the orchestra. The limiting factor for the height of the mezzanine became the less restrictive problem of the mezzanine obstructing the view of the stage from the orchestra's back rows.⁴²

Hammerstein was well-accustomed to the patent regime before he began to construct theaters because of his inventions in an entirely different technology. Hammerstein's first career was in the cigar industry. He swept the floors of a cigar factory, quickly worked his way up to floor manager, and started a profitable tobacco trade journal, the *United States Tobacco Journal*. Beginning during this time and continuing throughout much of his life, Hammerstein produced and patented more than forty-four cigar-related inventions, ranging from cigar cases⁴³ to cigar-rolling machines.⁴⁴ In fact, it was the income from Hammerstein's "patent-producing insomnia that would perpetually refill his coffers and finance his lifelong operatic ambitions," including his patented Manhattan Opera House.⁴⁵

The self-service store: Clarence Saunders

Clarence Saunders was a self-made grocery store magnate in Memphis, Tennessee, who earned and lost several fortunes over the course of the first several decades of the twentieth century. After a decade of working in a variety of jobs in the grocery business, Saunders made his first fortune from his revolutionary Piggly Wiggly grocery stores, launched in 1916, which fundamentally altered what it meant for a consumer to go shopping. Before the arrival of Piggly Wiggly, most grocery stores operated on the basis of a clerk-service business model. Customers entered a store and told store clerks what items they wished to order, and the clerks collected those items. In order to operate with fewer clerks and reduce labor costs – that is, in Saunders' always colorful phrasing, to slay the "demon of high prices"⁴⁶ – Saunders' Piggly Wiggly stores shifted to the self-service model that is still with us today, at least in the brick-and-mortar shopping experience. Customers entered a Piggly Wiggly store, collected the items they wished to purchase from a series of stocked shelves, and paid for them at a checkout counter. Although Piggly Wiggly was not the first grocery store to adopt this self-service model, Saunders was an early-stage pioneer who did more than anyone else to publicize and popularize the concept of self-service grocery shopping.⁴⁷

Keen on rapid expansion, Saunders took only a couple of years to turn Piggly Wiggly into a national franchise, complete with retail furniture that licensees were required to purchase and instruction manuals detailing how to run the business efficiently and maintain the brand publicly.⁴⁸ One tool that Saunders used to cut down on competition and encourage potential competitors to become licensees was a pair of patents on the floor plan of a self-service store.

The self-service grocery revolution was not simply a shift in the business model of how to sell groceries. It was also a shift in the spatial organization of the grocery store itself. The old-time clerk-service grocery stores were arranged with a counter dividing the store into a public space and a clerk-only space, and the goods were stored on shelves in the clerk-only space. A self-service store required a different layout: a publicly accessible "sales department" with goods on shelves and a clerk-only "storage or stock room" at the back with additional goods for restocking the publicly accessible shelves.⁴⁹ In addition, the self-service store needed

a “settlement station” where customers could pay one of the few remaining clerks for the goods collected from the self-service shelves.

Again, the Piggly Wiggly was not the very first self-service grocery store, so Saunders could not have broadly claimed a right to exclude others from constructing a store with a sales department in which all of the goods are arranged on publicly accessible shelves, a clerk-only stock room, and a settlement station. Such an arrangement of spaces would not have been innovative enough for a patent. What Saunders did patent was one particular spatial arrangement for the sales department:

I claim . . . [a]n apparatus for the vending of merchandise having a series of merchandise holders or display cabinets arranged parallel with each other and with spaces between them to form aisles and with the ends of alternate cabinets spaced from the wall or partition in the store, whereby a circuitous path is provided through which the customer must pass from the entrance to the exit.⁵⁰

The spatial layout of the store itself is the “apparatus for the vending of merchandise,” which, in modern parlance, is a single, continuous grocery aisle that every customer must traverse and that forces every customer to view all of the goods for sale⁵¹ (Figure 9.11).

Saunders' self-service store patent was the first in a wave of store-layout patents. Saunders himself filed for and received additional patents on improvements to his "apparatus," including "a settlement station . . . arranged with multiple paths leading from the final aisle around different parts of [the] settlement station and terminating in a single aisle or path leading to the ultimate exit."⁵² In other words, Saunders also patented the multi-lane checkout counter as an improvement that could be used in conjunction with his continuous aisle (Figure 9.12). Once Saunders had blazed the trail – or created the aisle, if you will – competitors quickly followed. Saunders' competitors not only adopted names that were suggestive of Piggly Wiggly (like Handy Andy, Helpy Selfy, and Hoggly Woggly)⁵³ but also patented more than a dozen variations on

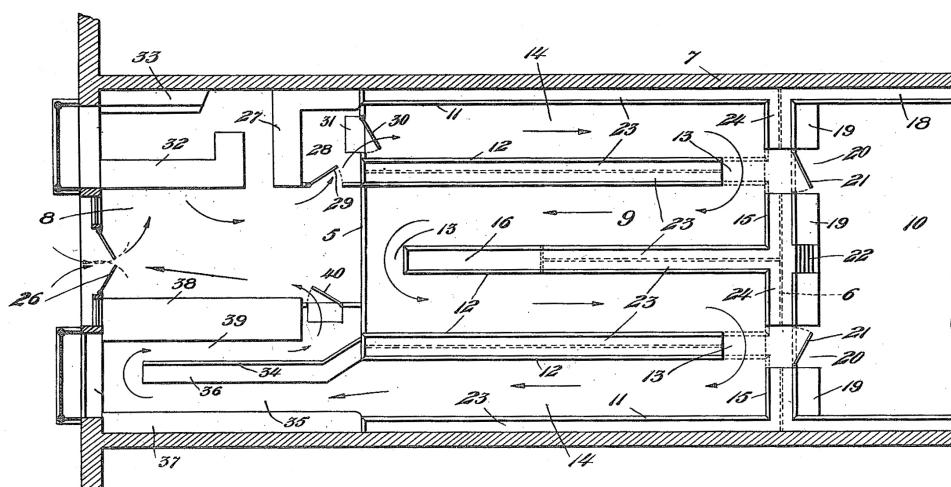


FIGURE 9.11 Saunders' Self-Serving Store, U.S. Patent No. 1,242,872.

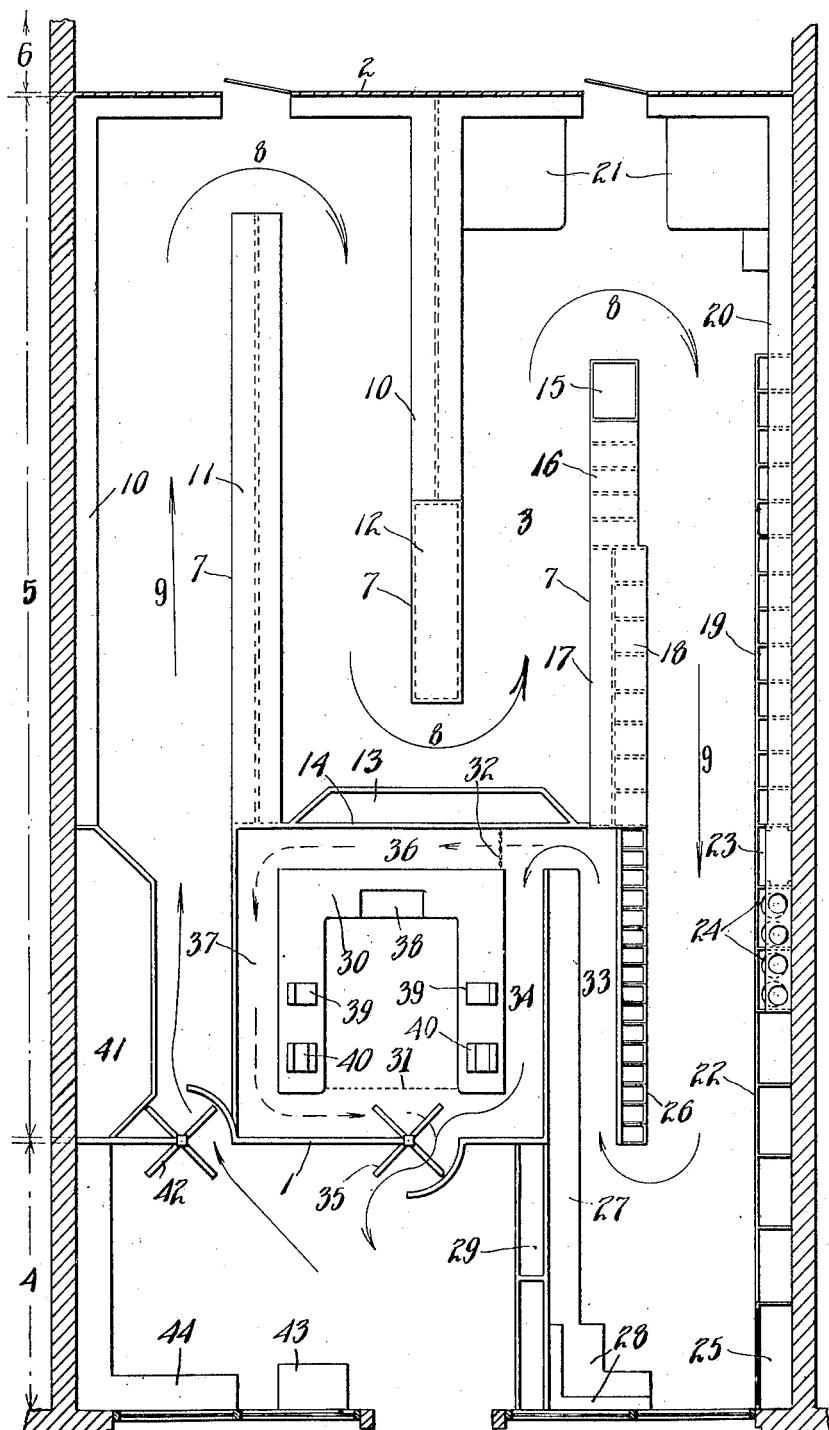


FIGURE 9.12 Saunders' Settlement Station Improvement, U.S. Patent No. 1,357,521.

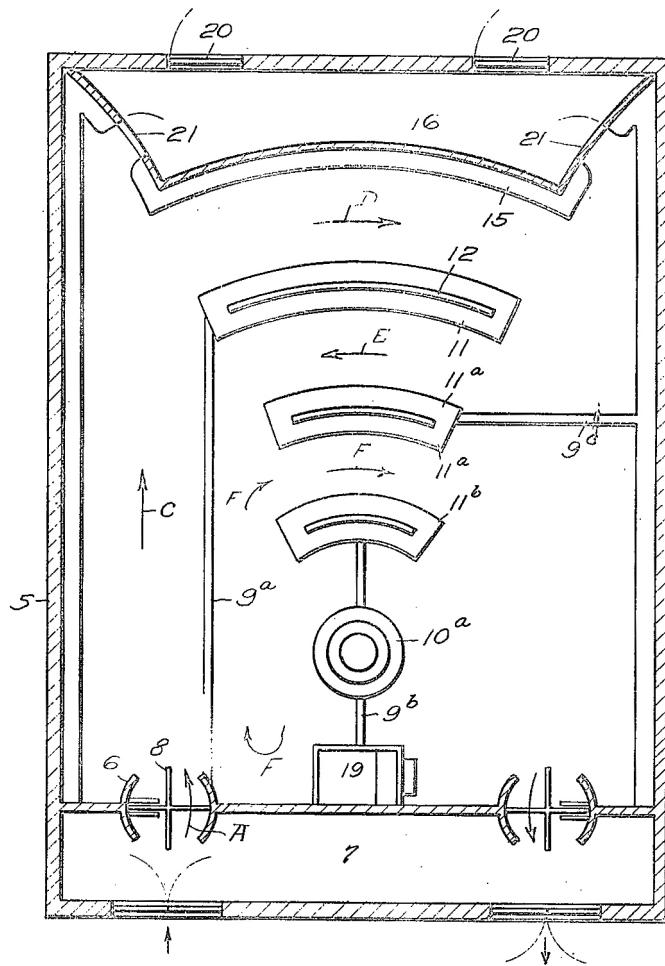


FIGURE 9.13 Robert A. Tribble, Vending Apparatus, U.S. Patent No. 1,305,033.

the self-service store, each identifying a different way of leading customers from the store entrance, through the goods, and to a settlement station at the exit⁵⁴ (Figures 9.13 and 9.14).

The Helix: I.M. Pei and William Zeckendorf

The careers of architect I.M. Pei and developer William Zeckendorf intersected in postwar America as Pei left his teaching job at the Harvard Graduate School of Design in 1948 to become the director of architectural research at Zeckendorf's firm, Webb & Knapp. The first public architectural project that Pei designed for Zeckendorf was the basis of an architectural patent on an apartment building listing both Zeckendorf and Pei as inventors and Webb & Knapp as the assignee.⁵⁵

The late 1940s saw a significant uptick in demand for one-bedroom efficiencies as soldiers returned from the war. Title I of the National Housing Act of 1949, early legislation in the

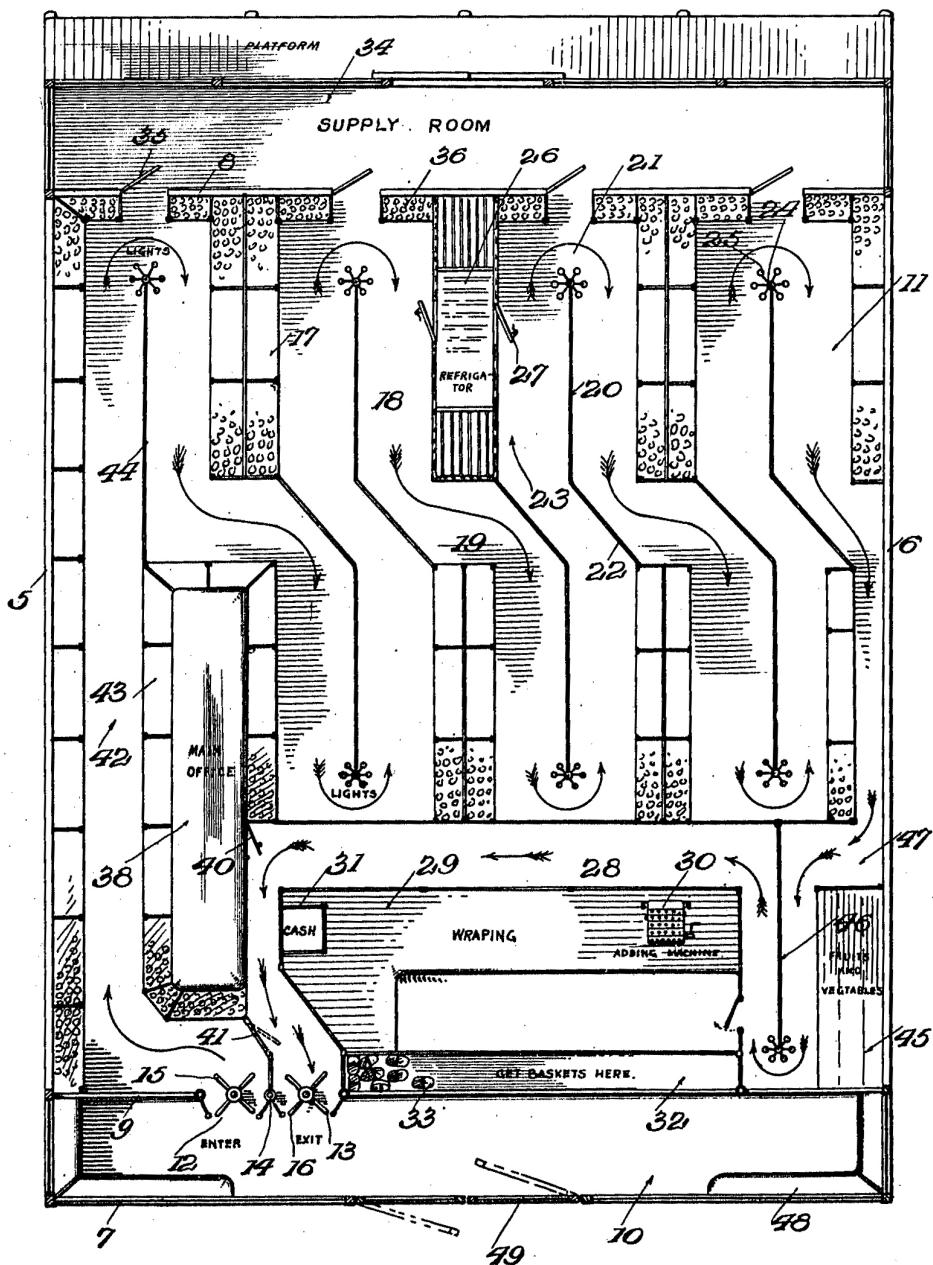


FIGURE 9.14 Edward L. da Roza, Self-Serving Store, U.S. Patent No. 1,313,794.

postwar era of urban renewal, provided funding for housing projects, much of which was targeted for returning servicemen. Zeckendorf put Pei to work designing an urban apartment building suitable to these market conditions, and, purportedly only two weeks later, Pei presented Zeckendorf with the design for a cylindrical, twenty-one-story tower known as “The Helix”⁵⁶ (Figures 9.15A and 9.15B).

Like earlier works by other Modern-era architects, the Helix had a core-periphery parti: a circular inner core of elevators, stairs, utility shafts, and short corridors, and an outer ring of eight stacks of wedge-shaped living spaces for apartment units. Load-bearing walls separated the wedges, freeing these spaces of intermediate columns. Kitchens and bathrooms were next to the inner core to both reduce the horizontal distance to the utility shafts and reserve the views on the perimeter for social and bedroom spaces.

While these features of the Helix contribute to the quality of the project, the truly innovative aspect of the Helix – and the only aspect that needs to be copied to infringe the issued patent – involved offsetting the floor slabs in adjacent wedges by one-half floor height. Wedges one, three, five, and seven were at the level of the elevator and stair landings, and wedges two, four, six, and eight were at half-level floor heights. Half-floor stairs could connect each of the adjacent wedges. As articulated in the patent,

[w]hat is claimed is [a] multi-story building structure. . . [with] vertical dividing walls sectionalizing the structure, . . . the floors of one section being located substantially midway between those in each contiguous section [and the] dividing walls having . . . openings and stairways . . . directly connecting the floors of the contiguous sections.⁵⁷

What did this innovative disposition of space “do” that merited a patent? The offset floors provided some justification for the helical design that adorned the building exterior under an outside-expresses-inside modernist ethos, but any protection for the visual aesthetics of the design should come from a copyright, not a patent. Rather, the half-floor offset between adjacent vertical groups of wedges “did” something by increasing the number of adjacencies between units in the building and thus making it easier for unit owners to accommodate their changing lifestyles by acquiring or divesting additional square footage to expand or contract their units, respectively. That is, the Helix design “obtain[ed] the maximum flexibility in the use of the available space within a building structure,” because “by the use of suitably spaced openings between the units [in adjacent vertical groups] access may be had between any given unit in one vertical group and the two units in each of the two vertical groups adjacent thereto.”⁵⁸ A unit in a conventional apartment building has only four adjacencies, at best: up, down, left, and right. In contrast, the Helix has six: up, down, up-left, down-left, up-right, and down-right. This greater reconfigurability of the units was not an accidental byproduct of Pei’s design. Aware of the fact that returning servicemen might want to start off with small units that could later expand as their means and families grew, Zeckendorf’s initial charge to Pei was to “make an apartment building that can expand and contract.”⁵⁹

Zeckendorf did not charge Pei with designing a project for any particular site. Although the Helix was never built, renderings usually show the Helix in New York City, either in Battery Park or on the East River, and Zeckendorf also sought to build it in San Francisco, Los Angeles, Boston, and Havana. Zeckendorf showed off the Helix every chance he got, including to Le Corbusier (who is purported to have commented, “Where is the sun? This design ignores it!”) before Pei emphasized that the advent of air conditioning made views, not

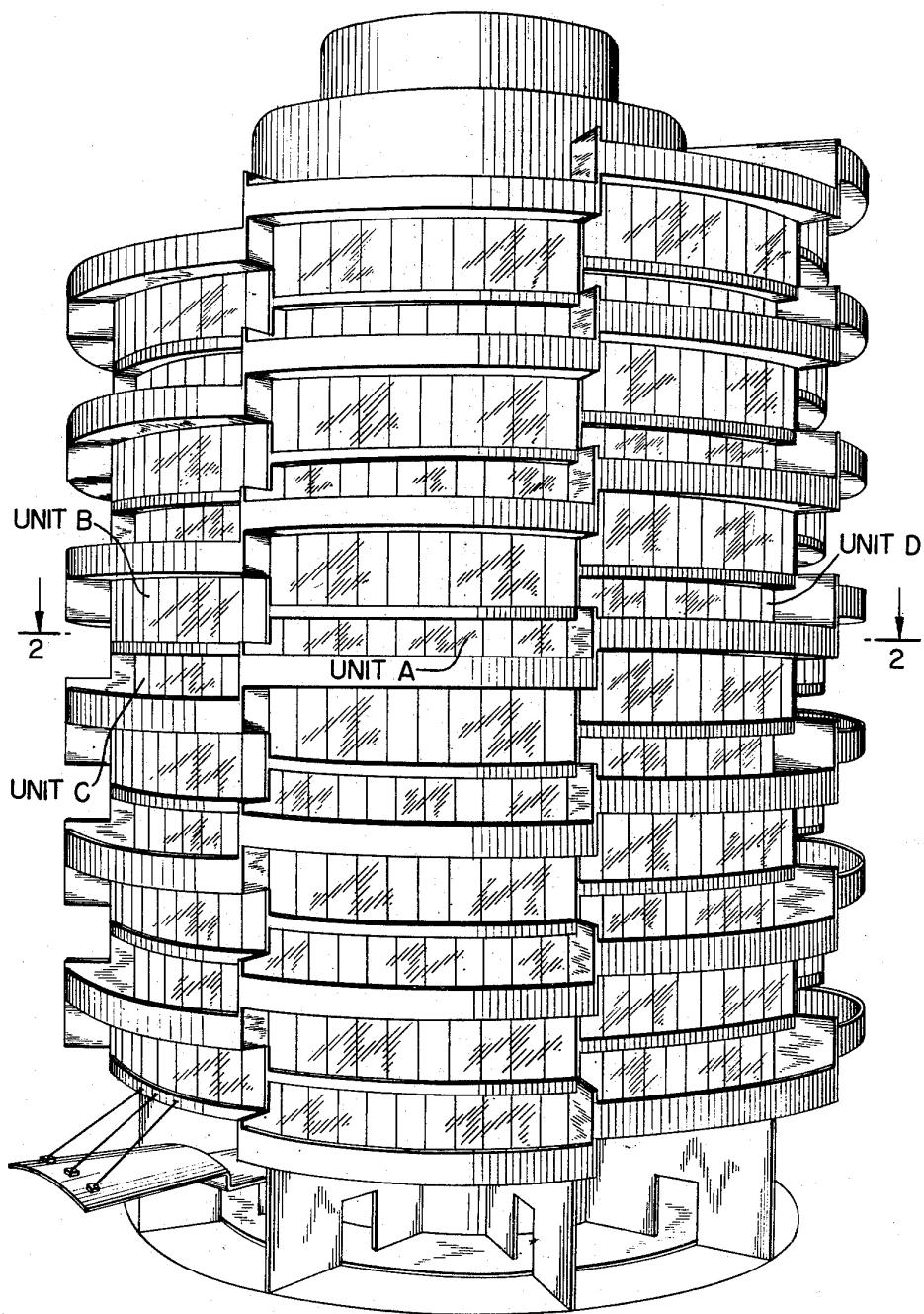


FIGURE 9.15A Zeckendorf and Pei's Helix, U.S. Patent No. 2,698,973, Figure 1.

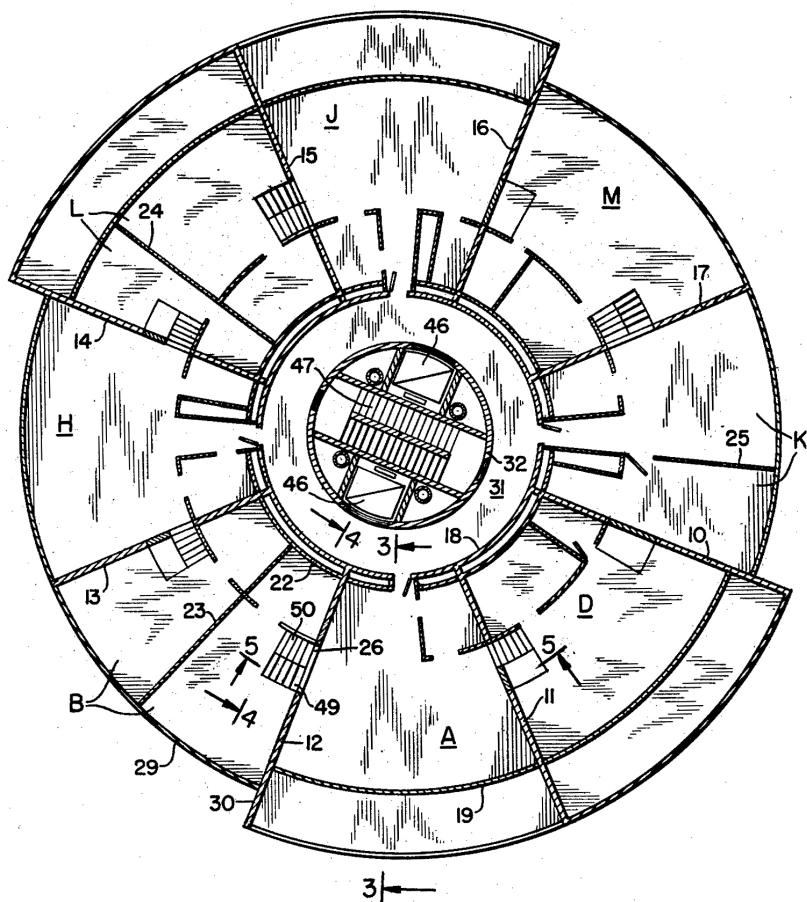


FIGURE 9.15B Zeckendorf and Pei's Helix, U.S. Patent No. 2,698,973, Figure 2.

the position of the sun, the more important design consideration).⁶⁰ Zeckendorf believed the Helix was a harbinger of the future: “One single great edifice new in concept can act as a bell cow. . . . Look at the fashion industry, where one dress can affect styles all over the world. The Helix could easily be another Christian Dior.”⁶¹

Like Hammerstein, Zeckendorf was also seeking other patents at the time he patented the Helix. When Zeckendorf first interviewed Pei, Zeckendorf’s desk was literally covered in blueprints of designs for mechanical parking garages. At that moment, Zeckendorf “was interested in only one thing: mechanical parking. His walls were full of plans for garages that move cars on important frontage.”⁶² Zeckendorf sought and obtained patents on these automated parking systems.⁶³ These mechanical parking devices were building-scale machines, an intermediate step between the machines that are the conventional fare of patenting and architectural designs that are only rarely patented. The applications for the mechanical parking systems were filed in July and August of 1949, and the application for the Helix design was filed in December of the same year.

