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Books

Nancy Shatzman Steinhardt
Chinese Architecture: A History
Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press,
2019, 400 pp., 253 color and 110 b/w illus.
$65 (cloth), ISBN 9780691169989

China's building traditions are among the most ancient in the world, yet Western scholars have paid less attention to the country's architecture than to its painting and sculpture. This may be due in part to the fact that architectural study requires extensive field research. Moreover, the technical vocabulary associated with Chinese architecture, formidable even to native-born scholars, is more complicated than the vocabularies of other fields.

Nancy Shatzman Steinhardt is the leading English-language scholar of Chinese architectural history. Her many books have served as guides for other scholars and as dictionaries that have better enabled Chinese scholars to communicate with their Western peers. Her latest book, *Chinese Architecture: A History*, is an important and ambitious work of wide scope, one that surveys the history and development of this architecture from its Neolithic origins in the fourth millennium BCE to the twenty-first century.

The book consists of seventeen chapters preceded by an introduction and followed by a conclusion. After discussing materials, structural methods, and basic design features in chapter 1, Steinhardt devotes the

remaining chapters to particular Chinese buildings and cities, progressing in chronological order, from "before written records" to the Qing dynasty (1644–1911). On occasion, she diverges from chronology to address specific topics, as in chapter 9, on the *Yingzao fashi*, the famous twelfth-century treatise on building standards; chapter 15, on Buddhist, Daoist, and Islamic influences; chapter 16, on domestic gardens; and chapter 17, on interactions between China and Western modernity. She concludes the book with a brief description of urban transformations in Beijing following the end of the monarchy in 1911 and the establishment of the People's Republic of China in 1949.

Steinhardt's book is the most comprehensive English-language volume to date on the subject of Chinese architecture. As a single-authored monograph, it is unrivaled in its scope. As historian Wei-Cheng Lin notes on the volume's jacket: "This authoritative and lucid book represents the best scholarship today on the history of Chinese architecture in any language. The comprehensiveness of its scope and depth is unmatched and it sets the standard for how the history of Chinese architecture should be taught and studied." Such praise is well deserved, yet it remains important to put Steinhardt's book into the larger context of Chinese architectural historiography. Comparing *Chinese Architecture* with other related works, especially those of Chinese architectural historians, raises questions about the issues Steinhardt discusses, the organization of her narrative, and the materials on which she relies.

Steinhardt here is concerned above all with the development of stylistic features and construction techniques over time. Her approach is consistent with that developed by Chinese architectural historian Liang Sicheng and his wife, Lin Huiyin, at

the Zhongguo Yingzao Xueshe (Society for Research in Chinese Architecture, or SRCA) during the 1930s, and advanced in the 1960s by Chen Mingda and Fu Xinian. Steinhardt seems to support Liang's traditional approach, as suggested by her close attention to architectural treatises such as the *Yingzao fashi* and the *Gongbu gongcheng zuofa* (*Construction Regulations of the Board of Works*) of 1734. Further, she retains some of Liang's specific notions, such as that of *jizhi* (228), or rigidity, used to indicate the inferiority of Ming and Qing dynasty architecture to the architecture of the Tang dynasty, which Liang praised as *haojin*, or vigorous.

In the 1950s, Liu Dunzhen, another key member of the SRCA, sought to move beyond Liang's more traditional approach by employing Marxist social history in *Zhongguo gudai jianzhu shi* (*History of Ancient Chinese Architecture*), a textbook for university students that was eventually published in 1980.[1] Liang's evaluation of stylistic differences between Tang–Song and Ming–Qing architecture was further challenged by scholars beginning in the early 1970s. For example, Han Pao-teh criticized Liang's failure to recognize Ming and Qing achievements in garden and environmental design, while Hsia Chu-joe argued that Liang's approach "simplified the social-historical process of the spatial construction."[2]

If Steinhardt seems unduly influenced by Liang's canonical narrative, she is nevertheless aware of his work's methodological shortcomings. Foregrounding Chinese architecture's diversity in terms of geography, type, and function, she also raises broader questions about architecture's cultural significance. This is particularly evident in her discussion of the Forbidden City (chapter 13), the center of the Chinese monarchy for more than

two thousand years. Here Steinhardt draws upon studies by Yu Zhuoyun, Yue Jiazao, and Fu Xinian in exploring palace function and ritual connotation, as well as the geometric logic of palace design. In general, however, she is more descriptive than analytical. Her book would have benefited from a more systematic consideration of fundamental issues, such as how architecture manifested and communicated imperial power through spatial orientation, color schemes, decorative motifs, numerology, symbolism, and even inscriptions, especially in such cases as the Forbidden City.

Examining extant monuments, Steinhardt also seeks to reconstruct the appearance of buildings that have not survived. Similar approaches have been taken by Chinese scholars, especially Fu Xinian. This is helpful in drawing attention to the architecture's more spectacular aspects, but it puts a relatively narrow emphasis on style and technique over other approaches. Certainly, the treatises Steinhardt discusses—such as the Confucian classic *Kaogongji* (*Record of Trades and Crafts, including Construction*), ca. fifth–fourth century BCE, and the Ming dynasty's *Yuanye* (*The Craft of Gardens*) of 1631—attest to the state's concern for construction and craftsmanship and indicate the close attention given to landscape design. Still, it would be worth considering how scholars might go beyond the formal and technical considerations of these treatises. An abundant literature on the perception and appreciation of the Chinese built environment—as recorded in memoirs, poetry, *youji wenxue* (travel literature), and novels—provides valuable resources for architectural historians. Chen Congzhou's 1984 book *Shuo yuan* (*On Gardens*) suggests how the integration of such sources might in turn generate more nuanced scholarship.[3]

The narrative structure of Steinhardt's book is also critical, as it demonstrates her concept of history itself. Most books on Chinese architectural history adopt one of two basic narrative frameworks: typology-chronology, grouping individual building types by scale and dynastic order; or chronology-typology, dividing materials by dynasty or period, with discussion of synchronic examples of individual types. With its occasional focus on specific topics, as in chapters 9 and 11, Steinhardt's book mainly follows the second model.

One shortcoming of the chronology-typology mode is that it complicates the direct comparison of various patron types—such as the imperial family, the state, regional governments, civil organizations, religious societies, clans, and private owners—and building activities over time. This makes it difficult to distinguish the unique significance of individual buildings for respective patrons. For example, Steinhardt's discussion of palaces, altars, and imperial mausoleums, introduced in the chapter on the Ming and Qing dynasties, is separate from her sections elsewhere on the architecture of Confucianism, the imperial resort in Chengde, and the imperial gardens. Such divisions undermine the reader's ability to understand the role of each type in contributing to an inseparable unity. Yet the formation of spatial unity through complex interactions over time maintained the imperial system in multiple ways: reinforcing imperial order, providing a nexus for imperial administration and diplomacy, and supporting the life and afterlife of the imperial family.

For an alternative approach one might consider Wu Liangyong's *Zhongguo renju shi* (*A History of the Chinese Living Environment*), published in 2014.[4] While this book also uses a chronological framework, it divides the construction activities of each period into three subordinate categories: state, regional, and local projects. This helps explain how architectural activities were organized and managed to meet the different objectives and requirements of different social groups in imperial China.

Compared to her rich and comprehensive discussion of premodern architecture, Steinhardt's final chapter and conclusion are rather abrupt and cursory, suggesting that the author struggled to summarize the modern history of Chinese architecture. For teaching purposes, it would have been useful if Steinhardt had explored how architects since the late nineteenth century have sought to reevaluate and revive Chinese architectural traditions, or how scholars have aimed to write and rewrite this architecture's history.

Despite these caveats, *Chinese Architecture: A History* represents a milestone, especially for English-language readers interested in traditional architecture. It will help scholars and students around the world to better understand the history of Chinese

architecture, while encouraging readers to consider how contemporary construction can benefit from historical study.

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Notes

1. Liu Dunzhen, ed., *Zhongguo gudai jianzhu shi* (Beijing: Zhongguo Jianzhu Gongye Chubanshe, 1980).
2. Hsia Chu-joe, "Yingzao Xueshe–Liang Sicheng jianzhushi lunshu gouzao zhi lixing fengxi" [A historiographical study of the history of Chinese architecture, as written by the SRCA and Liang Sicheng], *Quarterly of Taiwan Social Studies* 3, no. 1 (Spring 1990), 30, my translation. See also Han Pao-teh, *Ming/Qing jianzhu erlun* [Two essays on Ming and Qing architecture] (Taipei: Jing yu Xiang Chubanshe, 1982), 29–32.
3. Chen Congzhou, *Shuo yuan* (Shanghai: Tongji University Press, 1984).
4. Wu Liangyong, *Zhongguo renju shi* (Beijing: Zhongguo Jianzhu Gongye Chubanshe, 2014).

Carroll William Westfall

Architecture, Liberty and Civic Order: Architectural Theories from Vitruvius to Jefferson and Beyond

It is useful to begin this review of Carroll William Westfall's recent defense of the classical tradition as the wellspring of all that is "good, beautiful and true" in architecture by invoking a distinction the ancient Stoics made between truth (*alêtheia*) and the true (*to alêthes*). For the Stoics, coherence was the touchstone of truth, and truth was a body, "a collection of several elements consisting in knowledge," equivalent to a certain degree to reality itself.[1] A body, they explained, was not a finger, a toe, an ear, an elbow, or an eye, but all of these together. The true, on the other hand, was hardly real at all. As a judgment or expression that was either true or false, the true was not a body. "The sky is blue," for instance, may be a true statement about some fragment of reality, but as a statement of enduring truth it is incorporeal and without value. The second-century philosopher Sextus Empiricus explained that when a doctor says something false for the good of his patient, or a general relays a false message in order to encourage his men, truth persists, and indeed is enhanced. The doctor's or the

general's assertions are not true, of course, but "the true" has no value. Truth does, and this includes not only winning battles and recovering good health but ultimately the entire world order, of which victories and good health are a part. Needless to say, the inherent desirability of its ends made this a view intimately interwoven with the interests of those it served.

Truth was nothing less than the entire order of the world, and the human task was to uphold that order. This, essentially, is the task that Westfall has set himself in *Architecture, Liberty and Civic Order*. As the author's most recent assault on historicism, this book bypasses the scientific revolution and its obsession with "the true" so as to vindicate the enduring value of an immutable cosmic order whose structure, in obedience to "natural law," is mirrored in the structures of social and political institutions and in the proportions and ornaments of the classical architecture that Westfall presents as their avatar. He telegraphs his own interest in the first paragraph of the preface with an assertion, uniquely resonant with the opening lines of the American Declaration of Independence, that the city, as "the most important thing people make," is built "to assist our pursuit of happiness." As Westfall declares: "To serve that pursuit the city must be a community that preserves and protects the liberty of each citizen. In a well-ordered and well-built city the good that its citizens seek is served by buildings whose beauty is the counterpart to the good" (ix).

This passage sets the tone for the short history of Western architectural theory that follows, ten chapters that together present Westfall's own, intensely partisan reading of several well-known theoretical texts. An introductory chapter on imitation is followed by discussion of Vitruvius's *De architectura* in chapter 2, focusing mainly on his theory of symmetry and proportion. According to Westfall, these Vitruvian ideals are found "where the heavens and the earth intersect," binding "all things into an ordered, beautiful whole" (17). In chapters 3 and 4 Westfall, an established Alberti scholar, discusses Leon Battista Alberti's treatise *On the Art of Building* in similar terms, putting particular emphasis on its account of beauty, which Westfall calls "the binding quality in the universal and the

enduring order, harmony and proportionality of nature" (29).

Westfall's repeated insistence on Alberti's republicanism is puzzling, until you grasp the importance of that characterization for the overarching purpose of Westfall's larger narrative. According to Alberti's friend the humanist Cristoforo Landino, Alberti was a chameleon. His principal architectural patrons were condottiere princes, wealthy warlords with private armies for hire. Among them were Ludovico Gonzaga, Sigismondo Pandolfo Malatesta, and Federico da Montefeltro, who ruled cities (respectively, Mantua, Rimini, and Urbino) that had once been free democratic communes, but were no longer. Such beauty as Alberti helped to bestow upon these cities may have been grounded in the natural order, but it reinforced the power of the men who ruled them and not, as Westfall would have it, their citizens' liberty. In fact, except for a brief mention of Filippo Brunelleschi's dome in Florence (41), Westfall fails to discuss the brick-and-mortar reality of any fifteenth-century city. Instead, "the city" for Westfall remains an abstraction, where contextual evidence of the kind just invoked is rendered meaningless in the face of the transhistorical truth he seeks to defend.

Chapter 5 begins with an overview of the writings of Renaissance theoreticians such as Filarete, Francesco di Giorgio Martini, and Sebastiano Serlio, before turning to Andrea Palladio. Palladio's *Four Books on Architecture* of 1570, Westfall writes, "exemplifies the continued reinterpretation of Vitruvius' treatise, the foundation of the theory of architecture in the classical tradition" (72). Following Alberti, Palladio teaches that the architect should never betray nature and thereby deviate "from the true, good and beautiful method of building" (*Four Books* 1.20).

