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Dimensions 3

There follows in Dimensions 3 a collection of very thoughtful essays on "responsibility." You cannot read these articles without reflecting on the fact that responsibility is a personal matter with each of us having our own individual, collective and institutional obligations. Our responsibilities are what we make of them. They can be burdensome or liberating. Once we define our responsibilities we cannot dismiss them. Significant responsibilities require equally significant moral commitments.

This issue of Dimensions, like others in the past, fulfills one of the most important responsibilities of the College of Architecture and Urban Planning which is to create an environment which is reflective, self evaluative, curious and open to new ideas and thoughts. The College has a responsibility to embrace change as well as excellence, achievement as well as criticism.

I invite you to read this journal and reflect upon your own responsibilities -- your personal, professional, community and global responsibilities. You will find essays here which address each of these subjects as well as others. Dimensions 3 challenges us to a myriad of new responsibilities and reminds us of existing responsibilities which have only been half met. I applaud this year's editors and staff for: embracing this timely topic; presenting ideas for us to consider in this liberating way; and challenging us all to reflect on our individual as well as our collective responsibilities.

Robert M. Beckley, FAIA
Dean, College of Architecture and Urban Planning
Winter 1994
“Responsibility” is a word that has been widely used during the past few years. Although the concept behind it is filled with good intentions, this idea has been tossed around so much that it now often serves as nothing more than an indicator of political correctness — the idea of responsibility has begun to lose any real meaning. The purpose of this issue of Dimensions is to take a closer look at responsibility in the context of architectural education and practice and attempt to clarify and restore some of its meaning.

One important characteristic that seems to be overlooked in this era of renewed responsibility is the fact that this is a broad concept which means something different to each person. Social and environmental issues are two of the most common areas that are discussed — and their importance is not disputed — but we wanted to dig deeper to see if there are other issues which compel students and professionals in their pursuit of architecture. In order to introduce and stimulate this idea, we used three quotes on the Call for Papers which exemplify some of the opposing issues in the debate about responsibility:

The ALA Vision 2000 report that was published in 1988 concluded that environmental quality, affordable housing, and the architect’s role in the design of more attractive and efficient cities and suburban communities will be major issues the profession must address in the next century.
— Robert Gutman

To all those people worrying about making the world a better place, I say, ‘Why not do better architecture? Why not do better poetry?’ If they would stop worrying about the rest of the world and start worrying about themselves, then the world would be fine. It is the people who cannot do good architecture that worry about the rest of the world.
— Peter Eisenman

Despite the growing interest in political and social questions, there is still considerable hesitation and much intellectual confusion about how to conceive of theory, research, and programs within the realm of architecture that are comparable to investigations
and action. Just because architecture is an art does not relieve the profession of responsibility.

— Robert Gutman

To further stimulate thought we asked, “What is design responsibility? To whom is the design responsible? How much responsibility should the design possess? And why have we waited until now to ask the question?”

We were not disappointed in the responses. The topics cover a broad spectrum of ideas within the educational system and the profession of architecture, and they represent a variety of viewpoints, including those of students, student teachers, faculty and professionals. There are research papers covering topics such as making sustainable design a priority issue in architectural education, and the practitioner’s relationship to communities in the practice of urban planning. There are opinion papers representing ideas on the relationship between responsibility to society and the architect’s need to experiment, and the inability of architects to effectively communicate the importance of the environment to non-architects. And, for the first time in the history of Dimensions, there is a thought-provoking look at the profession of architecture through the medium of narrative story-boards.

The articles in this issue of Dimensions are intriguing, heartfelt, and hopefully will stimulate debate about the meaning of responsibility in architecture — debate that may even lead to action. The College of Architecture and Urban Planning is currently in the midst of re-evaluation and re-organization — the NAAB is performing its periodical review of the program and the College is searching for a new chairperson; it is poised on the edge of change. For this reason, it is especially important to raise the issue of responsibility and what this means in the hopes that some of the ideas presented here may actually be integrated into the goals of the College.

Anne Barnes Crowley  Christian R. Unverzagt
responsibility
the little red car: a boy’s curiosity, an architect’s responsibility

Sitting on the floor in short pants, white shirt and bow tie, his little legs were the freeway for his new car. He had been given the car yesterday by his Aunt when she came to visit. It was a great little red car with real rubber tires and doors that opened; a little steering wheel inside that turned the wheels. He drove the car down off the freeway of his leg and across the floor. Lightning crashed. Looking out the window of his room, he drove the car into his dresser with a crack. He sat on his knees and examined the car thoughtfully. There was a silver scratch across the hood that left a red line on the dresser. He rubbed it to see if it would go away.

He looked out the window again, then back at the car, opened the little door of the car — its engine idling. He closed the door, opened the door, closed the door, opened both doors and held the car up for inspection. Eye to eye with the headlights, he was reminded of the bi-plane his Uncle had given him. The engine grew louder and the car-plane took to the air. They buzzed the ceramic dog on the dresser, swooped over Bear on his bed. Bear wears a bow-tie, too. The car-plane landed in the plant in the window, then slid off its leaf landing pad falling to the floor with a crack. The doors popped off. He picked up the doors and tried to press them back on to their little hinges. They fell off again. One
fell into the heating grate and rattle down the duct; the other was buried in the plant.

He dug it out. It gracefully carried a little load of earth with it. He dumped it into the back seat of the car. Soon the back seat was filled, and he tried again to put the door back on. He squeezed the little car hard, the windscreen fell into the front seat of the car, and the steering wheel rolled across the floor.

The fishing rod was the thing he needed to fish the door out of the floor grate. It was up on the shelf. He only needed to be a little bit taller and he could reach it by himself. He set the car down to reach for the fishing pole. He jumped and managed to hit the shelf. Still standing with one hand in the air to measure the height, he looked around for something to stand on. He looked down at the little car. A car really did need two doors. He might be just tall enough if he stood on the car. He stepped on it and reached. Just as he wrapped his fingers around the pole, the little car's roof caved in. He fell back, pulling the pole and the shelf down with a crash. He sat on the floor blinking, and wondering why the little car would do such a thing.

He dug the car out of the pile on the floor and looked at it.

The dirt was safely trapped in the back seat. The side windows fell out and the windscreen was stuck. The wheels poked out sideways from underneath. It looked very un-car-like: flat with four big bumpers sticking out of it, and a heavy cargo of earth. The boat-car steamed its way over to the grating to allow the fishermen on board to cast their lines for car doors.

Having heard the crash, does his mother come running to see what has happened? How does she react? Is she outraged at the mess that is now scattered across the room from the fallen shelf? Does she punish him for making a mess, or for destroying the toy, or for destroying the gift for which his Aunt spent weeks searching? Does his mother sit down and ask him to explain what occurred and what he learned from the experience? Does she explain to him that when he grows up he must respect and be responsible to the gift and the gift-giver?

Can pure curiosity and inquisitiveness be judged for a level of responsibility? To whom is one ultimately responsible?

The little boy is curious and testing his world. He simply wants to know what works and what effect will result. He plays. He is not concerned with others' opinion that he
is destroying his toy. He is enjoying himself and finding out new things, and is quite pleased with the result. He does not see his toy as destroyed. Is he being irresponsible?

An architect who folds, bends, rips, pulls, squishes his toy — the gift of a building commission; wants to know the possible limits. The usefulness of his experimentation is that its making brought pleasure and the process brought wisdom. Does society have the right to hinder his freedom of expression that it has taught him to peruse?

I could do my work without purpose — my best work is without purpose. I invent purpose afterwards... Its only motivation is an internal one to reach its next state of being and then it begins again — it's not going anywhere it's just going...I want to do good work which follows my intentions. This takes wisdom — not knowledge, so I want to cultivate that wisdom, which is partly experiential, related to my own background, and it has to do with my capacity to invent...To all those people worrying about making the world a better place, I say, “why not do better architecture? Why not do better poetry?” If they would stop worrying about the rest of the world and start worrying about themselves, then the world would be fine. It is the people who cannot do good architecture that worry about the rest of the world. — Peter Eisenman

If the architect makes no claim at “being responsible” then the fault of responsibility lies with those with the power: those that pay for the architecture — the client, those that allow it to be built — planning boards and citizens who can protest building permits. Especially with an architect like Eisenman who plainly warns the world that he does not and will not consider the “responsible aspects” of architecture, his supporters are accountable. Eisenman’s point is to satisfy his own curiosity and creativity. He is a little boy with a new car. He may break it, render it useless in the eyes of the gift-giver, and annoy his parents; but he finds the new form as entertaining as the original, the “boat” as delightful as the car.