Unfinished bonus space: William J. Pulte

William J. Pulte founded a small home-building company in Michigan in 1950, and, today, PulteGroup Inc. is the largest homebuilder in the United States. Many events during the intervening sixty-plus years contributed to this entrepreneurial success story, one of which involves Pulte's mid-1970s patent on the configuration of "unfinished bonus space" in a house.⁶⁴

The early to mid-1970s was a tumultuous economic time for homebuilders. The oil embargo crisis and skyrocketing interest rates had cut sharply into consumers' buying power, and inflation was increasing construction costs. However, the status benefits of a single-family house, the expectation of a growing family, and hopes for a rosier economic outlook in the future all contributed to the continued allure of a large home in the suburbs. Given these conditions, Pulte sought to minimize upfront costs while still playing into consumers' desires. Wanting to build houses that had small price tags and yet projected images of bigness from day one, he settled on a house plan in which a significant amount of unfinished square footage enabled expansion over time. Of course, the idea of houses with unfinished space to be built out at a future date was not itself new, so Pulte's patent claimed only a house with one particular innovative configuration of unfinished space. The patented house had a wall dividing a generally rectangular footprint roughly in half, with finished living spaces and the main entrance on one side of the wall and a garage and the unfinished bonus space on the other side.⁶⁵ Importantly, the patent was limited in scope to houses that had unfinished bonus space on both the first floor, adjacent to the garage, and on the second floor, above both the garage and the first-floor bonus space (Figures 9.16A and 9.16B).

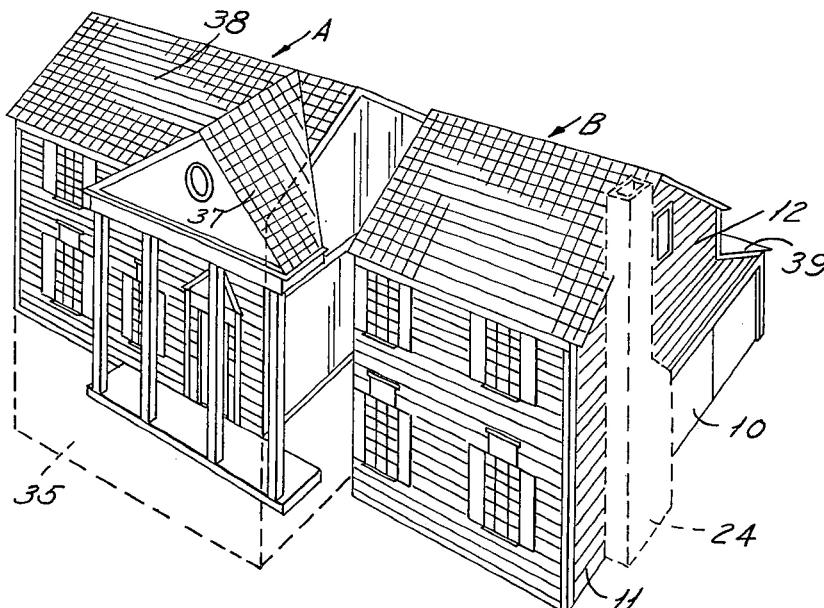


FIGURE 9.16A Pulte's House with Unfinished Bonus Space, U.S. Patent No. 4,015,385, Figure 1.

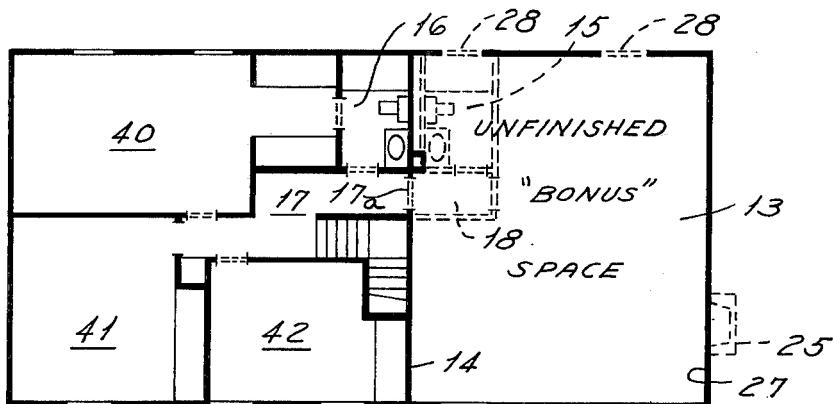
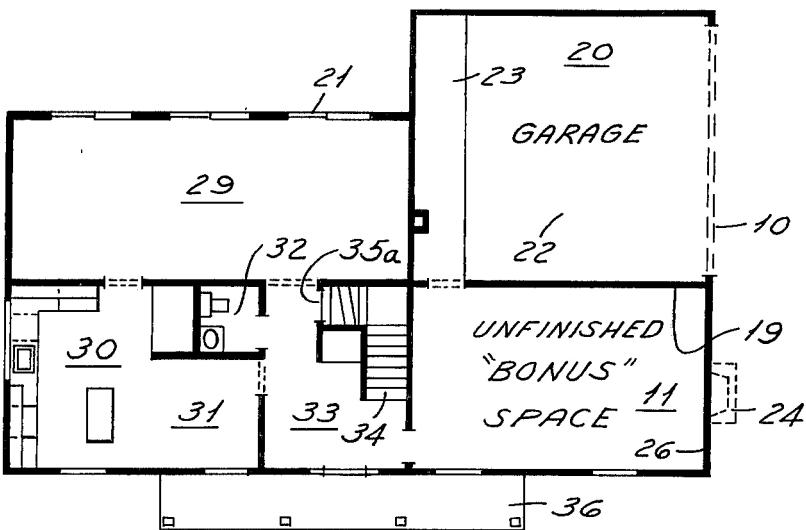
FIG.3

FIGURE 9.16B Pulte's House with Unfinished Bonus Space, U.S. Patent No. 4,015,385, Figures 2 and 3.

Pulte's patented home design was the subject of Pulte advertising in the real estate sections of newspapers in the markets in which the home was offered, including Detroit, Chicago, and the District of Columbia.⁶⁶ Because the patent was limited to the particular configuration of first- and second-floor bonus space, the patent arguably had as much marketing value, suggesting that Pulte's company was providing the latest and greatest in houses, as it had exclusion value. "As part of the merchandising program, the buyer is given a certificate after he purchases a house. The certificate states that he has bought a 'patented' Pulte home and further points out that the design of the home is 'unique and original and may not be copied

by other builders without regard for the copyright and patent law of the United States.”⁶⁷ “What’s to keep somebody from lifting the idea?,” asked one reporter in reference to the expandable home. “Not much, says Robert Horner, president of the Illinois division [of Pulte Homes]. ‘I suppose we could prosecute but that would be difficult if the design were changed somewhat.’”⁶⁸

Expansive architectural patentability, not extensive patenting by architects

The record of issued patents demonstrates that the PTO has an expansive understanding of patentable architectural innovation that accommodates innovations that are both modest in size and embodied in dispositions of space rather than construction technologies. However, the PTO’s record of issued patents should not be interpreted to suggest that architects have frequently sought patents as a historical matter or that they commonly do so today. To the contrary, much evidence points in the other direction, suggesting that architects usually do not seek to patent their innovative dispositions of space, even when they meet the legal requirements for patentability. Given the rather ordinary nature of the spatial innovations that have been historically patented and the large number of such innovations that architects have produced over the past 150 years, the total number of issued patents on spatial innovations is likely quite small in relation to the number of spatial-innovation patents that could have been issued. Furthermore, architects are often not the parties who seek to patent spatial innovations. The case studies illustrate that theater developers, grocery store magnates, real estate developers, and homebuilders have all sought patents on innovative dispositions of space, leaving fewer issued patents with architects as the inventors. The case studies also suggest that previous contact with the patent system and a worldview that sees a disposition of space as a stock commodity to be realized in multiple copies may be triggers for patent applications claiming architectural dispositions of space. Many service-oriented custom architects do not have either of these attributes. Perhaps most importantly, the lack of cognizance in architectural discourse of the availability of architectural patents outside of Bucky’s Quadrant strongly suggests that architects are unaware that patent protection for dispositions of space even exists.

Notes

- 1 Other forms of intellectual property also protect architectural designs. Design patents, which are distinct from the utility patents discussed in this chapter, protect a design’s ornamental features. Trade dress law gives some storeowners exclusive rights to the designs of their stores in order to avoid consumer confusion.
- 2 The author compiled the set of architectural patents issued by the PTO through a citation snowballing process. Patents have two types of citations: backward citations, when a patent cites to other patents as prior art, and forward citations, when a patent is cited by future patents as prior art. The author started with a small sample of architectural patents. Using Google Patents, he followed all of the patents’ forward and backward patent citations. Some, but not all, of these citations were also architectural patents. The author then repeated the process, following the backward and forward citations of the newly discovered architectural patents to discover yet more architectural patents. The snowballing process continued until the citations did not yield any new architectural patents. To check robustness, the author also searched the patents within the PTO’s most relevant technology classifications, starting new snowballing processes whenever new architectural patents surfaced.
- 3 In patent-speak, a patentable invention must be both “novel” (different from what already exists) and “nonobvious” (more than trivially different from what already exists). 35 U.S.C. § 102, 103.

- 4 35 U.S.C. § 101.
- 5 Patent law imposes a number of additional limits on what constitutes a patentable invention along with the innovation and utility requirements. However, these other requirements only rarely restrict the patentability of architectural designs.
- 6 Construction-technology inventions extend beyond structural systems. For example, they may also include cladding systems that resist the elements and mechanical systems that condition the interior environment.
- 7 The patent application was withdrawn, so a patent never issued. Joachim Krauss and Claude Lichtenstein, *Your Private Sky* (Baden, Switzerland: Lars Muller Publishers, 1999), 88–89. The reason why the patent did not issue is a matter of some historical disagreement. Loretta Lorance, *Becoming Bucky Fuller* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2009), 86.
- 8 U.S. Patent No. 2,220,482 (issued November 5, 1940).
- 9 U.S. Patent No. 2,343,764 (issued March 7, 1944); U.S. Patent No. 2,351,419 (issued June 13, 1944). The Dymaxion Deployment Unit was initially conceived as a single-family home, but its only use was as a premanufactured shelter for soldiers in the Middle East during World War II. It is unclear whether the constructed units employed the patented structural-shell construction technology.
- 10 U.S. Patent No. 2,682,235 (issued June 29, 1954) (geodesic dome); U.S. Patent No. 2,881,717 (issued April 14, 1959) (paperboard dome); U.S. Patent No. 2,905,113 (issued September 22, 1959) (self-strutted geodesic dome); U.S. Patent No. 2,914,074 (issued November 24, 1959) (geodesic tent); U.S. Patent No. 3,197,927 (issued August 3, 1965) (geodesic dome with adjacent members connected by circular tension rings); U.S. Patent No. 3,203,144 (issued August 31, 1965) (laminar geodesic dome).
- 11 Technically, the PTO only applies the law as interpreted by the federal courts. The PTO's expansive understanding of patentable architectural designs thus reflects the PTO's opinion that the federal courts have an expansive understanding of patentable architectural designs.
- 12 There are many, many patents on architectural dispositions of space that are dynamic machines in the sense that buildings have moving components. For example, see U.S. Patent No. 479,001 (issued July 19, 1892) (rotating audience seating inside a stationary ring of stages). The patents considered in this chapter demonstrate that architecture need not be a dynamic machine with moving parts to be patentable.
- 13 Today, computer-aided design and smart buildings also give rise to architectural software patents. For example, see U.S. Patent No. 8,600,556 (issued December 3, 2013) (smart building manager).
- 14 U.S. Patent No. 2,911,759 (issued November 10, 1959).
- 15 U.S. Patent No. 383,170 (issued May 22, 1888).
- 16 *Buffington's Iron Bldg. Co. v. Eustis*, 65 F. 804, 809 (1895). Whether Buffington actually invented the veneer-supporting steel frame long enough before its first public use by Williams LeBaron Jenney in the Home Insurance Building to have secured patent rights has been questioned. Dimitris Tsilos, "The Enigma of Buffington's Skyscraper," *The Art Bulletin*, 26, 1 (1944): 3–12; Muriel B. Chirstison, "How Buffington Staked His Claim," *The Art Bulletin*, 26, 1 (1944): 13–24; E.M. Upjohn, "Buffington and the Skyscraper," *The Art Bulletin*, 17, 1 (1935): 48–70.
- 17 James Bogardus, a major innovator of cast-iron construction, patented a cast-iron structural system. U.S. Patent No. 7,337 (issued May 7, 1850).
- 18 Claude A.P. Turner patented mushroom column construction. U.S. Patent No. 985,119 (issued February 21, 1911). Thomas Edison patented a less commercially successful method of casting entire buildings – walls, floors, roofs, and even furniture – from a continuous, slow pour of concrete. U.S. Patent No. 1,219,272 (issued March 3, 1917).
- 19 Grosvenor Atterbury patented many methods and apparatuses for producing hollow-core, precast concrete. For example, see U.S. Patent No. 828,833 (issued August 14, 1906).
- 20 Prefabrication patents provide an interesting history of the evolution of prefabrication strategies. See, e.g., U.S. Patent No. 2,037,895 (1936) (issued April 21, 1936) (prefabricated rooms with integrated plumbing fixtures designed for insertion into a freestanding structural frame); U.S. Patent No. 2,154,897 (issued April 18, 1937) (prefabricated modules with structural rigidity); U.S. Patent No. 2,706,213 (issued April 12, 1955) (a version of the double-wide premanufactured home).
- 21 The use of particular construction technologies can have implicit spatial consequences, resulting in patents that are construction-technology/disposition-of-space hybrids. U.S. Patent No. 7,581,363 (issued September 1, 2009) (claiming a building made out of stacked, parallel, adjacent, poured-in-place concrete tunnels).

- 22 U.S. Patent No. 3,842,553 (issued October 22, 1974) (airport terminal); U.S. Patent No. 734,938 (issued July 28, 1903) (apartment complex); U.S. Patent No. 858,070 (issued June 25, 1907) (burial crypt); U.S. Patent No. 4,439,959 (issued April 3, 1984) (single-family home); U.S. Patent No. 3,992,824 (issued November 23, 1976) (shopping mall); U.S. Patent No. 532,253 (issued January 8, 1895) (school); U.S. Patent No. 7,269,925 (issued September 18, 2007) (factory); U.S. Patent No. 3,742,932 (issued July 3, 1973) (doctors' office); U.S. Patent No. 1,321,100 (issued November 11, 1919) (parking garage); U.S. Patent No. 8,776,446 (issued July 15, 2014) (pharmacy); U.S. Patent No. 229,540 (issued July 6, 1880) (prison); U.S. Patent No. 5,469,673 (issued November 28, 1995) (senior living facility); U.S. Patent No. 4,074,793 (issued February 21, 1978) (restaurant/bar).
- 23 U.S. Patent No. 723,426 (issued March 24, 1903).
- 24 The disposition of spaces in a building is also copyrightable subject matter. 17 U.S.C. § 102(a)(8).
- 25 Sociologists view this facilitation as only the second half of the cycle: Society structures space, and then space structures social beliefs and behaviors. Thomas Gieryn, "A Space for Place in Sociology," *Annual Review of Sociology*, 26 (2000): 463–496.
- 26 U.S. Patent No. 7,497,055 (issued March 3, 2009) (multi-story multiple dwelling complex with semi-private garage-to-apartment entry and exit pathways).
- 27 U.S. Patent No. 9,109,375 (issued August 18, 2015) (building structure having improved household laundry functions).
- 28 U.S. Patent No. 9,941,143 (issued November 24, 2015) (business productivity hotel room).
- 29 U.S. Patent No. 6,155,012 (issued December 5, 2000) (mixed-use building, for example, for habitation and for business use).
- 30 U.S. Patent No. 4,852,313 (issued August 1, 1989) (maximizing views out); U.S. Patent No. 3,254,458 (issued June 7, 1966) (minimizing views in).
- 31 U.S. Patent No. 2,390,179 (issued December 4, 1945).
- 32 U.S. Patent No. 1,896,734 (issued February 2, 1933).
- 33 U.S. Patent No. 1,896,734 (issued February 11, 1931) (apartment house with elevator landing on every other floor).
- 34 There is one way in which the case-study patents are not representative: the inventors are all important historical figures. Most inventors who receive patents are “anonymous,” to use Siegfried Giedion’s term, because they are not the cultural or technological giants whose stories fill our history books. Siegfried Giedion, *Mechanization Takes Command: A Contribution to Anonymous History* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1948), 2–11.
- 35 Ken Bloom, *Routledge Guide to Broadway* (New York: Routledge, 2013), 101.
- 36 Hammerstein designed this theater, among others: “The plan of the theater was his own. He employed the architectural firm of McElfatrick, as he had done before, to file the plans and obtain the building permits, but all the designs and almost all of the details were his doing.” Vincent Sheean, *Oscar Hammerstein I: The Life and Exploits of an Impresario* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1956), 68.
- 37 Oscar Andrew Hammerstein, *The Hammersteins: A Musical Theater Family* (New York: Black Dog and Leventhal Publishers Inc., 2010), 31.
- 38 U.S. Patent No. 469,472 (issued February 3, 1892).
- 39 “A New Opera House,” *New York Times* (November 8, 1891), 13, col. 3.
- 40 Hammerstein, *The Hammersteins*, 31.
- 41 Patent No. 469,472, p. 1, ll. 14–18.
- 42 Ibid., p. 1, l. 67 to p. 2, l. 13. In passing, the patent also asserts that the patented design improves both ventilation and acoustics. Ibid., p. 2, ll. 10–13.
- 43 U.S. Patent No. 205,482 (issued July 2, 1878).
- 44 U.S. Patent No. 244,748 (issued July 26, 1881).
- 45 Hammerstein, *The Hammersteins*, 31.
- 46 Mike Freeman, *Clarence Saunders and the Founding of Piggly Wiggly: The Rise & Fall of a Memphis Maverick* (Charleston: History Press, 2011), 35.
- 47 The Grocerteria and Alpha-Beta stores in the Los Angeles area predated Saunders’ Piggly Wiggly stores. Will Soper, “Supermarkets,” *American History Illustrated* (March 1983), 18, 1: 43–44.
- 48 Freeman, *Clarence Saunders*, 48–50.
- 49 U.S. Patent No. 1,357,521 (issued November 2, 1920), p. 1, ll. 68–70.
- 50 Ibid., p. 3, ll. 27–32.
- 51 The courts eventually confirmed that Saunders’ patents were limited in scope to this single-aisle, must-pass layout and that self-service competitors using different circulation schemes in their sales departments did not infringe. *Piggly Wiggly Corp. v. Jitney Jungle Corp.*, 39 F2d 592 (1930).

- 52 U.S. Patent No. 1,357,521 (issued November 2, 1920), p. 3, ll.12–17. Saunders' other patents on the self-service store claim mechanical components such as price tags, lighting systems, and shelving units. U.S. Patent No. 1,297,405 (issued March 18, 1919) (price tagging means); U.S. Patent No. 1,397,824 (issued November 22, 1921) (display units); U.S. Patent No. 1,407,680 (issued February 21, 1922) (lighting system); U.S. Patent No. 1,437,554 (issued December 5, 1922) (combination of turnstile and cabinet); U.S. Patent No. 1,647,889 (issued November 1, 1927) (pyramidal display elements); U.S. Patent No. 1,704,061 (issued March 5, 1929) (combination of elevated walkway and shelving units). Saunders' final patent pertained to the mechanized Keedoozle store that he developed in the 1930s and 1940s. U.S. Patent No. 2,661,682 (issued December 8, 1953).
- 53 Jerry Cianciolo, "The Man Who Invented the Grocery Store," *The Wall Street Journal* (September 8, 2016), A11.
- 54 U.S. Patent Nos. 1,305,033 (issued March 5, 1915), 1,313,794 (issued August 19, 1919), 1,321,571 (issued November 11, 1919), 1,345,481 (issued July 6, 1920), 1,348,024 (issued July 27, 1920), 1,350,996 (issued August 24, 1920), 1,354,957 (issued October 5, 1920), 1,380,968 (issued June 7, 1921), 1,392,418 (issued October 4, 1921), 1,397,379 (issued November 15, 1921), 1,145,086 (issued March 27, 1923), 1,450,803 (issued April 23, 1923), 1,461,374 (issued July 10, 1923), 1,474,106 (issued November 13, 1923), 1,494,390 (issued May 20, 1924), 1,544,949 (issued July 7, 1925), 1,717,123 (issued June 11, 1929).
- 55 U.S. Patent No. 2,698,973 (issued January 11, 1955) ("multistory building structure"). This patent has been called "the first patent ever granted for an apartment building." Philip Jodidio and Janet Adams Strong, *I.M. Pei: Complete Works* (New York: Rizzoli, 2008), 22. However, this assertion is inaccurate. There are a number of earlier patents on multi-family housing structures. For example, Melusina Fey Peirce, an early feminist seeking to transform women's roles within the domestic sphere, patented an apartment building at the turn of the twentieth century. Dolores Hayden, *The Grand Domestic Revolution: A History of Feminist Designs for American Homes, Neighborhoods, and Cities* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1981), 85–86.
- 56 Jodidio and Strong, *I.M. Pei*, 21.
- 57 Patent No. 2,698,973, col. 6, ll. 78–85.
- 58 Ibid., col. 1, ll. 42–51; see also *ibid.*, col. 6, ll. 58–62.
- 59 Jodidio and Strong, *I.M. Pei*, 21; Carter Wiseman, *I.M. Pei: A Profile in American Architecture* (New York: H.H. Abrams, 1990), 51.
- 60 Jodidio and Strong, *I.M. Pei*, 23.
- 61 E.J. Kahn, "Big Operator," *The New Yorker* (December 8, 1951), 57.
- 62 Michael Cannell, *I.M. Pei: Mandarin of Modernism* (New York: Carol Southern Books, 1995), 98–99.
- 63 U.S. Patent No. 2,706,609 (issued March 22, 1955) ("automobile vertical conveyor"); U.S. Patent No. 2,670,859 (issued March 2, 1954) ("automobile parking system").
- 64 U.S. Patent No. 4,015,385 (issued April 5, 1977).
- 65 *Ibid.*, col. 4, l. 58 to col. 5, l. 12.
- 66 "Patent Pending on Pulte's Expandable Home," *Detroit Free Press*, Saturday (15 May 1976); "Pulte's Design Puts Buyers in the Market," *Chicago Tribune* (16 August 1975), W_B7; "Grand Opening: The Home with a Future," *The Washington Post* (12 July 1975), E28.
- 67 "Plain and Simple Makes No-Nonsense Approach," *Professional Builder: Apartment Business*, 41, 12 (1977): 78–79.
- 68 "Pulte Has Patent on Expandable Home," *Chicago Tribune*, Friday/Saturday (15–16 May 1981), sec. 3, p. 17.



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PART IV

Re-enactments



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10

BY THE BOOK

Philip Johnson's Ledoux redo at the University of Houston

Amanda Reeser Lawrence

In the early 1980s, Philip Johnson was invited by the University of Houston to design a new building for its School of Architecture, which had been housed in a “temporary” steel structure at the edge of campus since the 1940s. Although the architecture faculty had lobbied for an open international competition, going so far as to set up a fund and hire an advisor, the school ultimately discarded the competition plan in order to expedite the process.¹ Johnson’s name was put forth by a faculty group led by senior professors Burdette Keeland and Howard Barnstone, both longtime Johnson supporters. Following a cocktail party conversation, Keeland penned a letter to Johnson on February 9, 1981, asking if the university could “squeeze the first architectural schoolhouse out of you.”² On March 11, Johnson replied that he and his partner John Burgee were “naturally very excited to think of a) making an architectural statement b) doing an architectural school and c) doing a cultural building in that town of skyscrapers, Houston.”³

As told by Keeland and recounted by Frank Welch in his book *Philip Johnson & Texas*, Johnson and Burgee flew to Houston in May of 1983 to present the model of the project, transported in a Bloomingdale’s shopping bag.⁴ After taking the “exquisite” model out of the bag, which appeared to please the nervous group of University Regents, Johnson, with characteristic flair, reached into a second bag – this one from Tiffany’s – to produce another model of the “crown” – an open belvedere of classical columns – which he placed at the apex of the building. The design was unanimously approved by the Regents (Figure 10.1).

What most distinguished Johnson and Burgee’s proposal, however, wasn’t the ornamental crown or any other specific architectural feature but a much more fundamental quality: the building was a copy. More specifically, it was a copy of the “House of Education” designed by French neo-classical architect Claude Nicholas Ledoux for the ideal town of Chaux between 1773–1779, and first published in his 1804 *Architecture considérée sous le rapport de l'art, des moeurs et de la législation*⁵ (Figures 10.2 and 10.3). Indeed, Johnson and Burgee’s School of Architecture at first appears to be nearly identical to Ledoux’s earlier work; both are freestanding, symmetrical, cubic buildings with four-story wings that protrude from a central, taller cube, and are capped by pitched roofs; both are circumscribed by a continuous row of barrel arches



FIGURE 10.1 John Burgee and Philip Johnson with the model of the School of Architecture, University of Houston. Courtesy of University of Houston Architecture Visual Resources.