"Alberti and Palladio put architecture and urbanism in service to the political life of free cities" (77), Westfall declares at the opening of chapter 6, in one of many sweeping claims that leave the reader dizzy and longing for solid ground. This chapter is concerned with the rupture in Europe beginning in the seventeenth century of the Vitruvius–Alberti–Palladio trajectory outlined thus far. Claude Perrault—a servant of absolutism, but also a scientist, medical

doctor, architect, translator of Vitruvius (1673), and author of the *Ordonnance for the Five Kinds of Columns after the Method of the Ancients* (1683)—is presented as the villain, whose examination of the hoary tradition under the unsparing lens of nascent scientific method wrenched architecture from its cosmic moorings and beauty from its grounding in the natural order. As Westfall tells it, things on the Continent went from bad to worse until, with G. W. F. Hegel, art became nothing more than a mutable manifestation of the zeitgeist "rather than the enduring, unchanging, and unattainable beauty of the cosmic order" (91). This is the birth of the historicism that Westfall has spent much of his career contesting, most notably in *Architectural Principles in the Age of Historicism*, written in collaboration with Robert Jan van Pelt almost three decades ago.[2]

Safe from the "atheistic regicidal mobs" (97) that roamed revolutionary France, the British, luckily, were there to save the day. In England, the tradition of common law, based, as Westfall claims, in the natural law that represents the very order of the world, made for communities "knit together by friendship and benevolence" (98). As he writes in chapter 7, the classical tradition persisted in England and was renewed in the phenomenon of English Palladianism. There were the buildings, of course—he mentions Chiswick and Houghton Hall—but mostly, there were the books: Colen Campbell's *Vitruvius Britannicus*, which helped to launch the Palladian movement, and, even more important, Giacomo Leoni's English translations of Alberti and Palladio, published in the 1720s. These books, among others, found their way into the hands of Thomas Jefferson, training him as an architect, and giving him an "understanding of architecture as a civic art that facilitates the citizens' pursuit of happiness" (112). Like much else in Westfall's book, this claim is presented free of substantiating arguments, which is fine if you read it as catechism, as the author apparently expects you to do.

Westfall begins his book by defining architecture as a means to the pursuit of happiness. Consistent with that premise, his concluding chapters present the reader with the fulfillment of these intentions in Jefferson, "without doubt America's finest architect, a classical architect and successor

to Vitruvius, Alberti and Palladio" (119). It was in the Declaration of Independence, written by Jefferson, where the formula "pursuit of happiness" (repeated some two dozen times in Westfall's final chapters) first appeared. Asserting that the political aims of America's founding fathers and Jefferson's architecture were both grounded in the same immutable natural law, Westfall concludes by exploring ways in which that "Jeffersonianism" might yet be restored to American architecture to reaffirm the United States' unique place in the world.

Taken on its own terms and pared down to its essentials, Westfall's book is a strangely watertight script. The internal logic of the text reminds me of Alberti's famous definition of beauty as "the reasoned harmony of all the parts within a body, so that nothing may be added, taken away, or altered, but for the worse" (*On the Art of Building* 6.2), or the Stoics' account of truth as a "body" defined by its coherence and the desirability of its intentions, leaving no room for the contingencies of historical verisimilitude.

The teachings of the German American political philosopher Leo Strauss (1899–1973) played a formative role in shaping Westfall's ongoing quarrel with historicism. Strauss's *Natural Right and History* of 1953, the source of the epigraph to Westfall's preface, appears to have provided the template for his grand narrative. *Natural Right and History*, which argues for the existence of a continuous, coherent tradition of natural right governing political thought from Socrates to Thomas Aquinas, opens with the words of the Declaration of Independence: "We hold these truths to be self-evident . . ."[3] Who would venture to claim that the right to "Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness" is not a natural right? No American, Strauss intimates, thereby promoting—as does Westfall—the authoritative position of the United States in his story. But then, as Alexis de Tocqueville observed in *Democracy in America* (1840), "Americans have a very high opinion of themselves, and they are not far from believing that they constitute a distinct species within the human race."[4]

Westfall extends Strauss's presentation of an eternal classical tradition of natural law by grafting onto it an eternal tradition of classical architecture, which, as the avatar of natural law in the political sphere,

will produce the "Jeffersonianism" that will restore "the *città felice*, the good city that fulfills the needs of men" (180). Such vague, vast, and profoundly *arrière-garde* pronouncements may well persuade some, but I cannot say that I am one of them.

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Notes

1. Sextus Empiricus, *Adversus mathematicos* 7.38–42 (*Against the Logicians* 1.38–42 in the Loeb edition). See A. A. Long, *Problems in Stoicism* (London: Athlone Press, 1971), 98–106.
2. Robert Jan van Pelt and Carroll William Westfall, *Architectural Principles in the Age of Historicism* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1991).
3. Leo Strauss, *Natural Right and History* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1953), 1. See Mark Lilla, "The Closing of the Straussian Mind," *New York Review of Books*, 4 Nov. 2004, https://www.nybooks.com/articles/2004/11/04/the-closing-of-the-straussian-mind (accessed 30 Oct. 2019).
4. Alexis de Tocqueville, *Democracy in America*, trans. Arthur Goldhammer (New York: Library of America, 2004), 432.

Marco Folin and Monica Preti
Da Gerusalemme a Pechino da Roma a Vienna: Sul *Saggio di architettura storica* di J. B. Fischer von Erlach
Modena, Italy: Franco Cosimo Panini Editore, 2019, 259 pp., 114 color and 32 b/w illus. $62.80 (paper), ISBN 9788857014616

Marco Folin and Monica Preti's *Da Gerusalemme a Pechino da Roma a Vienna: Sul "Saggio di architettura storica" di J. B. Fischer von Erlach* is a book about a book: the *Entwurff einer historischen Architectur*. Precursor of the global turn in architectural history, the *Entwurff* was unprecedented when it was first published in 1721 by Johann Bernhard Fischer von Erlach (1656–1723), architect of the imperial Habsburg court. It was designed as an oblong folio, divided into five books. The first illustrates "Ancient Jewish, Egyptian, Syrian, Persian and Grecian" structures; the second, ancient Roman buildings; the third, edifices "of the Arabians and Turks" as well as modern architecture "of the Persians, Siamese, Chinese, and Japonese"; the fourth, buildings designed by Fischer himself; and the fifth, ancient and modern urns and vases. Accompanied by a preface and short explanatory texts by numismatist

Carl Gustav Heraeus (ca. 1671–1725), Fischer's "visually compelling images of monumental complexes, presented in bird's-eye perspective"—to quote John Pinto—"both individually and collectively stimulate the creative as well as the historical imagination."[1]

Over the years, scholars have interpreted Fischer's book in different ways. Hans Sedlmayr, for example, identified it as "the first monumental history of art in images"; George Kunoth described it as "the first comparative world history of architecture"; and Joseph Rykwert considered it both "the first general history of architecture" and "a new kind of architectural treatise."[2] Thomas DaCosta Kaufmann claimed that the *Entwurff* presented "the architecture of succeeding world empires, which had developed from the Near East, through the Greeks and Romans, to the Holy Roman Empire and Vienna," while Hanno-Walter Kruft argued that it was an "'outline' . . . a collection of examples of 'world architecture,' not . . . a coherent history of development."[3] More recently, Gundula Rakowitz described the *Entwurff* as a "project," a mental assemblage of monuments aimed at the creation of a new architecture.[4] Even the earliest translations revealed how variously the work has been understood: the first French translation of Fischer's work was called *Essai d'une architecture historique* (1721), while the first English translation was called *A Plan of Civil and Historical Architecture* (1730).

Folin and Preti's volume represents the latest word on the subject. Published on the occasion of two exhibitions in Bologna, the first at the Biblioteca dell'Archiginnasio (29 November 2018–3 March 2019), the second at the Accademia delle Belle Arti (29 November 2018–5 January 2019), the monograph's title offers a new translation, and hence interpretation, of Fischer's work: *Saggio di architettura storica*. According to the introduction, *Entwurff* should be translated as neither *plan* nor *project*, but rather as *saggio* or *rassegna* (a collection of examples), while *historischen Architectur* should be understood as an allusion to the slippery association between architecture and history in its most generic sense, thus suggesting something like "the architecture of all times," or "the architecture of past and present."

Folin and Preti's discussion of the title discloses their broader methodological approach. Unlike Rakowitz, they focus not on Fischer the architect, but rather on Fischer as the maker of prints, and analyze the *Entwurff* in terms of an evolving editorial process rather than as a coherent architectural project in the form of a book. At the same time, they build their argument around the interpretation of minute, interwoven details, scrutinizing Fischer's work without mythologizing it or treating the long list of Fischer scholars with undue reverence.

Da Gerusalemme a Pechino da Roma a Vienna is introduced by a short but dense preface by Carlo Ginzburg reflecting upon Fischer's book as a mirror of European expansionism. A series of appendixes includes an outline of Fischer's biography as well as a catalogue of all of the *Entwurff*'s eighteenth-century versions and another of the engravings and their preparatory drawings for the manuscript and proof exemplar of 1712, which Fischer presented to the young monarch Charles VI; for the 1720 copy that Heraeus sent to Tessin in Stockholm; and for the 1721 edition, which was the first that was publicly available. The volume is richly illustrated, reproducing the plates from the 1725 Leipzig edition as well as additional images to support the authors' analysis of Fischer's visual sources.

Part I consists of two chapters that summarize the crucial points of Fischer's career in Rome and Vienna. These also provide the context for the sixteen-year history of the making of the *Entwurff*, begun around 1705. Focusing on the world of printmaking, Folin and Preti also connect the *Entwurff* to the *Anfang*, a volume on Viennese architecture published in 1719 by Fischer's son. This analysis raises a number of broader issues, including the migration of individual prints from one work to another, the migration of architecture from paper to stone and back, the intertwining of architectural practice with editorial enterprises, and authorship concerns. However, Folin and Preti shed no new light on the many nebulous aspects of Fischer's life, particularly those related to his formative years and his contacts in Rome and in Naples (especially Philipp Schor and Francesco Antonio Picchiatti), or in Venice (including the brothers Giovanni and Pier Antonio Filippini), where

he may have traveled twice. Neither do they resolve the uncertainty around Fischer's travel to London or whether he had a direct encounter with the circle of Christopher Wren. Instead, their primary aim is to investigate Fischer's selections, his sources, and his possible efforts to articulate a coherent historical vision.

The answers to these queries unfold in a somewhat scattered manner throughout the following ten chapters of part II that focus upon each of the *Entwurff*'s plates. Although Folin and Preti rely upon previous scholarship, they deserve credit for assembling extensive information on the subject in different languages and for offering new readings of many details of the *Entwurff*'s creation. As they demonstrate, the author selected his models based on both pragmatic criteria and subjective preferences. Fischer adopted a range of different approaches: he might redraw works from other authors, he might rely on his imagination by compiling fragmentary sources into a new unicum, or he might opt to use lesser-known subjects or previously unpublished drawings. In some instances, as in book IV, he simply reused his own drawings. The *Entwurff* thus emerges as a nonsystematic collection of material with no agenda to construct a historical discourse, but also one that was sparked by "heterogeneous stimuli" rather than by the influence of particular works or figures, such as Carlo Fontana.[5] According to Folin and Preti, Fischer's "historical architecture," more than celebrating the past, his own designs, or his imperial patrons, celebrates the present.

What instead results from Fischer's myriad uses of antiquarian sources is what Preti and Folin refer to as the *Entwurff*'s "hybrid character," oscillating between scholarship and visual pleasure. A fuller understanding of this ambiguous aspect, however, would have necessitated a deeper investigation of the larger issue of artists' contributions to the making of knowledge. In the Republic of Letters, where the boundaries between learned ways of making art and artistic ways of making learning were porous, philological and imaginative approaches might coexist. Suspended between accuracy, imagination, and more practical aims (including Fischer's professional aspirations as architect and as printmaker), the *Entwurff* is, above all, a mirror of the complicated life and times of its creator.

In the early eighteenth century Europeans confronted a world with ever-expanding horizons. Diverse sources, ranging from sacred texts to fossils, pushed the study of origins ever further back in time. At the same time, travel accounts from distant countries poured into European libraries: according to the English naturalist John Woodward, it was impossible to understand the world without accounts obtained from its remotest parts. In Rome, Carlo Fontana (1630–1714), who trained the international generation of architects to which Fischer himself belonged, originally wanted to compare the Vatican Basilica with exempla such as the Temple of Samos, the Temple of Olympian Zeus in Athens, the Temple of Diana in Ephesus, and the Temple of Serapis in Alexandria.[6] In Fontana's view, the architect, in addition to being *intendente* and *pratico*, or well trained in architectural theory and building practice, also had to be a "historiographer."[7] In London, Christopher Wren (1632–1723) argued that the orders were "not only Roman and Greek, but Phoenician, Hebrew, and Assyrian," while his assistant Nicholas Hawksmoor (1661–1736) became "perfectly skill'd in the History of Architecture . . . in every Part of the World."[8] As scholars and architects engaged in a constant, multidirectional exchange of information, a single past branched out and multiplied. By the same token, Fischer's *Entwurff* attests to the challenging task of defining an authoritative, modern imperial architecture.

Folin and Preti's close examination of Fischer's plates encourages us to rethink the *Entwurff*, while at the same time reminding us of the ongoing need for new research into the world of eighteenth-century architecture.

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Notes

1. John A. Pinto, *Speaking Ruins: Piranesi, Architects, and Antiquity in Eighteenth-Century Rome* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2012), 45.

2. Hans Sedlmayr, *Johann Bernhard Fischer von Erlach*, 2nd rev. ed. (Vienna: Herold, 1976), 130 ("die erste monumentale Bilder-Kunstgeschichte"); George Kunoth, *Die historische Architektur Fischers von Erlach* (Düsseldorf: L. Schwann, 1956), 24 ("erste vergleichende Weltgeschichte der Architektur"); Joseph Rykwert, *The First Moderns: The Architects of the Eighteenth Century* (Cambridge, Mass.:

MIT Press, 1980), 68; Joseph Rykwert, *On Adam's House in Paradise: The Idea of the Primitive Hut in Architectural History* (New York: Museum of Modern Art, 1972), 130.