The money holder who cries out that hiring an architect is like hiring a lawyer or playing Russian Roulette misses the critical difference. When hiring an architect you have the similar amount of risk and high stakes, but you also can see what their work is like. Employing an architect is not just a matter of statistics of how many cases he has won, the average cost, the probability of being on the unlucky side of the spin. With an architect, the client has the reputation of the architect, his drawings, his previous buildings — tangible evidence of

what the architect's work is like or likely to be like. When an architect as prominent as Eisenman is hired, no one can be in any doubt of the sort of building commissioned. Eisenman has many buildings built and published, and he has written extensively about his work. "That is why my clients hire me. They wouldn't hire me if they didn't want a problem..." 2

But is curiosity and being obvious in your intentions enough of an excuse? Is the resulting architecture simply the cost to society for progress-like the use of animals toward cancer research?

There are many things you have to do. It is not a matter of liking them, but of having to do them. I carry my sons diapers in my briefcase. It is not that I like to; it is something I have to do. 3

Who is responsible? Responsibility requires action, or conscious inaction. A building cannot be responsible, because a building exists; it does not act. Those who have the power to act have the responsibility. The architect commits the act of design. He is responsible. Few architects have much power, so how much responsibility can they have? The client commissions and pays for the act of design. Money is power. City planning boards give the building permits allowing for the realization of the act of design.

They have the last say on whether a building gets built, or not built. They have a great deal of power. Citizens elect planning board members, and they can attend building permit meetings. Citizens have the dual power to elect those with the last say on the act of design, and to influence them once elected.

Power needs to be responsible.

In the end, who is not in some way responsible? But does everyone have to be responsible? Sociologists agree that play is an essential part of child development. Experimentation is an essential part of architectural development. How can we find a space in society for the architect to play?

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3. Eisenman. Question and answer period after his lecture at Rackham Auditorium, 12 November 1991 Ann Arbor, MI.
Today, perhaps more than ever, architecture must be seen as the field within which the political matrices, the social matrices, and those of the economy intersect, collide, and overlap with the intentions of the maker. Likewise, architecture occupies an intersection between its own celebrated history and the proliferation of energy that has been directed towards re-establishing the boundaries of its discipline. Of course, these two considerations come only after architecture has been placed into its uneasy relationship with the science of building. While this definition will not force us to compromise much of what interests each of us about architecture, it does quite convincingly splinter any clear and concise understanding of the responsibility of the architect. It is this splintered model of responsibility that leads to a position, and a project.

This splintering is made clear by looking at what is, from time to time, a complex and crippling array of obligations. For instance, Professionalism is grounds for both moral and ethical responsibilities that dictate a reasonable standard of care for the health, safety, and welfare of the general public. These responsibilities exist in tension with that which is obliged by virtue of the client/service relationship. The obligation of private architectures to participate productively in the larger public arena is one version of this subtle tension. Likewise, the need to educate society about the cultural importance of architecture is often competing with the

1. This essay was written in the margins of a Graduate Seminar entitled Grains of Sand, taught at the University of Michigan in the fall of 1993.  
2. This relationship is uneasy as architecture strives to touch us in some meaningful way while simultaneously responding to issues of the weather, the durability of materials, and what is, at times, a very complacent industry of trade.
need to have architecture informed [if not educated] by that same society. As of late, the design community’s responsibility to the environment has been pointed to in an effort to redirect the impetus of both the discipline and the culture. This, as we are painfully aware, can problematize the conception of the built environment to an extreme point — a point at which the architect becomes responsible for reversing the use of common, available materials [i.e. plywood] and re-aligning the divisions of labor that exist in a reciprocal relationship with the familiarity and knowledge of those materials.3 Add to this model our responsibility to the continuation of the rich traditions of our discipline, the need to redefine those traditions for ourselves, and the less tangible obligation to operate strategically in terms of making architecture that is both nourishing and vital. Now, these obligations tend to accrue within the site of architectural production, couching the creative act of making within an array of competing trajectories.

An interesting note is that this splintered model of responsibility participates and prolongs the multidimensional nature of architecture that exists explicitly at the level of lived experience and implicitly during its conception. Not only does this array participate, it complicates. Given the width and breadth of architecture, this responsibility accumulates with other sophisticated forces bearing down on the making of architecture and suspends us into a prison-house of competing concerns. This essay suggests that underlying any of these diverse responsibilities is the obligation that each of us has to ourselves. That is to say, there is a personal responsibility to decide. This responsibility provides us with the ability to respond.

A POSITION

Being responsible, in most scenarios, necessitates a clear understanding of one’s own position. While taking a position is an unavoidable byproduct of making decisions, the interest here is in defining that position, making it more strategic, and using it with informed intent. To place or position oneself removes the veil of mysticism that surrounds why one does this and not that. For this reason, placing oneself is, in and of itself, a critical act. Formulating a sense of who one is, what one values, and how one thinks [all three; tenets of any position] invites self-reflection and establishes the potential for taking on a critical dimension. In other words, this sincerity initiates the submission to criticism required
The responsible position of critical thinking is interested in anything that is critical of and critical to intellectual production. Additionally, criticism and its strategic incorporation into one's position cannot help but become an operative in the decision making process. Understanding this, along with the notion that critical thinking is taken on at the level of the individual, begins to underscore the need for a personal responsibility. One's own rationale [rational or not] pervades the establishment of this position and then sophisticates itself by establishing some critical trajectory to the way that position bears on the practice of making. In this respect, one's personal stake in the process of production must be seen as the pin driven through all other concerns.

_Besides, personal responsibility and accountability is not a theory, but a latent fact._

**A PROJECT**

The accountable and responsible dimension of this position is what establishes it as worthy of our reflection. The deeper potential of its value is substantiated by extending the articulation of the position towards the manifestation of a project. The interest here is not in a particular work of architecture. On...
the contrary, it is in what challenges an individual architectural moment [a building, if you like] to be more than it would be otherwise. The project, here, is channeled through the individual work, but is not limited to it. In some ways it is larger than an individual work. It is the project of critical architecture.

Critical architecture relies on the conventions and the inventions of its maker relative to the way in which that maker employs, and is driven by, criticism. Leery of the limitations of an architecture that concerns itself only with issues of Form, critical architecture turns to specific qualities found in its cultural context. In this respect a critical project of architecture attempts to thwart the assertion that architecture is a spontaneously founded, autonomous form. By implication, this thinking allows the less discursive social and political [cultural] forces to define potential paths of development and interpretation. Leery of the limitations of an architecture that requires a sophisticated reading and understanding of the culture influencing its production, critical architecture turns to the establishment of a system of formal relationships that can be discerned and interpreted without knowing the history of its making. In this respect a critical project of architecture operates with a knowledge of the typological and morphological dimensions of architecture's own history. This architecture establishes a rigor [a logic] that is already seen as imperative to the discipline of architecture. Both of these, the formalist tendency and the cultural tendency, are at work within critical architecture. It is important to note that one tendency is not at the expense of the other. The personal [poetic] reading of culture is advanced and developed by taking on formal qualities. Likewise, the order is reversible: the formal is advanced and developed by taking on sensibilities construed from a cultural reading. Emerging is the understanding that a critical architecture is:

...one resistant to the self-confirming, conciliatory operations of a dominant culture and yet irreducible to a purely formal structure disengaged from the contingencies of place and time.8

In this sense, critical architecture is a multi-dimensional endeavor seeking to temper the formal impulse with a sophisticated reading of its specific culture, time, and place. To operate between the cultural and the formal, between the local and the universal is an attempt to maintain and take advantage of the possibility9 inherent in architectural production.


9. Hurley, 85. 'Possibility' is referenced by Hurley with regard to supplementing the intentions of the maker with the contingent, the accidental, and the chance. These possibilities exist, always, alongside the foreseeable ones.
The production of critical architecture is directed by some search, some desire — an investigation. This search is linked to the need to define and re-define the nature of one's position. Each commission, each individual project, becomes tainted by the larger trajectory of one's search, one's vision. Call it pretension or foresightedness, the willingness to view the individual commission as an event within a larger body of work is imperative to responsibility and to the critical work.