FIGURE 10.2 Johnson/Burgee Architects and Morris-Aubry Architects, School of Architecture, University of Houston, 1983–86. Courtesy of University of Houston Architecture Visual Resources. Photograph by Masoud Poshtiban.

at the third story; both have arched entrances at the midpoint of each wing; and both have an ornamental “crown” of columns – Johnson’s Tiffany jewel – placed atop the central crossing. Johnson, who neither denied nor acknowledged the reference at the time, would later refer to the project as “the Ledoux building I did.”⁶

Although the Regents approved the design, University of Houston students and faculty were dismayed, if not outraged, not only by the choice of Johnson and Burgee as the project architects, but by the blatantly derivative nature of the project. In an inter-departmental memo of 1981 addressed to the architecture faculty, Professor John Zemanek, opposed to the choice of Johnson, enclosed a scathing review of his work by Ada Louise Huxtable, with a handwritten note at the bottom: “Picking the right architect should be more than getting on the fastest, loudest bandwagon. Who are we serving?”⁷ At the groundbreaking in April 1984, student “demonstrators” held signs asking, “Why does an Architecture Building Have to be a Copy?” and “Ledoux or Not Ledoux.”⁸ Both local and international press lambasted the “slapdash” project.⁹ Charles Jencks describes it as a “thinning out” of Ledoux’s original.¹⁰ And in his critical biography of Johnson, Franz Schulze delivers perhaps the most damning condemnation of the building, calling it Johnson’s “most audacious exercise in stylistic disentombment” (even among his “meretricious” and “vulgar” projects of the time) and “less an act of derivation than of freebooting.”¹¹

This near universal disdain for the project is surprising given the openly derivative nature of so many of Johnson’s architectural works. Are the historic appropriations at the School of Architecture really so distinctive within Johnson’s “conspicuously unoriginal” career?¹² As a point of comparison, consider the AT&T building in New York of 1984, the “first postmodern monument,” in which Johnson famously deploys an ornamental “Chippendale” crown, along with stone arches and colonnades borrowed from classical vocabulary. Or the PPG building in Pittsburgh, also of 1984, which appropriates Gothic rather than classical motifs, modeling crenellations and pointed arches out of a million square feet of glass. Although both buildings

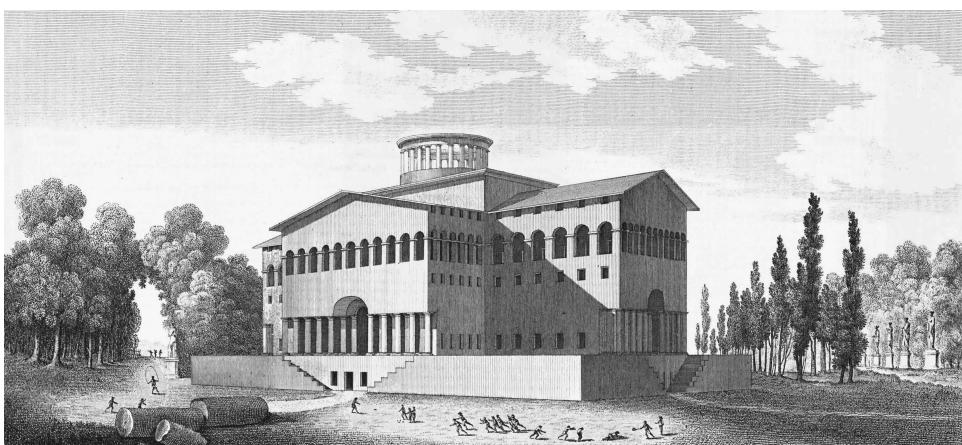


FIGURE 10.3 Claude Nicholas Ledoux, House of Education, 1773–79, perspective. *L'Architecture de C. N. Ledoux*. Edited by Anthony Vidler (Princeton, NJ: Princeton Architectural Press in association with the Avery Architectural and Fine Arts Library of Columbia University, 1984).

received their share of criticisms – Huxtable labeled them “shallow, cerebral design and such bad pieces of architecture”¹³ – neither is as maligned as the School of Architecture. And let’s not forget that Johnson’s House at New Canaan of 1949 – arguably his best-known work – is also a “copy” of Mies van der Rohe’s Farnsworth House – an interpretation that I will both elaborate upon and contest later in the chapter. But while the Glass House has been subject to innumerable studies and interpretations, the School of Architecture remains historically untouched. It is left out of most critical assessments of Johnson’s work, a seemingly undistinguished example of his postmodern “vulgar” works. This theoretical lacuna speaks to a persistent anti-postmodern bias within architectural history and theory, but also suggests an inability or unwillingness to consider architectural copying – unlike its less forceful cousins “referencing” or “alluding to” or even “inspired by” – as a legitimate aspect of architectural design.

As a counterpoint, this chapter investigates the act of copying as a starting point rather than a conclusion, an invitation to inquiry rather than a theoretical dead end; it considers how and through whom Johnson knew Ledoux’s work, the ways in which Ledoux’s House of Education was both mimicked and transgressed by Johnson, as well as other acts of copying in Johnson’s oeuvre. The aim is neither to resuscitate nor sully Johnson’s reputation, nor to proselytize on behalf of nor denigrate the neo-historicist architectural language of American postmodernism, nor even to offer a more nuanced interpretation of the School of Architecture building, but to broaden the lens through which we might carefully and critically consider the architectural copy.

Inexact copies

It is worth considering for a moment how the comparison between Johnson and Burgee’s School of Architecture and Ledoux’s House of Education is typically made. Ledoux’s project was never built; the sum total of its existence is three plates printed in Ledoux’s *Architecture*: Plate 218 depicts plans of its four floors (Figure 10.4); Plate 219 includes a section and elevation (Figure 10.5); and Plate 220, the most reproduced image, is a perspective view (Figure 10.3). Johnson and Burgee’s project, by contrast, is accompanied by the extensive documentation of any twentieth-century building, including drawings, correspondence, and countless photographs. And yet, relying on a long-standing Wolfsonian tradition, the comparison between the two projects is made consistently and almost exclusively on a single pair of images placed side by side; Ledoux’s perspective from Plate 218 and a photograph of the completed Johnson and Burgee building, ideally taken at an angle that approximates that of the Ledoux perspective. But even a cursory glance at this pair of images reveals that, despite their immediate and overwhelming similarities, the two projects depicted are not the same. The School of Architecture is not an exact copy.

For one, the Johnson and Burgee scheme appears to be of a different scale than its predecessor. Ledoux’s scheme was designed to accommodate eight students and sixty-four professors. As the plans and sections in *Architecture* depict, professors have apartments on the second “Entresol” floor, while student dormitory rooms occupy the third and fourth floor. On the first floor are classrooms and galleries, and in the most prominent space at the center is the chapel – a triple-height space lit from the circular colonnaded crown above. Johnson and Burgee’s scheme, by contrast, was designed to accommodate 40 professors and 640 students, as well as a library, lecture halls, and offices, which occupy most of the first floor. Architectural studios take the place of apartments and dormitories on the upper floor – and they now

Maison d'Education.

Pl. 218



FIGURE 10.4 Claude Nicholas Ledoux, House of Education, 1773–79, plans. *L'Architecture de C. N. Ledoux*. Edited by Anthony Vidler (Princeton, NJ: Princeton Architectural Press in association with the Avery Architectural and Fine Arts Library of Columbia University, 1984).

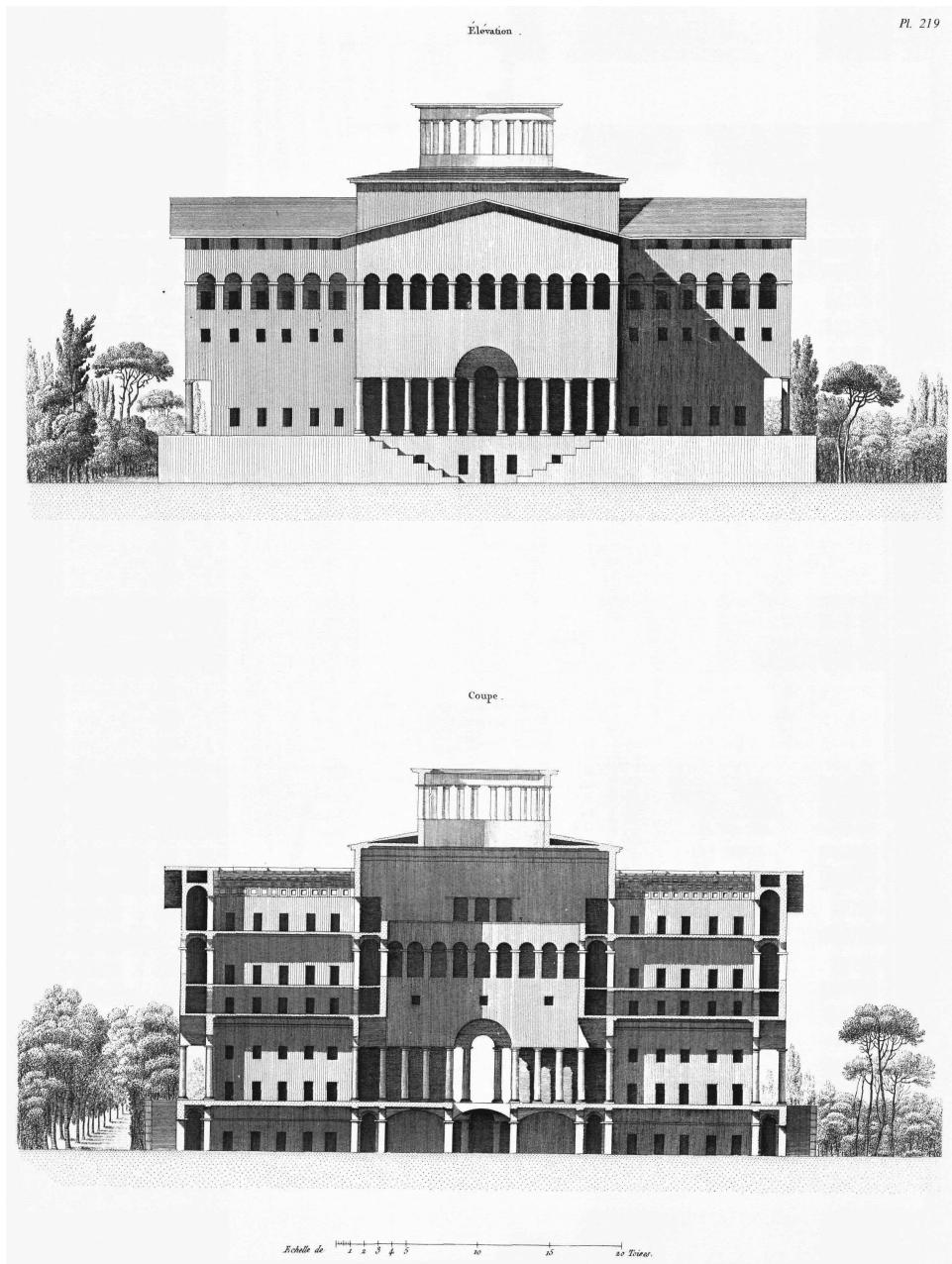


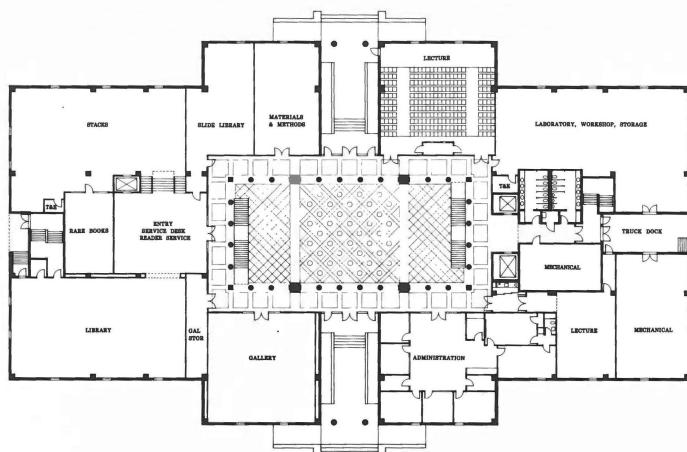
FIGURE 10.5 Claude Nicholas Ledoux, House of Education, 1773–79, plan and section. *L'Architecture de C. N. Ledoux*. Edited by Anthony Vidler (Princeton: Princeton Architectural Press in association with the Avery Architectural and Fine Arts Library of Columbia University, 1984).

open to the large central atrium space (Figures 10.6, 10.7). It is not surprising, then, to find that in most accounts, Johnson and Burgee's scheme is described as larger than Ledoux's – in one case, even “inflated to Texas proportions.”¹⁴ But while Johnson and Burgee's project was indeed designed to house more students and faculty, along with additional program, comparison of the drawings of the two schemes reveals that, in fact, their later scheme was approximately half the size of Ledoux's original design in its plan dimension.¹⁵

If we return to that first pair of images, we notice other differences as well. Johnson and Burgee swap Ledoux's circular belvedere at the top of the building for a rectangular one. Instead of the colonnade running along the façade of each of the four wings in the House of Education, each façade of the School of Architecture is anchored by a central arch flanked by two rectangular openings in an abstracted Palladian “motif” (echoing in miniature the massive entry at AT&T). The number and locations of windows is also different, particularly the small square windows at the mid-level which run continuously around the School of Architecture building rather than solely on the sides of the four wings. And Ledoux's neoclassical base is gone.

The removal of the base is worth noting as more than a superficial modification. In Ledoux's design, the full-story masonry base not only houses service programs such as laundry, offices, and dining areas, it elevates the entire scheme and creates a monumental entry sequence on all four sides. Johnson and Burgee not only eliminate the base, they substitute in its place an *exceedingly* thin granite strip – at 2' 4-3/8" high, it effectively disappears from any distance – which circumscribes the building perimeter. The dimension of the strip has no relation to the structure: construction details reveal that the granite face is narrower than the concrete footing it conceals (Figure 10.8). So what is the logic behind not only eliminating the base but also inserting this black “line” as a substitute? For one, the removal of the base changes the entry sequence to the main atrium space, which now occurs through the central Palladian arch directly onto the ground floor, rather than through sets of monumental stairs. This facilitates movement through the building, which was conceived as a “gateway” onto the prime axis of campus. But more importantly, it radically modifies the perception of the building as a stable entity. The monumental volume of the School of Architecture seems to hover just above the ground, with that thin black granite strip marking its shadow line.

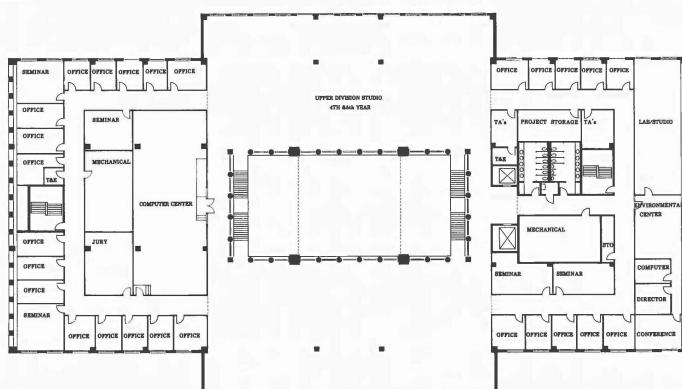
But to what degree do these differences make a difference? Do we need to reconsider Johnson and Burgee's building as a copy given its divergences from the Ledoux original? We can ask these same questions of Johnson's Glass House, which is also a non-exact copy. The differences between Johnson's Glass House and Mies's Farnsworth house are well established: Johnson substitutes a black steel frame for the white one; his glass walls are pushed to the perimeter rather than receding behind the steel columns; his house is entered on center at each of the four sides, rather than singularly from one side. And, most significantly for our discussion here, Johnson recasts Mies's precedent – which *actually* hovers above the floodplain in Plano, Illinois – by planting it firmly on the ground. The fact that both the Glass House and the School of Architecture share a compromised originality, that both are unquestioned appropriations *and* unique artifacts, creates an uncomfortable equivalence between them. Moreover, the architectural strategies that Johnson uses in each instance run counter to the historicity of the precedents themselves; in “grounding” Mies and “floating” Ledoux Johnson creates a neoclassical base for the modern precedent, and modernist reveal for the neoclassical one. Together the two projects enact a kind of historical inversion: Johnson acting like a postmodernist in 1949, and like a modernist in 1986.



FLOOR 1 PLAN

0' 10' 20' 50'

UNIVERSITY OF HOUSTON COLLEGE OF ARCHITECTURE BUILDING

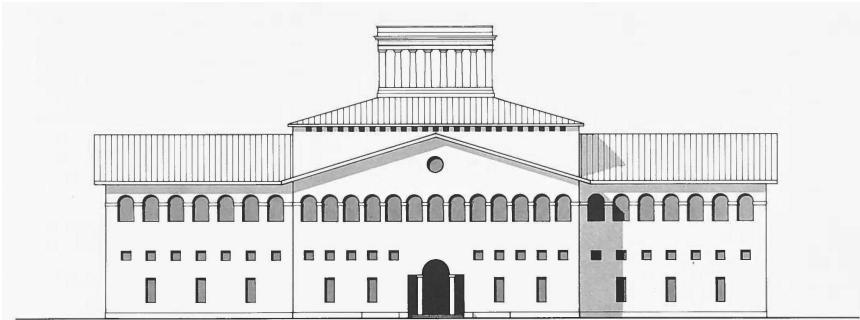


FLOOR 3 PLAN

0' 10' 20' 50'

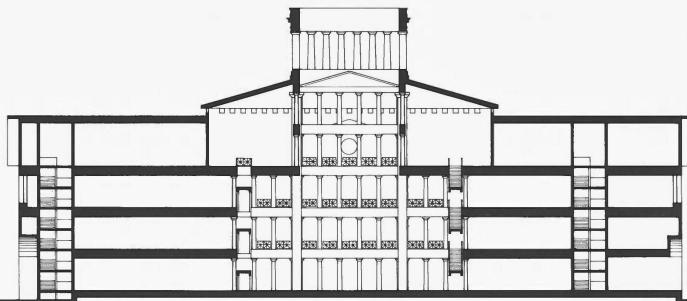
UNIVERSITY OF HOUSTON COLLEGE OF ARCHITECTURE BUILDING

FIGURE 10.6 Johnson/Burgee Architects and Morris-Aubry Architects, School of Architecture, University of Houston, 1983–86, ground floor and third floor plans. Courtesy of University of Houston Architecture Visual Resources.



ELEVATION

UNIVERSITY OF HOUSTON COLLEGE OF ARCHITECTURE BUILDING



SECTION

UNIVERSITY OF HOUSTON COLLEGE OF ARCHITECTURE BUILDING

FIGURE 10.7 Johnson/Burgee Architects and Morris-Aubry Architects, School of Architecture, University of Houston, 1983–86, elevation and long section. Courtesy of University of Houston Architecture Visual Resources.

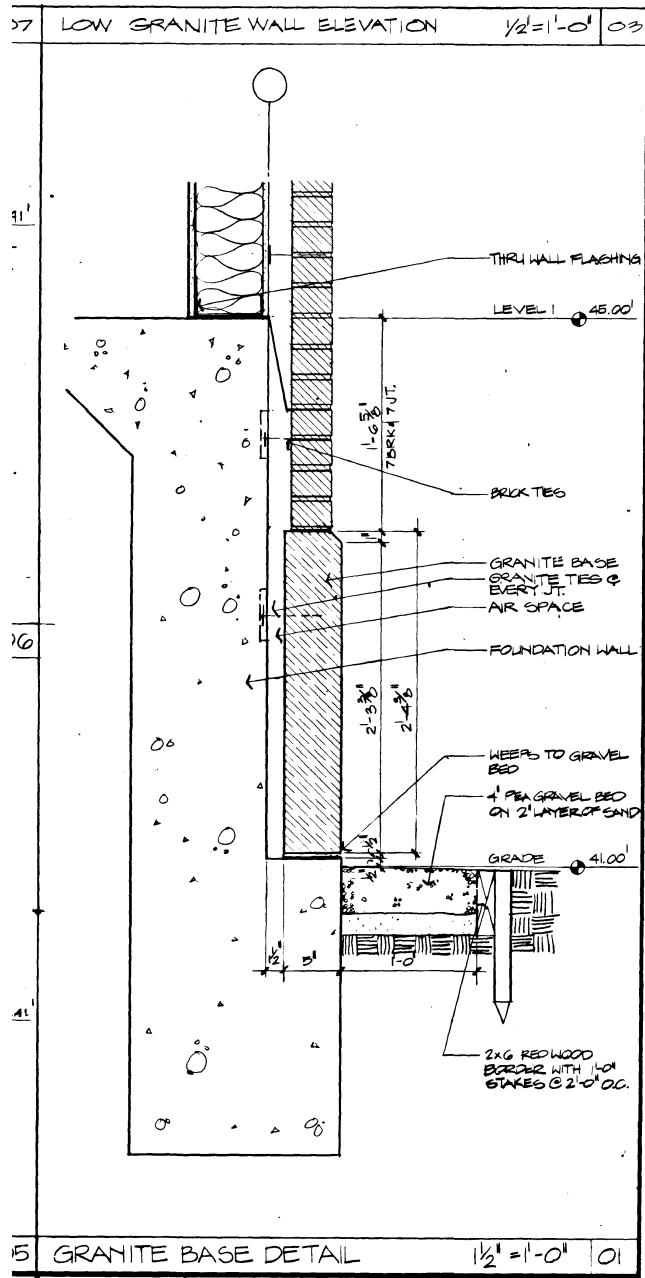


FIGURE 10.8 Johnson/Burgee Architects and Morris-Aubry Architects, School of Architecture, University of Houston, 1983–86, detail of the granite base moulding. Courtesy of University of Houston Architecture Visual Resources.

Versioning Ledoux

In his well-known article “House at New Canaan,” published in the *Architectural Review* in 1950, Johnson enumerates the sources for his Glass House (Figure 10.9). The Farnsworth House is of course included – “The idea of a glass house comes from Mies van der Rohe . . . My debt is therefore clear” – as is Mies’s plan for Illinois Institute of Technology (IIT).¹⁶ Less predictably, however, Johnson includes a number of other “sources of his inspiration” both modern and remote, along with specific descriptions of how each of them impacted his design: from a 1933 farm village plan by Le Corbusier he “copied” the footpath pattern; the arrangement of the glass house and neighboring guest house “follows” a drawing of the Acropolis at Athens from Auguste Choisy’s *L’Histoire de l’Art Grecque*. From Karl Friedrich Schinkel’s 1830 Casino in Glienicker Park near Potsdam, Johnson derived the siting of his Glass House – overlooking a bluff and with a “dead-level” entrance that is “Schinkelesque.”¹⁷

Johnson also includes among his sources a project by Ledoux: the Maisons des Gardes Agricoles – a project, like the House of Education, designed for the ideal town of Chaux. The image of the project depicts an unadorned spherical building in a sunken rectangular



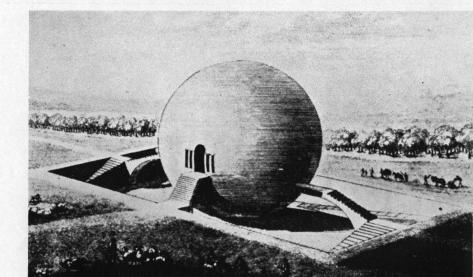
5 Karl Friedrich Schinkel: Casino in Glienicker Park near Potsdam c. 1830. Entrance façade.

The site relation of my house is pure Neo-Classical Romantic—more specifically, Schinkelesque. Like his Casino my house is approached on dead-level and, like his, faces its principal (rear) façade toward a sharp bluff.



6 Karl Friedrich Schinkel: Casino in Glienicker Park near Potsdam c. 1830. Terrace overlooking the Havel.

The Eighteenth Century preferred more regular sites than this and the Post-Romantic Revivalists preferred hill tops to the cliff edges or shelves of the Romantics (Frank Lloyd Wright, that great Romantic, prefers shelves or hillsides).



7 Claude Nicholas Ledoux: Maison des Gardes Agricoles, at Maupertuis c. 1780.

The cubic, “absolute” form of my glass house, and the separation of functional units into two absolute shapes rather than a major and minor massing of parts comes directly from Ledoux, the Eighteenth Century father of modern architecture. (See Emil Kaufmann’s excellent study Von Ledoux bis Le Corbusier.) The cube and the sphere, the pure mathematical shapes, were dear to the hearts of those intellectual revolutionaries from the



8 Mies van der Rohe: Farnsworth House, 1947. (Now under construction near Chicago).

The idea of a glass house comes from Mies van der Rohe. Mies had mentioned to me as early as 1945 how nice it would be to build a house entirely of large sheets of glass. I had never heard of him at the time, and it was not until I had seen the sketches of the Farnsworth House that I started the three-year work of designing my glass house. My debt is therefore clear, in spite of obvious difference in composition and relation to the ground.

FIGURE 10.9 Philip Johnson, “House at New Canaan, Connecticut,” *Architectural Review* 108 (1950): 154.

plot, with four stairs that lead up to and puncture the sphere, along with an accompanying description:

The cubic, “absolute” form of my glass house and the separation of functional units into two absolute shapes rather than a major or minor massing of parts comes directly from Ledoux, the eighteenth-century father of modern architecture (see Emil Kaufmann’s excellent study *Von Ledoux bis Le Corbusier*). The cube and the sphere, the pure mathematical shapes, were dear to the hearts of those intellectual revolutionaries from the Baroque, and we are their descendants.¹⁸

It is perhaps surprising to see the reference to Ledoux so early in his career – long before he became a referential darling for Johnson and others in the 1970s and 1980s – but Johnson’s familiarity with Ledoux predated the House of Education by nearly fifty years, and came largely if not completely through the writings and teachings of the Austrian-born architectural historian Kaufmann. Beginning in 1930, with his publication *Von Ledoux bis Le Corbusier*, Emil Kaufman more or less single-handedly revived Ledoux’s reputation among European and American architects. As Anthony Vidler has argued, Kaufmann’s work on Ledoux – particularly *Von Ledoux bis Le Corbusier*, with its explicit connection between modernism and the seventeenth century, and the very book that Johnson singles out in his *Architectural Review* article on the Glass House – exerted a profound influence on postwar American and European architects generally, and Johnson specifically. The young Johnson, Vidler writes, was “touched” by the “influence” of Kaufmann in the 1940s, “endowing Johnson’s own traduction of Mies with neoclassical overtones.”¹⁹ In 1940 Johnson hosted the preeminent Ledoux scholar at his home in Cambridge, Massachusetts for a talk sponsored by the newly created Society of Architectural Historians, which was later published as “Claude-Nicolas Ledoux, Inaugurator.”²⁰

In this article, Kaufmann positions Ledoux as a “revolutionary” architect. By revolutionary he does not mean politically radical – in fact, Kaufmann notes, Ledoux was a political conservative, someone “who thought of the monarchy as the Golden Age, and who welcomed the rising star Napoleon.”²¹ Instead, Kaufmann argues that in spite of his politics Ledoux was revolutionary because he articulated an entirely new “architectural system.” He goes on to describe a “fundamental transformation” in architecture in the late eighteenth century that not only “foreshadowed” the nineteenth-century “retrospective tendencies,” it even anticipated “a number of twentieth century features.”²² This took some theoretical sleight of hand, given the fact that Ledoux’s work “presented the familiar motives of the Classical Revival.”²³ Kaufmann asks his 1943 readers to look beyond the apparently historicist language to a more fundamental idea within the work: “One cannot grasp the meaning of his work by hunting for similarities in the works of Palladio or Piranesi. He himself warned against the critics who confine themselves to comparison.”²⁴

While acknowledging Ledoux’s debt to the past, Kaufmann takes pains to differentiate his positioning of history as something that looked forward rather than behind, as well as emphasizing his functionalist reading of history. In his 1952 book *Three Revolutionary Architects*, which features the work of Ledoux as well as his eighteenth-century counterparts Étienne-Louis Boullée and Jean-Jacques Lequeu, Kaufmann writes: “Even when he used some model, he had a definite reason for choosing it to accord with his artistic goal. What is important is not where his work comes from but where it leads.”²⁵ His argument is essentially one of

degrees: Kaufmann claims that Ledoux was *less* wedded to classical forms than his contemporaries. “Features taken from antique models were less dear to Ledoux than to others of his day, particularly to contemporary critics. He even warned against imitating or copying the antique, finding it unamenable to modern requirements.”²⁶ It is also, of course, an argument that reflects both the revisionist impulses of the historian – searching retroactively for “modern” qualities in this eighteenth-century work – as well as a recognition of the historicity of any particular moment; Ledoux could only go so far.