3. Thomas DaCosta Kaufmann, *Court, Cloister, and City: The Art and Culture of Central Europe, 1450–1800* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995), 293; Hanno-Walter Kruft, *A History of Architectural Theory: From Vitruvius to the Present*, trans. Ronald Taylor, Elsie Callander, and Antony Wood (New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 1994), 183.

4. Johann Bernhard Fischer von Erlach, *Progetto di un'architettura storica: Entwurff einer historischen Architectur*, trans. and ed. Gundula Rakowitz (Florence: Firenze University Press, 2016), XXI–XLII, esp. XXI.

5. Giovanna Curcio, "Premessa: 'Johann Bernhard Fischer von Erlach' di Johann Hans Sedlmayr: Pregiudizio storico e ricerca," in *Johann Bernhard Fischer von Erlach architetto*, by Hans Sedlmayr, ed. Giovanna Curcio (Milan: Electa, 1996), 7–13, esp. 9–11.

6. Curcio, 11.

7. Giovanna Curcio, "L''architetto intendente,' 'pratico' e 'istoriografo' nei progetti e nella professione di Carlo Fontana," in *Magistri d'Europa: Atti del convegno, Como 23–26 ottobre 1996*, ed. Stefano Della Torre, Tiziano Mannoni, and Valeria Pracchi (Milan: Nodo Libri, 1996), 277–302.

8. Christopher Wren, "Tract I," in Lydia M. Soo, *Wren's "Tracts" on Architecture and Other Writings* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 154; Hawksmoor's obituary notice, *Read's Weekly Journal*, 27 Mar. 1736, in Kerry Downes, *Hawksmoor* (London: A. Zwemmer, 1979), 8.

Ünver Rüstem

Ottoman Baroque: The Architectural Refashioning of Eighteenth-Century Istanbul

In writing of the mosque and complex of Mehmet II (1463–70), which began to Ottomanize the image of the conquered city of Istanbul, Spiro Kostof considered elements of siting, scale, modular units, and axial composition, then concluded that "all this has the authority of ancient Rome. Nothing so early in the Western Renaissance has this grandeur."[1] Mehmet II's mosque was followed by a succession of monumental, multifunctional, royally funded projects, including Sinan's magnificent mid-sixteenth-century Süleymaniye complex. Built with the spoils of conquest, these structures echoed in spirit the Roman imperial forums: like ancient Rome, Ottoman Istanbul displayed an indexical connection between its monumental development and the expanding empire it controlled.

The idea that the architecture of the New Rome continued to be "Roman" after the Ottoman conquest and that a deliberate revival of antiquity produced also here a parallel Renaissance has since inspired several scholars, foremost among them Gülru Necipo lu. In the remarkable new book *Ottoman Baroque*, based on his doctoral dissertation, Ünver Rüstem—Necipoğlu's former student—tests the assumption of a Roman continuity against the development in eighteenth-century Istanbul of a new architectural idiom to which the controversial label "baroque" has been applied since the early twentieth century. Rüstem explains the new idiom with a sensitive, critically motivated, sometimes overstated but in the whole convincing reference to classical, Greco-Roman precedents. He explores the resurgence of Ottoman imperial patronage after 1703, following a period in which the city's development was hampered by the empire's contraction and by the de facto transfer of the capital to Edirne. While the eighteenth century has often been portrayed as an age of decline for the Ottoman Empire, recent scholarship has emphasized the empire's recovery from seventeenth-century territorial losses, its enjoyment of a period of relative peace that gave rise to a powerful mercantile class, and its connections to broader, international sociocultural and economic developments. In Rüstem's view, self-display "related to and spurred by greater social mobility" was one of the dominant features of this period, across cultural borders (13).

Other scholars, notably Tülay Artan and Shirine Hamadeh, have explored the urban and architectural renewal that took place under Ahmet III (1703–30) following the return of the capital to Istanbul.[2] But no one before Rüstem has engaged in such in-depth study of this renewal's connections to the new imperial mosque complexes. Rüstem provocatively deploys the term *baroque*—against the tide of scholars who contest its use as unrelated to Islamic art—to indicate the new style's deliberate links to contemporary global modes. The Ottoman baroque marked the recovery of imperial authority in a cosmopolitan setting and manner, and was part of a longstanding tradition of synergy, rivalry, and mutual appraisal between the Ottoman Empire and Europe. Rüstem leads us to reimagine this period as one not of passive emulation but of sustained creativity and achievement.

"Corinthianizing" capitals, mixtilinear arches, variations on the egg-and-dart cornice, C and S scrolls, dentil moldings, undulating profiles and concave/convex surfaces, simplified Doric pilasters, dramatic spatial sequences—this repertoire based on creative adaptations of European forms was used prominently for the first time in an Islamic architectural context during the period Rüstem examines. One could ask how Islamic this architecture was, particularly when, as the author demonstrates, some of Istanbul's eighteenth-century monuments were built by teams composed largely of dhimmi, or non-Muslim Ottoman subjects. Further, one of the key architects of this narrative, Simeon Kalfa, was allegedly Greek. Yet the question may not be relevant, as recent scholarship has rejected the notion of Islamic architectural and artistic uniformity, instead emphasizing the richly diverse and multicultural nature of this heritage across time and regions.

Hybridity, transculturation, and the aesthetics of "translation" are important notions in Rüstem's critique.[3] Yet he sees limits to these, since the Ottoman baroque deployed a vocabulary that, in his view, does not appear "intrusive" or foreign in the Ottoman architectural context. Still, astonishing "objects of translation," such as the carved semivaults of the main gates and mihrab at the Nuruosmaniye Mosque—which transfigure the geometry of *muqarnas* into baroque plasticity—epitomize the ethos of borrowing, overlap, reworking, and metamorphosis that Rüstem explores. His assumption that all this belonged to a familiar visual framework because of cultural and geographical proximity and allegedly shared classical roots raises a debatable point.

The book's five chapters follow a loosely chronological and thematic order. The so-called Tulip Era of Ahmet III's later years (1718–30) is introduced in the first chapter, which tells a well-known story but refers to materials, ideas, and analogies often overlooked in previous scholarship.[4] The second chapter introduces the book's main protagonist, Sultan Mahmut I (r. 1730–54), who was given the title of Ghazi

(Victorious) after his recapture of Belgrade in 1739. This achievement provided the political foundation for what Rüstem calls the stylistic revolution of the 1740s, especially visible in Mahmut I's additions to Hagia Sophia. The third chapter introduces a much-maligned masterpiece, the mosque and complex of Nuruosmaniye, considered a symbol of decadence by many well into the twentieth century, but presented here as a brilliant reiteration of the scheme experimented with in Sinan's Mirimah Mosque at Edirnekapı (1563–69). Rüstem shows how local and foreign audiences alike viewed the dematerializing luminosity of the interior of the Nuruosmaniye Mosque as a high achievement. The last two chapters are devoted mostly to the patronage of Mustafa III (1757–74) and Abdulhamit I (1774–89), with perceptive analyses and contextualization of landmarks such as the Laleli Mosque, the rebuilt mosque of Mehmet II, and the funerary complex of Eyüp.

In connection to Ottoman architecture, the term *baroque* may indicate both a conceptual/operational mode of organization (theatricality, display, ornamentation, expansive and dynamic syntaxes) and a historical relationship with early modern architectural developments in Europe and beyond. Rüstem's discussion of the imperial loge or *mahfil* of the Nuruosmaniye Mosque is one of the most successful and intelligent applications I have seen of the first understanding of the term. Demonstrating how the *mahfil*'s design was integrated for the first time into the larger complex (previous examples appeared as somewhat dissonant additions), he shows that its transparency and the embracing L-shaped layout of the royal staircase leading to it were intrinsic elements of the theatrical *selamlık* ceremony (the official participation of a sultan at Friday prayers). Rüstem quotes a relevant section of the chronicle written by Ahmet Efendi, on the inauguration of the complex, to confirm this idea.

When we turn to the second of the two senses of *baroque* noted above, things become more complex. Rüstem correctly assumes that familiarity with and original adaptations of Western architectural themes were made possible through Ottoman Greek and Armenian intermediaries who had studied or spent time in Italy, especially in Venice and Padua, but also in Rome and Naples. The Italian formal analogies that

Rüstem traces for the Ottoman "stylistic revolution" of the 1740s come mostly from these last two cities (89–92). However, more in-depth research in Padua, and especially in the Armenian Catholic foundation of San Lazzaro degli Armeni in Venice, might lend support to Rüstem's somewhat tenuous argument here and shed light on the missing junctures of his proposed genealogy.

Royal foundations continued during Mustafa III's reign with the Laleli complex (1760–64), inspired by Sinan's Selimiye in Edirne (1575); like other, lesser monuments of the era, this complex displays an evident connection to the city's Byzantine legacy. This fact, Rüstem argues, belies the anxieties that Ottoman architects, patrons, and audiences shared about a heritage that many foreign observers saw as essentially Western or Christian in origin. In 1771, Laleli's patron also rebuilt the mosque of Mehmet II, which had been destroyed by an earthquake in 1766. Here, an archaizing prayer hall with spare, modern details was complemented by a modern imperial loge with archaizing details. More modest but architecturally compelling works were developed at Eyüp (site of a revered mausoleum), on the shores of the Bosphorus, and in the Asian quarter of Üsküdar. In his last two chapters, Rüstem addresses these as interconnected and diverse outcomes of the new manner, which formed an expressive system endowed with historical depth and a developed code of decorum (in the sense of appropriateness to rank and function).

That this flourishing of architectural expressions was deliberately connected in many ways to "the classical language of architecture" (in John Summerson's famous codification) is amply demonstrated by Rüstem.[5] However, the absence of an explicit Ottoman theoretical framework to explain or justify such uses and appropriations is a crux that leaves unanswered several questions raised by the "Romanist" stance in Ottoman architectural history. Is it possible to reuse and elaborate creatively on Western classical forms without doing theory, without Vitruvius or Leon Battista Alberti? Hamadeh's answer to this question was that the absence of a theoretical discourse acknowledging European sources should significantly reduce the importance of Western inspiration in eighteenth-century Ottoman

architectural culture. Rüstem is of the opposite opinion, and he looks for surrogates of theory in the visual fabric, in the ekphrastic/descriptive/laudatory discourse, in the social and political uses, and in the cultural perception and representation of this architecture. But we should also feel free to imagine that one of the main reasons for the inventiveness, vitality, and sophistication of the Ottoman baroque lies precisely in the fact that its proponents, and the diverse range of actors who brought it to life, were neither attached to nor hampered by Vitruvius, Alberti, or the logocentric tradition they represented. This is not to validate the old, Orientalist, romantic trope of fortunate ignorance fueling creativity. Creative misunderstanding and transfiguration belong to all periods and regions of art history, including the Western Renaissance and baroque that inspired, without overwhelming, the architectural practices explored in Rüstem's outstanding book.

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Notes

1. Spiro K. Kostof, *A History of Architecture: Settings and Rituals* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1985), 459.
2. See, for example, Tülay Artan, "Architecture as a Theatre of Life: Profile of the Eighteenth Century Bosphorus" (PhD diss., Massachusetts Institute of Technology, 1988); Shirine Hamadeh, *The City's Pleasures: Istanbul in the Eighteenth Century* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2008).
3. On translation in this sense, see Finbarr Barry Flood, *Objects of Translation: Material Culture and Medieval "Hindu-Muslim" Encounter* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2009).
4. Rüstem cites a long account of the Saʿdabad site that was published in the *Mercure de France* in 1755 (quoted by Auguste Boppe at the beginning of the twentieth century before falling into oblivion), as well as Dimitri Cantemir's Ottoman history of 1734–35 (useful for its information on the role of non-Muslim builders).
5. John Summerson, *The Classical Language of Architecture* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1980).

George E. Thomas
Frank Furness: Architecture in the Age of the Great Machines

The historiography of nineteenth-century American architecture took root in the

1920s and 1930s in the writings of critic-historians such as Lewis Mumford, Henry-Russell Hitchcock, Talbot Hamlin, and Fiske Kimball, who collectively established a narrative that still informs our understanding of the period.[1] Their portrayal of American architecture emphasized a culturally situated art historical analysis of form and style but also argued for the primacy of a small group of practitioners who broke the impasse of eclecticism and paved the way for modernism. Their work shaped how American architecture schools and architects understood the built environment, and instilled persistent attitudes toward the nineteenth century and modernism. In the case of Hitchcock, Mumford, and Hamlin especially, this historiography was developed alongside a critical viewpoint supporting the modern movement. The resulting literature tended to oversimplify the nineteenth-century canon and its relationship to the often chaotic and violent realities of American history. Disentangling our own understanding of the nineteenth century from that era of modernist advocacy is an ongoing project.

George E. Thomas's *Frank Furness: Architecture in the Age of the Great Machines* responds directly to the hold this modernist view of the nineteenth century still exerts on historical discourse. Thomas's central goal is to promote a better understanding and appreciation of Furness, his links to the technological and cultural environment of Philadelphia, and their combined roles in "shap[ing] modern architecture."[2] His more implicit objective, based on a lifetime of painstaking research, documentation, and advocacy, is to advance the rehabilitation of Furness's standing within the modernist canon, a project that began with the architect's rediscovery in the 1970s, which led to a Furness retrospective at the Philadelphia Museum of Art in 1973 and continued through the 2012 Furness Festival, a citywide celebration of the architect's work held at various venues. Thomas's critical monograph is an extension of his earlier book, *Frank Furness: The Complete Works*, coauthored with Jeffrey A. Cohen and Michael J. Lewis, and a complement to Lewis's biography, *Frank Furness: Architecture and the Violent Mind*.[3] If Furness remains a relatively little-known architect, it is not for lack of

attention from Philadelphia, the city's historians, and its architects.