Taking the establishment of a strategic, critical position as its foundation, critical architecture establishes a distance between its practice and that of the garden-variety, complacent architecture. The position offers a space of commitment within which the critical work is established and maintained in an effort to impact our understanding of both culture and architecture. Critical architecture begins with an intention to act, establishes a discourse relative to that intention, and critically develops within that frame. While one must strive to maintain the critical dimension of the work, the situation from which one begins is already important. Again, we see the need for personal responsibility, as well as the need to respond.

A persistently rearticulated intent accumulates knowledge...and allows the growth of that knowledge according to its own special beginnings and conventions rather than according to those derived from some prior authority.10

Making architecture entails making decisions between one discourse and another. These choices implicate responsibility.

Critical architecture is a responsible architecture.

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painting into architecture:

a parallel convergence

vincent castagnacci / melissa harris

Collaborations between artists and architects are typically limited to such projects as ornamenting a building or creating an installation. Our interest lies in a collaborative effort aimed at finding mutually supportive grounds for the teaching of art and architecture. Of further concern to us is how students will discover a means to learn from a discipline not their own, but closely related.

Consider the interaction of two disciplines running more or less independently, like parallel lines, yet sharing similar origins and aims in what Wallace Stevens called “the Maker’s rage to order.” Parallel, yet converging in ways that remain to be discovered, the disciplines of painting and architecture become locked in a mutually dependent embrace, through a pedagogical collaboration between a painter and an architect.

“Parallel convergence,” then, characterizes this experimental studio collaborative discussed here. The five week problem was assigned to first year architecture students at the University of Michigan in the fall of 1993. It required students to “read” a given painting, interpreting it volumetrically; to elaborate its plastic possibilities sculpturally; and finally, to develop a painting studio by extending those previous studies. The painting, entitled “Rome Variation #9,” is the penultimate variation in a series of ten, completed by the collaborating artist.
Analyzing paintings in architectural education is not new; indeed, it is a perennial problem at many schools of design. Generally, these are introductory problems intended to raise issues of composition. More often than not, they rely on paintings from the Cubist period, in which an architectonic attitude in painting became dramatically explicit. To direct attention toward the act of translation, without the compulsory need to understand the original work in its larger context, we avoided this tradition by choosing a contemporary painting. The author’s presence gave immediacy to the act of translating and insight to the task of designing. Discourse between the two arts was constantly at the fore.

This project proposed a general lesson. To recognize the correspondence between painting and architecture, students were asked to translate and to understand translation as a valid means of inventing architectural space derived from painting. How this lesson might enhance student experience and shape response was our central concern in crafting and directing procedure.

DESIGN OF THE PROBLEM

The painting was selected for its inherent architectural qualities. It visually flirts with alternating identities — those of plan, section, and facade. As the painter himself explained, “it is spring-loaded, poised for explosion into many directions.” Defining a rationale for transforming this latent energy into three-dimensional form posed the challenge.

The painting’s clearly visible planar structure provided inspiration for creative departure. Some procedural constraints were imposed, but the “rules” had to be formulated through a reading of the painting. Having no fine arts background, and virtually no painting experience, these students were operating from unconditioned observation.

TRANSLATION

If translation is defined as “the reproduction of a work in a language different from the original” (Britannica World Language Dictionary), then our application of that definition required that the “language” of painting be interpreted three-dimensionally in wood, and finally as architectural space. Translation also means “motion in which all parts follow the same direction.” Students were limited to orthogonal cuts in the wood for structural purposes. A translational strategy might consider the painting as a set of instructions waiting to be deciphered.
The painting also suggested a framework of formal possibilities providing a situation in which structural thinking was imperative. Within this concept of structural thinking the two disciplines seem to have the greatest potential for mutual reinforcement. Students were directed to concentrate upon aspects of the painting which contributed to the construction of space.

In theory, fundamental structural correspondences exist between painting and architecture as both are concerned with gravitationally determined spatial relationships. Though actual acknowledgement of its prevailing force is accomplished through different means in painting and in architecture, gravity guides the structural response. The cumulative consequences are most clearly summarized in the following:

Structure in its basic sense is the created unity of the parts and joints of entities. It is a pattern of dynamic cohesion in which noun and verb, form and to form, are coexistent and interchangeable; of interacting forces perceived as a single spatio-temporal entity. (from Structure in Art and in Science, Gyorgy Kepes)

STUDENT INTERPRETATIONS

To extract structural cues from a painting one must first understand color as being synonymous with the illusion of space. Space in painting is the consequence of color/shape interaction at boundaries where separations and connections occur. The idea of spatial representation in architecture through the plan and section view may then be applied to the analogous space defining element in painting — color. The logical embodiment of plan and section in color defines it as an inextricable extension of form. Conversely, the notion of facade only implies a decorative purpose and therefore conceals rather than reveals structure.

VOLUMETRIC ANALYSIS:

Two major translational considerations arose: 1) the identification and articulation of the painting’s tectonic character, and 2) the arrangement of those tectonic elements in structurally appropriate relationships. Virtually the entire class interpreted the blue/green field as ground or frame and the three major shape elements as figure. That field became either a horizontal plane (painting read as plan), a vertical plane (painting read as elevation), or a spatial frame (painting read axonometrically).
In terms of the second translational consideration, three types of movement were possible between the figural elements and the horizontal or vertical plane (ground): linear extrusion perpendicular to the plane, hinged rotation from the plane, or containment of interior space by the encircling frame. Each option was perceivable in the painting. The plastic cues from color further informed the interpretation and subsequent arrangement of both major and minor elements.

**SCULPTURAL TRANSLATION:**
In the sculptural translation, options proliferated. The painting’s influence diminished in proportion to the individual’s increased interpretative latitude. New issues emerged as greater inventive discretion shifted the painting’s inherent mandate to more personal interpretations of its content. The students’ own work began to suggest new spatial strategies: contrasting constructional systems and their associated spatial qualities (fig. 1A), interlocking space in section (fig. 1B), concealing interior expression by applying a neutral cladding (fig. 2), and establishing interdependency of volume and mass (fig. 3).

**SYNTHESIS: THE PAINTING STUDIO**
The most “architectural” phase of the project called for an interpretative insertion of function into an
spatial and tectonic characterizations of student solutions

contrast of spacial quality/definition: a carved solid creating a finite, inwardly focused interior wraps around the complimentary space for painting characterized quite oppositely as flowing, open, and infinite.

transformation process

contrast of constructional systems: questioning the types of space associated with a load bearing wall versus that of a frame structure leads to an articulation of zones of activities which suit the spatial character: service functions in the massive areas and painting in the open framed area. Layered, transparent space is bounded by solid, load bearing walls.

existing form. The intention was to encourage a dialogue between form and program. Where would the model have to "reform" to accommodate specific functions? A model which previously existed only as a translation of the painting, now could potentially suggest a scaled representation.

The program released to the students during the final phase of this project was open, and concerned essentially with what types of activities occur in a painting studio. Again, the painting, not the program, provided the initial mandate or framework prompting the various solutions. To have put the program first might have encouraged cliche notions of what a painting studio should be. A work space of formal and contextual integrity could emerge in which the painter would find his natural place. Form would suggest an appropriate functional solution.

CONCLUSION

If you accept Peter Eisenman's definition of formalism: form for form's sake, or the relocation of a specific form outside of the context in which it was generated, then certainly this problem has a "formalist" derivation. It presses aspects of architecture, form and function, into a direct dialogue —
Spatial overlap and cladding as camouflage: sectional interlock of two distinct spaces is achieved through a weaving vertical circulation. A more complex spatial interior is concealed from the outside by a neutral exterior cladding acting as a mask.

Transformation process James Korf

Interchandability of plan and section: simple extrusion becomes the subject for vertical and horizontal slicing resulting in a volumetric accrual. Legibility of either a mass or a void, or a figure and a ground, is dependent on the presence of both. Plan and section, interior and exterior are fused.

Transformation process Elizabeth Swanson
sometimes at odds, sometimes mutually enhancing. The analysis of the painting looked to the tectonic ingredients — geometry, color, and texture for interpretative clues. The problem hoped to inspire discovery, invention, and the attitude of learning how to learn from another discipline. If painting is the articulation of color and shape at boundaries where spatial connections are made, then architectural space may be analogously considered as the expression of materials structurally conceived and tectonically assembled.

Form came first in this project, but neither at the exclusion of function, nor at the expense of inhabitability. Beginning an architectural studio problem with a painting, seemingly arbitrary at first, ultimately proved valid not only in suggesting means of envisioning inhabitable space, but also in providing the potential to redefine "architectural program" and encourage a deeper understanding of functional need. The painting's reach was long and limitlessly suggestive.