To return to Johnson’s evocation of Ledoux in his text about the Glass House, although the notion that anything in the steel and glass house “comes directly” from Ledoux’s eighteenth-century stone sphere seems somewhat misplaced – particularly given the fact that Johnson also tells us that the Glass House is “frankly derivative” of Mies²⁷ – if we apply Kaufmann’s interpretation of Ledoux as a “revolutionary,” and, as he urged us to do, resist the urge to search for similarities or a repository of “forms to be imitated,” but instead consider Ledoux’s architecture as embodying a set of “absolute” forms, the link between the two works is made clear. For Johnson in 1949, Ledoux represented a “new” architectural system, not a neoclassical precedent. Through Kaufmann’s interpretation, Ledoux’s “absolute” sphere becomes, for Johnson, an equally “absolute” cube.

But what about the House of Education? Isn’t Johnson violating the core principles of Ledoux, the architect who, according to Kaufmann, “warned against imitating or copying the antique”? Here we have to look for another version of Ledoux put forth by Kaufmann. In *Three Revolutionary Architects*, Kaufmann discusses Ledoux’s House of Education as embodying qualities of “juxtaposition” and “non-integration.” In particular, he describes the colonnade (or belvedere) at the top as “distinguished from Baroque tones” by its “lack of formal affinity to the structure. In the nineteenth century, cupolas were similarly placed on prismatic blocks, and could be removed without any harm to the whole. Often even an aesthetic improvement might result from such an amputation.”²⁸ Kaufmann suggests that the belvedere wasn’t integral to the project; it could be substituted with another form, or even removed. Indeed, the project might even be *better* if it was. Moreover, it was just one of a number of parts or “elements” of the project that could be shifted and recombined. With its “removable” prismatic blocks, the House of Education, in Kaufmann’s reading, is a precedent *susceptible* to change. In these terms, Johnson was simply taking Kaufmann at his word: removing, rearranging, and recombinining elements of Ledoux’s House of Education into a new combination. The circular crown was swapped for a square one, a gesture that would induce no “harm.” The missing base could be seen as an “amputation” that might even be an “improvement” to the project. Neoclassical buildings, Kaufmann suggests, were easy to take apart and put back together.

According to those working in Johnson’s office at the time, the process of adapting Ledoux’s House of Education for the University of Houston was indeed quick and easy, with Johnson’s initial sketch ideas for the project translated into the final design within a matter of weeks.²⁹ There is virtually no process material, no elaboration of different schemes; Johnson described to colleagues how “fitting” the precedent seemed for a school of architecture, with its open plan and spaces around a central opening, but never publically spoke about the choice.³⁰ While this is not atypical for Johnson to downplay process work – he often spoke of his ineptitude at drawing – it is still remarkable that Johnson offers no insight into how or why he chose this particular Ledoux project – only an acknowledgment of the wholesale appropriation of the predecessor, “the Ledoux building I did.” This stands in stark contrast to the Glass House, where he so carefully delineated his sources.

Perhaps the singularity of the source at the University of Houston seemed so obvious that he felt he didn't need to reveal it. Or, maybe, within the context of the 1980s, the use of precedent, particularly in Johnson's work, was all but expected. It was therefore a question of which not whether – unlike in the culture of the late 1940s where his admission of influence was “unusual,” and his strategy of appropriation at odds with the still-predominant modernist ideology. The eclecticism of the sources for the Glass House (Mies, Schinkel, Ledoux?) and the catholic and unapologetic language delineating strategies of imitation (“copy,” “follow,” “influence”) were decidedly more 1980s than 1950s.³¹ But the difference between the two works was not only in their respective stylistic languages, or even in Johnson's depth of confession, but in the fact they brought forward two different versions of Ledoux, both of which Johnson derived from Kaufmann: a “cubic” and “absolute” Ledoux in the 1940s versus an “elementalist” Ledoux in the 1980s.

Historical crutches

In a 1954 talk given to students at Harvard, which would later be published as “The Seven Crutches of Modern Architecture,” Johnson elaborates on what he saw as the “shortcuts” taken by teachers and students alike in the design process. The first of these “crutches,” he states, was history – though, in 1954, he finds that this “most important crutch” was no longer as much of an issue: “History doesn't bother us very much now. . . . In the old days you could always rely on books. You could say, ‘What do you mean you don't like my tower? There it is in Wren.’” Or, “They did that on the Subtreasury Building – why can't I do it.”³² The use of history, Johnson suggests, props up the designer in the face of arbitrary aesthetic judgment providing justification for presumably extraneous, non-utilitarian design decisions. By the 1980s, much of the profession, in addition to Johnson himself, was back on historical crutches.³³ So was Johnson simply acting as a “chameleon,” as many have dubbed him, changing his colors to match the style of the day? Had Neoclassicism – or just classicism more broadly – become a generic in 1986 in the same way that Mesian modernism had been in 1949?

Craig Owens argues that Johnson's use of history is a form of genealogy in the way that Nietzsche defined it – as something in opposition to history. Writing about the Glass House, Owens argues that its modernity emerges from the fact that historical sources are not placed in any kind of traditional order but as a “radical dispersal of history.”³⁴ For Owens, Johnson's revealing of his sources in the Glass House is a “reinterpretation and rearrangement” of the past, in which the earlier pieces lose their meaning.³⁵ Owens goes on to argue that “with the exception of Mies's works, there is no immediate resemblance between the sources cited by Johnson and his Glass House.” But these non-Mesian sources – which are decidedly unreadable and unknowable in the final form of the Glass House itself – could also be read as a smokescreen, an attempt to throw us off the unmistakable but problematic nature of the copy. By the 1980s Johnson no longer feels the need to tell us his sources, nor complicate the singularity of the reference. In other words, he's no long afraid of the copy.

In writing about his work in the 1980s, Johnson's biographer Schulze suggests that novelty could be found in the choice of esoteric sources – guild halls, for example, in the Republic Bank of 1984, which were not typically associated with skyscraper design – and that the choice of such lesser-known precedents was appealing for Johnson precisely because of their apparent “originality” in a time “when his history source books were growing dog-eared.”³⁶

Although Johnson offers no insight into how or why he chose Ledoux's House of Education – other than telling his colleagues what “fitting” choice it seemed – could we read a kind of originality into Johnson’s choice of this relatively unknown project? He didn’t choose Ledoux’s Coopers house, for example, or even the Maison d’Agricole, both much better-known and well-published examples of his *architecture parlante* from Chaux. Although Kaufmann had included the House of Education in some of his publications, it was neither widely published nor wellknown. The House of Education was thus not only a “fitting” one for the task at hand, but also an esoteric and novel one.

And yet this question of *which* precedent or even its relative novelty doesn’t get at the question of how or why the precedent is appropriated and reconfigured. When Johnson references Ledoux at the Glass House there is no visual record of the source, only the proto-functionalist sensibility of a “cubic” mass. At the School of Architecture, by contrast, the specificity of the form – rather than its quality as an “absolute” form – is inescapable, and seemingly swallowed whole. If what Johnson (via Kaufmann) locates in Ledoux is a radical, “revolutionary,” even proto-modern sensibility, then to copy that form represents a fundamentally contradictory position insofar as it is regressive rather than revolutionary. This is the paradox at the heart of revivalism: replicating the form that embodies qualities one admires does not ensure a replication of those qualities, and in fact may seemingly contradict those qualities. Moreover, if the qualities that one admires are the “revolutionary” ones, an architecture that was allegedly advancing new ideas and architectural propositions, then the replication of that form effectively cancels out those aims.

In 1986, as part of a history course he was teaching at the University of Houston, architect Ben Nicholson and his students built a full-scale cardboard replica of Donato Bramante’s Tempietto of 1502 in the central atrium of Johnson and Burgee’s brand-new School of Architecture building³⁷ (Figure 10.10). Nicholson’s students used their book money to buy materials. Nineteenth-century drawings from books in the School of Architecture library served as their working drawings, and a mason was consulted to help execute the building and translate stone masses into cardboard ribs. Nicholson recalls that the inspiration for the work was a seeming similarity between the size of courtyard of the School of Architecture and the one in which the Tempietto was built in Rome.³⁸

Johnson never publicly commented on Nicholson’s project. And though the scale of the two projects, the length of execution, and their respective intents could not be more different, as a pair, Johnson and Burgee’s School of Architecture and Nicholson’s Tempietto offer further insights into the questions that surround architectural copying. Nicholson and his students translated an early sixteenth-century stone building into cardboard. Johnson and his team translated eighteenth-century drawings of an unbuilt project into brick and stone. In both cases, the openness and directness of the reference is unmistakable and unrestrained. But Nicholson’s replica as a bald-faced critique of postmodernism’s facile mimicry is both more acceptable and more radical. We understand that it is not supposed to be the actual Tempietto: it’s made of cardboard, not stone; it’s sitting in an atrium in Houston thousands of miles from the Janiculum hill in Rome; it lasted for only a few months, rather than a few centuries. The copy is safely removed from its original, both in actual distance and in its material execution – and because of this distance we can comment on the cleverness of the translation (like Johnson and Burgee’s building, it too has many differences from its apparent double in Rome); of the ingenuity in executing the cardboard structure; of the feat of raising the project in the space. The School of Architecture, however, is both more earnest – this is a serious, expensive,



FIGURE 10.10 Benjamin Nicholson and students, cardboard replica of Donato Bramante's Tempietto installed in the atrium of the School of Architecture, University of Houston, 1986. Photography by Paul Hester.

academic building – but also more mischievous – the reference to Ledoux is blatantly obvious but never discussed.

In writing about the Glass House, Peter Eisenman described a sense of historical inversion: in looking at Johnson's project vis-à-vis Mies's "original" we tend to confuse the original for the copy; in other words, Johnson's "later" version appears to be first.³⁹ Harold Bloom defines a similar quality in poetry as "Apophrades" or the "return of the dead," when a poet "holds open" his poem to a precursor's work so that it seems to come to life again in the later one: the "uncanny effect is that the new poet's achievement makes it seem to us, not as though the precursor were writing it, but as though the later poet himself had written the

precursor's characteristic work."⁴⁰ While we may never confuse the School of Architecture with its eighteenth-century counterpart, or Nicholson's Tempietto for Bramante's, there is nevertheless a kind of Bloomian historical disorientation in their respective pairings. Elapsed time collapses through their sameness. But they also reorient our understanding of the precedent: Ledoux is now read through Johnson, Bramante through Nicholson, and vice versa. To say that more simply and more broadly, we re-see the past through the present most forcefully in a copy. Johnson's Glass House, by contrast, while equally imitative, occupies the same historical moment as its source, so the sense of revisioning is less pronounced. Johnson's work may appear to be "first," as Eisenman claims, but this does little to affect our understanding of Mies; if anything, it reaffirms Mies as a "strong" architect.

Looking back on the period in which he designed and constructed the School of Architecture ten years after its completion, at a lecture given in the building itself, Johnson described the historicism of the 1980s as liberating, as something new: "it felt wonderful that I could connect with the past. Felt avant-garde."⁴¹ In this framing, the historicist is no longer regressive but progressive. While this claim seems both ridiculous and, as is always the case with Johnson, potentially insincere, it also highlights the slipperiness of architectural signifiers – can the seemingly *arrière-garde* act of copying an eighteenth-century radical become radical? At the very least, it cracks upon, if only through suggestion, our most treasured disciplinary ideology: an alignment of progress with originality. If Rosalind Krauss and others long ago taught us to mistrust the avant-garde's claims to originality, perhaps it is time to reconsider foundational myths about the unoriginal as well.⁴²

Notes

- 1 Faculty and administration were apparently skittish about a competition process, given earlier failed attempts. In addition, the administration wanted to ensure that the approved state funding remained in place, given a gubernatorial election in the fall of 1982. See Mark Hewitt, "Much Ledoux About Nothing? A New Building for the University of Houston College of Architecture," *Cite* (Fall 1983): 8. For a thorough account of the building's history, see Drexel Turner, *Open Plan: The History of the College of Architecture University of Houston 1945–95* (Houston: Atrium Press, 1995).
- 2 Letter from Burdette Keeland to Philip Johnson dated February 9, 1981. "I have personally chatted with the Chairman of the Regents, proper alumnus, and the necessary faculty members about asking you if there is any possible way that you would accept a commission in your favorite city of Houston, Tejas (stet)." Burdette Keeland Architectural Papers, 1926–2000, University of Houston Libraries (Hereafter "Burdette Keeland Papers"): Series 3, Box 3, Folder 24.
- 3 Letter from Philip Johnson to Burdette Keeland, dated March 11, 1981. Burdette Keeland, Series 3, Box 3, Folder 24.
- 4 Frank D. Welch, *Philip Johnson and Texas* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2000), 209.
- 5 Though the volume was first begun in the 1780s, the encyclopedic work wasn't completed for another twelve years, much of it during Ledoux's imprisonment from 1793–94. C.N. Ledoux, *Architecture considérée sous le rapport de l'art, des moeurs et de la législation*. Edited by Anthony Vidler, published as *L'Architecture de C.N. Ledoux* (Princeton: Princeton Architectural Press in association with the Avery Architectural and Fine Arts Library of Columbia University, 1984).
- 6 Philip Johnson, *Philip Johnson: The Architect in, NJ His Own Words*. Edited by Hilary Lewis, O'Connor and John Timothy (New York, NY: Rizzoli International Publications, 1994), 163.
- 7 Zemanek's memo includes two clippings; one a "Conversation with Philip Johnson," in *Arch Plus* 1973, in which Johnson famously describes himself as a "whore" who would "work for the devil himself;" and a 1981 Ada Louise Huxtable review from *Architectural Record* which includes the remarks quoted earlier about the AT&T Building in New York and the PPG Industries Building in Pittsburgh as "shallow, cerebral design and such bad pieces of architecture." Burdette Keeland Papers Series 3, Box 3, Folder 22.

- 8 Welch, *Philip Johnson and Texas*, 209. In fact this was a false groundbreaking set up by Keeland – complete with cardboard shovels. The next day Johnson met with university administrators for the “real” event.
- 9 Hewitt, “Much Ledoux About Nothing,” 9.
- 10 Charles Jencks, *Post Modernism: The New Classicism in Art and Architecture* (London: Academy Editions, 1987), 234.
- 11 Franz Schulze, *Philip Johnson: Life and Work* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1996), 368–369.
- 12 In his discussion of Johnson’s House at New Canaan, Jeff Kipnis writes: “Throughout his career, Johnson has not only been conspicuously unoriginal, he has, by virtue of his habitual rostering of references, positioned himself against the myth of architectural originality,” David Whitney and Jeffrey Kipnis, eds., *Philip Johnson: The Glass House* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1993), 10.
- 13 Ada Louise Huxtable, “The Troubled State of Modern Architecture,” *Architectural Record*, January 1981.
- 14 Welch, *Johnson and Texas*, 210.
- 15 Ledoux’s base is approximately 296 feet square. It has a footprint of around 86,000 square feet, while Johnson and Burgees, at 286' 5/8" by 151' 9 7/8" is close to 44,000 square feet. (Ledoux’s scales that appear on the plates in *L’Architecture* are given in Toises, a French measurement dating to the early medieval era and based on the dimension of a man’s outstretched arms. My calculations derive from a base measurement of 46.25 Toises, and a conversion of 6.395 feet per Toise.)
- 16 Johnson, “House at New Canaan,” 154. From the six-foot closet module to the asymmetrical furniture grouping to the steel corner details, Johnson ascribes nearly every feature of his house as “indebted to” or “adapted from” the project, the plans for which Mies had shown to Johnson as early as 1946. *Ibid.*, *passim*.
- 17 *Ibid.*, *passim*. The Choisy drawing had also featured prominently in Le Corbusier’s *Towards a New Architecture*.
- 18 *Ibid.*, 154.
- 19 Anthony Vidler, “Histories of the Immediate Present: Inventing Architectural Modernism, 1930–1975,” (PhD dissertation, TU Delft), 18. Later published as Anthony Vidler, *Histories of the Immediate Present: Inventing Architectural Modernism* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2008).
- 20 Emil Kaufmann, “Claude-Nicolas Ledoux, Inaugurator,” *Journal of the American Society of Architectural Historians*, 3, 3 (July 1943): 12–20.
- 21 *Ibid.*, 15.
- 22 *Ibid.*, 12.
- 23 *Ibid.*, 16.
- 24 Emil Kaufman, *Three Revolutionary Architects: Boullée, Ledoux, and Lequeu* (Philadelphia: The American Philosophical Society, 1952), 479.
- 25 *Ibid.*, 521.
- 26 Kaufmann, “Inaugurator,” 17.
- 27 Mies had shown Johnson plans for the Farnsworth house as early as 1945, discussing “how easy it would be” to build a house of large sheets of glass. Johnson, “House at New Canaan, Connecticut,” 154.
- 28 Kaufmann, *Three Revolutionary Architects*, 522.
- 29 Conversation with Stephen Achilles, project manager for Johnson Burgee architects, September 8, 2016.
- 30 Conversation with Stephen Achilles.
- 31 Johnson seems compelled to account for every aspect of the project in terms of its source, even banal or generic elements: next to an image of the simple bar kitchen he writes “I have no idea what precedent I followed on that.” Johnson, “House at New Canaan,” 159.
- 32 *Ibid.* No doubt his inflammatory remarks were largely a provocation to the Gropius-controlled Harvard by the Miesian acolyte – though, as is typical of Johnson’s polemics, this particular statement directly contradicts his architectural work at the time (not to mention his own polemics – in 1959 he would famously declare “One cannot not know history.”)
- 33 Much of this historicist work was centered in and around Houston, and completed largely for the developer Gerald Hines, for whom Johnson’s School of Architecture would eventually be renamed. The Transco tower of 1985, whose sleek vertical design recalls the New York skyscrapers of the 1930s and the NBC Center (formerly Republic Bank) of 1984, with its three-tiered crenelated top that recalls guild halls of later medieval northern Europe, are two of the most prominent examples.

- 34 Craig Owens, "Philip Johnson: History, Genealogy, Historicism," in *Philip Johnson: Glass House*. Edited by Whitney and Kipnis, 89.
- 35 Ibid., 83.
- 36 Schulze, 364.
- 37 Conversation with Ben Nicholson. August 24, 2016. This came on the heels of the series of façades he had "elevated" in the Astrodome.
- 38 Another inspiration, according to Nicholson, was as the story of Filarete and his construction of a city for ten thousand in ten days. Ibid.
- 39 Peter Eisenman, *Writings* (Oxford University Press, 1979), 1.
- 40 Harold Bloom, *The Anxiety of Influence: A Theory of Poetry* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1973), 16.
- 41 Johnson lecture October 28, 1994. MoMA archives.
- 42 See Rosalind Krauss, *The Originality of the Avant-Garde and Other Modernist Myths* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1985).

11

A CAREFUL MISREADING OF PRECEDENT

The politics of transparency in the work of Lina Bo Bardi

David Rifkind

At first glance, the idea that the work of Lina Bo Bardi could be strongly influenced by that of Giuseppe Terragni seems absurd. Bo Bardi, whose architecture in Brazil is rooted in a populist and communist politics, is an odd candidate to pair with Terragni, the best-known protagonist of Italian Rationalism. Terragni's buildings and urban plans represented the authoritarian values of Benito Mussolini's fascist regime, something that repulsed Bo Bardi.¹ Yet what Bo Bardi, who was born in Italy just ten years after Terragni and who shared a number of key personal and professional contacts, found important about Terragni's work was not its specific political content, but rather the way that it was able to act politically.² More than any of her contemporaries in postwar Brazil, Bo Bardi pursued an architecture of populist and democratic social engagement, influenced (paradoxically) by the successful example of the socially engaged authoritarian architecture of her Rationalist predecessors (Figure 11.1).

Bo Bardi was already very familiar with the interwar work of the Italian Rationalists when she emigrated to Brazil in 1946 with her husband, Pietro Maria Bardi.³ Bo Bardi entered the school of architecture in Rome, her native city, in 1934. Her 1939 thesis project revealed her maturing interest in Rationalism: her design featured an assemblage of modernist structures that demonstrate a careful study of recently completed projects in the national capital, including Luigi Moretti's Fencing Academy at the Foro Mussolini and Giuseppe Capponi's Faculty of Botany at the University of Rome (the project also made reference to Figini and Pollini's Olivetti factory extension in Ivrea, then under construction).⁴ But her strongest familiarity with Terragni and Italian Rationalism came through her relationship with Pietro Maria Bardi, one of Rationalism's staunchest supporters and a close friend of Terragni and his collaborators, who founded the journal *Quadrante* with Terragni's help.⁵

Bardi was a self-taught art critic and architectural theorist who was largely responsible for radicalizing and politicizing the discourse of architecture in fascist Italy. It was Bardi who first used the term "fascist architecture" in a series of articles published in 1930 and 1931,⁶ and he staged a number of provocative exhibitions at his galleries in Milan and Rome in order to make the case for modernism as the official architecture of the fascist state.⁷ In 1931, Bardi used the occasion of the second exhibition of Rationalist architecture (the first exhibition organized by the *Movimento Italiano per l'Architettura Razionale* (Italian Movement for



FIGURE 11.1 Lina Bo Bardi, Museu de Arte de São Paulo (MASP), 1957–68, and Giuseppe Terragni, Casa del Fascio, Como, 1932–36. *Quadrante 35/36* (October 1936).

Rationalist Architecture, or MIAR) at his Galleria Bardi in Rome to press the argument in favor of modernism directly to Benito Mussolini⁸ (Figure 11.2). The spectacular controversy surrounding the exhibition made Bardi a household name, and brought him to the attention of seventeen-year-old Lina Bo, who later noted that she would follow Bardi's career with great interest after the exhibition.

The building that best demonstrates Bo Bardi's engagement with Italian Rationalism is her design for the Museum of Art of São Paulo (MASP; 1957–1968) (Figure 11.3). The MASP's bold design features a large, two-story glazed bar housing the primary gallery space (as well as offices) lifted high above a plaza overlooking the city. The plaza caps a plinth containing an auditorium and several stories of galleries, which replaces an existing public belvedere. To preserve the open space, Bo Bardi elevated the main gallery twenty-six feet above the plaza, where it is held aloft by four enormous concrete piers supporting an elaborate concrete structure whose 243-foot span extends nearly the full length of the block. Her goal was an “uncomplicated architecture that would immediately communicate that which in the past was called ‘monumental,’ meaning a sense of the ‘collective,’ or ‘Civic Dignity.’”⁹

Designed to house the collection of a new arts institution founded by Bardi, the MASP played two significant civic roles: as an institution, it endowed the growing industrial metropolis of São Paulo with cultural gravitas by providing it with a permanent collection of European art; as a building, it helped define and enhance a significant public space in the heart of the city. The building's design reflects both of these functions, but what is particularly notable is the dramatic structural gesture that enables it to connect the historically significant belvedere of its site on the Trianon Terrace to the Avenida Paulista (the major thoroughfare of central São Paulo) and the adjoining park. The four massive piers create a gateway between the overlook and the avenue, and announce that this continuous, uninterrupted space belongs to the public.¹⁰ It is a gesture that identifies the public space as an extension of the city – and thus



FIGURE 11.2 Pietro Maria Bardi, *Tavolo degli orrori*, created for the Second Exhibition of Rationalist Architecture (also called the MIAR exhibition), Rome, 1931. *Quadrante* 2 (June 1933).



FIGURE 11.3 Lina Bo Bardi, MASP, São Paulo, 1957–68. Photograph by Nelson Kon.

available to any kind of activity – rather than as an extension of the museum, which would imply restrictions to the functions of an elite institution.¹¹ This act of generosity is entirely populist and democratic in intent, but its origins lay in one of the most authoritarian projects designed during the fascist period in Italy, the first Palazzo del Littorio competition project by a team that included Giuseppe Terragni (with Antonio Carminati, Pietro Lingeri, Ernesto Saliva, Luigi Vietti, Marcello Nizzoli, and Mario Sironi) (Figure 11.4).

The Palazzo del Littorio was intended to serve as the national headquarters of the fascist party. The building would mark the center of power in the single-party state, and it would focus on the charismatic dictatorship of Mussolini. Decrees from Mussolini's balcony at his provisional headquarters in the Palazzo Venezia carried greater significance than any parliamentary or ministerial action, and the party intended its permanent seat to manifest the hierarchical structure of the fascist state, climaxing in the Duce's *arengario* (rostrum) above the ruins of imperial Rome. The nature of the commission compelled architects like Terragni and his partners to refine their arguments about the symbolic and rhetorical efficacy of modern architecture as a form of political representation in fascist Italy.¹² They contended that modernism alone could give physical form to the regime's rhetorical concerns, and the unrealized design for the fascist party's headquarters represented an opportunity for Terragni to express these ideals without compromise.¹³ Debates over architecture's ability to embody the political values of Mussolini's regime dominated Italian architectural discourse the year the competition was held (1934), which was also, coincidentally, the year Bo Bardi began her architectural studies. The Palazzo del Littorio's principle façade was a windowless expanse of porphyry panels that defined a large gathering space on its site along the Via dell'Impero. Like the MASP, this wall was suspended above the plaza from four massive piers in order to create a continuity between the public space of the street and the space beyond, but for a purpose wildly different from that of the museum. Terragni's team (which called itself the Gruppo Milanese) used the spatial continuity between the street and the interior of the headquarters to signify the fascist party's complete integration into every aspect of public life in Italy, much as they used the building's references to archeological excavations to reinforce fascism's claims on a historical continuity with imperial Rome.¹⁴ The great curving arc of porphyry defined the plaza (which extended into the street for the purpose of hosting enormous rallies) as a

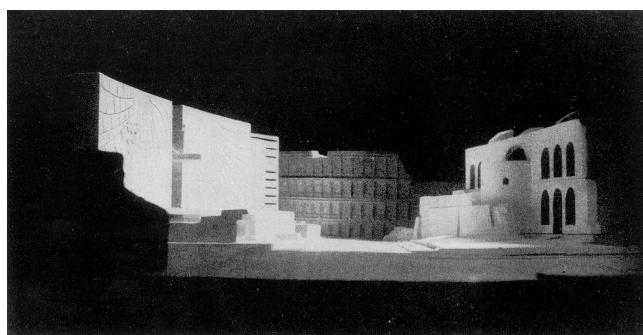


FIGURE 11.4 Giuseppe Terragni (with Antonio Carminati, Pietro Lingeri, Ernesto Saliva, Luigi Vietti, Marcello Nizzoli and Mario Sironi), Palazzo del Littorio competition entry (Scheme A), Rome, 1934. *Quadrante* 18 (October 1934): 19.

specific kind of public space, in which the extended balcony at the apex of the wall provided a spatial focus for the masses gathered to hear Mussolini speak (Figure 11.5).