Furness's visibility beyond Philadelphia, however, is central to Thomas's argument, particularly finding a place for the architect in the modernist canon. Thomas compares Furness with Peter Behrens, for example, arguing that Furness's influence through his students—Louis Sullivan, most famously—makes him a more potent and fundamental source for modernism. Thomas's critique of the New York Museum of Modern Art's 1932 International Style exhibition, with its "alien theories of European avant-gardism" (219), reengages questions surrounding the "critical origin for the beginning of modern architecture" and argues for siting these origins in Furness and Philadelphia (222). Equally important is the primacy of Philadelphia's architectural culture to the modernist narrative, which Thomas argues was "hijacked to the later arena of Chicago" (77). Thomas portrays Furness as a catalyst for architectural thought fundamentally linked to Philadelphia's culture of invention, inspiring later practitioners like Louis Kahn, Robert Venturi, and Denise Scott Brown.

The book pursues its project in four chapters that are presented more as linked essays than as continuous narrative. The first chapter focuses on the historiography of Furness and the construction of his identity as an architect, the second on Philadelphia's inventive industrial culture, the third on a comparison of Furness's Academy of Fine Arts with H. H. Richardson's Trinity Church (as a means of comparing Philadelphia and Boston), and the fourth on Furness's embrace of industry as inspiration for his designs for the Pennsylvania Railroad and the library at the University of Pennsylvania. Within each chapter, brief vignettes allow Thomas to delve into the ways in which individual buildings relate to the book's larger themes.

Links between industry and art are at the heart of Thomas's argument for seeing Furness as a revolutionary modernist. Thomas uses John Ruskin's discussion of the discomforts of railroad travel to frame his analysis of Furness's design for the Baltimore & Ohio Railroad Station, which accommodated urban travelers with a thoughtfully conceived program of lunchrooms and

waiting rooms furnished with fireplaces and rocking chairs. At the same time, Furness emphasized the materials and forms of the machine age by exposing the massive steel columns, girders, and rivets that supported his buildings' shed roofs, platforms, and stairs, treating these elements as part of a "muscular . . . architecture of power and structural force," distinct from, for example, the more "feminine" stair court at Burnham & Root's Rookery in Chicago (155) (Figure 1). Thomas uses a series of evocative metaphors to drive the point home: the University of Pennsylvania Library is a "furnace that powered an engine for learning" (166); the Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts is a "factory for art" (115). Housed within his own city, "locomotives and engineered designs remained Furness's urban muse" (146).

Architectural historians continue to reassess modernism through varied perspectives, including infrastructure and technology, typological studies (see the recent *JSAH* special virtual issue on skyscrapers, for example), global and urban histories, and examinations of race and gender.[4] Through his examination of Furness, Thomas provides an important reminder of the narrowness of the existing historiography of American architecture (as opposed to that of modern architecture more broadly), which continues to draw on a limited cast of characters and locales. One of the most important themes in the book is that of the "regional rifts [that] divided the nation and in turn shaped design and criticism into the twentieth century" (217). Thomas's project is to advocate for the roles of Philadelphia and Furness within modernist architectural history, but more generally, his book shows how the scholarly monograph can play an important role in broadening our understanding of the complexities of architectural practice during an American nineteenth century marked by these "regional rifts." Architects practicing in booming cities like Minneapolis, Atlanta, Denver, Richmond, San Antonio, and San Francisco confronted enormously varied contexts for navigating labor, technology, and culture. If we still value nineteenth-century American architecture primarily for the contributions of New York and Chicago to the modernist narrative, as Thomas argues we do, then *Frank Furness: Architecture in the Age of the*

Figure 1 Frank Furness, Baltimore & Ohio Railroad Station, Twenty-Fourth and Chestnut Streets, Philadelphia, 1886, detail of the east staircase (photograph by Cervin Robinson, 1959; HABS PA,51-PHILA,405-6, Prints and Photographs Division, Library of Congress).

Great Machines should provide us with incentive to rediscover the architects and cities that together created a more complex and nuanced architectural and historical landscape.

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Notes

1. Lewis Mumford, *The Brown Decades: A Study of the Arts in America, 1865–1895* (New York: Harcourt, Brace, 1931); Talbot Hamlin, *The American Spirit in Architecture* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1926); Henry-Russell Hitchcock, *The Architecture of H. H. Richardson and His Times* (New York: Museum of Modern Art, 1936); Fiske Kimball, *American Architecture* (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1928).
2. In the last sentence of his epilogue, Thomas suggests that "architects and historians would do well to closely examine context to better understand the architecture of Frank Furness and the other innovators who have together shaped modern architecture" (223).
3. George E. Thomas, Jeffrey A. Cohen, and Michael J. Lewis, *Frank Furness: The Complete Works*, rev. ed. (New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 1996); Michael J. Lewis, *Frank Furness: Architecture and the Violent Mind* (New York: W. W. Norton, 2001).
4. Sarah M. Dreller, ed., "Skyscrapers," special virtual issue, *JSAH* (2019), https://jsah.ucpress.edu/content/special-virtual-issue-skyscrapers (accessed 21 Jan. 2020).

Kathryn E. O'Rourke
Modern Architecture in Mexico City: History, Representation, and the Shaping of a Capital

During the early years of the twentieth century, many Mexican architects, like their peers in other parts of the world, were determined to produce a modern architecture specific to their nation. This ambition fueled a prolific debate about what constituted Mexican identity. Mexican architects, consequently, set themselves the task of making both a new architecture and a new architectural history. This concern for creating a national architectural history defined their designs throughout the first half of the twentieth century. In *Modern Architecture in Mexico City*, Kathryn E. O'Rourke draws from this context and argues that the foundations of Mexican modernism are to be found in the first

texts on Mexican colonial architectural history. In a parallel reading of those texts and buildings, she explores the primacy of Mexican architects' interest in the representational qualities of national themes. O'Rourke asserts that these buildings were "meant to be seen and 'read,'" and as a result, their architects helped to create "one of the most complex systems of visual culture in the twentieth century" (5).

O'Rourke argues that Mexican modernist architects were generally inattentive to innovations in plan and section. Instead, their work displayed a preference for façadism, and for this reason, it contrasted with contemporary European and U.S. works of modern architecture. O'Rourke also claims that this strand of Mexican modernism has been neglected because scholars of Mexican modern architecture have tended to interpret buildings in terms of social and political conditions, which has led to the privileging of rationalist vocabularies and a dismissal of representational qualities. These points underlie O'Rourke's contention that Mexican modernist architects used wall surfaces and façades as representational planes for nationally specific imagery, which they considered fundamental.

The first part of the book, "Colonial Concepts for Modern Mestizos," begins with a chapter that traces the intellectual roots of Mexican modernism through the celebration, documentation, interpretation, and representation of colonial buildings by early twentieth-century scholars, architects, and photographers. In his 1901 book *Spanish-Colonial Architecture in Mexico*—the first history of the country's colonial architecture—Sylvester Baxter explained that architecture's distinctiveness by highlighting its fusion of Spanish forms and indigenous techniques.[1] Baxter saw this fusion surviving in the work of contemporary craftspeople. His history provided key concepts for the development of a national modern architecture, essentially inventing the idea of "Mexican architecture." Baxter's book and other related histories of the era pointed to the visual effects of surfaces and façades, principally those of Churrigueresque and baroque buildings.

In chapter 2, O'Rourke focuses on Carlos Obregón Santacilia's first major work, the Ministry of Health (1926). This building showed that references to

Mexican architectural history, international modern classicism, and art deco could coexist with references to folk art and ample use of applied decoration. In chapter 3, O'Rourke examines the Venustiano Carranza Recreation and Athletic Center for Workers (1929), by Juan Segura. References to colonial architecture for mass audiences were used here in a style that resisted categorization and revealed an absence of agreement on what "Mexican architecture" should look like.

In the second part of the book, "Images, Absence, and Otherness," O'Rourke tackles well-known figures and buildings that, after a long period of experimentation, crystallized international awareness and understanding of Mexican modern architecture. Here, however, her arguments lose some of their earlier strength and clarity. The first chapter in this section, chapter 4, deals with Juan O'Gorman, who is perhaps best known for denying the possibility of defining a Mexican modern architecture. Yet, as O'Rourke explains, the famous conjoined houses in San Ángel that he designed for Diego Rivera and Frida Kahlo (1930–31) and the urban and rural elementary schools he built for the city government during the first half of the 1930s are all "profoundly imagistic" (163). O'Gorman, the author argues, "composed pictorially. . . . He borrowed literally and imagistically for his own buildings" from illustrations found in Le Corbusier's 1923 *Vers un architecture* (186). Rather than applying overly historicized ornament or other elements, O'Gorman used native plants and brightly colored walls to nationalize his buildings. Similar borrowings of themes from European sources, in tandem with others from local contexts, are found in many avant-garde designs from around the world.

Regardless of his interest in Le Corbusier, says O'Rourke, O'Gorman's defense of functional architecture shows that he "profoundly misunderstood" the Swiss architect's work (165). After discussing the ambiguous disposition of spaces in the Rivera–Kahlo houses, she surprisingly claims that O'Gorman's "focus on modularity and efficiency blinded the architect to two of Le Corbusier's most important contributions to modern architecture:

innovation in plan and section" (188). One could argue, however, that O'Gorman intentionally manipulated the lessons of Le Corbusier, not because he "missed or dismissed" the architect's "central arguments" about design aesthetics, but because he did not feel the need to follow them uncritically (185). O'Rourke concludes that O'Gorman understood colored wall surfaces in much the same ways as Segura and Obregón Santacilia: as pictorial surfaces, and not, as so many Europeans saw them, as vehicles for "experiment[ing] with spatial perception" or as "means of differentiating spaces" (214). However, she does not adequately explain how she has come to this conclusion. O'Rourke reads the buildings' façades and surfaces perhaps too pictorially, with little concern for other technical, programmatic, or political issues, all of which were important to the Mexican avant-garde. This incomplete analysis partially explains why she does not acknowledge spatial innovations before the 1950s.

In chapter 5, O'Rourke analyzes Mexico City's Ciudad Universitaria (CU), or University City, of the Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México (1949–54) as the signature example of a "Mexicanized" modernism in the postwar years. This ambitious project's architects aimed to create a design that would stand with the greatest works of Mexican architecture, largely by integrating giant mosaic murals into some of the key buildings. The CU stood at the center of an increasingly complex debate during the 1950s, one grounded in a deepening study of architectural history and theory carried out in books, journals, conferences, and exhibitions—and, in large part, by the CU's own architects. According to O'Rourke, the CU's ample use of volcanic rock and other indigenous materials, combined with the architects' sensitivity to local landscape, marked a decisive shift away from the sources of preceding decades. Given the importance of this project and its representational aspirations, her analysis would have benefited—as would other sections of her book—from more attention to reception. O'Rourke describes the CU as a radical, new, subjective spatial experience, one based on texts by Alberto T. Arai (one of the project's designers) discussing the sense of estrangement often experienced by visitors to pre-Columbian ruins. In contrast to the work of his predecessors, O'Rourke maintains, Arai's ideas implied a far more nuanced, psychologically complicated way of nationalizing historical forms.

Unsurprisingly, O'Rourke's last chapter is devoted to Luis Barragán, who has long been praised for integrating elements of modernism with vernacular and colonial themes. His brightly painted walls "have been interpreted widely as evidence of yet another, and perhaps the quintessential, 'Mexicanization' of architectural modernism" (284). One wonders why O'Rourke describes Barragán's approach as involving "distillations and abstractions of the color in Mexican folk art" (299) when she has not said the same of O'Gorman, who also employed planes of color in his designs. Barragán, she adds, "like his colleagues, selectively abstracted and reinterpreted images and forms from a variety of sources to shape buildings that . . . many have read as nationally specific" (285). Here— as with her discussion of Arai, whose buildings at the CU, inspired by ancient pyramids, cannot be explained in terms of their façades—O'Rourke's argument about façadism is difficult to follow. Barragán is well known for his dismissal of façades and his high level of spatial experimentation, yet O'Rourke claims that "the studied nonchalance of exteriors that disappeared into historical . . . streets made Barragán at least as fully a facadist as any of his colleagues" (284–85).

Mexican architectural history has been shaped in part by foreign observers who helped to establish the idea that certain buildings were expressive of national character. It was often these authors who sought out relationships between ancient pyramids or colonial convents and modern architecture. Perhaps unwittingly, O'Rourke joins them in seeking the expression of national character in façades and surfaces. Her book does little to explain the "shaping of a capital" that the subtitle promises, since, with the exception of the CU, the buildings that provide the book's case studies had little impact on Mexico City's broader urbanism. O'Rourke does not attend to the vast majority of the city's buildings—the everyday architecture that shaped the capital—much less consider how these contributed to people's experience of the city.

Still, the book's contributions to the study of Mexican architecture are substantial, found mainly in O'Rourke's carefully researched and meticulously presented case studies, which open new paths for investigation and offer much to careful readers. As a general overview, the book is of great value, deepening and widening our understanding of the intellectual and cultural contexts in which modernism arose in Mexico.