Parallel convergence, an elusive conceit, has teased us with its ambiguous nature revealing collaboration in a fresh way. It simultaneously blurred the two professions while preserving their autonomy. For, implicit in this poetic notion is the succulence of a wonderful sauce where various extractions have simmered, sharing their unique flavors while preserving their own; where tastes begin in one place and end somewhere unexpected. Layered essences, a concinnity of ingredients, the solution has transcended the problem.
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The responsibility of the architect is a loaded phrase that summons many questions about the way we should think and act. How should we design? For which group? Sensitive to which personal or societal need? Let us not forget the standard of care, social conditions, economic confines, technological adaptations, and environmental concerns. These questions are endless and demand reactions that compel us to consider our decisions carefully. Facing this task forces us to define and understand the nature of our responsibility. This must be cultivated in school.

As students, we come to school to prepare ourselves for this professional challenge. From the start, our training is defined by the curriculum. Which classes? Design, history, theory, technology: there is an abundance of topics to study, each with its own agenda that is an essential piece of the conception and deliverance of our education. We believe that a well-rounded transcript fulfilling the necessary requirements will enable us to deliver the solutions to the problems of our day. This is true, but what happens tomorrow when today’s problems change? The inevitable predicament of change implores us to search for new solutions that may not pertain to our once relevant topics of study.

*Spoon feeding in the long run teaches us nothing but the shape of the spoon.*
—E.M. Forster
The real essence of our education lies where there is neither a course pack nor a course listing on the bulletin board. Our education begins with a process of thinking that challenges our own work and our relationships with other students and faculty. Largely overlooked within our educational structure are these three exchanges that provoke critical engagement within our institution. Only questioning and critical minds will become relevant in a changing society, will realize the reasons for change, and will make effective decisions for these changes.

Success begins when we push beyond the comfort of complacency. First, we must challenge ourselves to accentuate our personal identity. Our own scholastic needs and responsibilities are too easily outlined in a checklist: a competition, a seminar, a good cognate, some computer skills. All of these are important, and are a part of the goals that we must ultimately determine for ourselves. Yet once we complete these skills, we may be misled to believe that we have fulfilled our educational goals. Before we reach this point, we should realize the unfortunate ease with which one can "walk through" an academic experience. Our time here is too short and our education is too valuable to have either of them merely presented to us. Rather than condoning a selfish approach that permits passive learning, we must each develop aggressive, proactive approaches to our studies; ones that are aware of the opportunities to invigorate and foster participation in our education. In order to discover our best solutions, we must criticize, question, and think creatively about using our given materials and resources; and test new ideas by understanding past theories and principles. Our school is a laboratory for experimentation that will lead each of us to discover the real intentions and processes behind our work. We need innovative attitudes that wonder why.

Second, being critical of our own work entitles us to be critical of our peer's work. When we share interest in each other's projects, a passionate forum evolves which allows us to realize each other's individual potential for the continued growth of our education. Our peers are teachers too, and are as equally valuable to our education as the curriculum is. With this frame of mind, we can allow each other to be questioned, prodded and provoked into hard work, production and thinking. Critique and re-critique — exchange constructive advice with an open and giving mind which elevates quality and
pushes our work level beyond mediocrity. Do not accept substandard output, or just the "required" level of work from one another, because our peer's work is a reflection of the school and, therefore, a reflection of us. By circulating knowledge, we invigorate and stimulate the whole environment to be pedagogically, as well as learning-oriented. We need a communal attitude that questions, evaluates, and produces.

Third, we have a responsibility to our faculty. They possess an abundance of knowledge and resources waiting to be tapped; ready to overflow into an open relationship. Their leadership and teaching is essential to our intellectual and creative growth. Respect their visions and processes and accept their criticism and advice as positive input.

On the other hand, we must be capable of criticizing their methodologies and presentations in order to establish our own positions and directions. Our interest and inquisitiveness will encourage them to respond the same, and to evaluate the quality of their courses and work. When we develop an attitude that encourages and supports challenges from all levels of our institution, we work towards a goal of achievement and discovery. We learn to develop a rigor that enriches our individual characters, and elevates the overall caliber of our education. We need to engage in a reciprocating relationship with our faculty.

As a senior in high school, and as a senior in college, I had been fated to graduate at what I then thought were the "wrong" times. I had felt slighted because I had been unable to enjoy the benefits of a new gymnasium or an upcoming university building. One afternoon, as a senior at Lehigh University, I was discussing this bad timing with my architecture professor. A clever grin came across his face as he corrected me and informed me of how fortunate I really was. As a young student who could sometimes overlook hidden positivity, I just did not understand why this was the case. "...because you have the wonderful benefit to see, experience and understand change," and the ability to see change by grasping the reasons from the past, and comprehend the implications for the future is far more valuable than the comforts of a new facility.

Timing has now afforded the same opportunity to each one of us. The College of Architecture and Urban Planning is in a vulnerable position of change. Our incoming chairperson has the opportunity to lead us, but only through our participation.
Take a step forward to embrace and learn from these changes. We need to utilize this time to discover the benefits of change by pushing ourselves, peers and faculty to question the issues at hand and to find the best solution not only for ourselves, but for the betterment of each other and the school. Realize the collective power our inquisitive energy and spirit possess to improve the quality of our education and to unite the whole college. This will make a difference in each one's education. The reputation of the University of Michigan is certainly rooted in the quality of our faculty, administration, and students; but most importantly, it is reflective of our initiative, actions and attitudes. Begin to be responsible now — as students, in order to be responsible later — as professionals.

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ARCHITECTURE IS HARD
Our ten young students shuffled into studio; they looked quite confused and rather intimidated. “Grab a table and a credenza and then arrange your studio space. We’ll be back in a little while,” we ordered. Blank looks ensued. “What is a Credenza?” Once the mysterious Credenza was identified, we left. Upon our return, order(?) had prevailed and we had a tiny Studio Radieuse. I thought “My God, it’s going to be a long month. How are we going to teach these kids about architecture?”

This past summer, adjunct Professor Christian Zapatka and I had the unique experience and opportunity to teach the Career Discovery Program. It was a one-month program designed to introduce high school students to architecture. We had designed an intense month which encompassed studio, drawing, history and site visits. I think the most difficult portion of the program was our inability to comprehend how little our students really knew about architecture.

While we were planning the curriculum, Christian and I had grand visions of presenting two to three significant buildings per week — Tom Hille-style, but upon our discovery that architectural and, to a large extent, world history were mysteries; we were compelled to attempt the impossible: condense 2500+ years of architecture into seven lectures. Indeed this was a Herculean task. The history capsules, as we called
them, were more like history sup­
positions. We made it to Mod­
emism and beyond, thanks to
William Bricken’s two-hour mara­
thon lecture which covered every­
thing from Schinkel to Foster in
four slide carousels.

In addition to the history lectures,
we had planned short readings that
would be discussed once a week.
Le Corbusier’s chapter on automo­
biles was chosen because we
thought they could relate to it.
They all were auto-centric. Every
sports car and import car on the
road was identified and subse­
quently had its vitae listed with the
assuredness and exactitude of
architects discussing building com­
ponents and the latest projects.
The discussion started with the
question, “What is your favorite
car?” The usual favorites were
mentioned: Lexus, Mercedes, BMW,
Ferrari, Alfa Spider and so forth.
We asked why. A very quiet and
feminine voice from the back of
the classroom said “They are fuel­
efficient, styled and
streamlined.”
We were euphoric! Were these our
young students quoting Corb? At
long last, we found a level they
understood. We pressed on. “Does
this sound like anything that you
have read recently?” The room was
silent. They had read the article but
were unable to make the connec­
tion. Is design or architecture such
a mystery, or is it that we simply
are not communicating? Have we
lost the ability to communicate, or
is it that our means of commu­
nication is so internal to our profession
that no one else can understand
us? Our students, for the most
part, had a difficult time.

Many did not know how to read a
plan or how to draft. Plan, view
(our word for perspective), and the
evil twins: section and elevation,
were all new vocabulary words and
concepts which had to be
explained at least twice daily. I
have been told that a few years ago
when Bonnie Greenspoon was the
teaching assistant for the Career
Discovery Program, one student
could not understand the idea of a
building section. The legend is that
Bonnie became so frustrated, she
almost took the student’s model to
the shop, sliced it in half on the
table-saw, dipped it in ink, and
then stamped it on his desk to
’demonstrate section.’ I understand
the frustration. Axonometric was
equally impossible. I think I
demonstrated that concept so many
times that I am still doing it in
my sleep.