The Gruppo Milanese project can be read as a rich allegory of dictatorial power seeking historical justification for its authority. The design's iconic element, the 80 meter curving wall of porphyry hovering over a piazza off the Via dell'Impero, embraced the anticipated crowds below and transformed the entire building into an enormous stage for Mussolini's speeches.¹⁵ The wall gathered the masses and projected the voice of the Duce, whose *arengario* jutted forward through the sole break in the façade. Curvilinear incisions in its stone surface manifested invisible isostatic structural forces as a metaphor for the dictator's irrepressible volition.¹⁶ Sunlight reflecting off the richly colored stone would have bathed the assembled masses in a red glow.

In both buildings, the relationship between an elevated mass and an open space below it helps identify the ground as a specific kind of public space, and grants public status to a site linked to the public space of the street by this dramatic structural gesture.¹⁷ Bo Bardi transformed Terragni's precedent by removing the balcony – the key element establishing a hierarchical relationship between authoritarian ruler above and compliant masses below – and straightening the wall to make it more of a gateway than a stage set. Bo Bardi also changed the nature of this gateway by framing an expansive view over the city from the plaza, whereas

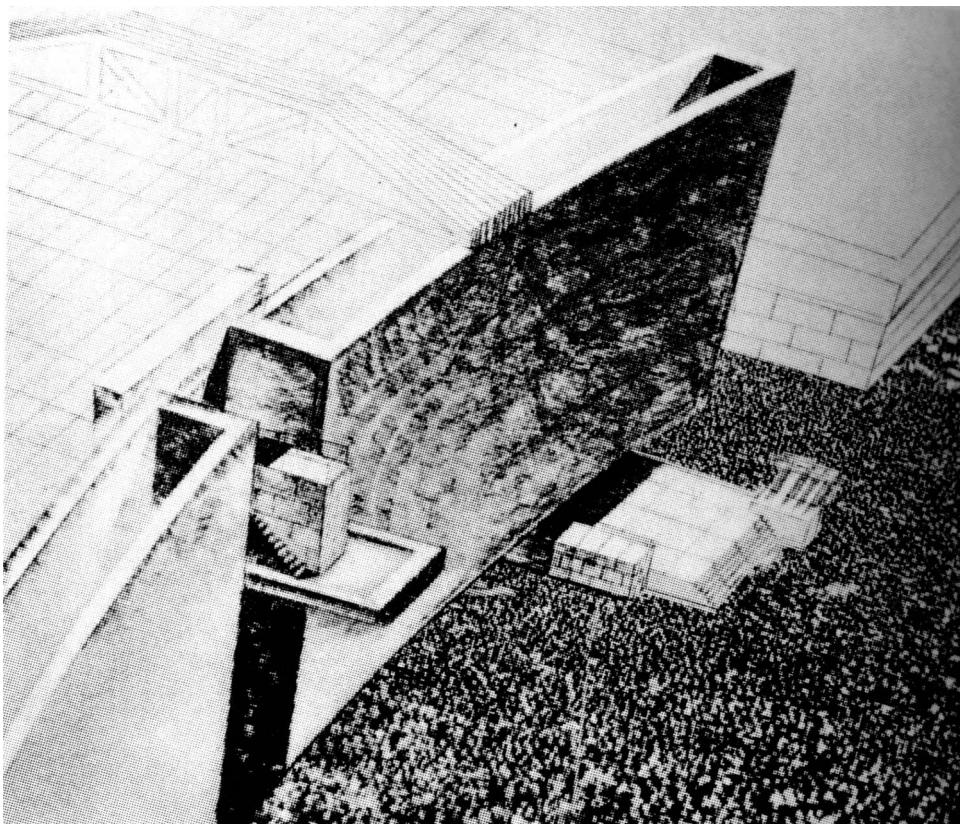


FIGURE 11.5 Giuseppe Terragni et al, Palazzo del Littorio competition entry. *Quadrante* 18 (October 1934): 20.

Terragni's project led visitors to the building's auditoria. As a result, the ground plane of the MASP becomes a universally accessible and non-hierarchical space of democratic assembly, in contrast to the rigidly hierarchical space for staged rallies created by the façade of the Palazzo del Littorio.

Quadrante published the Terragni team's project along with their detailed explanation of the political and poetic significance of the building's formal and spatial gestures.¹⁸ The journal reproduced the images demonstrating how experiments with polarized light revealing the isostatic forces within a solid block of material led the group to inscribe the porphyry wall with joints representing the otherwise invisible lines of force (Figure 11.6). In their explanatory text, the team described how the singular gesture of an immense expanse of stone elevated above the plaza acted to connect Mussolini to the people.¹⁹ In a strikingly parallel move, Bo Bardi cloaked the MASP in solid masonry in an early sequence of designs (1959–1965), and her oldest surviving scheme indicated that she wanted to sheathe the museum in marble.²⁰ It was only during construction, when it became apparent that the concrete structure could not support stone or concrete panels, that Bo Bardi revised the project so that its vertical surfaces would be walls of glass.²¹

The resulting transparency radically transformed the building in both appearance and effect. Bo Bardi recognized that the physical transparency of the elevated volume could reinforce the spatial continuity between the Avenida Paulista and the Trianon Park.²² She designed an exhibition system that magnified this effect by hanging paintings on panels of glass held upright by a single concrete block on the floor of the gallery (Figure 11.7). Visitors entering the space encountered a field of paintings floating in the crystalline atmosphere of the fully glazed gallery.²³ The glass panels were oriented perpendicular to the long glass walls of the building, so that the thin edges of the painting frames and the window mullions were the only opaque materials interrupting the visual connection between the Avenida Paulista and the vista out over the city. In effect, the art and the view both belonged to the people of the city.

Here, too, Bo Bardi showed how much she profited from her familiarity with prewar design in Italy. Italian designers in the 1930s had produced a number of beautiful and inventive

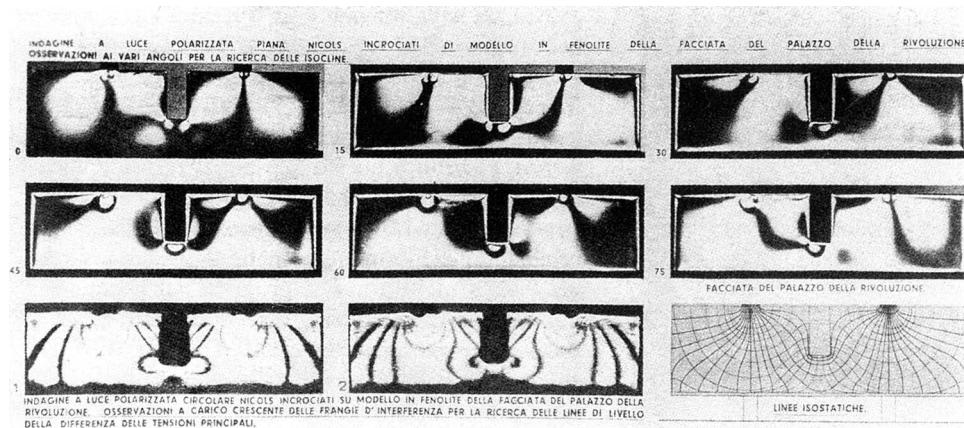


FIGURE 11.6 Palazzo del Littorio, polarized light studies. *Concorso per il palazzo del litorio e della mostra della rivoluzione fascista in roma/Relazione* (Milan: Modiano, 1934).



FIGURE 11.7 Lina Bo Bardi's glass exhibition stands inside the MASP. Collection of the Library and Documentation Center of MASP.

exhibition designs that took art off the walls and suspended them from delicate armatures within a space.²⁴ Bo Bardi had begun using these exhibition techniques in São Paulo as early as 1947, with her first exhibition for the MASP in its provisional quarters, and Italian critics recognized the debt to prewar installations by Rationalist architects.²⁵ Again, many of these exhibitions served intensely propagandistic purposes, yet it appears Bo Bardi understood that the specific political content of design is tied to its context, and that in the context of the MASP's radically democratic space the same exhibition techniques that once represented the fascist regime's celebration of advanced technology could instead come to represent the universal accessibility and political transparency of the Brazilian republic.²⁶

Bo Bardi argued that the transparency of the gallery and the openness of the plaza gave physical expression to a populist and democratic ideal of freedom. She recounted with pride composer John Cage's proclamation that "this is the architecture of freedom" during a 1985 visit to the MASP.²⁷ Three years later, and some twenty years after the building's completion, Bo Bardi claimed that her goal in designing the MASP was "not beauty, but freedom"²⁸ (Figure 11.8).

The transformation of the elevated portion of the MASP from opaque mass to transparent volume mirrored a similar process in Terragni and Lingeri's work. Not only had their Palazzo del Littorio project evolved into a largely glazed second iteration, but their 1935 design for new studios for the Brera Academy of Fine Arts (with Figini and Pollini) translated the obdurate mass of their fascist party headquarters into a crystalline volume of spaces devoted to the production of art. The implied structural forces inscribed into the porphyry walls of the Palazzo del Littorio evolved into literal structural forces – in the form of an exposed structural frame – visible through the building's glass wall. The façades of both buildings are lifted one story above street level, and the Brera's continuous wall of glass, like the glazing of the Bauhaus's workshop wing (Walter Gropius and Adolph Meyer, 1925–1926), unified the

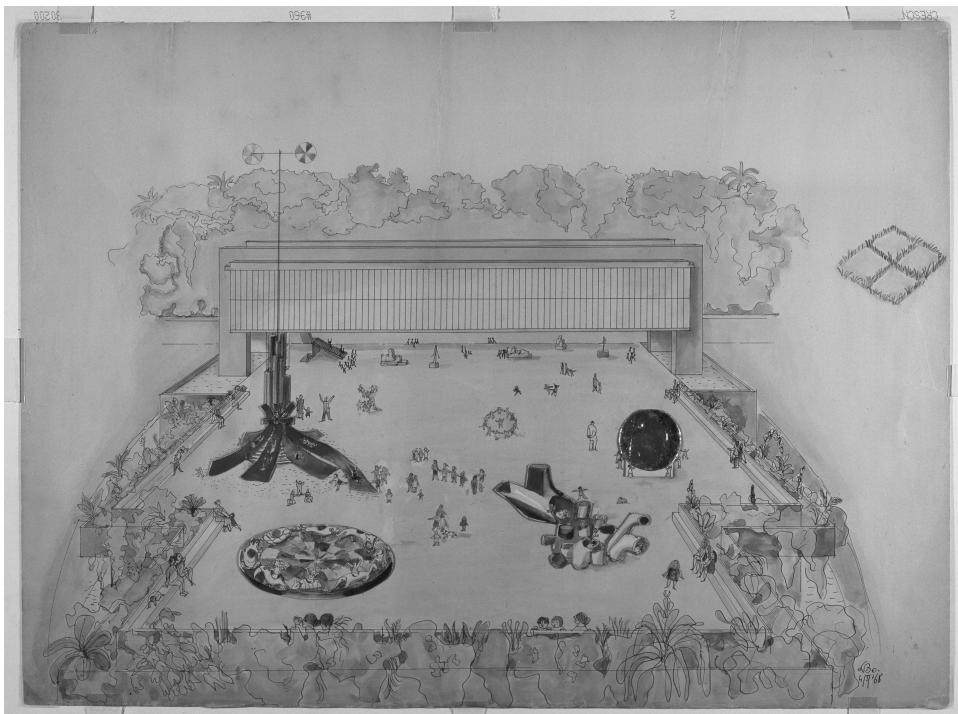


FIGURE 11.8 Lina Bo Bardi, preliminary study, practicable sculptures for the Belvedere at Museu Arte Trianon, 1968. India ink and watercolor on paper. Photograph by Luiz Hossaka. Courtesy of the Museu de Arte de São Paulo Assis Chateaubriand.

numerous studios within into a single volume (and here we must note how Terragni and his partners appropriated a form of transparency rooted not in Mussolini's rhetorical tropes but in Gropius's interest in crafting a pedagogical structure consistent with his socialist beliefs). Absent the intense political context of the Palazzo del Littorio program, the Brera's glass wall embodied a broader range of Rationalist poetics, such as reconciling modernism and tradition through the use of materials and spatial relationships, integrating new building programs with appropriate spatial configurations, refining the material palette of the International Style, and exploiting the richly phenomenal qualities of glass. Above all, the Brera project demonstrates the capacity for architects to engage precedent – both in their own oeuvre and in the work of others – as a continuous project of creative transformation; indeed, it is an ongoing process of careful misreading.²⁹

The lyrical display of structural forces in the original scheme for the Palazzo del Littorio had a strong influence on the postwar work of Pier Luigi Nervi. The brilliant structural engineer, who was also a member of the *Quadrante* circle and a confidante of Bardi's, was impressed by the work of Italo Bertolini, who developed the pattern of isostatic stress lines in the Gruppo Milanese project based on his experiments with phenolic resin models photographed under polarized light at the architecture school of the Milan Polytechnic. After the war, Nervi began employing these natural stress patterns in his design of structures like the floors and roof of the Gatti wool mill (1951–1953).³⁰ Previously, Nervi's exposed structures

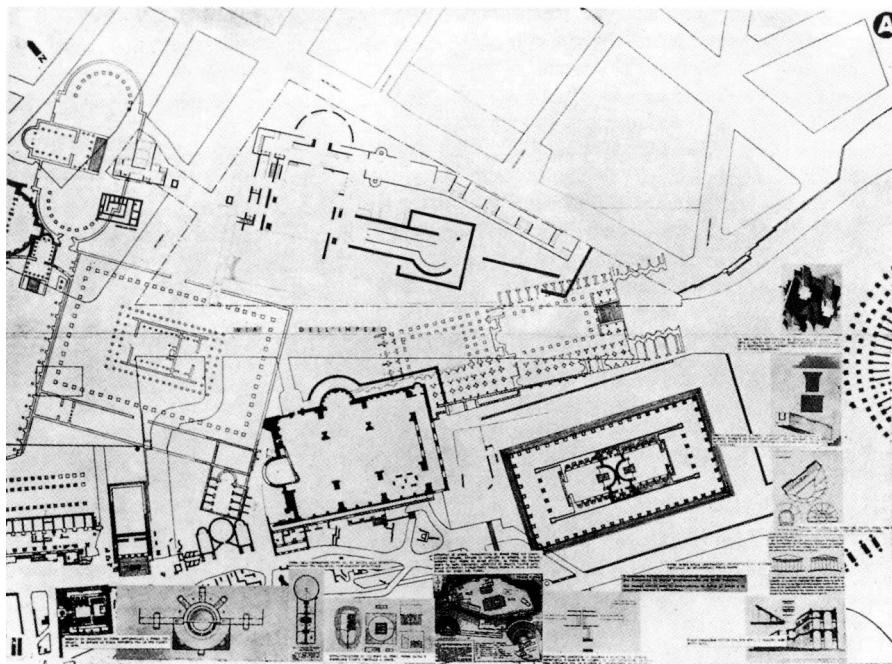


FIGURE 11.9 Palazzo del Littorio, site plan with invented ruins. *Concorso per il palazzo del littorio e della mostra della rivoluzione fascista in roma/Relazione* (Milan: Modiano, 1934).

had employed simple geometries that failed to exploit the material efficiencies made possible by advanced research by figures like Bertolini. But with the Gatti wool mill, Nervi began to demonstrate an ability to adapt forms developed in very different contexts based on their shared conceptual attributes. Like Bo Bardi, he mined the Palazzo del Littorio for specific gestures which he stripped of their original political content in order to reappropriate them based on conceptual affinities. He had observed this process of creative transformation in numerous projects by Terragni, and discussed it in extensive correspondence with Bardi.³¹ Nervi maintained his relationship with the Bardis for many years, and even helped Bo Bardi with the structural design of her celebrated glass house in São Paulo, while his son, Antonio, collaborated with Bo Bardi on an unrealized media center featuring auditoria, offices, and residences for Chateaubriand, her patron at the MASP.

Another small point of comparison between the Palazzo del Littorio and the MASP lies below the surface of both buildings. The Gruppo Milanese were the only participants in the Palazzo del Littorio competition who rendered their design in the context of the area's Roman-era archeological remains (Figure 11.9). They aligned their auditoria with the exedra of a temple lying buried to the west; however, this ruin was invented by Terragni and his partners, who seem to have modified the nearby Forum of Augustus, but rotated it ninety degrees. They fabricated this antique context in order to depict the building as rooted in the capital's historical fabric, and capable of making visible the ruins lying just below the surface of the city. Bo Bardi exhibited a similar interest in the historical fabric of the MASP site, which had hosted earlier structures that looked out over the city. Because the Trianon Terrace had been cleared and partially excavated earlier, she built up the ground level by constructing a plinth containing

an auditorium and additional exhibition spaces, which are covered by the public plaza. The subterranean parts of the museum do not make direct reference to the Palazzo del Littorio project, yet in both cases the architects used a suspended volume to accentuate the historical depth of the ground beneath the public plaza. But if the Terragni team's goal was to draw an immediate connection between the imperial past and the imperial present in a manner that subjugated the individual to the state, Bo Bardi's intent was to reconstruct the site "as a new stage for cultural life in the city."³²

The importance of the MASP's transparency brings us back to the building to which it bears particular comparison, Terragni's Casa del Fascio in Como (Figures 11.10). The Casa del Fascio is important for a number of reasons, but chief among them is the fact that it was built. This allowed architects like Bo Bardi to test the veracity of the architect's claims regarding the building's ability to act politically by shaping behavior and identity through spatial relationships and material symbolism. Bo Bardi knew the Casa del Fascio well, since, among many points of contact, it was the subject of the celebrated monographic double issue that marked the end of *Quadrante* in 1936.³³ Here, Terragni explained at length how the building's physical transparency modeled the political transparency Mussolini claimed for fascism, and how the building used carefully framed transparencies to establish a relationship between building and city that extended its political engagement to the entire metropolitan population.³⁴ While Bo Bardi rejected the specific political content of Terragni's building, she embraced the example of a building's ability to act politically. With her design of the MASP, Bo Bardi effectively operated at two levels of political engagement: one in which she affirmed Terragni's



FIGURE 11.10 Casa del Fascio. *Quadrante* 35/36 (October 1936).

contention that a building, no matter how devoid of iconography, could construct social identities, and another in which she criticized Terragni's specific ideological content by replacing it with an architecture of participatory, popular democracy.

This critical transformation of precedent – this creative misreading of precedent – is a key component of both Bo Bardi's and Terragni's poetic practices. It is important to stress that Bo Bardi's work is not simply a commentary on Terragni's; her sources are broad and numerous, and her inventiveness cannot be dismissed.³⁵ Rather, it is a mark of her skillful eye and critical imagination that she is able to analyze and interpret work like Terragni's, which was built in such a different context. And just as Bo Bardi transformed her precedents, so did Terragni. The key similarities that link Bo Bardi's MASP to buildings of such different size, program, site, materiality, and historical context exemplify the poetic processes of reference, appropriation, and critical revision that link each work of architecture to the heritage of the discipline.

I need to stress that Bo Bardi vehemently rejected the politics of fascism and, unlike her contemporaries, she never indulged in the rhetorical embrace of fascism to justify her design practices, nor to further her career.³⁶ Yet Bo Bardi didn't need to be an enthusiastic supporter of fascism to be excited about the changes to her native city, which was radically reinvented and renovated during her formative years as a student of architecture. Projects like the Città Universitaria (the new campus for the University of Rome), the new cities built in the Pontine marshes, railway stations, post offices, the athletic complex at the Foro Mussolini, and the vast administrative district of E'42 represented the regime's commitment to funding projects that demonstrated modern architecture's capacity for rationalizing city planning, extending access to public services to all classes, representing ideological values, and improving living conditions. Even as fascism became increasingly oppressive and violent toward Italians, racist and anti-Semitic in official policy, and imperialistic in its military interventions in Spain and Ethiopia, the regime continued to support social programs meant to improve the lives of everyday Italians, and it continued to fund projects by leading Rationalist architects, including Terragni, Bottoni, Griffini, Figini and Pollini, BBPR, Mazzoni, Moretti, Vaccaro, and others. Bo Bardi came of age in a Rome that served as a test case for modernism's engagement with social concerns. And while Bo Bardi rejected the reactionary right-wing politics of the inter-war Rationalists, she shared their embrace of the utopic origins in the Modern Movement's central concern with social engagement.

If recontextualizing the Terragni team's urban gestures was a radically political move, so too was it an intensely poetic one. Much like Terragni, Bo Bardi exhibited an enthusiasm for the analogical thought processes that treat historical artifacts through poetic tropes such as metaphor, synecdoche, and irony, and she employed this facility for poetic transformation in the design of the MASP. It is here, where Bo Bardi's work transforms and completes its precedents through a critical process of interpretation, that she exemplifies the ability of architecture to embody Harold Bloom's concept of poetic misprision.³⁷ Though difficult to translate into architectural terms, Bloom's "revisionary ratios" (of which misprision is one) offer a theory that governs both criticism and production. Introduced in his landmark 1973 book, *The Anxiety of Influence*, misprision is a mode of critical engagement in which architects interpret the built environment through design as active criticism; it is a creative misreading that generates new knowledge.³⁸

In brief, misprision describes a poet's relationship to her precursors in which the act of writing is inherently critical of precedent; the poet repeats the precedent poem to a point before turning away to find a new conclusion. Completion comprises critical reflection.

Bloom outlines a process of close reading and imaginative transformation in which the later work presents an alternative conclusion to its predecessor. Every creative act is also an act of criticism, and any sophisticated work of architecture synthesizes knowledge gained from close readings of disparate sources.

Architecture challenges Bloom's contention that misprision is not concerned with politics or the history of ideas, which he argued were unnecessarily reductive analytical frameworks. Yet architecture's ability to operate on multiple levels – to engage the political and to wrestle with contemporary thought while simultaneously speaking diachronically to the heritage of the discipline – demands a multivalent criticism. Bo Bardi's engagement with Terragni exemplifies how misprision enables architecture to operate politically, without reducing the work of architecture to an essay in political accommodation or resistance. Reference is not the same as quotation, and transformation should not be confused with transcription.

Architecture's ability to act politically – to construct social identities, to shape public behavior, to reinforce or critique power – transcends the specific political context of its individual iterations. In fact, architecture's sharpest political critiques often come through the self-conscious appropriation of forms and spatial relationships whose specific ideological content is adapted and transformed in a new context. Much like the way monotheistic Christians in the Renaissance appropriated the sacred architecture of pagan and polytheistic Rome in their own ecclesiastic structures, a radical populist like Bo Bardi could reorient forms developed to construct a militarized and mass identity under fascism to serve her critical project of advocating popular democracy in Brazil through selective interventions in the built environment.

This process of appropriation and transformation is part of the heritage of architecture. Each work of architecture is a critical reinterpretation of its predecessors, in a process Bloom described – in relation to poetry – as misprision. Bloom conceptualized poetry as a process of creative misreading, in which each poet transformed the work of his or her predecessors by reproducing it to some degree, then critically revising it to create new works. In this way, each work of poetry – and in our case architecture – can be understood in a general sense as a critical interpretation of the heritage of architecture. In this case, one can trace key relationships of appropriation and critical transformation that link Bo Bardi's work in São Paulo to Terragni's work in Rome and Como.

In the 1980s, Bo Bardi and her husband named their São Paulo-based think tank Instituto Quadrante, resurrecting the title of the journal he had founded in Italy a half century earlier. In evoking the name of Fascist Italy's most stridently political architectural publication – the one that most passionately advocated Terragni's work – they signaled that they had definitively put to bed the suspicions that they (or at least Bardi) still harbored fascist sympathies that had dogged them during their early years in Brazil. More importantly, they signaled that their work was motivated by concerns larger than the specific political context of the first part of their careers, and that they could continue the cause of an activist artistic practice, even as the particular goals of that activism changed.

Bo Bardi echoed Terragni's understanding that architecture acts poetically and politically, and that these roles are fundamentally integrated. Every building acts both diachronically and synchronically by simultaneously engaging both its particular social context and the heritage of the discipline. Work by architects like Terragni and Bo Bardi are thus both timeless and thoroughly rooted in its time. This ability to act politically and speak poetically is the true legacy of Bo Bardi's architecture. In the new context of her adopted homeland of Brazil, Bo

Bardi developed an architecture that conferred nobility on the poor, and invited all to participate in the daily life of the metropolis.

Notes

- 1 On Terragni's commitment to fascism, see Diane Ghirardo, "Politics of a Masterpiece: The Vicenda of the Facade Decoration, the Casa del Fascio of Como, 1936–1939," *Art Bulletin*, 62, 3 (September 1980): 466–478. On Bo Bardi's complicated politics, see Renato Anelli, "Lina Bo Bardi and Her Relationship to Brazil's Economic and Social Development Policy," in *Lina Bo Bardi 100: Brazil's Alternative Path to Modernism*. Edited by Andres Lepik and Vera S. Bader (Ostfildern: Hatje Cantz Verlag, 2014), 169–182.
- 2 On Terragni's commitment to politically engaged architecture, see Giuseppe Terragni, "L'appassionata polemica degli architetti italiani su le nuove forme della architettura contemporanea," *Il Giornale d'Italia* (12 May 1931); and Terragni, "La costruzione della Casa del Fascio di Como," *Quadrante*, 35, 36 (October 1936): 5–27. On Bo Bardi's commitment to politically engaged architecture, see the translation of Bardi's 1957 treatise, "Contribuição propedéutica ao ensino da teoria da arquitetura," in *Lina Bo Bardi: The Theory of Architectural Practice*. Edited by Lina Bo Bardi and Cathrine Veikos (New York: Routledge, 2014), 45–221.
- 3 Cathrine Veikos argues that Bo Bardi and her husband, Pietro Maria Bardi, used publications and exhibitions in a polemical manner aimed at transforming Brazilian society, in a manner similar to Bardi's cultural and political activism in fascist Italy, where he was one of the most outspoken proponents of Rationalism. Lina Bo Bardi and Cathrine Veikos, *Lina Bo Bardi: The Theory of Architectural Practice* (New York: Routledge, 2014), 17–18.
- 4 Zeuler Lima details Bo Bardi's education in Zeuler R.M.A. Lima, *Lina Bo Bardi* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2013), 12–18.
- 5 Veikos, 17.
- 6 Pietro Maria Bardi, "Architettura. Arte di stato," *L'Ambrosiano* (31 January 1931).
- 7 Dennis Doordan, "Architecture and Politics in Fascist Italy: Il Movimento Italiano per l'Architettura Razionale," (PhD dissertation, Columbia University, 1983), 60.
- 8 Bardi, *Rapporto sull'architettura (per Mussolini)* (Rome: Edizioni di Critica Fascista, 1931).
- 9 Giancarlo Latorraca, *Ways of Showing: the Exhibition Architecture of Lina Bo Bardi* (São Paulo: Museu da Casa Brasileira, 2015), 149.
- 10 Luis Fernández-Galiano, ed., *Lina Bo Bardi, 1914–1992* (Madrid: Arquitectura Viva, 2015), 46.
- 11 Von Fischer, 107–109.
- 12 Good descriptions of the Palazzo del Littorio competition appear in Carol Rusche, "Ancient and Modern: The Palazzo del Littorio Competition," *Architecture Today*, 3 (November 1989): 30–33; Dennis Doordan, *Building Modern Italy: Italian Architecture 1914–1936* (New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 1988), 134–137; Richard Etlin, *Modernism in Italian Architecture, 1890–1940* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1991), 426–434; and Thomas Schumacher, *Surface and Symbol: Giuseppe Terragni and the Architecture of Italian Rationalism* (New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 1991), 173–188.
- 13 Carminati, Lingeri, Saliva, Terragni, Vietti, Nizzoli and Sironi, *Concorso nazionale per il progetto del Palazzo del Littorio e della Mostra della Rivoluzione Fascista in via dell'Impero a Roma* (Milan: Società G. Modiano, n.d.).
- 14 Terragni (25 October 1934) four-page mimeograph letter addressed "agli amici del Gruppo Milanese Espositori al Concorso Nazionale del Littorio, Carminati, Lingeri, Saliva, Terragni, Vietti, Nizzoli, Sironi." Archivio Pietro Lingeri, Milan (APL). Reprinted in Enrico Mantero, *Giuseppe Terragni e la città del razionalismo* (Bari: Dedalo, 1983), 126.
- 15 Doordan, *Building Modern Italy*, 134–137.
- 16 "He is like a God, against the sky. There is nobody above Him. The entire façade exalts His force, His genius. From all parts of the great street that is the heart of Rome, the pulse of the world, from Piazza Venezia, from the arches of the Coliseum, high, alone, in the light. He will be before the cheering crowds: before everybody, with everybody." Carminati, Lingeri, Saliva, Terragni, Vietti, Nizzoli, Sironi, *Concorso nazionale per il progetto del Palazzo del Littorio e della Mostra della Rivoluzione Fascista in via dell'Impero a Roma* (Milan: Società G. Modiano, n.d.). Quoted and translated in Etlin, 433.