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Note

1. Sylvester Baxter, *Spanish-Colonial Architecture in Mexico* (Boston: J. B. Millet, 1901).

Michał Murawski

The Palace Complex: A Stalinist Skyscraper, Capitalist Warsaw, and a City Transfixed

Looking back, there is every reason to think that Warsaw's Palace of Culture and Science should have followed the Berlin Wall as an architectural casualty of the Eastern bloc's collapse. A gargantuan Stalinist skyscraper "gifted" to the Nazi-ravaged city by the Soviet Union, the Palace stands as an inescapable reminder of Poland's communist past and its subjection to Soviet imperialism. Yet thirty years after the Cold War's end, the building not only remains Warsaw's undisputed center, but it also has gained a reputation that consistently defies the ideological expectations of the presumed posthistorical liberal order. Providing spaces for numerous cultural and civic functions—including theaters, museums, sports facilities, a massive auditorium (the Congress Hall), and offices of the Polish Academy of Sciences—the Palace is frequented by thousands every day, provoking warm sentiments even among those whose political inclinations should cause them to despise it. Right-wing politicians occasionally promise to tear it down, but such calls are mostly empty

posturing. The skyscraper (Poland's tallest) and the vast square around it (Europe's largest) appear immune to the reigning neoliberal logic that seeks to transform Warsaw into a "normal" capitalist city. The Palace stubbornly remains "still socialist."

In his new book, Michał Murawski argues that Warsaw is possessed by a "Palace complex"—a fascination so profound that the perplexed city cannot but succumb to the building's mesmerizing pull. Murawski does not make such claims lightly: trained as an anthropologist, he spent countless hours in and with the Palace of Culture while also polling and interviewing thousands of Warsaw residents—politicians, prominent cultural figures, architects, taxi drivers, and janitors, among many others—about the building. The resulting panorama of perspectives is as sweeping as it is paradoxical. After three decades of official attempts to diminish the Palace's presence in the city, if not demolish it altogether, the majority of Murawski's interviewees see it in a positive light and do not want it replaced. Many people are genuinely fond of it, some of them bona fide fanatics dedicated to collecting Palace memorabilia or to staging weddings and other important life events inside it. The web of discourses and practices that surround the Palace amounts to what Murawski terms "Palaceology," a social phenomenon that ranges from high art and soap operas to all sorts of unsubstantiated popular myths. The building even has an official chronicler: a woman employed in that position continuously since 1960. She receives countless letters, many of them addressed to the Palace itself, as if it were a living being.

Ever since Victor Buchli's ground-breaking book on the Narkomfin Building in Moscow, anthropologists have made important contributions to the study of socialist built environments.[1] Murawski follows in their footsteps, tracing the ways in which the Palace of Culture affects the life of the Polish capital. However, he makes a novel argument that departs from anthropologists' frequent focus on architectural failures, positing instead that the skyscraper can be seen as a case of a resounding success. This provocative argument, going against the received (or perceived) wisdom that socialism produced only unlivable and

ineffective environments, rests on the persistence of the Palace's public character, in contrast to much of its urban context, which since 1989 has undergone a thorough (re)privatization. Contrary to expectations, the Palace's civic significance has only increased in recent years. Its associations with Stalinism have been supplanted by more mundane civic functions such as public time-keeping (with the addition of a clock atop the building). The roots of this significance, Murawski argues, lie in the originating act of the expropriation of private land for the building's construction; in turn, the Palace's domineering size and appearance have prevented reprivatization efforts.

Equally important is the fact that the building was conceived as a "social condenser," an architectural instrument for social transformation intended to bring together a fragmented society on its way to communism. This concept was promoted by Soviet constructivists during the 1920s, but it retained relevance even after the suppression of the avant-garde under Stalin and was adapted by architects amid the shift toward socialist realism. With its numerous cultural, educational, and recreational facilities, the Palace of Culture, Murawski claims, is the world's largest social condenser, and it continues to function as one even after three decades of capitalism.

Murawski's book should be of great interest to architectural historians, offering as it does an eloquent case study of the process by which a building survives the demise of the political system that produced it. Especially relevant are the first three chapters, amounting to almost a third of the book's total length, which recount the circumstances of the building's creation during the late 1940s and early 1950s, as Poland was drawn into the Soviet orbit and transformed according to Stalinist models. The most visible symbol of this transformation, the Palace became the fulcrum of a new Warsaw rising from the ashes of wartime destruction. It was Soviet in a literal sense: following Vyacheslav Molotov's proclamation that the Soviet Union would aid the city's reconstruction by donating a skyscraper, the building was designed by Lev Rudnev, architect of Moscow's key socialist realist landmarks, and built with the participation of thousands of Soviet construction workers.

Murawski's account pays little attention to the Soviet side, focusing instead on the chief players in Poland, in particular two architect/planners closely involved in the project's conceptualization and construction. Edmund Goldzamt and Józef Sigalin did much to ensure the integration of this Soviet design into the local context, and their careers exemplify the numerous contradictions of the period. Both ethnically Jewish, their families suffered greatly during the Holocaust (and, in Sigalin's case, under Stalinist repression); both survived the war by finding refuge in Moscow. Goldzamt received his architectural training there to become Poland's leading ideologue of socialist realism; Sigalin, half a generation older than Goldzamt, became the chief bureaucrat, power broker, and planner of Warsaw's postwar reconstruction. Immensely powerful during the Stalinist period, Goldzamt and Sigalin lost influence after Stalin's death, their fortunes paralleling those of numerous other professionals across the Eastern bloc. Their abundant writings provide an invaluable record of the motivations and aspirations of the period, testifying to the fact that the Palace of Culture, despite the many political, social, and cultural changes taking place around it, continues to function according to its architects' intentions.

The Palace Complex is a clear, engaging, and, at times, quite entertaining read. The only place where it falters slightly is in chapter 2 (the book's shortest), which is dedicated to the building's central source of controversy: its status as a Soviet "gift"—in other words, an offer that could not be refused or reciprocated. Unlike the other chapters, with their wealth of material evidence, this section of the book is predominantly theoretical, which comes as little surprise considering that discussions of gift economies are foundational to the discipline of anthropology, dating back to the works of Bronisław Malinowski and Marcel Mauss. However, the dense theorization is complicated by numerous references that will likely be unfamiliar to nonanthropologists. These risk obscuring the tragic conflation that occurred with this act of gifting: the conflation of socialist aspirations with the violence of Soviet empire building, which arguably doomed the entire socialist project in Eastern Europe. When

the bond between giver and recipient dissolved after the collapse of the Soviet bloc, the Palace's reputation improved, which, in turn, allowed its public character to emerge more fully.

The Palace of Culture is the least likely of survivors, especially when compared to less controversial examples, such as East Berlin's Palace of the Republic, which fell victim to the postsocialist transition. It is remarkable, then, that Warsaw's skyscraper continues to function as intended and, in fact, has emerged in recent years as a site and symbol for all kinds of progressive initiatives, from feminist celebrations to protests against Poland's ultra-right-wing government—the ultimate testament to its mesmerizing "still-socialist" pull.

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Note

1. Victor Buchli, *An Archaeology of Socialism* (Oxford: Berg, 1999). See also Krisztina Fehérváry, *Politics in Color and Concrete: Socialist Materialities and the Middle Class in Hungary* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2014); and Christina Schwenkel, *The American War in Contemporary Vietnam: Transnational Remembrance and Representation* (Bloomington: Indian University Press, 2009). Schwenkel's work on Vietnam is ongoing, and she is currently preparing another book on the subject, titled *Building Socialism: The Afterlife of East German Architecture in Urban Vietnam*, for Duke University Press.

Juliana Maxim
The Socialist Life of Modern Architecture: Bucharest, 1949–1964
New York: Routledge, 2019, 188 pp., 86 b/w illus. $155 (cloth), ISBN 9781138820340; $46.95 (paper), ISBN 9781138820357

Juliana Maxim's new monograph on Romanian architecture under socialism is a welcome contribution to the booming interdisciplinary field of Second World urbanity studies.[1] Not only does it bring into focus new material on Romanian architectural culture previously unavailable to English-language readers, but it also raises original research questions that challenge long-standing stereotypes about the production of space under socialism. In this way, the book offers more than an excursion into the transformation of Bucharest between 1949 and 1964. It stands as a compelling, theory-driven analysis of modern architecture as a "social condenser"—bringing together political, social, and cultural imaginaries—which makes it relevant for a broader audience.[2]

The book's first part, "The Rise of the Socialist City," examines new planning imperatives developed by professionals and politicians after World War II and their implementation in several housing districts of Bucharest, including the Floreasca neighborhood in the period 1954–63. Maxim shows that the program of radical state-driven modernization privileged urban renewal as the main site of building socialism and negotiating its contours.[3] During the first years of Communist Party rule (1947–52), a series of sweeping political measures aimed at abolishing landownership and reorganizing production facilitated the shift to a centrally planned economy, of which urban and rural development was meant to become an integral part. The government's ambition to resolve Bucharest's housing crisis—a specter that had haunted the city, like many other European cities, since the Industrial Revolution—was coupled with the idea that citizens must be uplifted from the perceived "backwardness" of the historical city. Housing and the improvement of public infrastructure became the focus of socialist urban planning in Romania, as in many socialist countries, after World War II. It was within this context of mobilizing urban planning in the service of state building and social change that the country's architectural profession underwent a significant restructuring of its own, from the liberal profession it had been between the wars into an "organizational activity" tightly regulated by state priorities and norms (19). Importantly, this transformation came about through a process of negotiation between the new political elite and the professional community. Not only did new state priorities reshape the architectural profession, but the profession also actively participated in shaping the state.

Stories about the building of socialist neighborhoods like Floreasca are not new, and numerous studies have been published regarding similar developments across the Second World.[4] What makes Maxim's book important are the subtle distinctions she draws between different varieties of modernism and socialism. Her entire first section could be read as a series of arguments countering widespread misconceptions about socialist urban development. For example, Maxim shows that Romanian postwar urban development was not simply the result of Sovietization but also the outcome of a homegrown architectural culture responding to imported Soviet principles.[5] At the same time, the country's urban development was not just a continuation of interwar Romanian modernism—it was also a result of the advent of a radically different ideological orientation with respect to class politics, signaling a shift further to the left.[6] One example of this shift was the rejection of single-family houses with individual gardens in favor of apartment buildings with collective garden spaces. Maxim also compares two districts built in postwar Bucharest—Vatra Luminoasa, with its classical ornamental elements, and Floreasca, with its straightforward modernist look—to show that this leftist program was embodied in different styles. She demonstrates that the opposition between socialist realism and modernism so often highlighted in the literature has been significantly exaggerated, and she recommends that scholars take this into account in their study of professional debates on typification and standardization. She also argues against reducing Romanian postwar modernism to pragmatic technological solutionism. With her keen eye for the aesthetics of architectural production, Maxim asserts that the architects of the Floreasca district not only sought cheap and practical solutions to reorganizing socialist-era living but also aspired to develop a powerful architectural language that would communicate the promise of socialism to the district's residents. She insists that the poetics and affective ambitions of Romanian postwar architecture be taken seriously.

If the book's first section reads as a polemic against historiographic clichés, its second and third parts constitute original contributions to debates concerning the specificity of socialist architectural culture. The brilliant section titled "Type and Typification" is devoted to the main methods of socialist architectural design: typological research, or the typification of design; and the standardization of building components, linked to the industrialization of construction and the introduction of prefabrication technology. Maxim argues

that scholars often confuse and conflate these two distinct approaches to the rationalization of socialist construction, and she is the first scholar to disentangle them so fully.[7] In particular, she shows that in the 1950s, when Romania still lagged behind other parts of the world in factory production of building components, and traditional methods of masonry were still widely used, typification was the main driver of new architectural forms and emerging building norms. By the early 1960s, with the rapid development of new building technologies, such as prefabricated panel and monolith concrete construction, type-designs started to integrate the dimensions and parameters of new building components. As a result, users' spatial experiences began to be determined more by the sizes and shapes of building components than by architects' decisions about spatial arrangements.

More important, Maxim rehabilitates the historical significance of typological research as a foundational principle of socialist architecture in Romania. In her interpretation, type-design was a powerful tool that architects used to enact cultural transformation under socialism. It was through research on new types of dwellings that architects could partake in the larger process of redefining life under socialism and forging new forms of subjectivity and collectivity.[8] Maxim documents how Romanian architects carefully studied different scenarios of everyday life in order to codify inhabitants' experiences into building programs and different architectural norms, from built-in cabinets to the spatial parameters of block sections. Typification was not simply a prelude to the state-led industrialization of construction; it was a sophisticated, action-oriented form of research that allowed architects to engage with socialist ideology and core societal questions. Maxim seems to suggest that the specificity of socialist architecture lay in architects' creative work on type-design. By divorcing the study of type from the history of particular building technologies such as prefabrication and concrete production, she resuscitates type-based research and gestures toward its latent potential as a tool for transitioning to emancipatory futures. One could argue that type remains one of the few instruments available to architects who assume that "artifacts have politics" and, by extension, a progressive agency rooted in spatial form.[9]

The book's last part, "Peasant Houses and Workers' Apartments," further complicates Maxim's definition of socialist modernization. It shows that the process of modernization was not limited to the radical reshaping of urban typologies inspired by Romania's forward-looking ideology; it was also intertwined with the reinvention of the country's rural past, embedded in Romanian intellectual traditions that preceded socialism. Here Maxim turns to the historical writings of the Bucharest sociological school of the interwar period, particularly its studies on folk architecture, and the archival collections of the Village Museum, which continued its work after World War II. This detour introduces the reader to the specific culture of typological thinking that existed in Romania. According to Maxim, this corpus of research made it possible for socialist-era architects to conceive of type-design as a tool of reform and to envision the peasant house as a type-based matrix for future housing, ultimately binding the vision of socialist modernity to folk tradition and presocialist notions of community and collective rationality.