Drawing class was also particularly
trying. One assignment was to
draw an elevation of Rackham. The
ability to abstract a perspectival
view into an elevation (which was
one of our new words) was quite limited. Many could and would look, but they did not see. Most were drawing from memory. Trees were caricatures of what a tree really looked like and certainly did not look anything like the trees in front of Rackham. We kept telling them to look. "Forget what you think a tree looks like, forget it is a tree and just draw what you see. Also, no sawing back and forth with your pencil. If I catch you doing that I will take your pencil and break it in half." ("Sawing" was a drawing crutch they all used. They would draw many short fuzzy lines to represent a single straight line.) The threat worked and the sawing stopped, and instead, we had straight lined fat cartoon trees. They did not seem to understand the practice that architecture and drawing require. One does not know how to draw at birth. It is a learned skill and it is a long, painful process. I told them the tale of when I was in college and was learning how to draw. I retold accounts of leaving drawing class in tears because I just did not "get it." Learning to draw took a long time and it was not easy. I explained that I am by no means an excellent renderer, but I am no longer embarrassed to show my drawings to strangers. The stories seemed to help, but attention spans still lagged; the desire for the answer, instant gratification and a complete project in one day — before dinner if possible — prevailed. The questions remained, "What do you want me to do?"
Should I ...” The best answer to those burning questions was proposed by William Bricken, “Make it Better!” Beautiful!

By far, the most accessible portions of the program were the site visits. What a way to teach architecture! See it, look at it, touch it, and walk through it. We took them to a couple of offices and to some residences. We were graciously invited to visit the Palmer House. What a treat! One student loved it so much she wanted to move in. Maybe the missing component of architectural education is that architecture does not happen in plan. Architecture is not the simple act of drafting; architecture is the act of designing space. It should be touched, and, as suggested by Ada Louise Huxtable, kicked.

How can someone who has limited or no design experience know what architecture is? Is it an innate response or sense? How is it that one student is motivated and inquisitive and the other indifferent and bored? Why is it that anything visual entices the young? Has the visual stimulus of the television taken away their ability to see and understand? All of our students were members of a different generation and, as we subsequently discovered, culture than we. In order to teach, we had to be better than a video game, faster than a commercial, and more entertaining than a situation comedy.

Indeed, each student was motivated and at the top of their high school class. Our biggest problem was that despite their recognized intelligence, they knew very little of architecture. It simply was not understood as something that embodies history, culture and may be discussed on a theoretical level. Unfortunately, this problem is found not only among students, but also within society as a whole. Let’s face it; our only public role model is Mike Brady. All our students knew of Frank Lloyd Wright, but did not know much about him. Although he is a household name, Frank Lloyd Wright is not a good role model. This is because knowledge and beliefs which are widely held about his work and life are not based on a close reading of the wealth of available information. Rather, most beliefs are based on legend and folklore. I feel that the lack of understanding of Frank Lloyd Wright is indicative of the American misconception that architects are draftsmen and that all one has to do to be an architect is to sit down, draft floor plans, and in a day or so a house is produced. Architecture is not thought of in terms of the repetitive process it is; rather, it is seen as a one time
event. Unfortunately, this was also the view held by our students. These misconceptions are a very clear indicator that as architects we are not communicating to non-architects. How can we combat this misinformation? How can we educate people that their environment can be a source of joy and beauty?

The first step is to educate the public and to make them aware of our presence. Everyone knows that architects design buildings but are not quite sure what that means exactly. It seems that only a few people know that architects can design wonderful buildings and that is why someone should hire an architect. Mrs. Palmer had a pretty firm grip on the solution to the problem. As a means of introducing people to architecture, she and her husband would invite small groups to come and experience the house. She said she loves to have children visit her home because it allows them to experience architecture and she delights in seeing the smiles on their faces. Our students, she felt, were too old to truly enjoy the house. Funny, we thought they were too young. Mrs. Palmer does have the right idea. Maybe that is the answer: a life-long field trip.

Perhaps if we teach children what architects do and how well they do it they will grow up to be informed clients. I do not mean that fifth-graders should recite the Fathers of Modernism along with the signers of the Declaration of Independence, but perhaps if children are taught to be aware of their environment and how wonderful it could be, with the help of an architect, they could convey their appreciation for architecture and architects to their parents: Mr. and Mrs. America. As the recyclers have discovered, the persuasive powers of a small child are incredible. If we use a similar strategy we might benefit immensely. Imagine, a client who is interested in the quality of the space in which they live, a client who respects and appreciates the architect's talent rather than one who sees the architect as a draftsman who simply "draws up their dream" like the magician who pulls the correct card out of the deck on the first try.

So, how does one go about teaching architecture? This past summer we tried one method, and I think that we were successful: another promising beginning is to teach young children to respect their environment, both built and unbuilt. As educators, we can introduce ideas about space and design and there will be those who understand and love it and those who do not. We had a few who
loved it and who improved dramatically. A couple of them should enroll in architecture school right away. Others should not. Some may not enroll or may not even consider enrolling, but at the very least they all know a lot more about architecture than they did on the day they created the Studio Radieuse. On that level, I would say that we accomplished our goal. We now have ten more people who know something about architecture and what architects do. I think the moment of victory was when the drawing on the studio chalkboard changed from “Architecture is Fun” with a straight face to “Architecture is Hard” with a frowning face. Christian and I certainly did not delight in our students’ discontent, but felt some satisfaction in knowing that at least they understood.

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student works
alfredo casati
habitable wall

matthew woods
habitable wall
elizabeth spitz
responsibility in housing
university housing
bridget perinno
susan kremers
daniel byles
jason richardson
chin lee
ann arbor performing arts center

brian stackable
ann arbor performing arts center
lien-tien tsao
ann arbor performing arts center
joce lin musgrove
architecture by
surrogate designers
jaeho lee
the new urbanism
and the vernacular
david fink
circus and other thrills
heather kelsey
circus and other thrills
maurice L. charbonneau
ponca interpretive center

sam gargarello
reclaiming land from
the automobile
david ernst
chair
hai luc
coffee table

jesse t. adkins
end table
grace cheng
romeo and julia
Noel Michaels
Conversion of an ore dock to a monastery
samir emdanat
conversion of an ore dock
to a monastery
The demise and uncertain future of architectural practice has received much attention lately and calls for change in the way we approach our craft are increasing in number and intensity. Many of these proposals have at their core a common theme: Architects must become more socially responsible in order to position themselves favorably for the future. This “call to action” is simply a response to the current state of our cities, our nation, and our world. In his book, *Earth in the Balance*, Vice President Al Gore has boldly documented the many dilemmas facing humankind and calls for re-evaluation at all levels of society, saying, “We must all become partners in a bold effort to change the very foundation of our civilization.”

For architects to respond to this opportunity, our energies must be redirected towards the many neglected social issues: the environment, education, housing a diverse and changing population, quality of life, etc. The intent of this paper is to focus on the first of these issues — the environment, and show how our profession — specifically in architectural education — has been slow to approach our symbiotic relationship with the planet. The “green” movement in architecture has already begun, but instead of waiting for this approach to trickle down to architecture schools, we must make sustainable design a major issue which is addressed throughout our formal training. Sustainable design has been...
defined by Susan Maxman, current president of the American Institute of Architects and major proponent of the movement, as “architecture that fulfills the needs of the current generation without limiting the ability of future generations to procure what they need and to sustain themselves.” In practical terms, this means we, as architects, must constantly try to minimize the impact our actions have on the environment. Specifically, it means attention to many concerns including: energy-efficiency of buildings as total systems, alternative energy sources for buildings, recycling of buildings and building materials, indoor air quality, on-site waste management, preservation of natural eco-systems, and minimized dependence on the automobile. The list of concerns is long and the challenge is daunting, but we must view this challenge as a process a “life long struggle,” understanding that it cannot be conquered with one great act. I view this problem with a great sense of urgency in light of how our relationship with our planet has such a profound influence on all human activities. I will first state my arguments why sustainable design is an issue of professional responsibility. I will then show how these issues have been neglected in our education and in the facilities at the University of Michigan School of Architecture, where we should be effectively prepared to meet the challenges of professional life. Finally, I will suggest alternatives to the current practices at our school which can better prepare us to answer the challenge of sustainable architecture.

Are we the ones?