- 17 Zeuler R.M.A. Lima, *Lina Bo Bardi* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2013), 66–72, 122–137.
- 18 Gruppo Milanese (Carminati, Lingeri, Saliva, Terragni, Vietti), “Due altri progetti,” *Quadrante*, 18 (November 1934): 18. See also the coverage of the Gruppo Quadrante project in *Il Nuovo stile littorio: I progetti per il palazzo del littorio e della mostra della rivoluzione fascista in Via dell'impero* (Milan and Rome: S.A. Grafiche Bertarelli, 1936), 115–120. The relazione submitted to the competition was also published as an offprint by Modiano as Banfi, Belgioioso, Danusso, Fugini, Peressutti, Pollini, and Rogers, *Concorso nazionale per il progetto del palazzo del littorio e della mostra della rivoluzione fascista in Via dell'impero a Roma* (Milan: Società G. Modiano, 1934).
- 19 “Due altri progetti,” *Quadrante*, 18 (November 1934): 18.
- 20 Lima, 70–71.
- 21 Lima, 71.
- 22 Lima, 128. Von Fischer, 110.
- 23 Of her design for the exhibition system at the MASP, Bardi said, “The vertical screen-like crystal mounts on which paintings are shown displease viewers accustomed to comfortable upholstery and remote controls, since they have to look behind the panels to read technical information, authors' names, and titles of works. I think my design for the MASP gallery's easel-panels makes an important contribution to international museography.” Quoted in Giancarlo Latorraca, *Ways of Showing: The Exhibition Architecture of Lina Bo Bardi* (São Paulo: Museu da Casa Brasileira, 2015), 153.
- 24 See, for example, Franco Albini's designs for the exhibition of antique goldsmithing at the 1936 Milan Triennale and for the Scipione & Black and White exhibitions at Milan's Pinacoteca di Brera in 1941. Stephen Leet, *Franco Albini, Architecture and Design, 1934–1977: Marco Albini, Franca Helg, Antonio Piva* (New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 1990). Kay B. Jones, *Suspending Modernity: The Architecture of Franco Albini* (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2014).
- 25 Sabine von Fischer, “The Horizons of Lina Bo Bardi: The Museu de Arte de São Paulo in the Context of European Postwar Concepts of Architecture,” in *Lina Bo Bardi 100: Brazil's Alternative Path to Modernism*. Edited by Andres Lepik and Vera S. Bader (Ostfildern: Hatje Cantz Verlag, 2014), 104.
- 26 Von Fischer, 107.
- 27 Quoted in von Fischer, 103.
- 28 Quoted in von Fischer, 104.
- 29 On Rationalism's engagement with the heritage of architecture, see, for example, Giorgio Ciucci, “Italian Architecture During the Fascist Period: Classicism Between Neoclassicism and Rationalism: The Many Souls of the Classical,” *The Harvard Architecture Review*, 6 (1987): 76–87. See also Thomas Schumacher, “Terragni and Classicism: Fence Sitting at the Barricades,” *Journal of Architectural Education*, 41, 4 (Summer 1988): 11–19.
- 30 Terry Kirk, *The Architecture of Modern Italy: Visions of Utopia, 1900–Present* (New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 2005), 191–192. See also Agnoldomenico Pica, *Pier Luigi Nervi* (Rome: Editalia, 1969), 26.
- 31 I discuss Nervi's writings and correspondence with Bardi at length in Rifkind, *The Battle for Modernism: Quadrante and the Politicization of Architectural Discourse in Fascist Italy* (Vicenza: Marsilio, 2012).
- 32 Lima, 71.
- 33 *Quadrante*, 35, 36 (October 1936).
- 34 Terragni, “La costruzione della Casa del Fascio di Como,” *Quadrante*, 35, 36 (October 1936): 5–27.
- 35 Bo Bardi's theoretical interests were diverse, and included Geoffrey Scott's 1914 treatise *The Architecture of Humanism*, Veikos, 20–43. As a practitioner, she was deeply interested in both vernacular and industrial architecture, Lima, *passim*. See also Lina B. Bardi, *Stones Against Diamonds* (London: Architectural Association, 2013). Translated from the Portuguese by Anthony Doyle and Pamela Johnstone from the anthology: *Lina por escrito*, published by Cosca Naify, 2009.
- 36 Lima, 12–18.
- 37 I expand on this point in David Rifkind, “Misprision of Precedent: Design as Creative Misreading,” *Journal of Architectural Education*, 64, 2 (March 2011): 66–75.
- 38 Harold Bloom, *The Anxiety of Influence: A Theory of Poetry* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1973).

12

NOT EXACTLY THE SAME

On the fantasy of “Chinese architectural copies”

Winnie Wong

To be aware of our own biases is beyond a point impossible: we fail to recognize not only why we alter history, but often that we do. Thus we tend to misconceive the past as a fixed verity from which others have strayed, but to which we can and should remain unswervingly faithful.

—David Lowenthal, *The Past is a Foreign Country* (1985)¹

The usefulness of the fake, its counterfeit and counter value, lies in the fact that it provides a kind of crazing of the smooth mirror of global production.

—Ackbar Abbas, “Theory of the Fake” (2001)²

In 1755, at the height of the European mania for *chinoiserie*, a British employee of the Swedish East India Company named William Chambers returned to England after three voyages to the port of Guangzhou, China. Leveraging his firsthand experience of China and a subsequent five years in Rome and Paris, Chambers would fashion himself into the leading establishment architect and landscape designer of the day, Architect to King George III, Master Surveyor, and first Treasurer of the Royal Academy of Art. In the 1760s, Chambers designed the Chinese Pagoda (Figure 12.1) and the House of Confucius for the Kew Royal Botanic Gardens, for which trees and flowers from all climes and soils were sought, and the architectural styles of the ancient civilizations rebuilt in a veritable encyclopedia of the natural and built world.

Chambers boasted that his ten-story wooden Chinese Pagoda at Kew, which still stands today, was modeled on the famous Porcelain Pagoda of Nanjing built of porcelain bricks in the Ming dynasty, though we can be quite sure that Chambers never came anywhere near that fabulous marvel during his visits to Canton. Rather, he would have known of it only through a brief description first published in 1665, in Johan Nieuhof’s (1617–1672) account of the 1655–1657 Dutch Embassy to Peking, almost a century prior to Chambers’s own voyages (Figure 12.2).³ Instead, Chambers probably based his design on the far less remarkable pagoda in plain sight at Whampoa Island (Figure 12.3), a swampy backwater outside the port of Guangzhou, where all European ships were obliged to anchor and await admittance into the Great Qing empire.



FIGURE 12.1 Chinese Pagoda at the Kew Royal Botanic Gardens, London, 2006. Photograph by Burkhard Mücke.

But even as Chambers was styling himself into the foremost English expert on Chinese architecture, he was frantically rummaging about for his drawings from his China trips. These drawings were never found, and ultimately he admitted that his knowledge of Chinese architecture was not very precise at all. As he wrote in his treatise, *Designs for Chinese Buildings* (1757), “I do not pretend to give this as a very accurate plan of that building: exact measures of Chinese structures are of small consequence to European artists.”⁴ A good copy, it would seem, was not very much in Chambers’ mind, nor perhaps within his ability, when he built

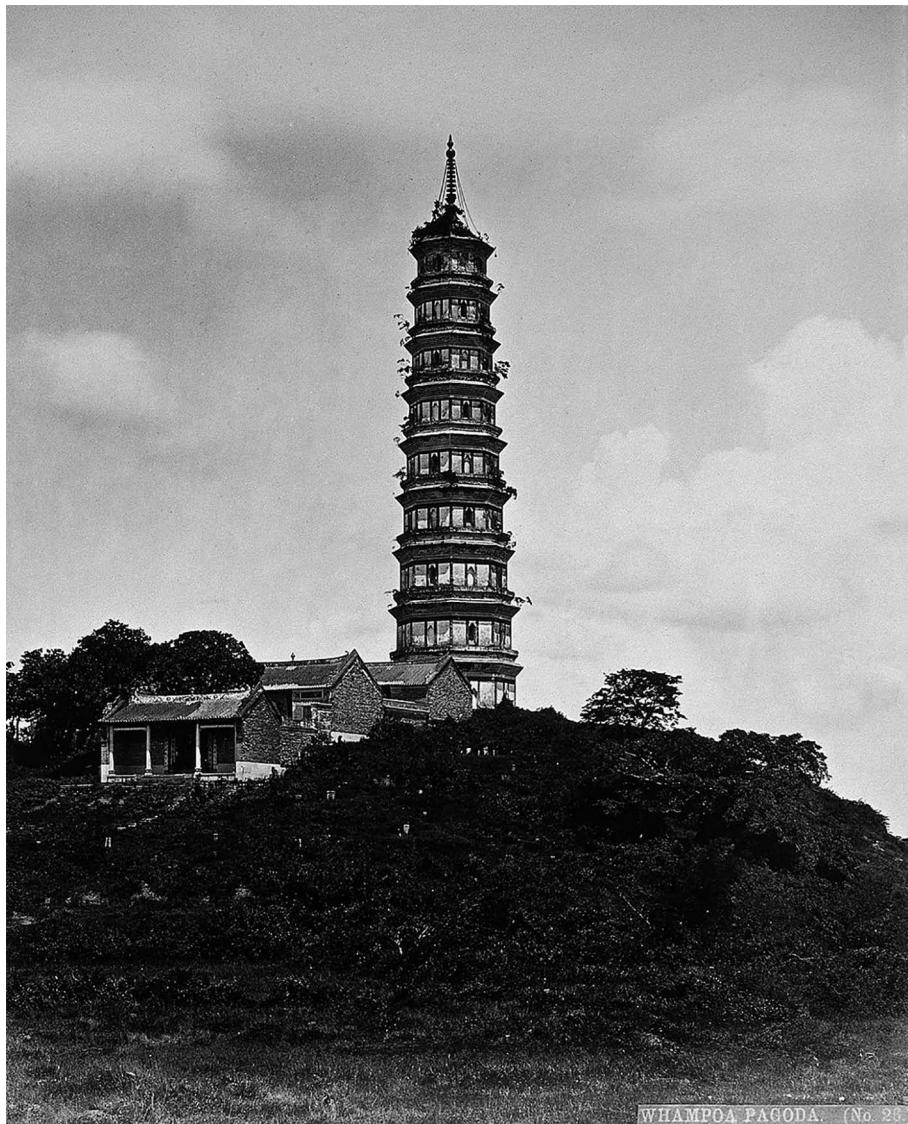


FIGURE 12.2 The Pazhou Pagoda, known to Europeans as the Whampoa Pagoda. Photograph by W. P. Wellcome, 1873. Courtesy of Wellcome Library no. 29856i.

his “Chinese” Pagoda. Of course, being made only of wood, Chamber’s Kew pagoda was, by modern standards, but a cheap imitation of the porcelain spectacle of Nieuhof’s account.

Fast forward 250 years, and the Western obsession with the imitation of world architecture appears to have thoroughly infiltrated China. Since China’s ascension to the World Trade Organization in 2001, the American news media has been beating a steady drum of outrage over architectural copying in China. These claims include one building that looked like Le Corbusier’s Notre Dame du Haut at Ronchamp, a “copy” of Zaha Hadid’s Beijing Wangjing

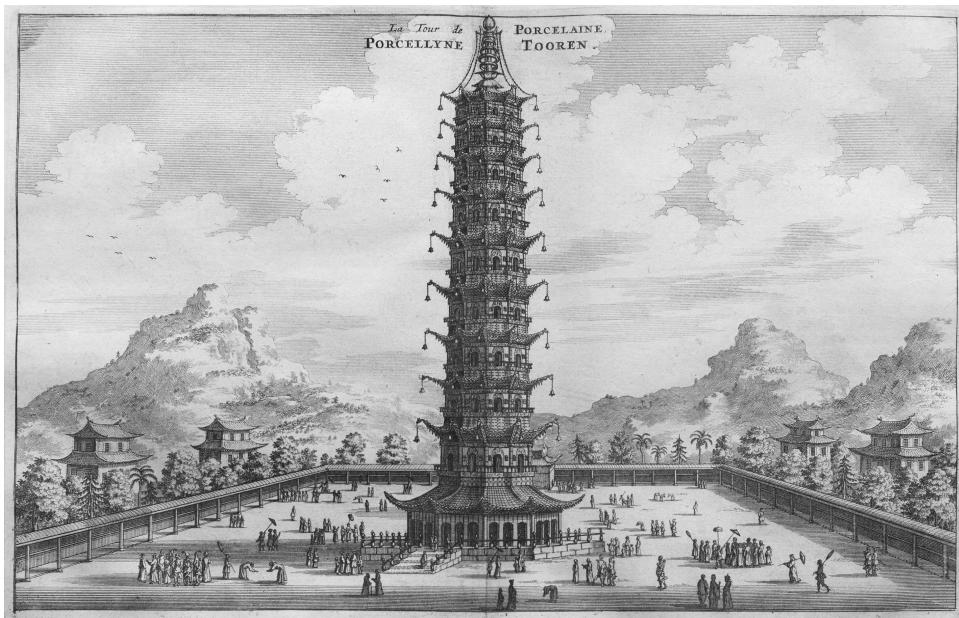


FIGURE 12.3 The Porcelain Tower. Johan Nieuhof, *Het Gezantschap der Neérlandsche Oost-Indische Compagnie* (Amsterdam: Jacob van Meurs, 1665).

Soho to be built *before* the original would be finished, and a university built to look like Hogwarts. Eventually, there were stories of whole residential “ghost towns” built to look “exactly like” quaint towns in Britain or Austria, and “fake Apple Stores” so close to the real ones that even the employees did not know they were not working for Apple. Popular interest in such stories have even inspired a neologism – “duplicature” – as though Chinese architects and builders are the first in history to emulate, quote, cite, adapt, appropriate, or reuse, and Western, ones exempt from influence, mimicry, or theft.⁵

In this chapter, I caution against these charges of duplication or “copying,” which rely upon an ideology or faith in the timeless objecthood of architecture as the unique work of a single architect’s individual style, a romantic myth that is increasingly dominating popular American perception of China. In fact, the vast number of Chinese “architectural copies” or “replicas” raised in recent years hardly match the popular expectation that the two buildings compared are “exactly the same.” Indeed, such buildings often differ so substantively and plainly in plan, elevation, program, use, materials, site, quality, and effect, that one might question how the journalists who have written of them could claim they were “copies” at all. Instead, I argue that these so-called “Chinese architectural copies” belong within the long-standing traditions of Western architectural practice, which for centuries have relied upon the process of emulating of architectural styles, appropriately adjusted to a new site and program. In other words, to parse the imaginary notion of Chinese “duplicature,” we must carefully distinguish between the traditional stylistic emulation which has long governed architectural and construction practice, and to separate it from a newfound (copyright-based) conception of architectural authorship and ownership of designs. The extraordinary charge of Chinese architectural copying, I argue, represents a fallacious faith in what cultural historian David



FIGURE 12.4 The Great Temple of Gratitude, rebuilt in Nanjing. Photograph by Nikki Gensert.

Lowenthal once called the “fixed verity” of the past. Simultaneously, it forgets architecture’s own very recent past. In tracing this double reinvention of the past as it has been applied to Western accounts of architecture in contemporary China, I am concerned not only with questioning the nationalist and cultural myths that underlie that “smooth mirror of global production,” but also to draw attention to the startling departure from the West’s own traditions manifest in this accusation.

Certainly, in the twenty-first century, an ascendant China has rebuilt itself in ways that have consistently surprised the Western imagination. Not only has China become the place where Europe’s leading architects can build their best work, the scale of that construction has reached a scale that is no longer possible in the West. Since the death of Chairman Mao, urban districts throughout China were remade in only a couple of years; an entire city of fifteen million, Shenzhen, was built in three decades; and fifteen hundred museums were constructed in under ten years. Even the Porcelain Pagoda of Nanjing was rebuilt in modern steel and glass by a wealthy patron of that city (Figure 12.4).⁶ It is not surprising then, that not a few

examples of European and American architecture and landscape have been similarly – and often as inaccurately as Kew’s pagoda – remade. There is indeed an ostentatious “Chateau de Maisons-Laffitte” hotel resort outside Beijing, which specializes in hosting large state functions; several scaled-down “U.S. Congresses” that serve as low-level government offices (for example, in Shunde and Fuyang); a “Ronchamp chapel” functioning as a BBQ restaurant that raised the ire of the Corbusier foundation, which forced its destruction;⁷ while, famously in 2012, renderings of two buildings under construction in the freewheeling city of Chongqing appeared stylistically similar renderings of Zaha Hadid’s renderings for the three buildings of her Wangjing Soho complex in Beijing.⁸

Though challenged by those intellectual property–holding nations and populaces obsessed with maintaining their privilege, and often even proudly declared to be perfect copies by proud locals, these “copies” are in fact *not exactly the same*. Far from it: Zhang Yuchen, the Chinese developer who built the “copy” of the Chateau de Maisons-Laffitte, explained that he needed to add two gargantuan wings to the original French baroque plan in order to make it suitable to his needs.⁹ Neither is this kind of ambition limited to the appropriation of European icons: the beloved China National Pavilion of the Shanghai World Expo has inspired at least one performing arts center in Chongqing, while innumerable “Water Cubes” imitating the Beijing Olympics Aquatics Center have sprung up as spas and massage centers. Whether historical or contemporary, and whether designed by European or Chinese firms, all architectural styles are up for appropriation in China’s building boom.

This recent Chinese phenomenon of architectural copying arguably began with the “Window of the World” theme park built in Shenzhen in 1992 as an encyclopedia of the world’s architectural landmarks. In fact, the replicas of the theme park are the first and most prominent architectural replicas to have been built in Reform-era (post-1978) China, and the motivations for them – globalization, modernization – remain consistently present in the rhetoric surrounding contemporary Chinese architectural “copies.” Developed by a Taiwanese–Hong Kong joint venture as the premiere showpiece of the new city of Shenzhen, the forty-eight-hectare park features over 140 replicas of world architecture radially arranged around a 1:3 scaled replica of the Eiffel Tower. These replicas include a roaring Niagara Falls, a windswept Sphinx and Pyramid at Giza, an eight-foot-tall San Marco Square, and a conveniently human-sized Tower of Pisa (Figure 12.5). Like Kew Gardens, Window of the World initially served as a world heritage primer for the ruling class: first, Chinese political leaders toured Window of the World in official visits in descending order of the political hierarchy. Then, gradually, as China’s Reform and Opening era continued apace, bureaucrats, professionals, and workers were brought on workplace-organized educational leisure visits, until ultimately it became firmly established as a middle-class amusement park in the 2000s. Because of the ideological way in which tourism to the park was linked to the governmental policy of “Opening” to the world, the theme park was the most spectacular instantiation of the Dengist policy. For a generation of Chinese citizens, it would have been strange to visit the global and innovative city of Shenzhen without visiting the purported replicas in the nation’s “Window” of the World.

As to the replicas themselves, the range of scales by which the world’s cultural and architectural heritage has been represented is bewildering: toddlers tower over the Forbidden City and the White House, while large groups squeeze in for pictures on the slightly reduced stairs of Gaudi’s Spanish Steps. Since, in more recent years, Chinese tourists have begun traveling the (real) world en masse, it is a standard joke upon their return from globe-trotting to declare that they first saw world cultural landmarks at Window of the World where they had seemed



FIGURE 12.5 Window of the World, Shenzhen, 2008. Photograph by author.

more beautiful! In other words, Chinese tourists have learned to express that very worldly ironic ennui with originals. The park was so successful that a franchise was attempted in Florida (but failed), and another was built in Beijing. At Beijing's Window of the World, the celebrated filmmaker Jia Zhangke set his film *The World*. In Jia Zhangke's typical meandering style, the narrative of the film appears to have no plot connection to the place it is set, and the brooding replicas of the world's well-known buildings instead oppress us with their vast distance from the real thing, as though nothing speaks of alienation so much as copies.

Not entirely models, and not entirely architecture, the uses of Window of the World by its visitors lay the groundwork for the significations behind architectural copying in contemporary China. Architectural copies usually only appear as exact or near copies through the comparison of strategically taken photographs, but at Window of the World they are also explicitly and exclusively experienced as sites for the production of photographs themselves

(Figure 12.6). Each replica at Window of the World functions as joyful and amusing portrait backdrops for selfies and group portraits, a way for domestic tourists to imagine themselves as international ones. Shenzhen, the city that anonymously gave the world the “selfie stick,” reminds us that in post-Mao China, so much is being built that some architecture is merely serving as full-sized models for a photo-generating life.

Architectural copying at Kew and in China stems, then, not from the desire to counterfeit an object, but from the luxury of providing total set pieces for consuming experiences. Only with such a distinction can we understand why the phenomenon in China has taken on the scale of whole neighborhoods and gated communities. Spurred by Chinese developers and government departments with large-scale urbanization projects and high-profit expectations, residential and mixed-use developments throughout China are regularly themed with European or American styles, the most well-known nicknamed for the places they are said to

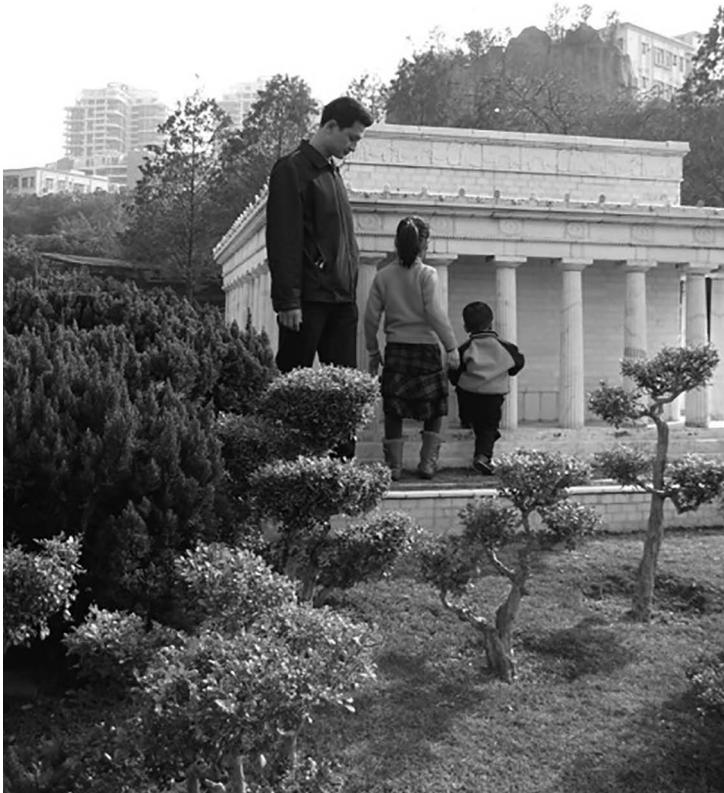


FIGURE 12.6 Window of the World, Shenzhen, 2008. Photograph by author.

imitate – Shanghai’s “Thames Town,” Anting’s “German Town,” Hangzhou’s “Venice Water-town,” and Huizhou’s “Hallstatt.”

Although these developments are usually mocked for “faking” a European lifestyle in a naive fashion, their planning, construction, and inhabitation are in keeping with the established pattern of China’s urban development. In that process, to succeed with both developers and the local officials who oversee the projects, developments consistently contain a number of luxury villas to be sold for the most profit, a mix of mid- and high-rise residential towers both for sale and to rehouse and compensate existing residents, and institutional buildings such as an art museum, a theatre, a hotel, and offices to house and gratify the local government that approves the project. In preparing their bids, Chinese developers hire foreign architecture firms to generate designs based on their own heritage before handing off successful design proposals to local firms (themselves stocked with foreign and foreign-trained architects) to actually detail. Appropriately enough, Shanghai’s “Thames Town” was designed by the British firm Atkins – which conducted an extensive photographing tour in England to design the project (Figures 12.7 and 12.8) – while Anting’s “German Town” was designed by the Shanghai office of the German firm Albert Speer & Partners.¹⁰ Expatriate intermediaries, not unlike Sir William Chambers, in other words, market themselves as experts of national culture, and fitting practitioners of national style. Ultimately, the resultant “copies” are far from street-to-street or building-to-building urban plans; rather, they are merely large developments “themed” in a (genericized) national style. “Thames Town,” after all, is not a particular place in England, but rather an amalgamation of British quaintness. Thus, these are not “Chinese” copies of European buildings at all, but rather urban design products born of foreign-domestic partnerships working in an extant architectural style applied to a new local program.

In this sense, we might argue that the eighteenth-century mania in Europe for *chinoiserie* has been matched in post-Mao China for things *oushi*—generically Euro-styled without concern or care for the historical facts or specificity from which Europeans believe they derive their authenticity. Just as Europeans once drank tea and waved paper fans in their wallpapered “Chinese rooms” with little regard for historical or cultural authenticity, wealthy Chinese today play golf, collect wine, acquire oil paintings, and live in overstuffed interiors with crystal chandeliers in their villas. This material exoticism appropriates not an original, but the expanses of distance and time: Europe and China are figured in this form of consumption as merely “old” cultures with weighty traditions that might anchor the whimsy of fashion. In China, “classicism” (*gudian*) refers to all of Western culture up to the mid-nineteenth century, and the appeal of European culture, with all its ruins and tourist sites, is summed up in its highly appropriatable past (all available online), and coded, at least for now, as aspirationally better and higher classed.