Maxim's work is pioneering in its examination of the relationship between socialist cosmology and the production of urban and rural built environments, and it prompts important questions about other socialist countries' integration of rural culture into urban planning models. Another unanswered issue concerns the reworking of rural architectural thinking into the concrete, socialist-era building programs imagined for Romania's countryside. Unfortunately, Maxim stops short of exploring rural modernization under socialism. Nevertheless, her subtle understanding of socialist urbanity makes *The Socialist Life of Modern Architecture* a must-read not only for historians but also for aspiring theoreticians and practitioners of architecture interested in crafting the future.

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Notes

1. The last decade saw an impressive convergence of interest among scholars from different disciplinary backgrounds, ranging from history and architectural history to anthropology and sociology, in studying built environment and lived experience across the former socialist world—that is, the Second World. This quickly expanding field is shaped by such scholars as, to name a few, Richard Anderson, Elke Beyer, Steven E. Harris, Katherine Lebow, Brigitte Le Normand, Ana Miljacki, Virag Molnar, Eli Rubin, and Kimberly Zarecor, all of whom have published monograph-length studies of socialist urbanity in the course of the past decade. For an overview of this trend, see the following historiographic essays: Vladimir Kulić, "The Builders of Socialism: Eastern Europe's Cities in Recent Historiography," *Contemporary European History* 26, no. 3 (2017), 545–60; Elidor Mëhilli, "The Socialist Design: Urban Dilemmas in Postwar Europe and the Soviet Union," *Kritika: Explorations in Russian and Eurasian History* 13, no. 3 (2012), 635–65. See also "Book Discussions," Second World Urbanity (blog), http://www.secondworldurbanity.org/book-discussions (accessed 5 Feb. 2020).

2. I use the term *social condenser* here in the sense developed by early Soviet constructivists. See Michał Murawski and Jane Rendell, "The Social Condenser: A Century of Revolution through Architecture, 1917–2017," *Journal of Architecture* 22, no. 3 (2017), 369–71.

3. See also Stephen Kotkin, *Magnetic Mountain: Stalinism as a Civilization* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995).

4. See, for example, Katherine Lebow, *Unfinished Utopia: Nowa Huta, Stalinism, and Polish Society, 1949–56* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 2013); Kimberly Elman Zarecor, *Manufacturing a Socialist Modernity: Housing in Czechoslovakia, 1945–1960* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2011).

5. For contrasting definitions of Sovietization, see Anders Åman, *Architecture and Ideology in Eastern Europe during the Stalin Era: An Aspect of Cold War History* (New York: Architectural History Foundation, 1992); John Connelly, *Captive University: The Sovietization of East German, Czech, and Polish Higher Education, 1945–1956* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2014).

6. This argument may be compared to arguments concerning the shared aspirations of modernization projects across the Iron Curtain and the universality of urban typologies used around the globe. For example, see Kate Brown, *Plutopia: Nuclear Families, Atomic Cities, and the Great Soviet and American Plutonium Disasters* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015); Florian Urban, *Tower and Slab: Histories of Global Mass Housing* (Hoboken, N.J.: Taylor & Francis, 2015).

7. In her analysis of the working methods of Stavoprojekt, Kimberly Elman Zarecor examines typification as one of the first steps in the process of standardization. See Zarecor, *Manufacturing a Socialist Modernity*, 95–112. By contrast, Philipp Meuser and Dimitrij Zadorin depict typification as a hostage of standardization. See Philipp Meuser and Dimitrij Zadorin, *Towards a Typology of Soviet Mass Housing: Prefabrication in the USSR 1955–1991* (Berlin: DOM, 2015).

8. This discussion connects Maxim's research to research on early Soviet debates on *novyi byt* (a new way of life) and the dynamics of cultural

revolution. See Christina Kiaer and Eric Naiman, eds., *Everyday Life in Early Soviet Russia: Taking the Revolution Inside* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2006).

9. Langdon Winner, "Do Artifacts Have Politics?," *Daedalus* 109, no. 1 (1980), 121–36.

Neil Jackson

Pierre Koenig: A View from the Archive

Neil Jackson's new book, *Pierre Koenig: A View from the Archive*, is grounded in his close examination of the extensive collection of this architect's work held at the Getty Research Institute in Los Angeles. Composed of "over one hundred box files of correspondence, documents, drawings, photographs, and other material, both professional and private, as well as over 250 flat files of drawings," the collection was acquired in 2006 by the Getty's curator for architecture and design, Wim de Wit, just two years after Koenig's death. While Jackson draws to some degree upon other sources, he states that "the purpose of this book is to explore the work of Pierre Koenig through the medium of his archive, for there his architectural development can be best understood, and from there, the best composite picture constructed" (vii).

Author of the earlier *Pierre Koenig, 1925–2004: Living with Steel*, Jackson opens his new book with a brief overview of the architect's life before he established his independent practice in Glendale, California, in 1952.[1] Born in San Francisco in 1925, Koenig moved with his family to San Gabriel, just east of Los Angeles, in 1939, and there he developed an early talent for drawing. In 1943 he joined the Enlisted Reserve Corps and eventually experienced combat in Europe, where he served until 1945. Following his discovery of John Entenza's magazine *Arts & Architecture* in the San Gabriel public library, Koenig decided to pursue a degree in architecture. In 1948, following two years at Pasadena City College, he enrolled in the School of Architecture at the University of Southern California. During his four years at USC he encountered an extraordinary group of professors, lecturers, and visiting critics, including Calvin C. Straub, Garrett

Eckbo, Gregory Ain, Gordon Drake, Harwell Hamilton Harris, A. Quincy Jones, and William Pereira. Straub, in particular, had a strong interest in the single-family residence, and he worked closely with Eckbo to promote wood-frame post-and-beam structures with broad expanses of glass, buildings that allowed their free-flowing interior spaces to open into the surrounding landscape. This was a distinctive modernist approach to design that architectural historian Esther McCoy later dubbed the "Pasadena" or "USC" style.

While still a student, Koenig worked in the office of Raphael Soriano and produced a number of striking perspective drawings for Soriano's 1950 Case Study House, one of the first steel-frame residences produced for Entenza's Case Study House Program. Here, one can already discern Koenig's talent as a draftsman—a talent evidenced by the more than two hundred drawings reproduced in this handsome book. During his student years, Koenig also built his own house in Glendale. Despite the skepticism of his instructors, who questioned the applicability of steel to residential architecture, and their strong emphasis (especially Straub's) on wood post-and-beam construction, Koenig built his family house using steel-frame construction. It was his first such residence.

Eschewing wood as a primary structural medium, Koenig would employ steel and glass in a manner parallel to that of Straub and his colleagues, as Jackson points out, to produce the kind of open, flexible interior spaces they promoted; he thus set himself on a path he would follow throughout his career. Koenig believed that once steel became more widely accepted for residential use, the cost of the material could be reduced through off-site factory production, making possible the type of affordable, mass-produced housing that Entenza was promoting through the Case Study House Program. "Steel is not something you can put up and take down," Koenig later explained to McCoy. "It is a way of life."[2]

Koenig moved closer to his goal of the prefabricated steel house with his own Case Study House designs, published as part of the program in *Arts & Architecture*. Case Study House 21 was commissioned by Walter and Mary Bailey in 1956 and completed in 1958. Jackson's analysis of the

drawings for it buttresses Koenig's notion that the building's modular organization could be reproduced to create almost any programmatic configuration. It would remain Koenig's favorite design, even though his Case Study House 22 (1958–60), built for Buck and Carlotta Stahl, would overshadow it, thanks to the spectacular nighttime photographs of the house made by Julius Shulman.

Shulman, whose archive also resides at the Getty Research Institute, documented both of these Koenig-designed houses. His images ensured that they became emblematic of Entenza's project and icons of Southern California's postwar modernism. Shulman's share of the credit for these buildings' success remained a point of contention between architect and photographer, however, and Jackson gives much of the credit to Shulman. Jackson points out that Koenig resented the fact that both Shulman and the buildings' owners benefited financially from Koenig's designs—from the sale and rights to the images, and from the resale of what came to be recognized as architectural masterpieces—in a way that he did not (169).

The success of Koenig's Case Study Houses led to his receiving a series of important commissions, however. Still, he chose to maintain a small practice, working for a time out of his garage and later from a home office in Los Angeles, and his early success would soon wane. As Jackson argues, tastes were changing in the 1960s, shifting away from postwar modernism and eventually toward postmodernism. Beyond changing tastes, the large number of unrealized proposals documented in the Getty Research Institute's Koenig archive reveal the many obstacles the architect encountered in promoting steel-frame houses, which often proved too complex and expensive to build. Indicative of this impasse was his attempt to supply low-cost, prefabricated housing for the Chemehuevi Indian reservation near Lake Havasu in the California desert. Along with colleagues and students at USC, Koenig struggled for three years to bring this project to fruition, and although he persevered for several more years, the project was eventually abandoned. Similarly, Koenig's last completed commission, for the Schwartz residence (2000–2004) in Pacific Palisades, took four

years to finish; office correspondence and drawings document missed deadlines for the supply of materials, on-site delays, continuous change orders, and cost overruns. When it came to steel framing as a reliable and cost-effective material for the single-family residence, it appears that the skepticism of Koenig's USC instructors may have been warranted.

Koenig returned to USC to teach in 1961 or 1962, perhaps as a means to sustain himself and his family in the face of declining commissions. He eventually served at the university as assistant director of the Institute of Building Research under Konrad Wachsmann, and subsequently as director of the undergraduate Building Science Program. In 1963 Wachsmann and Koenig were joined by Ralph Knowles, who "introduced [Koenig] to phenomenology and the use of natural forces as organizing determinates" (165). Together they developed a new design studio curriculum based on these principles. This included the use of a heliodon, an instrument that Knowles appears to have introduced into the classroom and an innovation that may account for the appearance of shadow studies in the Koenig archive as early as 1965 (fig. 7.10, plates 86, 91, 106).

Jackson's interpretation of the archive offers a number of insights into Koenig's work and practice. For example, the multiple notations on Koenig's drawings (sometimes made by clients) and office correspondence indicate how closely the architect worked with his employers. His approach to design as an individual practitioner is reflected in the precision of his renderings and the attention he focused on the most minute details. This can be seen in both the working drawings he produced for foundation details and the configuration of wood formwork for the concrete poured at the Bailey House (plates 12–15), as well as in Koenig's meticulously detailed rendering for the roof flashing and scupper for the Oberman House (1960) (plate 52).

All of this brings new appreciation to the extent of Koenig's practice, yet Jackson focuses his primary attention on "the medium of his archive" through detailed analyses of the drawings. These are at times difficult to follow and can distract from the bigger picture: the houses themselves. The problem is exacerbated by the book's dearth of photographs of these remarkable

buildings. While the constraints of publication may account for this, the inclusion of more photos would have helped clarify our understanding of many of the highly detailed working drawings, which are necessarily presented at a fraction of their original size. Thus, I found it useful to keep close for consultation a copy of Jackson's earlier volume on Koenig, which is heavily illustrated with photographs of the houses and makes clear their structural and spatial qualities.

In the end, Jackson must be congratulated for the effort it took to bring to light so much of this important architect's five-decade-long career. And, as has come to be expected, the Getty Research Institute and the J. Paul Getty Trust have produced a beautiful volume that reflects the highest standards in the field of architectural publication.

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Notes

1. Neil Jackson, *Pierre Koenig, 1925–2004: Living with Steel* (Cologne: Taschen, 2007).
2. Pierre Koenig, quoted in Esther McCoy, *Modern California Houses: Case Study Houses, 1945–1962* (New York: Reinhold, 1962), 70.

Mardges Bacon

John McAndrew's Modernist Vision: From the Vassar College Art Library to the Museum of Modern Art in New York

Thomas S. Hines

Architecture and Design at the Museum of Modern Art: The Arthur Drexler Years, 1951–1986

The two books reviewed here, by Mardges Bacon and Thomas S. Hines, use the methods of biography to offer new insights into the Museum of Modern Art's engagement with architecture from its founding years until the mid-1980s. During that period, the exhibitions sponsored by MoMA's Department of Architecture and Design (A&D) garnered significant attention from the popular and trade presses, and the

institution took seriously its self-appointed role as arbiter of the modernist canon. In the realm of architecture and design, the figure of Philip Johnson loomed large, but these books usefully refocus attention on the creative and administrative skills (or lack thereof) of two other men who made MoMA's history as vital and dynamic as it was: John McAndrew, curator of A&D from 1937 to 1941, and Arthur Drexler, who served first as curator of architecture (1951–56) and then as director of the Department of Architecture and Design (1956–86).