“Will you try to change things, use the power that you have, the power of a million new ideas?”

“What is this power you speak of and this need to make a change? I always thought that everything was fine.”

— excerpt from “Dialogue,” a song performed by the group Chicago on their album Chicago v.

Is there an inherent responsibility for architects to be more cognizant and sensitive to our relationship with the planet? The American Institute of Architects, the governing body for architects in this country, apparently believes there is. Three years ago, it started the Committee on the Environment (COte) to promote sustainable design practices through educational efforts. This committee now boasts more than one thousand members. Susan Maxman has made the environment the top priority of her tenure, saying “as professionals who shape the built envi-

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environment, we have an imperative to redefine our role on this planet from one of exploitation to one of stewardship."

Further justification for architects to redefine their roles with regard to the environment is to make spaces and structures that work better. This reasoning should appeal to those who do not view our profession idealistically and are asking “what’s in it for me?” Everyone associated with architecture and planning should be interested in putting out a better product. As architects, we are trained to deal simultaneously with the individual parts as well as the whole. Since everything we do is derived from our environment and has an effect on it, we must do more to understand this very important relationship and how it contributes to our pursuit of the “harmonious whole.” Peter Calthorpe, a key figure in the movement for a sustainable built environment, writes:

Understanding the qualities of nature in each place, expressing it in the design of communities, integrating it within our towns, and respecting its balance are essential ingredients of making the human place sustainable and spiritually nourishing. ...nature should provide the order and underlying structure of the metropolis."

In order to strengthen itself internally and in the perception of the public, the architectural profession needs to better understand the environmental impacts and relationships of our work to achieve a more beautiful and functional whole.

A third justification for architects to answer the call of environmental responsibility is one that should appeal to even the most cynical and unaware practitioner — economics. If architecture is viewed as a service industry (which sadly seems to be its current state), then we must market a more competitive service. We must position ourselves to respond to the needs of more enlightened clientele and bureaucrats who may also be responding to Gore’s call to action. More and more, potential clients are looking for architects who are aware of the new technologies, regulations, and sensitivities associated with sustainable design. Architects who wish to remain attractive to potential clients must expand and update their services to reflect this changing market.

If architects are to heed the call to become more environmentally aware, the ideals and sensitivities of sustainable design practices must permeate our professional mindsets and inform everything we do. To facilitate this change in focus, we must start the process early in the
educational sequence and make it an overriding concern throughout. The attitudes necessary to sustain the environment for future generations will then be ingrained within us, and it will be much less of an effort to act with a deep sensitivity to our connection with the earth. Paul Bierman-Lytle, in his book, The Environmental Style, writes on the need to include a constant environmental concern along with the more traditional fundamentals of architecture: "Environmental tools cannot be taught in support courses anymore. They almost have to be lessons like Palladio or Vitruvius that the architect consumes and that are set in the back of his brain."\(^7\)

**COURSEWORK ANALYSIS**

Although there has been some emphasis on environmental sensitivities in a few building/environmental technology courses in the University of Michigan School of Architecture curriculum, these courses are a minor ingredient in the educational "stew." It is a well-acknowledged fact that the architectural design studios are the core of any architectural education,\(^8\) and this holds true at this University. It is here that our ideas are imagined, developed, and implemented into three-dimensional solutions. The design studios are where students develop their habits, methods, and beliefs which will define their professional "personalities" that will hopefully be directed at creating a better physical environment. The design studios are where the ideas for sustainable design must be emphasized. Ironically, this is the section of the curriculum that is most lacking.

I have been a full-time student in the University of Michigan School of Architecture for the past four years: two years at the undergraduate level and two years pursuing a Master of Architecture degree. In those four years, I have been involved in eight design studios. These studios dealt with many different topics and were taught by eight different instructors. While these studios for the most part successfully addressed such important and basic issues as context, form hierarchy, functional relationships, and clarity, only one studio of these eight included any discussion or emphasis on sustainable design.

It is interesting to note that this studio consisted of a project to analyze and design a Navajo Cultural Center. The Native American culture has a completely different outlook on how we should habitat this earth; a much healthier and forward reaching attitude. In order to successfully design physical space that respond-

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ed to their vision, we had to become attuned to the intense environmental sensitivities that are so ingrained in their society. These sensitivities are rooted in their belief that all of humanity is an integral part of the earth, that we are born of the earth and that death returns us to the earth. These beliefs lead to a more responsible attitude of stewardship. They feel that whatever harm we bring to the earth now, we bring to ourselves and all future generations. This focus and its implementation into all aspects of their existence is an example we should strive for.

My personal studio experiences seem to reflect the prevailing conditions for the typical student both at the University of Michigan School of Architecture and nationwide. A recent survey of architectural students taken at the AIA convention shows that ninety percent of all students in attendance did not have any kind of environmental design available in their schools. An informal poll of my fellow architectural students at the University of Michigan supports these results.

**OUR PHYSICAL STUDIO SPACE AS EXAMPLE:**

In order to have heightened sensitivity to our relationship with the environment, we need to attack the current situation in our school on two fronts: (1) our instruction based upon positive mental conditioning; and (2) the physical space where we spend so much time. The Architecture Building must be an example of sound sustainable principles and should reflect a genuine concern for our impact on the environment.

The school has made some progress in this area. The outdated, energy-wasting lighting fixtures in the studios have been replaced with new, more efficient fixtures. A major problem with air quality in the studios and offices is being alleviated with the pending installation of operable windows. This action is long overdue, and one would hope improved air quality, not solely economic gain, was the intended goal. The addition of spray booths was an improvement, but questions still remain as to where the fumes are exhausted. The filters on these machines are ineffective because they are seldomly changed.

**TOWARD MORE RESPONSIBILITY**

It is painfully clear that the architectural profession is a reflection of a society which has neglected its responsibility of stewardship to our fragile environment. The profession...
is changing its course slightly (as is society in general), but we must become leaders in these matters and must involve ourselves in setting policy, becoming what Mary McAuliffe refers to as “lamp-bearers” to society instead of “mirrors” of society.¹⁰

To become leaders in environmental awareness, we must begin learning these strategies from day one of our architectural education so it becomes as much an element of ourselves as “form and function” and “firmness, commodity, and delight.” The space in which we operate must be a reflection of environmentally sensitive ideals, so we may learn even on a subconscious level. Instructors must be aware of the messages they impart to their students, both hidden and direct. While teaching urban design concepts through urban infill projects is important, promoting the demolition of older buildings for no reason other than to build something new only perpetuates the myth that we have unlimited resources with which to build. It is clear in such a case as this that adaptive re-use would generally be a more ecologically sound alternative.

Most in our profession will agree that change is needed in the way architects interact with our environment. I believe we have the potential to promote this change, but to accomplish this we must change our focus — beginning at the educational level. As Mahatma Ghandi, a heroic champion of change said, “we must be the change we wish to see in the world.”

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Architecture is created through the power of the imagination. Simply defined, it is the power of forming mental images or visions not previously known or experienced by the senses — a vision born in a visual field. The issue of vision is greatly misunderstood and improperly used as a design tool in architecture. This paper will define the fundamental basis of vision, argue for the necessity of its application in architectural design, and discuss the responsibility of architectural education to that application.

**In architectural design, what comes first — the plan or the perspective?**

Understanding the current use of vision in architecture, the answer would seem to be quite simple and clear. The proper construction of a perspective drawing requires information from a plan to be cast forward into a view, hence, the plan is the essential ingredient to allow the generation of a perspective. In other words, the plan comes first. This is the clear and decisive explanation of a distinguished architect for whom I have great respect. His opinion is soundly anchored in the traditional language of architecture — the two-dimensional expression of plan, section, elevation and site to facilitate architectural conceptualization and realization.

I argue that the three-dimensional expression of perspective should be the initial convention to facilitate conceptualization and realization in
architectural design. Architecture can only be judged or valued through the experiential interaction of site and building.

Close your eyes and remember your first trip to the ballpark, the opera, or the circus. Your imagination can take you there instantly — does it evoke volumetric and spatial views, or an ordered hierarchical plan? Having the experience of that moment invested in your memory, the issues of space, scale and light are dominant; the perspective view is recalled.