Although a powerful liberal fantasy conjures up a vision of Chinese aspiring to become Western while living in their Euro-styled villas, a cursory visit to any one of these Chinese projects reveals the steep divergences between the imagined original and putative copy. At Thames Town, the streets are indeed marked with English names (“Gower Street”), and each house’s postbox is given a decorative Arabic-numeral house number. The postman, however, relies upon the real Chinese street names and house numbers to actually locate the residences. “Thames Town,” in fact, is actually just a neighborhood in the new downtown area of the Songjiang district of Shanghai. Throughout China, from middle class to luxury levels, the architecture of themed residences further share little in the details of historic European vernacular architecture, and instead are tailored to Chinese modern living: they contain outdoor



FIGURE 12.7 “The Church,” housing an active Christian congregation, in “Thames Town,” Songjiang, Shanghai. Photograph by author.

cabinets for external air conditioning units, balcony installations to sun laundry, and dining rooms to accommodate large round dining tables. At the luxury end, villas are personally outfitted to feature such things as garden ponds to hold live fish until needed for cooking, and inside, soundproofed karaoke rooms and mahjong terraces. Despite the visual similarities so easily rendered in photographs of exterior façades, the spaces, programs, and uses of these themed developments are not copies of European residential architecture at all, but stylistic appropriations through and through, adapted to a wide range of local price points and

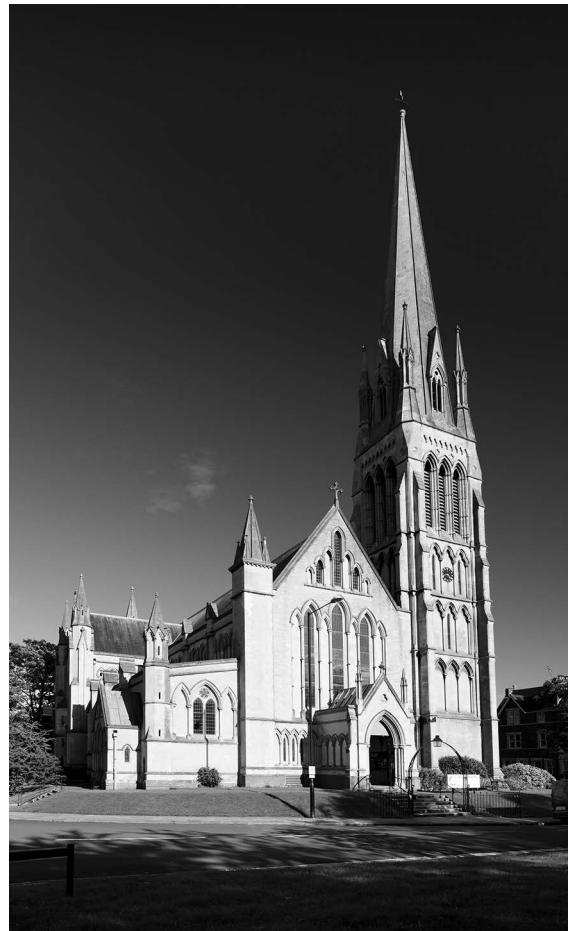


FIGURE 12.8 West front of Christ Church, Clifton Down Road, Clifton, Bristol. Photograph by Evan Chakroff.

residential uses. In essence, so much is being built in China that some architecture is merely serving as full-sized stage sets – whether for financial speculation or lifestyle settings.

What is an architectural copy, and what distinguishes it from the habitual formal and stylistic imitation which permeates the architectural profession? In the United States, it wasn't until 1990 that architecture was accorded copyright protection for the first time in the long history of intellectual property law.¹¹ Hence, for only the past two decades have American architects been able to claim copyright over their designs in America. In China, ascension to the WTO in 2001 required the construction of an intellectual property legal regime. During this period of intense legalization, the American media and its public have constantly insisted that infringements and piracy are not properly policed in China, demanding strict enforcement even as they otherwise fault the Chinese party-state for its authoritarian rule. For the Chinese public, it is neither counterfeit handbags nor DVD piracy which makes “copies” an urgent issue. In just 2008, for example, two massive tragedies focused the public concern

against fraud and fakery: The first was substandard or adulterated foods and medicines, most poignantly highlighted when baby milk powder adulterated with melamine was found to have sickened 300,000 babies, hospitalized 54,000 and killed 6. The second was corrupt or substandard public infrastructure and building constructions, brought to the fore in the collapse of over 7,000 school buildings in Wenchuan county following the 8.0-magnitude Sichuan earthquake. The number of children's deaths caused by the collapsed schools remains disputed, and is held between the official count of 5,335 and political activists' count of 19,065. Given such serious and urgent public health and safety concerns, stylistic imitation in the elevations or façade details of pre-existing architectural works can hardly be regarded with the same alarm – or indeed, moral turpitude – as copyright or trademark infringements are in litigious America.

Quite contrarily, the Chinese public responded with a new, nationalistic discourse, *shanzhai* (山寨). Shanzhai was a term that literally meant a “mountain stronghold,” but in the 2000s, it came to popularly designate commercial goods made in the spirit of righteous and patriotic mountain bandits or guerillas. Shanzhai can range from counterfeited, pirated, illegitimate, unauthorized, and/or fake goods, yet many Shanzhai products are considered cute, daring, ingenious, patriotic or parodical forms of cultural appropriation, like “Redberry” smartphones or “OFC” (Obama Fried Chicken). Because Shanzhai refers to these playful takes on international brands, even as it encompasses the dangers of fake food and medicines, it is a term best translated as “guerrilla appropriation.” In other words, Shanzhai names the knowingness with which Chinese consumers experience the rife diversity, ingenuity, and also risk, of their consuming sphere.

From a legal cultural perspective, it is furthermore important to distinguish between the principles and practices described by copyright and trademark law, and consequentially the difference between counterfeiture and copying, for the two are often collapsed in popular discourse. One of the most visible cases of this confusion occurred when in 2011, an American nurse living in Kunming, China, posted a video on her blog documenting her visit to what appeared to be an Apple Store.¹² She encountered glass panel windows, birch rectangular tables, employees in blue T-shirts with name tags, and a minimalist spiral staircase. Although there was no question that the store was selling genuine Apple products (many authorized Apple retailers do so in China and around the world), she was outraged to realize that it was not an “Apple Store” per se – at that time, Apple had opened its iconic stores only in Beijing and Shanghai. Of course, there were slight differences between this store and the Apple Stores in those cities, just as there are plenty of differences between Apple Stores and the other authorized Apple Retailers employing Apple’s minimalist design aesthetic all around the world; this Kunming store appears to have executed the style somewhat better than most – perhaps by providing its employees with blue T-shirts and gray lanyard ID tags. It was at least enough to confuse a single American. The American news media exploded with the nurse’s outrage and her video and blog post about the “fake Apple Store” went viral – even Mitt Romney mentioned it in a 2012 presidential debate with Barack Obama, grossly exaggerating that the “counterfeit” store sold “counterfeit goods.”¹³

Notably, Apple never issued a public comment on the furor, but a little over a year later, in January 2013, the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office granted Apple a trademark on its Apple Stores (Figure 12.9). The legal vehicle under which Apple made its claim was “trade dress,” a subcategory of trademarks which protects the “total image and overall appearance of a

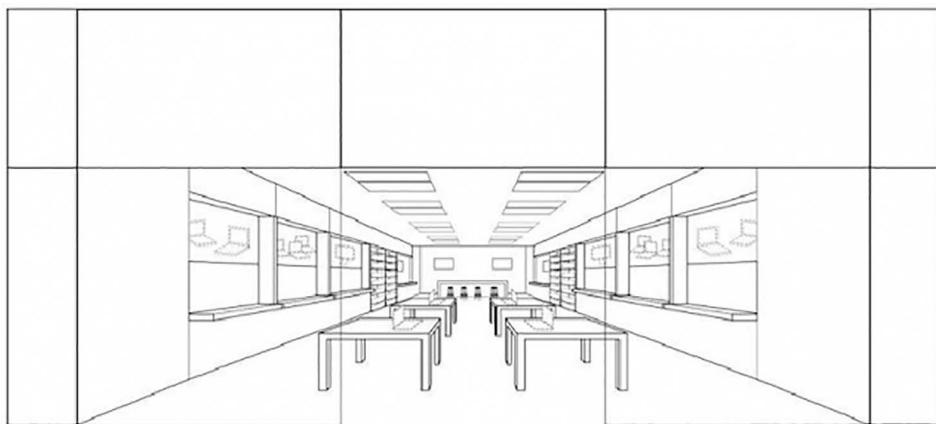


FIGURE 12.9 USPTO Service Mark registration 4277914.

product.”¹⁴ According to the filing, Apple’s trade dress on its Apple Stores consists of the image above combined with this textual description:

a primarily glass storefront, rectangular recessed lighting traversing the length of the store’s ceiling, Cantilevered shelving and recessed display spaces along the front side walls, rectangular tables arranged in a line in the middle of the store parallel to the walls and extending from the storefront to the back of the store, multi-tiered shelving along the rear walls, and an oblong table with stools located at the back of the store below video screens in the back wall.”¹⁵

The highly generic character of this protected description is characteristic of trade dress registrations for commercial spaces – a precedent set by the Tex-Mex fast food chain, Taco Cabana, in a 1992 U.S. Supreme Court case.¹⁶ Such broad protections over “design” should well concern those who wish to protect the “expressiveness” of architectural practice as an artistic one; and ultimately, according to the *Wall Street Journal*, it was only an *American* store selling Apple products that was closed down for infringing on Apple’s trade dress. Pursuant to the fear of Chinese copying, we should note that the layout and arrangement of shelves and tables at the “fake” Apple Store in Kunming did not match this legally protected description very closely at all. There was no cantilevered shelving, no rectangular recessed lighting, no “rectangular tables arranged in a line in the middle of the store parallel to the walls” and so on (Figure 12.10). Ultimately, as a consuming public we should question how and why we have allowed the brand-value of “The Apple Store” to so infiltrate our consciousness that any familiar conglomeration of wood furniture and glass storefront could threaten us as a “fake.”

In contrast to the trade dress logic, the passage of copyright laws to protect architectural design would suggest that architecture ought to be treated as an art – broadly defined in intellectual property discourse as a medium for the expression of original ideas, rather than as a trademark – a form of design-packaging for the commercialization of every



FIGURE 12.10 “Are you listening Steve Jobs?” Photograph by Jessica Angelson.

space. And yet, to treat architecture as art should take into account the particularities of its medium and conventions, not to mention its gloried tradition and longstanding history of stylistic influence and imitation. As Kew Gardens or Window of the World shows, slavish imitation of construction details has rarely ever been the point, and such is the internal ingenuity and contextual sensitivity of architectural and construction practice that virtually all of the cases of copying are in fact adaptations to a specific program and site. The curious story of the “fake” Apple Store in China, selling “true” Apple goods in an Apple-esque environment for a company that authorizes many similar retailers to do precisely that, speaks as much to the range of possibilities for creative appropriation in China as it does to American leaps of faith in the Chinese to mimic American culture “exactly.” All the architectural copies turn out to be not exactly the same, and sometimes, very far from their referent. Like the Chinese tourists who imagine their home country’s architectural replicas are “even better” than the real thing, Americans seem to believe that Chinese want to live exactly like them. Patriotic blustering aside, architectural copying, whether at Kew or in Shenzhen, stems ultimately not from an intention to counterfeit an object, but from the ambition to provide a total setting for novel, all-consuming experiences. It is, after all, the special promise of architecture to stylize life itself, and style is, moreover, far from inimitable.

Notes

This is a revised version of an essay first published in *Artforum*. I am grateful to editor Julian Rose for his many suggestions. Research for this essay draws from fieldwork in Shenzhen, Shanghai, and Chongqing, China, between 2010 and 2013, with subsequent Chinese media research compiled by Xiaohui Wu in 2014. I am especially grateful to Sophie Golub, whose own research in American architectural campus copying influenced my thinking.

- 1 David Lowenthal, *The Past Is a Foreign Country* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), 326.
- 2 Ackbar Abbas, “Theory of the Fake,” in *Laurent Gutierrez and Valerie Portefaix* (Hong Kong: Map Book Publishers, 2001), 313.
- 3 Johann Nieuhof, *Het Gezantschap de Nederlandtsche Oost-Indische Compagnie*. . . (Amsterdam: Jacob van Meurs, 1665). English translations titled *An Embassy from the East-India Company of the United Provinces* were published in 1669 and 1673.
- 4 William Chambers, *Designs of Chinese Buildings, Furniture, Dresses, Machines, and Utensils* (London: Published for the Author, 1757), page A, fn †.
- 5 The word “duplitecture” is introduced in Bianca Bosker, *Original Copies: Architectural Mimicry in Contemporary China* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2013).
- 6 The pagoda is part of a Buddhist temple complex known as the Bao’ensi (Temple of Gratitude), recorded to have dated from 194–195 BCE, one of the earliest Buddhist towers in China. A private donation of US\$1 billion in 2010 enabled the reconstruction of a museum, temple and park complex. The new tower was opened to the public in 2015. See <http://baike.baidu.com/view/185203.htm>.
- 7 Bert De Muyneck, *Mark Magazine*, 5.
- 8 Nadia Kasehm, “A Tale of Two Buildings: A Case of Architectural Copyright Infringement in China,” *Fordham Art Law Society* (30 October 2015). It is important to note that despite this headline, the article itself details that no copyright lawsuit was brought by Zaha Hadid nor was there ever a court finding of copyright infringement.
- 9 In the *Daily Mail*, Zhang is quoted to have said: “It cost me \$50 million but that’s because we made so many improvements compared with the original.” “Multi-Millionaire Builds Exact Replica of Famous French Chateau for \$50 Million . . . in Beijing,” *Daily Mail* (13 June 2012). Beijing Chateau Lafitte Hotel currently operates as a hotel, spa, winery, and events center.
- 10 The firm was founded in 1964 by Albert Speer, son of Albert Speer, and architect for Hitler and the Third Reich. It opened a Shanghai office in 2001.
- 11 17 U.S.C. § 102. Architecture Works Copyright Protection Act (1990).
- 12 The story was first initiated in 2011 by an American nurse, Jessica Angelson, living in Kunming, China, on her blog, birdabroad.wordpress.com, and several days later she reported that the story had been picked up by nearly 1,000 media outlets. The *Wall Street Journal’s China Realtime Report* blog later cast doubt on the fact that the employees did not know they weren’t working in an official “Apple Store.” “Fake Apple Store Clerk Speaks out,” *China Real Time, Wall Street Journal*, <http://blogs.wsj.com/chinarealtime/2011/07/21/china-fake-apple-store-clerk-speaks-out/>
- 13 “Mitt Romney Called Out on Fake Apple Store”, *Wall Street Journal* (17 October 2012), China Real Time Report: <http://blogs.wsj.com/chinarealtime/2012/10/17/china-fake-apple-store-blogger-romney-misusing-the-story/>
- 14 *Blue Bell Bio Medical v. Cin Bad, Inc.*, 864 F.2d 1253, 1256 (5th Cir. 1989). Also, it “involves the total image of a product and may include features such as size, shape, color or color combinations, texture, graphics, or even particular sales techniques.”
- 15 USPTO Service Mark registration 4277914.
- 16 Further on trade dress and architecture, please see the author’s “Ambience as Property: Experience, Design, and the Legal Expansion of ‘Trade Dress,’” *Future Anterior*, 9, 1 (Fall 2012): 89–105.

13

CITTÀ ANALOGA

Aldo Rossi's visual theory on display

Léa-Catherine Szacka

It was in 1969 in the preface to the second edition of *l'Architettura della Città* (The Architecture of the City) that Italian architect Aldo Rossi first mentioned, and briefly unfolded, his concept of the *Città analoga* (Analogous City), “a compositional procedure that is based on certain fundamental artifacts in the urban reality around which other artifacts are constituted within the framework of an analogous system.”¹ The Analogous City refers to a “construction of the real” that, using an analogous system, constitutes “an act mediated by architecture in its relationship with things and the city, with ideas and history.”¹ To illustrate his concept, Rossi uses Giovanni Antonio Canal’s (Canaletto) fantasy view of Venice, a *Capriccio* from the mid-eighteenth century in which the painter freely associated three of Palladio’s architectural projects: the Ponte di Rialto, the Basilica di Vicenza, and the Palazzo Chiericati (Figure 13.1). In Canaletto’s Capriccio, the three monuments are placed next to each other, forming a view (*vedute*) that seems perfectly realistic, as if directly captured by the painter. Yet, none of these three monuments was actually located in Venice (Palladio’s Rialto bridge was never built – he lost the competition – while the Basilica and the Palazzo stand in Vicenza). Rossi explains: “The geographical transportation of the monuments within the painting constitutes a city that we recognize, even though it is a place of purely architecture reference.”² The Venice depicted by Canaletto and based on the appropriation of Palladio’s work is an analogous city composed of monuments related to both the history of architecture and to the collective memory of the city. The city becomes a recognizable construct and a locus of purely architectural values: neither fully imaginary nor completely true, a city that is as true as the real Venice, analogous to the real Venice.

The conceptual notion of the Analogous City is of paramount importance in understanding the work of Rossi. It refers not merely to a formal, but to an operational idea whose fundamental *modus operandi* is the appropriation of projects and references that can be freely associated to recompose a new whole, linking theory and practice while allowing architects to design projects that blend their personal memory with the city’s history. In the Analogous City, the elements are “pre-established and formally defined,” but the result of their juxtaposition creates an “authentic, unforeseen, and original meaning of the work.”³ In his recent book



FIGURE 13.1 *Capriccio con edifici Palladiani* by Giovanni Antonio Canal, Detto Canaletto, 1753–59.
Courtesy of the Galleria Nazionale di Parma.

on analogy, Jean-Pierre Chupin traced the genesis and ramifications of the Analogous City, a theoretical fiction and architectural legend that, as he argues, remained partially, and perhaps intentionally, unexplained and inexplicable.⁴ Yet, if never fully elucidated, the mystery around the theoretical concept of the Analogous City had, after 1969, been explored and partially unveiled by Rossi through a series of exhibitions that began to frame its scope and allow for more tangible readings of his intentions. It was, arguably, the highly public act of exhibiting that allowed Rossi to further explore and later elaborate his theoretical concept.

In 1970s Italy, architectural exhibitions were meeting points and the platforms from which Rossi could shape and construct his theory of the Analogous City visually – in two and three dimensions – rather than in words. It was first in 1973 and then at regular intervals of three years (in 1976 and 1979) that Rossi commissioned or produced versions of the Analogous City, using alternative representational techniques each time. The first of these visual representations took the form of an oil canvas, with the title *La Città analoga*, on display at the 15th Milan Triennale. Three years later, Rossi produced and exhibited the monochromatic collage,⁵ also titled *La Città analoga*, at the 1976 Venice Biennale exhibition *Europa-America: Centro storico-suburbio* (Europa-America: Historical Center-Suburb).⁶ Because of its particular composition and intriguing mix of modes of representations, and due to its large circulation, this collage represents perhaps the most poignant and notorious illustration of Rossi's concept of the Analogous City. Finally, in 1979, Rossi designed the *Teatro del Mondo* (Theater of the World), a floating structure built in the context of the Venice Biennale that offered a new and strikingly different reading of the concept of the Analogous City. Reaching beyond the mere act of representation, the Teatro entered into direct and highly contextual dialogue with the city. Considering the work and writing of Rossi and looking more closely at the three exhibited examples, this chapter disentangles and articulates Rossi's use of the concept of the Analogous City, linking it to the postmodern attitude towards appropriation in architecture.

The underlying hypothesis is that Rossi's three works on display are neither pure architecture form nor simple representations, but contain elements of both; they are analogical in being like the city, and like architecture, while being outside the disciplinary space of both. As such, they explain and perform Rossi's concept of the Analogous City in a way that his writing could not.

Rossi and the concept of analogy

The concept of analogy is often associated with the idea of resemblance. But, more than sheer resemblance, an analogy consists in comparing one thing to another for the purpose of illustration, explanation, or clarification. It is based on the idea of correspondence or partial similarity:⁷ A is to B what C is to D. Moreover, an analogy is also a way of reasoning, thinking, and coming to a perception. For Aldo Rossi, analogy was a design method that combined personal and collective memory and served to explain things through the juxtaposition of other things. As explained by Bruno Reichlin, a former collaborator of Rossi: "What Rossi meant was that some times [sic], to explain things they are only other things. In other words, there comes a time where you cannot say things, but you can only propose things that are different, equal and close."⁸

In the work of Rossi, the concept of analogy directly implied a series of appropriations: external and historicist quotations but also conversations with the architect's own built or unbuilt work. For Rossi, the act of appropriation – the deliberate reworking of images and styles from earlier, well-known works of art – was fundamental: it went beyond architectural influence, and was a way of conceptualizing the world and creating a new ensemble for which he claimed ownership. A close reading of the architect's body of works (including buildings, writings, and drawings) reveals an endless succession of appropriations, "a critical activity that reflected upon itself."⁹ It was by appropriating, identifying, and rereading works by Adolf Loos, Alessandro Antonelli, Peter Behrens, and Le Corbusier that the young Rossi, when still a student and working for the magazine *Casabella-Continuità*,¹⁰ reached beyond modern orthodoxy.¹¹ Rossi's first building, the Monument to the Partisans of World War II in Segrate, near Milan, is a collage of architectural elements (Figure 13.2): the column-cylinder, the wall, the triangular shaped beam, the stairs; simple typologies and geometries that aren't new, but when placed in a different combination and juxtaposition, take on a new significance.¹² Moreover, in Rossi's work, there exists a form of "double appropriation" in which quotations of various references from the history of architecture intersect with fragments, of Rossi's own architecture: the Monument in Segrate then reappears in other works by Rossi such as the town hall of Muggio (1972) or the Hotel Il Palazzo in Fukuoka (1987–89).¹³ Rossi writes: "Thus I like to quote from objects or even events in my own life, as well as describe or study or illuminate something whose direct bearing on my work is not obvious."¹⁴ For him, the reference to one's own work does not represent the sign of an imprisonment, but a degree of freedom.

It was in relation to the city that the concept of analogy gained full potential in Rossi's work: something the Italian architect started reflecting upon in the 1960s from ideas developed in *The Architecture of the City*. In Rossi's Analogous City there is, as explained by Peter Eisenman in the introduction to the book's 1982 English edition, "a dislocation of place" and a "dissolution of scale," a subversion of the real city that "allows for both memory and history" to cohabit as the result of collective unconscious.¹⁵ It was in the context of three exhibitions tackling the theme of the city (in its relation to rational architecture, as an opposite to



FIGURE 13.2 Monument to the Partisans of World War II in Segrate by Aldo Rossi, 1965–67. Photograph by author.

suburbia, or as a scenic space) that Rossi could better play with and explore the juxtaposition of the concept of analogy and the theme of the city, while using appropriation to tackle issues of authorship and enter in conversation with a historical body of work as well as his own architectural production.

The first *Città analoga*, 1973

The first real materialization of the theory of an Analogous City happened in 1973, when Rossi, then curator of *Architettura-città*,¹⁶ the international architecture exhibition of the 15th Milan Triennale, commissioned his friend and pupil Arduino Cantafora (1945–), to paint a 7 m × 2 m oil on canvas to be put on display in the Palazzo dell’Arte. In the manner of Canaletto’s capriccio, and borrowing both from the style of painter De Chirico’s theatrical settings

and the composition of fifteenth-century wide single-point perspective *Ideal City* (formerly attributed to Piero della Francesca), this large fresco depicted an urban perspective, featuring the improbable juxtaposition of a series of historically eclectic works of iconic architectural references, mainly emanating from a rationalist architectural culture: Étienne-Louis Boullée's 1780 Spiral tower, Adolf Loos's 1911 house on Michaelerplatz in Vienna, Peter Behrens's 1911 AEG factory, and Ludwig Hilberseimer's 1924 project Friedrichstrasse, both in Berlin, Alessandro Antonelli's Mole Antonelliana in Turin, Giuseppe Terragni's 1936 Casa del Fascio in Como, The Pantheon and the Pyramid of Cestius in Rome, among others. At the center was Aldo Rossi's own 1965 Monument to the Partisans of World War II in Segrate near Milan (Figure 13.4). The painting was placed in a small section, hinging between a longitudinal and a curvilinear part of the exhibition space, between the presentations of the various cities (Trieste, Venice, Berlin, Stockholm, Zurich, Rome, Barcelona, Napoli, and Bologna) and the second part of the exhibition dedicated to works by Italian and foreign architects. By its size and placement in the exhibition space, we can conclude that the painting, beyond offering a synthetic image of what an Analogous City could be, was meant to provoke a strong impression on visitors that would, by then, have absorbed a large quantity of information concerning a number of European city centers.

Establishing a link between imagination and reality, the first Analogous City referred to the shared character of the construction of cities and the role of monuments both in urban territories and in collective memory. It served to advocate for a compositional system that would take into account the role of memory – both individual and collective – in the construction of cities over long periods of time.¹⁷ Yet despite suggesting a direct influence of memory on the construction of cities, the first *Città analoga* was completely deprived of any human presence: it was a simple montage of famous buildings from all periods of history with, in the center, a work by Rossi. It represents “a fictive city in all its complexity.”¹⁸



FIGURE 13.3 Group portrait, participants of the Architettura-città exhibition at the 15th Milan Triennale (in front of La Città Analoga by Arduino Cantafora), 1973. Photograph by Heinrich Helfenstein.



FIGURE 13.4 *La Città Analogà* by Arduino Cantafora, 1973 Museo del Novecento, Milan.

Eisenman writes that

The time of analogy, a bifocal lens of history and memory, takes in and collapses chronological time – the time of events – and atmospheric time – the time of place . . . the time of analogy is thereby abstracted from the real city.

He continues: “it is *no place*, but no place that is different from that of modernist utopia precisely because it is rooted in both history and memory.”¹⁹ Eisenman describes the atmosphere that emanates from Cantafora’s painting: a dissolution of time and space, something that is forever suspended on the surface of the canvas. The painting, with its emptiness, absence of human figures, exaggerated shadows, dream-like atmosphere, disquieting effect, and mix of realism and strange juxtapositions, recalls the *Pittura metafisica* (metaphysical painting), a style, inspired by surrealism that flourished between 1911 and 1920 in the work of de Chirico but also his brother Alberto Savinio as well as painter Carlo Carra.

The fact that Cantafora’s painting was produced in the context of the 15th Triennale is key for understanding the concept of the Analogous City. Often perceived as the manifesto for the Tendenza, this exhibition was imagined by Rossi as a display of concrete projects and a pedagogical endeavor meant to question the role of architecture vis-à-vis the profession and within the city. The exhibition put together a group of Italian and American architects that were to shape international architectural discourse in the 1970s and 1980s. The by now famous group portrait, with its members scattered by Heinrich Helfenstein in front of Cantafora’s urban landscape, clearly encapsulate the noteworthiness of the painting.