To be sure, Johnson plays a crucial role in the early stages of both books. Johnson and McAndrew overlapped in their time as students at Harvard but did not meet until they were both touring Germany in 1929. As Bacon describes, the two "kindred aesthetes" (50) then traveled across Europe, seeking out examples of the new modern architecture, such as J. J. P. Oud's Kiefhoek housing estate in Rotterdam and Gropius's Bauhaus campus in Dessau. Their travels provided the foundation of Johnson's research into the architecture that, a few years later, became the basis for MoMA's *Modern Architecture: International Exhibition* (1932), which Johnson curated in partnership with Henry-Russell Hitchcock. McAndrew came to MoMA in 1937 through his connections with founding director Alfred Barr, his travels with Johnson having exposed him to the architectural vanguard, especially its use of industrial materials and unorthodox color schemes. These ideas shaped his own design of the Vassar College Art Library and Art Gallery, as well as his scholarly understanding of modernism. Drexler was hired at MoMA by Johnson in 1951, the two having met when Drexler was working in George Nelson's office and writing an article about Johnson's Glass House in 1949. Johnson at the time was director of the Department of Architecture and Design, and he hired Drexler, then twenty-six years old, as MoMA's curator of architecture. Drexler remained at the museum for three and a half decades, long after Johnson's departure.

Both Bacon's and Hines's studies provide deep views of MoMA's architecture exhibition program across the mid-twentieth century. We learn about exhibitions that have received little attention in the historical record (McAndrew's *Three Centuries of*

American Architecture of 1939; Drexler's *Visionary Architecture* of 1960), and we come to appreciate that MoMA's modernism was never as dogmatic or as simple as it appears in the rearview mirror—or as its detractors might suggest. These books give us a nuanced and complex view of the MoMA curators' attempts to document and explain modern architecture to the public, yet at times the reader may want more information about the supporting characters and the debates surrounding the exhibitions. For instance, the authors might have written more about the coterie of intriguing female curators—Ernestine Fantl, Elizabeth Mock, Greta Daniel, Mildred Constantine—who supported the museum's central male figures. And it might have been helpful if they had explored in more depth the ways in which A&D's broader intellectual community shaped the choices behind the exhibitions.

Bacon's biography of McAndrew focuses almost exclusively on the first few decades of his career, which includes—but is not defined by—his tenure at MoMA. Indeed, of the three major chapters in Bacon's narrative, only the third addresses McAndrew's work at MoMA. The first explores the social networks through which he learned about modernism in the 1920s, and the second examines his work as a professor at Vassar College and his design of the Art Library there (1937). Over these three chapters Bacon examines how McAndrew understood modernism, how his views changed over time, and how, ultimately, he developed the concept he called "naturalization" to explain the adaptation of modernist ideas to distinctly North American geographic, climatic, and cultural concerns (133). Bacon's focus on modernism means that her biography is a bit lopsided: McAndrew's three postwar decades at Wellesley and his notable work as a historian of Mexican colonial architecture are condensed into a brief epilogue. However, given the richness and abundance of material from the 1920s and 1930s with which Bacon was working, her emphasis is understandable; perhaps a separate biography on McAndrew's later career will be taken up by another scholar.

The impetus for Bacon's book was the renovation of the Vassar Art Library—involving restoration of McAndrew's original design—in 2007. In addition to its nuanced and deeply contextualized narrative, *John McAndrew's Modernist Vision* contains several elements that celebrate the history of this commission, which Bacon identifies as the "earliest modern interior for an academic building on an American campus" (76). A foreword by Molly Nesbit, Susan Donahue Kuretsky, and Thomas E. Hill discusses the history of Vassar's Art Department and its role in the development of art and architectural history in the United States. The library's design was first published in a 1938 critical essay by art historian Agnes Rindge, a colleague of McAndrew, and her essay, along with invaluable original photographs, is reprinted in its entirety here. An exhaustive list of the exhibitions held at the Vassar College Art Gallery from 1923 to 1940, compiled by Elizabeth Nogrady, rounds out the volume.[1]

Bacon begins her discussion of McAndrew's career by invoking the concept of "geographies of modernism" (33). With this, she draws attention to McAndrew's interest in modernism across the European continent and North America. Her phrasing reminds us that McAndrew did not see modernism as a uniform set of aesthetic practices that transcended nations; rather, he compared and drew distinctions among different modernist practices. In her first chapter, Bacon traces McAndrew's career as an undergraduate at Harvard, and then as a student in the School of Architecture (where he did not complete his degree); there he intersected with young modernists such as those involved with the Harvard literary journal *Hound & Horn* and the Harvard Society for Contemporary Arts. The connections between Harvard's student groups and the founding of MoMA have long been recognized, but Bacon's narrative and the evidence presented by the Vassar exhibition record demonstrate that modernism within the United States during the 1920s and 1930s involved a dynamic network of multiple geographic nodes.[2] Vassar is not far from New York City, and it became an active site for debates about modernism and the dissemination of modernist ideas to ever-broader audiences beyond the metropolis.

Bacon's discussion of McAndrew's time at Vassar and his work on the Art Library is amplified by several pages of full-color photographs of the renovated spaces. These offer a fascinating comparison with the original black-and-white images. The most striking element in the library is the color scheme, which involves multiple shades of blue, reddish earth tones, and a cork floor; the modernism of the space is enhanced by colored linoleum-topped reading tables, glass-brick walls, and a range of chrome-plated tubular steel chairs. Bacon delves deeply into the many possible sources—high and popular culture, European and American—that McAndrew may have drawn upon as he developed this unusual interior design. While any or all of these might have informed his vision, she ultimately focuses on Le Corbusier's purist palette, with its bold blocks of earth tones (in contrast to the stronger primary colors favored by De Stijl architects and artists), and convincingly connects the library's design to McAndrew's study of Le Corbusier's aesthetics.

In 1937, while finalizing his designs for the library and gallery at Vassar, McAndrew left the college and joined MoMA as curator of the Department of Architecture and Industrial Design. Although his curatorship has often been reduced to the mixed success of the 1938 Bauhaus exhibition and the fraught 1940 exhibition of the work of Frank Lloyd Wright, Bacon introduces a welcome level of sophistication and rigor in her assessment of McAndrew's time at the museum. Through careful study of published writings, personal correspondence (both within the museum and beyond), and contemporary architectural criticism, Bacon traces McAndrew's growing confidence in the idea of a "naturalized" modernism emerging in a country where vernacular traditions, materials, and historical sources confronted imported manifestos and ideals. She revisits such surprising and long-neglected exhibitions as MoMA's tenth-anniversary architecture show, *Houses and Housing* (1939). Moreover, she connects McAndrew's design (developed with Barr) for the museum's original 1939 sculpture garden—which used modest, vernacular materials such as plywood and asbestos cement—to his intellectual interests in a multifaceted, democratic modernism. Given her astute analysis of McAndrew's garden and building designs, it is unfortunate that Bacon does not spend more time analyzing the forms and impact of his exhibition installations.

Hines's book covers the entirety of Arthur Drexler's career, most of which was spent at MoMA. Johnson hired Drexler in 1951, just a few years out of college; he worked at the museum until 1986 and died in 1987. Because Drexler's career took a course that was different from McAndrew's, Hines's book necessarily differs from Bacon's in its nature and scope. Whereas Bacon situates McAndrew within multiple overlapping circles of modernist exploration in the interwar years, Hines's study of Drexler is, in large part, a history of the Department of Architecture and Design at MoMA during the years of Drexler's involvement. Hines became a part of that history when he collaborated with Drexler on a major exhibition on Richard Neutra in 1982. He introduces his connection to Drexler in his preface, describing how their interactions in the early 1980s led him to write this book.

Hines divides Drexler's career by decades, and each chapter examines the major exhibitions he curated or supervised during a given span. Hines discusses in depth the exhibitions in which Drexler was directly involved, but he also includes briefer accounts of the exhibitions Drexler supported in his role as department director. Hines thus builds a composite image of A&D's activity from the immediate postwar years through the height of postmodernist debates in the 1980s. Because Drexler did not leave any personal archive, Hines's history is constructed largely through judicious quotes from Drexler's own, eloquent writings; selected published reviews; and materials from archival sources such as museum press releases, internal correspondence, and photographs. The resulting narrative is a comprehensive account of A&D's efforts under Drexler, and future scholars will want to consult this book when looking for information about the many and varied exhibitions it offered in these decades.

At the same time, Hines adheres closely to the institution's point of view when addressing topics such as the intellectual impact of given exhibitions, so there is room for more critical analyses of Drexler's curatorial activities. For instance, based on the story as told here, it is hard to discern Drexler's own intellectual investments in some of his more unusual exhibitions.

Why did he believe *Visionary Architecture* was an essential show to mount in 1960? What exactly did he understand to be the significance of Ricardo Bofill and Léon Krier, subjects of a dual exhibition presented in 1985? Hines's distance from Drexler's own concerns becomes particularly evident in his discussions of the period 1966–75, when modernism was under assault and postmodernism was ascendant. He spends considerable time explaining Robert Venturi's arguments in *Complexity and Contradiction in Architecture* (1966).[3] He quotes Drexler's foreword to the book but does not fully explain why Drexler recommended that MoMA publish it, nor does he successfully situate Drexler's stake in its arguments or success.

Drexler made a name for himself through his eloquent analyses of built spaces, and throughout Hines's book, excerpts from Drexler's writings convey the clarity and incisive observations characteristic of his prose. Hines finds Drexler equally effective in his exhibition design (68), but, as with Bacon's study of McAndrew, too little information is provided about specific installations for readers to fully understand their arguments or impacts. I was struck, for example, by an installation photograph of the Neutra exhibition from when it traveled to the University of California, Los Angeles, in 1983 (Hines, 159); showing an architectural model at the gallery's center and enlarged photographs hung, unframed, on the walls, the photo echoes a well-known installation view of *Modern Architecture: International Exhibition* from 1932 (reproduced in Bacon, 69). What logic governed the presentation of the model as sculpture, and what mental work were viewers required to do to understand the relationship between the model and the photographs surrounding it? Hines notes that for the 1979 exhibition *Transformations in Modern Architecture*, Drexler purposefully changed his display strategy. "My number one priority," Drexler explained, "was to create a visual experience that I could not have through the pages of a book or the slides of a lecture" (135). Deeper engagement with the scholarly literature of critical museum studies would have allowed Hines to develop a more pointed assessment of Drexler's curatorial motivations and contributions.[4]

Taken together, Bacon's and Hines's biographies successfully demonstrate that the men who led the Department of Architecture and Design for much of MoMA's first half century had more wide-ranging views about modern architecture than is often assumed. Bacon contextualizes McAndrew's intellectual pursuits and concludes that he understood modern architecture as "pluralistic and open-ended," and as a "transatlantic synthesis" that engaged "the empirical transformations of the International Style" (152). Hines writes that Drexler "acknowledged over and over that modern architecture was never just one thing" (95). These two volumes, variously exhaustive and nuanced, help restore some of the complexity to our understanding of MoMA's early decades, and to our formulations of modern architecture writ large.

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Notes

1. McAndrew designed the interior of the Art Gallery in 1937, but those spaces have since been replaced by a larger facility designed by Cesar Pelli.
2. See "Commentaries," *American Art* 27, no. 3 (Fall 2013), 2–33.
3. Robert Venturi, *Complexity and Contradiction in Architecture* (New York: Museum of Modern Art, 1966).
4. Hines cites Mary Anne Staniszewski, *The Power of Display: A History of Exhibition Installations at the Museum of Modern Art* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1998). In addition, see Mieke Bal, *Double Exposures: The Subject of Cultural Analysis* (New York: Routledge, 1996); Jennifer Jane Marshall, *Machine Art 1934* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2012); Kristina Wilson, *The Modern Eye: Stieglitz, MoMA, and the Art of the Exhibition 1925–1934* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 2009).

Ugliness and Judgment is a short and dense book that argues that the concept of architectural ugliness can be seen as an ingredient of a social conflict with institutional elements rather than as a matter of personal or shared aesthetic taste. In order to establish this argument, Timothy Hyde

presents his hypothesis through a series of events in English architecture, because in England there is a continuous history, hundreds of years long, of civil and ecclesiastical courts arbitrating disputes in what would now be called town planning. Indeed, the power of the latter has strengthened in recent years, since the passing of the Ecclesiastical Exemption (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) (England) Order 1994 and successive legislation; such laws have not only affirmed the Church of England's right to make decisions on alterations to its "listed" (i.e., protected) buildings but also regulated this right in regard to other mainstream English Christian denominations. This backdrop provides a neat continuum for an argument that starts with the acts of individuals and makes it way up to the government-backed public inquiries of recent decades. The outstanding example of these is the case of James Stirling's "ugly" No. 1 Poultry, in the City of London, designed in 1985–88. An inquiry and subsequent appeals delayed the building's completion for ten years as the national amenity societies (voluntary organizations that advocate for the built and natural environment) joined forces with members of the public to challenge its erection on the site of protected Victorian office buildings, within a chamber set up with the furnishings and trappings of a regular courtroom.

Hyde's story starts with the city of Bath before John Wood the Elder found it: a shameful mess of ugly buildings that failed to match up to the expectations of the genteel clients of the fashionable spas. In order to counter this, Wood needed to organize: to write, to draw, to lobby—what Hyde calls "the emerging formulations of civic aesthetics" (34). The resulting fine buildings (The Circus, Queen Square), along with the crescents and countless minor streets, are thus the embodiment of Wood's social construct. This took place in the early eighteenth century. In a later section of the book, Hyde tells the story of the irascible John Soane's battle with the London building authorities, and with his neighbors and all passersby, to extend the front of his house on Lincoln's Inn Fields in Holborn, in defiance of regulations, by 3 feet, 6 inches outward toward the street. Like much else to do with Soane, this ended up in court. As Hyde explains, an attack on

a professional's artistic decision was then seen as a libel against his person; thus, a personal transgression by one side or the other made its way into a legal formulation within the civic sphere.