*Without ever having seen the plan of the building you are in right now, can you draw it?*

While the answer should be yes, it raises the question of how? The amount of information you will be able to generate directly depends on the amount of interaction you have experienced with the building and site — the experiential aspect of space. In order to generate two-dimensional plan information from the experience of bounded space, the memory or imagination must translate three-dimensional information into two-dimensional information. In architecture, the experiential aspect of vision is the initial mode of conception for architectural space — vision comes first.
In the traditional language of architecture, the perspectival drawing does not take an active role in the exploratory stages of design. This is the fundamental misuse of vision in architecture. The translation between thought and expression through media is the critical process in applying vision in architectural design.

Historically, architects have expressed their initial ideas through the graphic medium of drawing — two-dimensional expressions of plan, section and elevation. These informal private study drawings are done rapidly and without much detail. Typically viewed as only a record of a preconceived thought, critical thinking suggests that their capacity is far greater. A single study drawing is a short-term elemental drawing cycle — constructing the drawing one step at a time: stroke — response — stroke. This is an interactive process where each new mark renews and expands the conceptual scope of the design task.\(^1\) The study drawing generates information in the active production of creativity within the imagination. It is the elemental ingredient for conceptualization in design. If our initial thoughts occur in a three-dimensional visual field, and we work our thoughts through two-dimensional expressions, are we tapping the full potential of the elemental drawing cycle and our imagination? The interaction and translation of the imagination with the drawing page is the critical phase towards involving experiential vision as a design tool. The three-dimensional visual field of the mind must interact with a three-dimensional representation; a perspective drawing in the exploratory stages of design.

Vision attaches seeing to thinking and feeling; the eye to the mind. Applied in architecture, it defines the perceptual experience linked to singular perspective vision — where the imagination has its greatest impact.\(^2\) Architects should draw to truly feel as if they are inside the buildings they are designing. The definition of vision, as it relates to architectural design, must be expanded to embody the conceptualization of architecture through the collective perceptual experiential interaction of building and site.

Through a thesis design practicum, "Experiential Drawings," a drawing strategy was implemented to explore the use of perspective drawing from conceptualization through realization in design. With only the program and site as foreground issues of design, all drawings were drawn from the perspective experience of bounded space. These perspective drawings, program
and context, (see illustrations) document the conceptualization of architectural design through defining the collective perceptual experience of the proposed building and site. This cycle continues throughout the design process, focusing on the generation of plan from perspective, the evolution of the perspective, and the interaction with traditional design tools of section, elevation, and modeling.

Only through the conception of each programmatic element can spatial relationships and hierarchy be developed. Drawing an interior perspective defines space through the definition of surfaces and light, and implies direction. The appetite of the visual field is a critical advantage which the perspective drawing has over a two-dimensional drawing. Envisioning a perspective view means to suggest and involve the imagination in envisioning what lies beyond. Much like the elemental drawing cycle of the imagination to the drawing page: stroke — response — stroke, the perspective drawing involves a higher level of interaction: drawing — imagination — drawing. This creates an interactive process between drawings, where design conceptualization is generated through a complete programmatic drawing cycle, and where each mark expands and redefines the
conceptual scope of the design task. This initial interior drawing cycle defines the intentions of hierarchy and circulation, and the quality of spatial relationships desired between program elements.

Architectural form is generated in the same manner. Through a process of interacting with the site, the participant is forced to actively engage the fluctuating volumes in urban space by drawing the perspective, to interpret interior spaces previously experienced (drawn from initial series of program), and to define the context of one's interaction with building form. Again, each new drawing expands and redefines the conceptual scope of the design task. In this initial stage, ordering principles such as hierarchy, axis, and symmetry become secondary to the issues of human scale and perception. This initial exterior drawing cycle defines the desired qualities of interaction between architecture and context; issues of scale generate the model or fingerprint for architectural form.

Vision, as it is applied to architectural design, has its greatest impact in the exploratory phases of design, while the expression of plan, section and elevation has its greatest impact in design development. These two design conventions work hand in hand — without one, the other can not expand and grow. They work simultaneously. The information derived from each process is fundamental in design, it


is the procedural step of drawing which determines the capacity level of imagination and creativity.

The perspectival drawing establishes emotional context to the mental images we are creating. Previously experienced environments of light, sound, temperature, smell and emotion become tools an architect uses to define space within the imagination. By trying to capture the seeing and feeling of one’s imagination in the conception of space, one defines the parameters, in physical form, of the experience one is designing. These drawings are clear definitions of design intentions specific to program and context; they continually build and redefine characteristics and traits, and continually incorporate these decisions in each drawing throughout the design process. Their implementation into the exploratory stages of design increases the amount of information the architect must initially define; much like the information a participant in a building and site — architecture — has to initially decipher. They provide honesty in the architect.

Directly at issue are the changing times in which architecture finds itself. Electronic information — the computer — is at the center of this change. Our approach to the electronic age through both the architectural profession and the educational system will shape the future of architecture. While our medium for design will shift into the electronic age, the fundamental issues of design will not. If the profession is to be responsible for the computer’s implementation as a design and representational tool, then the educational system is responsible for laying a basic foundation of skills required to work in this electronic medium. The ultimate responsibility of the architectural community is to recognize the three dimensional capabilities and possibilities of this medium, and where a redefinition of design thought processes is required. The Architectural education community must bear the responsibility of developing and enhancing the cognitive processes of three dimensional imagination and memory context as the foundation for our future.

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Dwellings reflect ideals and realities about relationships between women and men within the family and in society.

— Daphne Spain, *Gendered Spaces*¹

Middle-class suburban housing is a unique architectural and social phenomenon. This form of housing has been based on the division of labor between genders that places men in public work settings and women in the home. Prior to the nineteenth century, "home and work had been complementary to each other...comprising a unity of social existence for women and men," but "by the mid-nineteenth century they had become two distinct and isolated spheres."² The woman "was banished from the public arena and confined to the domestic hearth where she could remain unsullied by the events of public life."³ In preventing women from being exposed to the ills of public life, women were also prevented from taking part in many important activities of life, such as formal education and business decisions. Men became associated with the public sector and women with the home, "the spatial institution containing the least amount of socially valued knowledge."⁴

Segregation in the nineteenth century occurred within the home as well, "specifically in terms of a male domain of office and library with a separate entrance (which) removed women from the interaction with men that


³ Weisman, 87.

⁴ Spain, 235.
might have exposed them to information related to their public status. This separation of male and female domains has significant implications because "women and men are spatially segregated in ways that reduce women's access to knowledge and thereby reinforce women's lower status relative to men's." Status is achieved based on the amount of power one has, and historically this power has been based on political participation and control over property and labor. These arenas are in the public domain, thus when men and women are separated spatially into public and private arenas, women are denied access to tools and knowledge which could potentially afford them power. Michele Rosaldo points out that "women's status will be lowest in conditions of sharp separation of domestic life and the public sphere of activity and of isolation from each other in homes belonging to men." According to Daphne Spain, "changing the gender-based division of labor in the home is the key to breaking down the female-dominated domestic sphere and a male-dominated public sphere," thus equalizing the status of men and women and allowing both genders access to all sectors and forms of knowledge. A suggestion has been offered that "opportunities for combining domestic and public activities are limited by such suburban characteristics as low density, lack of public transportation and public services, and limited provision of housing alternatives." In order to explore the current status of this gender-based division of labor, this paper analyzes a contemporary suburban house and its surrounding neighborhood. It looks specifically at the design of middle-class suburbia based on the idea of spatial segregation due to gender differences.

This paper will first focus on the suburban housing boom after World War II, when suburban housing as it is today was developed in the United States. It looks at how it originated, for whom it was originally designed, and how it affected some of the people who lived in it.

The second part of this paper is an analysis of a contemporary middle-class suburban house. It is evaluated in the context of the evolution of suburban houses in the past forty years; how does it compare to post-World War II houses? For whom has it been designed? It is also analyzed in terms of how appropriate it is to current social and economic situations; do these changes seem to have been addressed by architects and developers.

3. Spain, 124.
6. Spain, 3.
opers, and is this change reflected in the housing designs? And what are the implications for suburban, middle-class housing for the future, in relation to changing roles of women and ideas of family?