Beyond its esthetic effect, the canvas presented a layering of historical examples of rational architectural references and served as a prescriptive manual that gave the visitor of the exhibition some rules on architectural and urban composition: something suspended between history and memory. It was meant to symbolically and physically (within the space of the exhibition) link the study of cities with the production of architecture. Yet the 1973 Analogous City conveyed a very strong sense of individual authorship, something that was to be challenged when Rossi, three years later, had another occasion to publically exhibit his ideas, this time in the context of the Venice Biennale.

The Second Città analoga, 1976

The Analogous City is condemned, by its destiny, to perpetual evolution.²⁰ That may explain why, only three years after exhibiting Cantafora's painting at the Triennale, Rossi presented a second *Città analoga*, this time at the 1976 Venice Biennale. Using the technique of the collage, this collective work (produced, with Fabio Reinhart (1942–), Bruno Reichlin (1941–) and Eraldo Consolascio (1948–) of 2.5 m × 2.5 m was another attempt to illustrate Rossi's concept of the ever-changing nature of the urban landscape, where the form of the city is determined by the historical imagination – collective memories, places, and buildings. The monochromatic collage embodied, in its collaborative mode of production, an idea of collective memory, moving beyond the authorial approach to image production. Thus, the piece questioned the notion of single authorship while mirroring the key aspects of Rossi's theory of the city – summarized with the dictum “*l'architettura sono le architetture*” – that is, all architecture is made of the aggregation of other architectures, which are, in turn, located within a historical lineage, using typology as a structuring or technical base.

The second *Città analoga* “displays an aggregation of architectures drawn from collective and personal memories”²¹ combining pictorial views and cartographic representation and focusing on the relation between reality and imagination. Many of the elements used in the collage were extracted from Rossi's teaching at the ETH in Zurich,²² architecture with an iconic and pedagogical value. It mixed references to rationalism and the *Neues Bauen*, neoplatonism and the architecture of the enlightenment; icons of Modern and Rationalist



FIGURE 13.5 Aldo Rossi installing the collage *Città Analoga*, *Europa-America: Centro Stodico Suburbio*, 37th International Art Exhibition of the Venice Biennale, 1976. Photography by Lorenzo Capellini.

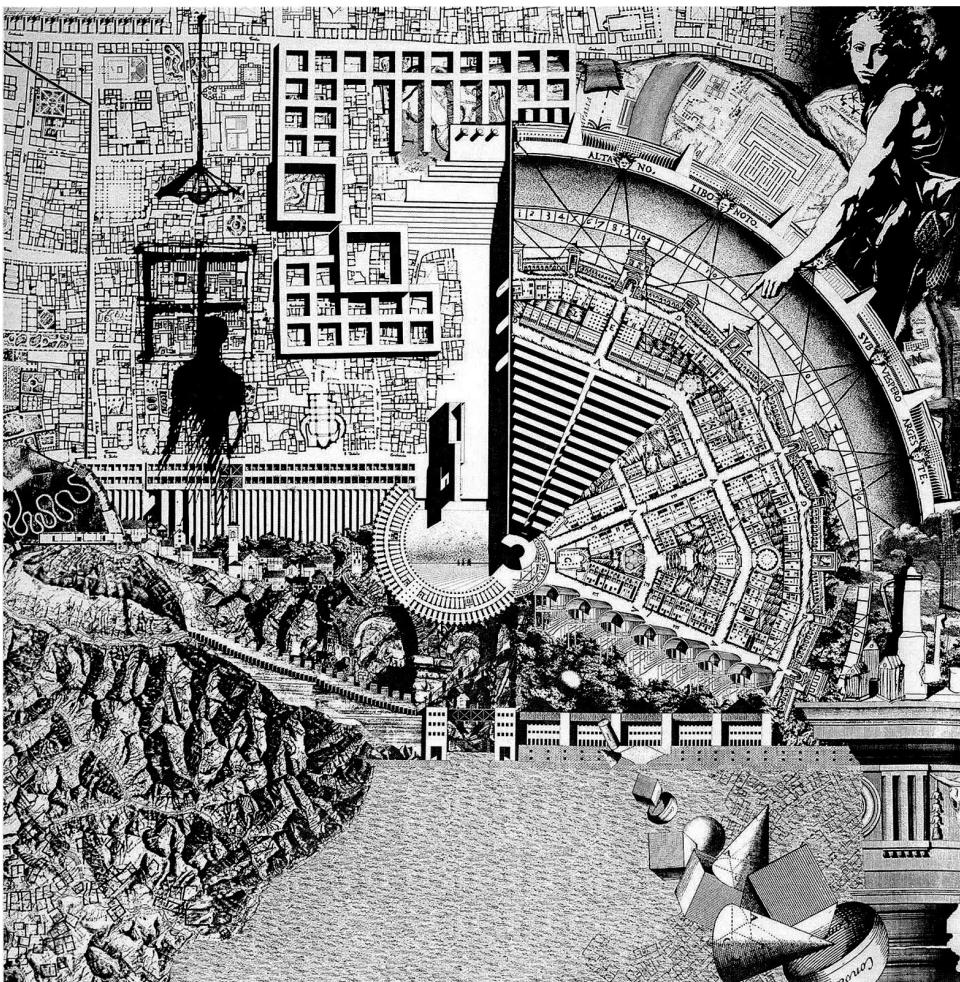


FIGURE 13.6 Collage *Città Analoga* by Aldo Rossi, Fabio Reinhart, Bruno Reichlin, and Eraldo Consolascio. Courtesy of the Centre Pompidou, Paris.

architecture such as Giuseppe Terragni's Casa del Fascio in Como and Le Corbusier's chapel of Notre Dame du Haut Ronchamp; vernacular constructions of the Ticino; Piranesi's prisons; and even early baroque paintings. It also included some of Rossi's most famous architecture such as the Gallaratese Housing Unit, the Cemetery of San Cataldo; the Coffee Maker and, again, in the center of the composition, the Monument to the Partisans of World War II in Segrate (Figure 13.6).²³ The square composition played on the ambiguity created by a carefully crafted juxtaposition of plans and elevations, adding a sense of depth to the composition.²⁴

Shifting technique, from painting to collage, Rossi, with the second *Città analoga*, further emphasized the idea of appropriation – to cut and paste things, mostly photocopies extracted from architecture books and other references, into a new composition; to transform, swallow, and even plagiarize existing or imaginary architecture in order to make them one's own body of work; to question and challenge the concept of authenticity and the value of architectural

creation. Coined by Georges Braque and Pablo Picasso at the beginning of the twentieth century, collage became a distinctive genre within modern art, one that emphasized the concept and the process over the end product. In that manner, the 1976 collage was not meant as an end or a definite explanation of what the *Città analoga* was; it was, as explained by Chupin, itself an analogy from which emerged new significations from the insertion of object and project, according to a relatively arbitrary montage, but with a calculated automatism, all this with the objective of expressing a sense of environment and a sense of memory.²⁵ The collage also borrowed from surrealists techniques (the games, the procedures, the process) which, as explained by Jean La Marche, have the primary purpose of avoiding “the hegemony of reason and convention and, by so doing, allow something else to come forward into the work.”²⁶

In a recent interview, Fabio Reinhart explained that the second *Città analoga* was not an analogous city, but a “Map of the analogous city, or rather of the same reality, positioned in an analogous form.”²⁷ If the first *Città analoga* was imagined as a manifesto, this one was more akin to a map, reproduced in a limited number of copies and that could be used to navigate the concept of Analogous City as conceived by Rossi and understood by his disciples at a precise moment in time.

The *Teatro del Mondo* as an analogique machine, 1979

Rossi's celebrated work, the *Teatro del Mondo*, also produced in the context of an exhibition, could be understood as the closing episode in an analogical triptych started in 1973. Going beyond the painting and surpassing the collage, the third manifestation of Rossi's theory was three-dimensional, adding a spatial and temporal aspect to the idea of the Analogous City. The *Teatro del Mondo* was a small floating theatre built for the exhibition *Venezia e lo spazio scenico*,²⁸ presented from 6 October to 4 November 1979 both in the spaces of the Palazzo Grassi and, projecting Venice's intrinsic theatricality beyond the walls of the Palazzo, in significant spaces of the city like Piazza San Marco and in front of the Arsenale.²⁹ An homage to Venice, the exhibition showed a series of cases in which the existing city was reinvented and re-proposed through the reintegration of the imaginary and the use of ephemerality. In fact, as recalled by Manfredo Tafuri in his article “L'Ephemère est éternel. Aldo Rossi a Venezia,” the *Teatro del Mondo* (and the exhibition *Venezia e lo spazio scenico* in its entirety) paid homage to the ephemeral, “a favourite theme of the theatre tradition of sixteenth-century Venice.”³⁰ It was meant to express a link with history and memory as well as a degree of creativity and a complete sense of freedom normally impossible in historical center such as Venice (Figure 13.7).

The *Teatro del Mondo* had been imagined as an urban machine with three main functions: to provide a usable if not a precisely defined space; to be placed as a volume in relation to the monuments of Venice; and to be built on the water.³¹ It was a 25 m temporary tubular construction, a binary structure, reminiscent of Palladio's villa Capra and formed by a cubic space (9.5 m long × 11 m high) – on top of which was flanked a terrace offering views of the surroundings – surmounted by a pointed octagonal prism (6 m high) and fixed and mounted on a raft (35 m × 9 m). It was made from “Innocenti” steel tubes (from the company Ponteggi Dalmine)³² covered with warm yellow timber (entirely covered on the outside and partly covered on the inside) and topped by a light-blue fringe-like line and a roof made of galvanized iron sheeting. Inside, the space was a combination of steps (facing two sides of the central stage) with galleries capable of accommodating 200 to 250 spectators.³³ The *Teatro* was not only a theatre but also a tower, designed to enter in a dialogue with the monuments of Venice.



FIGURE 13.7 Teatro del Mondo anchored in Saint Marc's basin, Venice. Photography by Paolo Portoghesi.

If Rossi's theatre had been inspired by the archetype of the Venetians sixteenth-century *theatrum mundi*, such as the ones erected by Rusconi and Scamozzi, the correspondence to this model was only literal: the *theatrum mundi* were open floating theatres that accommodated only performers while the public was admiring the spectacle from a distance, on the *fondamenta*. The form of the Teatro also appropriated common vocabulary of water-related structures (the gondoliers' kiosks, the seaside beach cabin, the lighthouse, etc.) and the unique farm architecture of the Lombardy region and characteristics of Venetian architecture (it was modeled on the size of San Mark's basin monumental architecture). By virtue of its extraordinary form and powerful poetic charge, it would become etched in the collective memory, perhaps more deeply than many of the adjacent, permanent structures.

The *Teatro* served as proof that “historical memory (could) now be enriched beyond the limits of any modernist orthodoxy.”³⁴ The success and appeal of this poetic construction was

largely due to its ephemerality and to the fact that it added a three-dimensional component to the exhibition, one that was more comprehensible to the general audience. The Teatro, like other modern prototypes, gave the public a chance to experiment with space and to explore, from its terraces, new views on the city. Theatrical principles and techniques had often influenced urban culture, giving to the urban environment the capacity to express collective values and to respond to the needs of the imagination. In the same way, the *Teatro* used the ephemeral as a way to emphasize, question, and rethink permanent construction while allowing a degree of creativity in otherwise static historic city centres.

If not directly related to the two other *Città analoga*, the *Teatro del Mondo* implicitly referred to the same ideas first expressed in *The Architecture of the City*: that “the city . . . is to be understood as an architecture”; that “with time, the city grows upon itself” and “acquires consciousness and memory”; that “the contrast between particular and universal, between individual and collective, emerges from the city and from its construction, its architecture.”³⁵ The *Teatro del Mondo* was a form of laboratory that, in Rossi’s words, sought “fantasy only within reality.”³⁶ It was not mere image but an image generator, a machine, meant to create new temporary urban landscapes situated at the crossroad between reality and fiction. By moving around the city of Venice and beyond (it started its journey in Marghera, just outside Venice, where it was built, and traveled all the way to Dubrovnik) the *Teatro* generated extraordinary urban compositions to be impressed on both individual and collective memories – recorded in photography – and performed as a machine reactivating the past and linking the Biennale with the city of Venice.

The *Teatro del Mondo*, like Canaletto’s painting, was meant to question static urban visions and to produce, through the use of the ephemeral, and via the medium of the exhibition, new images of the city that, neither real nor imaginary, recall personal and collective memory. Yet this particular effect could only be obtained by the particular character of an event like the Biennale, fostering a confrontation between the ephemeral and the durable, a condition encapsulated in the context of the exhibition and its blending with the city. Of course, Venice is not any city, and like in the Canaletto painting, the snapshot of the *Teatro* taking this city as background show the effect of an ephemeral structure confronted with the monuments of Venice – as well as with other constructions of the Laguna, from its departure point in Marghera, up until the very public space of Piazza San Marco.

Conclusion

The *Città analoga* will forever remain an allusion. Never explicitly clarified through words, Rossi’s theory was meant to be transmitted via the power of visual and spatial languages: the immersive space of the painting, the depth of the collage, the ephemeral space of the temporary floating structure and, more generally, the public and performative space of the exhibition. Thus, through the act of exhibiting, Rossi’s various iterations of the *Città analoga* are these “other things”; they are other ways to perceive and sense the city, to see, not only what one sees with one’s own eyes, but to perceive the layers of history and memories, the complete set of references that are at stake both for the particular and the universal.

Arguably, it is by borrowing from the idea of appropriation, that the *Città analoga* not only embodies the notion of the collective memory, but also was analogous to Rossi’s theory of the city. Yet, Rossi, unlike many of his fellow postmodernists, thought that appropriation not only

concerned the visual or semantic aspects of architecture, but should also challenge theoretical concepts, repeating the past, but also, and in the same manner, the present and the future.

The triptych constituted by the two *Città analoga* and the *Teatro del Mondo* represent a series of appropriations: and together, each and every version of the Analogous City change our understanding of Rossi's work and, more precisely, the particular entanglement between architecture and the city. If the first *Città analoga* was fixed inside the Milan's Palazzo dell'Arte, and only circulated through photographic reproductions, the second version traveled beyond Venice, to different location after being reproduced in a limited number of copies, distributed among its creators. But it was the *Teatro del Mondo* that further pushed the dialogue with the city, no longer contained within the exhibition space, itself embedded in the cityscape, but directly connected with the urban environment, moving within the spaces of Venice and beyond.

By moving from two to three dimensions and by exhibiting his theory in the open air of the city, Rossi, in 1979, pushed the boundaries of appropriation, rendering it more public than ever. In so doing, he materialized a prophesy, made clear in the last few lines of "The analogous city: panel," an explanatory text he had published in the magazine *Lotus International*, just a few months after presenting his second *Città analoga* at the Venice Biennale: "Between past and present, reality and imagination, the *analogous city* is perhaps simply the city to be designed day by day, tackling problems and overcoming them, with a reasonable certainty that things will ultimately be better."³⁷

Notes

- 1 Aldo Rossi, *The Architecture of the City* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1982), 166.
- 2 Ibid.
- 3 Ibid.
- 4 On the concept of analogy in the work of Rossi, see Jean-Pierre Chupin, "L'architecture de la ville," in *Analogie et Théorie en Architecture: De la vie, de la ville et de la conception, même* (Geneva: Infolio, 2010), 127–191.
- 5 In 2012, the Centre Pompidou acquired the piece as part of its architecture collection (inventory number: AM 2012-2-371). Gift of the Friends of the Musée National d'Art Moderne, 2012. Collage of paper, felt, ink, gouache on paper and synthetic film. 230 × 240 cm). The collage was restored and framed to figure prominently within the exhibition *La Tendenza: Architectures Italiennes 1965–1985* – almost as a trophy or pictorial manifesto for a still understudied and under-defined movement within postmodern architecture.
- 6 The exhibition *Europa-America: Centro storico-suburbio* had been organized by Vittorio Gregotti as one of three architecture shows inside the 37th International Art Exhibition of the Venice Biennale. It was imagined as a confrontation between a group of European architects and a group of American architects on the theme of the suburb and the historical city center. It was held at the Magazzini del Sale from 31 July to 10 October 1976, presented original work by twenty-five architects, including the most pre-eminent in a new generation (also called the "middle" generation) of American and European architects, identifying them as the "restless offspring of the masters of the modern movement." The dialectical display had been coordinated by Franco Raggi, Gregotti being in charge of the group of Europeans (The group was composed of fourteen participants that included Atelier d'urbanisme et architecture (AUA), Carlo Aymonino, Giancarlo De Carlo, Oriol Bohigas / Joseph Martorell / David Mackay, Herman Hertzberger, Hans Hollein, Lucien Kroll, Aldo Rossi, Alison and Peter Smithson, James Stirling, Taller de Arquitectura, Oswald Mathias Ungers and Aldo van Eyck), while the IAUS of New York, with the help of Peter Eisenman and Robert A.M. Stern and sponsored by the Graham Foundation, was in charge of the Americans. (The group was composed of eleven participants that included Raimund Abraham, Emilio Ambasz, Peter Eisenman, John Hejduk, Craig Edward Hodgetts, Richard Meier, Charles Moore, Cesar Pelli, Robert A.M. Stern,

Stanley Tigerman, Robert Venturi, John Rauch and Denise Scott Brown.) The aim was to present to a European public the essential differences between American and European urbanism, highlighting how the work of Europeans, unlike that of Americans, arose out of the historic and cultural urban complexity of the environmental context. While the Europeans worked on the historic center and primarily displayed documentation on built projects or competition entries, their American counterparts offered theoretical thinking and ad hoc hitherto unpublished projects on the suburb featuring new programs, polemical texts and drawings. Exhibited in the long and narrow halls of the Magazzini, the two groups were clearly presented as distinct and confrontational entities. Extending the exhibition beyond the gallery walls, the Biennale also set up an extraordinary open debate between all exhibitors of *Europa-America*. For more on this exhibition see Léa-Catherine Szacka, "Debates on Display at the 1976 Venice Biennale," in *Place and Displacement: Exhibiting Architecture*. Edited by Thordis Arrhenius, Mari Lending, Wallis Miler and Jérémie Michael McGowan (Zurich: Lars Muller, 2014), 97–112.

- 7 www.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/english/analogy (accessed September 1, 2016).
- 8 Bruno Reichlin, interview with the author, August 16, 2013, Breillet, France. "Ce que je trouvais génial, dans ce passage qu'a écrit Rossi, est qu'il affirme qu'il y a un moment où, pour expliquer les choses, il y a seulement d'autres choses. Autrement dit, vient un moment où l'on ne peut pas dire les choses, mais on peut seulement proposer des choses qui sont différentes, égales et proches." Translation by the author.
- 9 Diogo Seixas Lopes, *Melancholy and Architecture: On Aldo Rossi* (Zurich: Park Books, 2015), 95.
- 10 Aldo Rossi received his architectural degree from Milan Polytechnic in 1959 and started collaborating for the magazine *Casabella-Continuità* in 1955, when directed by Ernesto Nathan Roger, and continued the collaboration until 1964, when the direction passed to Gian Antonio Bernasconi.
- 11 See Silvia Micheli, "Aldo Rossi," in *Collections d'Architecture, la collection du Centre Pompidou, Musée National d'Art moderne* (Paris: Editions Centre Pompidou, 2016), 400. See also Seixas Lopes, *Melancholy and Architecture*, 97–98.
- 12 Ibid.
- 13 Ibid.
- 14 Rossi, *A Scientific Autobiography*, 57.
- 15 Rossi, *The Architecture of the City*, 8–9.
- 16 Held between 20 September and 20 November 1973, *Architettura-città* aimed at showing real and concrete projects, situated within the lineage of rationalist architecture. Aligned with the 1950s and 1960s editorial project of the magazine *Casabella-Continuità*, Rossi's exhibition was meant to show a critical continuity of the modern movement.
- 17 See Chupin, "L'architecture de la ville," 131–191.
- 18 Migayrou et al., *La Tendenza: Italian Architecture 1965–1985*, 21.
- 19 Peter Eisenman, "Introduction," in *The Architecture of the City*. Edited by Aldo Rossi (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1982), 8.
- 20 Bruno Reichlin, interview with the author, August 16, 2013, Breillet, France, "La 'Città Analoga' est appelée, par sa destiné, à toujours évoluer." Translation by the author.
- 21 See Dario Rodighiero, *The Analogous City: The Map*, Introduction by Cyrille Veillon (Lausanne: Archizoom EPFL, 2016).
- 22 Due to his political engagement, Rossi was suspended from teaching at the Politecnico di Milano. Following that, he moved to Zurich where he occupied a chair in architectural design at the ETH from 1971 to 1975.
- 23 The 1976 version of the *Città Analoga* included the Knossos palace (Crete, 15th–16th century BC); the Bouleuterion (Miletos, 2nd century BC); the Church of Santa Costanza (Rome, 4th century); the Chapter House of York Minister (York, 1230–1472); the Mosque-madrasa of Murad, first-floor (Brusa, 14th century); the Bayezid II Külliye (Edirne, 1488); Donato Bramante's Tempietto of San Pietro in Montorio (Rome, 1502); Giovanni Battista Caporali's drawing of Vitruvius' city (1536); Andrea Palladio's Palazzo Thiene (Vicenza 1542); Galileo Galilei's Drawing of Pleiades Constellation (1610); Tanzio de Varallo's David and Goliath (ca. 1625); Francesco Borromini's San Carlo alle Quattro Fontane (Rome 1638–1641); Paulaner Monastery (Nova Paka, 1654–1732); Francesco de Sanctis and Alessandro Specchi's Spanish Steps (Rome, 1725); George Bähr's Frauenkirche (Desden 1726–1743); Augustin-Charles D'aviler's Figures of geometry principles, after Pierre-Jean Mariette (1738); Giovanni Battista Piranesi's Plan of Campus Martius in Rome (1746–1778); Giovanni Battista Piranesi, The Prison V, (1746–1778); Andrea Palladio's Doric columns (1786); Giuseppe

Pistocchi's project of a monument-barrack on Mont Cenis (1813); Dufour Map, 1st edition (1864); Antonio Croci's Croci House (Mendrisio, ca. 1875); Giuseppe Terragni's Project for the Danteum (1934); Le Corbusier's Chapel of Notre Dame du Haut Ronchamp (1954); Gianfranco Caniggia's Como Map (1963); Aldo Rossi's monuments to the partisans (Segrate, 1965); Giorgio Grassi's project of San Rocco housing unit (Monza, 1966); Aldo Rossi's project of the square (Sannazzari de Burgondi, 1967), Aldo Rossi, Massimo Fortis and Massimo Scolari's Project of the town hall (Scandicci, 1968); Aldo Rossi's Gallaratese Housing Unit (Milano 1969–1970), Aldo Rossi's Beach huts (1970), Aldo Rossi and Gianni Braghieri's Cemetery of San Cataldo (Modena 1971); Bruno Reichlin, Fabio Reinhart and Tonini House's (Torricella, 1972–1974); Aldo Rossi and Gianni Braghieri's single family houses (Broni, 1973); Aldo Rossi and Gianni Braghieri's Villa (Borgo Ticino, 1973); Aldo Rossi's moka coffee maker (1975); Aldo Rossi, Spazio chiuso interno (1974); Bruno Reichlin and Fabio Reinhart's restoration project of Castel Grande (Bellinzona, 1974), Aldo Rossi, Gianni Braghieri, Bruno Reichlin and Fabio Reinhart's project for connecting the walls to the main door of Castel Grande (1974), Aldo Rossi, Max Bosshard and Gianni Braghieri's project for the regional administrative center (Trieste, 1974); Bruno Reichlin and Fabio Reinhart's house (Vezio, 1975); Max Bosshard, Eraldo Consolacio and Orlando Pampuri's Brontallo Ground Floor survey (1974); Corippo elevation after the work of Luigi Snozzi and Henk Block, enriched by elements from typological plates, (1979). Informations taken from Dario Rodighiero, *The Analogous City: The Map*, Introduction by Cyrille Veillon (Lausanne: Archizoom EPFL, 2016).

- 24 As recalled by Bruno Reichlin, the collage was “brutally” executed, mostly out of photocopies from different books. Bruno Reichlin, Interview with the author, August 16, 2013.
- 25 Chapin, “L’architecture de a ville”, 140. See also Aldo Rossi, “La Città analoga: Tavola (The Analogous City: Panel),” *Lotus International*, 13 (1976): 7.
- 26 Jean La Marche, “Surrealism’s unexplored possibilities in Architecture,” in *Surrealism and Architecture*. Edited by Thomas Mical (London: Routledge, 2005), 286.
- 27 Reichlin, interview with the author, August 16, 2013.
- 28 Conceived and organized by Paolo Portoghesi, director of the Architecture Sector, and Maurizio Scaparro, director of the Theatre Sector.
- 29 See Paolo Portoghesi and Maurizio Scaparro, *Venezia e lo spazio scenico*, exh. cat. Palazzo Grassi (Venice: Edizione la Biennale di Venezia, 1980), 7.
- 30 Manfredo Tafuri, “L’Ephémère est éternel: Aldo Rossi à Venezia,” *Domus*, 602 (January 1980): 7.
- 31 Aldo Rossi, “Il progetto per ‘il teatro del mondo,’” in *Venezia e lo spazio scenico*, 110.
- 32 Rossi first wanted to build the theatre using a wooden structure, but this idea was abandoned due to deadlines and budget constraints.
- 33 The interior space of the teatro was inadequate for the needs of a theatre production and actors refused to perform in it. For more details, see Paolo Portoghesi, *Postmodern: The Architecture of the Postindustrial Society* (New York: Rizzoli, 1982), 61–65; David A. Morton, “Tendenza, Italian Rationalism: Rossi and Aymonino,” *Progressive Architecture*, (October 1980), 64–65; and Tafuri, “L’Ephemere est éternel.” About the maximum number of spectators other sources rather suggest that no more than 150 people at the time could fit the space of the Teatro. See Silvia Malcovati, “Teatro del Mondo di Aldo Rossi,” in *Architectura del Novecento*, Vol. 2 Opere, progetti, luoghi L-Z. Edited by Marco Biraghi and Alberto Ferlenga (Einaudi: Milan, 2012), 657–661.
- 34 Paolo Portoghesi, *Postmodern: The Architecture of the Postindustrial Society* (New York: Rizzoli, 1983), 64. For a good description of the *Teatro del Mondo*, 61–65.
- 35 Rossi, *The Architecture of the City*, 21.
- 36 “Un progetto che cerca ‘solo nel reale la fantasia.’” See Aldo Rossi, “Il progetto del teatro del mondo,” in *Venezia e lo spazio scenico: Carnevale del Teatro, Mostra a Palazzo Grassi*. Edited by Paolo Portoghesi and Maurizio Scaparro (Venice: Edizioni la Biennale di Venezia, 1979), 110. See also Silvia Malcovati, “Teatro del Mondo di Aldo Rossi,” 658.
- 37 Aldo Rossi, “The Analogous City: Panel,” in *Lotus International*, Milan, 13 (December 1976): 8.

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