The Soane case took place in the early nineteenth century. Shortly afterward, a committee of experts discussed the use of a suitable pollution-resistant stone for the Houses of Parliament, and then later another made suggestions for that stone's replacement when the original material failed. In this way, scientific decision-making structures entrenched themselves into arguments about civic beauty.

Beyond Stirling's Poultry scheme, the last section of the book looks at three cases: the campaign by No. 1 Poultry's developer, Peter Palumbo, to insert a radical type of round altar into the clashing geometry of Christopher Wren's neighboring church of St Stephen Walbrook; the attack by Charles, Prince of Wales, on the 1983 proposal by the architectural firm Ahrends, Burton and Koralek to extend the National Gallery; and the discourse around the 2009 proposals for new apartment blocks on the Chelsea Barracks site. In this last story Prince Charles was again at the center, a situation in which he found himself becoming a kind of social construct of public opinion, or even a conceptual version of monarchy resorting to its historic role of patronage. Over time, the media's dissemination of the arguments, whether in ever-expanding legislation or press coverage, was itself drawn into the process. For example, one aspect of the professionalization of today's amenity societies—from groups of connoisseurs into effective activists—has been the successful deployment of a range of social media to raise support for campaigns aimed at preventing damage to protected buildings. Thus, the entire building world eventually consists of a series of interlocking networks of constructed decision-making organizations.

There is much to recommend this argument, not least its originality in regard to the concept of ugliness and the fact that with one exception (addressed below), Hyde's grasp of both the English context and the fine details of the events he describes are first-rate. But Hyde also raises, without mentioning it, an interesting question: Which is the ugly, and which is the beautiful? For if ugliness is a social

and political construct rather than an aesthetic opinion, all of his stories could be reversed. The mess of the old city of Bath could be the beautiful, and Wood's additions could be the ugly. Certainly Anne Elliot, the heroine of Jane Austen's novel *Persuasion*, seems to take this view; having been exiled to Bath, she sees the slow evolution of Tudor architecture (with its artisans' guilds and their rules) as presumably just as much a construct of beauty as the speculative developers' architecture. Was it the original austere, conventional Georgian front of Soane's house that was the beautiful thing, or was it his addition to it? The construct known as the planning system today would take the latter view.

In some of Hyde's cases, such as that of the Royal College of Art's angry Anti-Uglies of the late 1950s—a group of, mostly, stained-glass students who campaigned loudly against recent quiet and refined buildings such as Albert Richardson's Bracken House, opened in 1959 opposite Saint Paul's Cathedral—there seems little doubt that what some people called "ugly" was what most others both then and now thought attractive, and vice versa. Indeed, Bracken House is protected today; Bowater House on Hyde Park, of which the Anti-Uglies approved, has been demolished.

So "ugliness" is an odd choice of word; "civic disruption" might have been more appropriate. In fact, in some of Hyde's cases the "disruption" is actually "nondisruption." This happened in Chelsea when Quinlan and Francis Terry aroused the ire of modernists in proposing a neoclassical housing estate alongside Wren's baroque hospital and their own earlier matching extension to it. The disruption here was that Richard Rogers had been displaced from the scheme through Prince Charles's interventions and had nothing to do with any aspect of the physical nature of the Terrys' design.

Disruption, then, is what this book is mostly about. The only substantial element missing from Hyde's narrative is that of the battles of social class, the perennial desire of the British, recorded time and time again by the people and their observers, that arguments and prejudices about class should trump all logic. How else to explain the phenomenon of Alison and Peter Smithson, who throughout the 1950s presented their

ideas for staggeringly ugly buildings as a kind of activism against the genteel complacency that reigned at the Architectural Association and elsewhere? While some of their fellow tutors saw their place at the school as an affirmation of a status quo that had enabled them to assimilate into it, regardless of class or background, the Smithsons were on the attack: housing was to look gritty, northern, and "working-class." A thump on the nose would teach those southern softies a lesson.

It is one of the great mysteries of British architectural history that this bizarre, disruptive, unaesthetic type of architecture has had the impact it has; only the perennial appeal of a good old-fashioned bout of class warfare can explain it. Louis Hellman, the veteran cartoonist of the weekly *Architects' Journal*, once depicted a bemused pair of working-class old-timers collaged against a particularly unfavorable view of the Greater London Council's recent Brutalist South Bank arts center: "We often come and admire the subtly articulated exposed concrete," they observe, glumly. This message was intended as a commentary for the benefit of the average architectural practitioner on how elevated arguments about aesthetics operate at some remove from practice, a recurring theme in Hellman's work. Hyde's idea that the whole story of the design of this building, the responses to it, and its later history as a cult object for middle-aged enthusiasts of Brutalism is actually part of the history of the cultural and political construct of ugliness is, in fact, quite a convincing one.

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Paul Dobraszczyk
Future Cities: Architecture and the Imagination
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In *Future Cities: Architecture and the Imagination*, Paul Dobraszczyk argues that there is a lesson to be learned from architectural and urban imaginations—from the nineteenth century to the present—that could be repurposed to solve some of the pressing problems of our cities in the age of the Anthropocene. As we increasingly become aware of the "destructive impact of human activity on the planet" (12), imaginations

could be instrumentalized to change current urban practices—or, rather, malpractices. Dobraszczyk asserts that this strategic use of imagination should be possible because the categories of "imaginary" and "real" are much more intertwined than we tend to think. He states: "The central aim of the book is to ground these imaginary cities in architectural practice, demonstrating just how many connections can be made between the two" (8).

Focusing on three thematic types of imagined cities—"unmoored cities (submerged, floating and flying), vertical cities (skyscrapers and undergrounds) and unmade cities (ruins and salvage)"—Dobraszczyk argues that we urgently need imagination today because our cities are besieged with problems, such as "flooding generated by climate change, rapid population growth and increasing social division, and technological failure and societal collapse" (8). Reimagining our cities should become a "political practice," providing resistance against capitalism's excesses and encouraging us to value "the reuse of discarded materials in order to challenge capitalism's fundamental basis in the creation of ever-vaster quantities of waste" (196).

This is all good and well-meaning, except that there remain some unresolved, perhaps neglected, quandaries. Dobraszczyk seems too convinced of modern architecture's innocence and its ability to shoulder the burden of mitigating socio-urban pathologies; he ignores architecture's historical complicity with capitalistic modes of production and environmental deterioration. Consider the declaration of the arch-provocateur Le Corbusier at the outset of *Urbanisme*: "A city! It is the grip of man upon nature. It is a human operation directed against nature, a human organism both for protection and for work. It is a creation."[1] It is worth pondering how both Enlightenment ideals and early twentieth-century modernist manifestos positioned architecture and the city as über-reason, capitalism's best tools to tame unpredictable nature and mobilize the project of progress.

It took decades for critics to begin to mount serious counterarguments against the Enlightenment ethos of taming nature. In *Eclipse of Reason* (1947), Max Horkheimer wrote: "The disease of reason is that reason

was born from man's urge to dominate nature."[2] In a different vein, Manfredo Tafuri declared in 1986 the futility of architecture as a redemptive project: "The mass of architects shouldn't worry, they should just do architecture."[3] This was a brusque reference to the architectural practice and theory of the New York Five (Peter Eisenman, Michael Graves, Charles Gwathmey, John Hejduk, and Richard Meier). What Tafuri implied was that whatever the "mass of architects" did mattered little because architecture had lost its ideological mission of transforming society. As an instrument of capitalism, modern architecture had become pointless, a failed project, insofar as one assumed that social emancipation was one of its primary goals. Tafuri's Marxist critique was uncompromising: "One cannot 'anticipate' . . . an architecture 'for a liberated society'; what is possible is the introduction of class criticism into architecture."[4] Fredric Jameson encapsulated Tafuri's position as "conveying a paralyzing and asphyxiating sense of the futility of any architectural or urbanistic innovation."[5]

Decades later, with the recession of poststructuralism's influence, we can afford to see some light at the end of Tafuri's nihilist tunnel. Yet Dobraszczyk's promotion of the idea that recycling "waste"— a by-product of capitalistic production processes—can bring better environmental value and more authenticity to how we live our lives is both premature and trendy. As U.S. architect William McDonough and German chemist Michael Braungart argue in their book *Cradle to Cradle: Remaking the Way We Make Things*, recycling itself is a problematic concept, since it tacitly legitimizes the inevitability of waste while ignoring more environmentally friendly adaptations to the biological cycles of generation and autoregeneration.[6]

In addition to emphasizing his faith in the efficacy of conventional ameliorative tools to solve today's environmental crisis, Dobraszczyk offers occasional sweeping generalizations. He writes: "Although all architecture, by definition a mixture of solid surfaces and spaces in between, contains air, it does so in almost complete ignorance of the latter's existence, let alone responding to its material qualities" (79). Really? There are plenty of examples across times and places, particularly in tropical climates, of builders capturing the breezes to ventilate

interiors; this has long been common practice, and it is based on architects' deep understanding of air and its seasonal behavior, as well as its symbolism.

Another issue in *Future Cities* is the author's largely ahistorical presentation of "imagination." Dobraszczyk mines different iterations of imagination—as a universal human faculty, as a romantic reaction against scientific rationalism in the eighteenth century, and as the essence of contemporary fantasy and escapist literature and other media (9). Imagination, according to the author, could be a potent force for shaping reality and the fundamental structures that organize it. Throughout the book, he seems enthralled by what Frederik Polak, in *The Image of the Future*, called "active utopianism," a kind of imagining that transcends the faithful acceptance of a preordained trajectory of history.[7] In this case, imagination is agential, able not only to foresee the future but also to make it more agreeable.

Up to a point, Dobraszczyk's contentions concerning the agency of imagination make sense. But to claim that imagination can be a universal societal vehicle for advancing active utopianism is to ignore the particular historical contexts from which imagination emerges. One wonders whether the anxious Dickensian imagination around social ills in nineteenth-century London, separated from its particular historico-political milieu, is the same thing as the neoliberal imagination that created Dubai's soaring skyscraper Burj Khalifa. Simple comparisons that Dobraszczyk draws between Frank Lloyd Wright's unbuilt mile-high skyscraper in Chicago and the Burj Khalifa (112–13) and between Hugh Ferriss's drawings in *The Metropolis of Tomorrow* (1929) and

Cesar Pelli's Petronas Towers (1998) in Kuala Lumpur raise serious questions about the book's historical methodology. I, for one, have studied how Ferriss's imagined city of skyscrapers was related to a broader interwar American "aesthetics of ascension" that also influenced visionaries like Buckminster Fuller and Norman Bel Geddes.[8] Context matters.

Perhaps the ahistoricity of *Future Cities* allows for a seductively fluid narrative about air as an environmental experience and abstraction, connecting London's 1851 Crystal Palace and Cloud Citizen (2014), the megaskyscraper complex for Shenzhen conceived by Urban Future Organization and CR-Design. Meanwhile, Dobraszczyk faults Argentine artist and architect Tomás Saraceno's hypothetical aerial city for "viewing the air as a frontier—an empty, non-territorial space that is ripe for colonization" (103)—a criticism he mounts from the vantage point of present-day debates about climate change, asking why we should aggravate the earth's already "warmed" atmosphere by creating an even more climate-affecting human footprint. It is an impassioned plea, but one that takes issues of climate change at face value and offers little further discursive engagement.

The strength of Dobraszczyk's book lies in its panoramic survey of imaginary projects across literature, visual culture, architecture, cinema, and urban thinking over the past two centuries. Readers will find much that is useful here for thinking through the current crisis of environmental degeneration, economic disparity, and wasted resources. Despite the ease with which Dobraszczyk—all too predictably—presents such anthropologically and socially complex phenomena as informal

settlements and slums as places of "both extraordinary vibrancy and unmitigated squalor" (205), *Future Cities* highlights the possibilities of imagining new opportunities to solve our planet's urgent problems.

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Notes

1. Le Corbusier, "Foreword," in *The City of To-morrow and Its Planning*, trans. Frederick Etchells (from the 8th French ed. of *Urbanisme*) (New York: Dover, 1987), xxi.

2. Max Horkheimer, *Eclipse of Reason* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1947), 176.

3. Manfredo Tafuri, "There Is No Criticism, Only History," interview by Richard Ingersoll, *Design Book Review* 9 (Spring 1986), 11, quoted in Kurt W. Forster, "No Escape from History, No Reprieve from Utopia, No Nothing: An *Addio* to the Anxious Historian Manfredo Tafuri," *Any: Architecture New York*, nos. 25/26 (2000), 5.

4. Manfredo Tafuri, *Theories and History of Architecture*, trans. Giorgio Verrecchia (New York: Harper & Row, 1980), iii, quoted in Thomas A. Dutton and Lian Hurst Mann, "Introduction: Modernism, Postmodernism, and Architecture's Social Project," in *Reconstructing Architecture: Critical Discourses and Social Practices*, ed. Thomas A. Dutton and Lian Hurst Mann (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1996), 17.

5. Fredric Jameson, "Architecture and the Critique of Ideology," in *Architecture, Criticism, Ideology*, ed. Joan Ockman (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1985), 58, quoted in Lian Hurst Mann, "Subverting the Avant-Garde: Critical Theory's Real Strategy," in Dutton and Mann, *Reconstructing Architecture*, 282.

6. William McDonough and Michael Braungart, *Cradle to Cradle: Remaking the Way We Make Things* (New York: North Point Press, 2002).

7. Fred L. Polak, *The Image of the Future*, trans. Elise Boulding (New York: Oceana, 1961).

8. Adnan Morshed, *Impossible Heights: Skyscrapers, Flight, and the Master Builder* (Minnesota: University of Minnesota Press, 2015).