**THE BIRTH OF THE AMERICAN DREAM: POST-WORLD WAR II SUBURBAN HOUSING**

One can describe suburban housing as an architecture of gender, since houses provide settings for women and girls to be effective social status achievers, desirable sex objects, and skillful domestic servants.10

After World War II, single-family suburban homes became “inseparable from the American dream of economic success and upward mobility.”11 During this post-war period, the middle-class suburban house became the symbol of the ideal separation between the genders. These houses were “retreats for male workers and... workplaces for their wives,” places for “the returning veteran, the beribboned hero who wanted his wife to stay home.”12

For women, the 1950s marked the opening of a new era. Middle-class women were now “multiple-role, all-purpose, ‘high-value — low-cost’ housewives, with responsibility for all the personal and emotional care of other family members, for being active consumers in the market, as well as, of course, for housekeeping.”13 The image of the happy housewife/mother in her beautiful suburban home, surrounded by the appliances and gadgets that contributed to her happiness, was constantly reinforced in advertisements, magazines, television and movies to the extent that it was seen as the “norm” of the day. Expectations were raised so that “standards of homemaking and motherhood effectively ensured that the conscientious American housewife would remain housebound.”14 This consumer-driven era was “dominated by advertising, which brought an unprecedented set of pressures to bear on the isolated housewife.”15 Betty Friedan, in her groundbreaking book *The Feminine Mystique*, described the image that women had to contend with:

*The suburban housewife — she was the dream image of the young American woman and the envy, it was said, of women all over the world. The American housewife — freed by science and labor-saving appliances from the drudgery, the dangers of childbirth and the illnesses of her grandmother. She was healthy, beautiful, educated, concerned only about her husband, her children, their home. She had found true feminine fulfillment. As a housewife and mother, she was respected as a full and equal partner to man in*
his world. She was free to choose automobiles, clothes, appliances, supermarkets; she had everything that women ever dreamed of.16

This image of women and their families perpetuated the design for much of suburban housing. The designers assumed that all people living here would be the same: white, middle-class families in which all men worked in the city, all women stayed at home, all couples had children, and all families had at least two cars. The problem was that the ideas were based on stereotypes; stereotypes which informed the designer’s assumptions about women consumers. The first assumption was that “women’s primary role is in domestic service to husband, children, and home; and, second, domestic appliances make women’s lives easier.”17 These ideas stereotyped women “as mothers, cleaners, cooks, and nurses in order to define and direct the market.”18


This stereotype was reinforced in the designs of much of the housing of this time. The birth of one of the most significant suburban prototypes was in March, 1949, when Bill Levitt put his first houses up for sale. This was a significant time in the history of suburban housing because “most American housing is based on Levitt’s model of the home as a haven for the male worker’s family.” In her book Redesigning the American Dream, Dolores Hayden described one of these neighborhoods:

In Hicksville, nothing is on a straight line. Roads curve to lead the eye around the corner, but every road is lined with identical houses. There is no industry in Hicksville except the construction industry. Each new Cape Cod house is designed to be a self-contained world, with white picket fence, green lawn, living room with television set built into the wall, kitchen with Bendix washing machine built into the laundry alcove. Every family is expected to consist of male breadwinner, female housewife, and their children. Energy conservation is not a design issue, nor is low maintenance, nor is public transportation, nor is child care. A few parks and public swimming pool are planned to provide recreation.

The most obvious characteristic of this housing was that it was literally a prescription for spatial separation based on gender. Men did their work in the city and came home only for rest and relaxation, but every aspect of a woman’s life was supposed to take place here. It was totally isolated from the rest of the world, and situated so that the only way to get to any place of significance was to drive. Gerda Wekerle notes that this is one of the most detrimental factors to women in suburbia. The houses themselves were designed so that women supposedly had everything they needed within the house; there was no need for them to go anywhere else. In this era of consumerism, women were supplied with all the latest gadgets and appliances supposed to make caring for the house and children more efficient and less time-consuming. Yet instead of freeing up a women’s time, they did nothing more than raise the standards. As many women discovered, a perfect house and perfect children often were hard to attain, and not as fulfilling as one would have hoped. Women began to admit that they felt empty, incomplete and generally dissatisfied with life.

It should be noted that although there is plenty of documentation to suggest that many women were bored and unhappy with life in suburbia at this time — “the overwhelming impression is that
women [were] the passive victims of post-World War II suburban development, forced to subordinate their own interests to those of husband and children" — Wekerle has found this interpretation too simplistic. She says that “women, as well as men, share the American dream of homeownership and have willingly chosen suburban locations.” She suggests that the problem is not the desire for a house of one’s own, away from the hustle and bustle of business life, but that there is a “narrow range of environmental alternatives” which forces one to choose “between access to jobs or safety in the city and an environment suitable for child rearing but lacking in stimulation for adults in the suburbs.”

Women were not suffering because of the demands of domesticity or child-rearing alone, or from how these were encouraged in the suburban home, but more from the lack of anything else. Wekerle concludes by saying that what is needed in suburbia is a wider range of options, particularly “community designs which acknowledge women’s labor force participation and support it.”

In the analysis of the contemporary suburban house that follows, this will be one measure of the success of these designs.

A CONTEMPORARY SUBURBAN DEVELOPMENT

One of the most significant social differences between the post-World War II era and today is that more than half of all women today participate in the public sphere. The majority of these women are in the work force. Some women work out of economic necessity, others because they like the challenges and stimulation; many women work for both reasons. Now that this condition exists, the delineation between the public sphere, so often associated with men, and the private sphere, usually associated with women, is no longer so clear. Thus, one would expect to see changes in the design of suburban housing that historically has reflected this delineation.

In looking at a contemporary suburban development and the houses within it, one sees that many of the design features have not changed significantly. The development under discussion was built in the past year as part of the Foxfire subdivision of “single family dwellings,” located on the outskirts of Ann Arbor, Michigan. The site plan [fig. 3] is very similar to the description of the Hicksville community designed by Levitt; nothing is on a straight line, and there are no industries, services, or schools.
within it. There is no indication of even any recreation areas or swimming pools; just a lot of clearly delineated private lots, seemingly placed only to maximize and fill up all of the available land.

In the marketing brochure for this development, “Your Community” is described as one of northeastern Ann Arbor’s “most selective residential locations” with the “quiet and privacy of the country, plus the convenience of a close-to-downtown location.” But when one visits this development, one is not struck by the country feeling promoted in the brochure, primarily because there are no trees. Like most other suburban developments, the area was clear-cut to make way for the houses. And the location is close to downtown only if one has a car; it is too far to walk and there is no public transportation.

It is clear that the car plays an important role here, which is not surprising since the car is one of the reasons for the advent of suburbs. This importance is seen in the lack of public transportation and in the overwhelmingly prominent garages integral to the front
of the houses. Similar to the first suburban developments, the car is a necessity at Foxfire if one ever plans on leaving the neighborhood, and it is taken for granted that each resident will own one. This immediately begins to limit access since it essentially bars anyone without a vehicle from living here.

If one is interested in looking at one of the new homes in this development, the first stop is the realty agents' office located at the site. It is set up almost like a store; all of the options for carpet, tile, cabinetry, appliances, and so on are displayed for easy selection. The houses, too, are set up in this manner.

There are six floor plans to choose from, each one represented in one of the six models open for viewing. And each model is partially--to fully--decorated to give it a more home-like feel. This way of selling houses follows the consumer-oriented trend introduced in the marketing brochure which emphasizes the potential buyer's ability to pick and choose from a variety of options. All of the choices are laid at one's feet; it is just a matter of choosing exactly what one wants from this selection. This consumer-oriented characteristic is similar to Levit & Sons' approach to selling houses forty years ago. They, too, emphasized the various technological devices and architectural features. And they also had a showroom displaying all of the products that were in a Levittown house. Selling houses became one-stop shopping, almost like buying a car. The only difference now is that there are more options to choose from, therefore the buyers have more flexibility in "customizing" their new home.

Of the six floor plans to choose from, each has six elevation options. Each floor plan has a name; there is The Birchwood, The Lexington, The Princeton, The Saratoga, The Sherwood, and The Harvard. These names suggest images of, perhaps, country estates owned by the wealthy upper-class. In reality, these houses are variations on a box, adorned with different "architectural details" to make them look like different styles [figs. 4-6].

This emphasis on particular architectural styles, meant to evoke a certain class of people and way of life, is something that has changed in suburban developments over the years. One of the major selling points in these developments has been the emphasis on new technology and ease of maintenance, thus one would expect to see this reflected in the architectural style.
Many suburban houses, such as the unadorned, straightforward houses designed by Joseph Eichler in California, did reflect this. Levittown houses, on the other hand, did not look contemporary at all; they were imitations of Cape Cod style “salt box” houses, another variation in the new-classical tradition. But these at least did not pretend to be more than what they were designed for; simple, affordable houses for working middle-class families. The contemporary suburban houses of today, such as those in Foxfire, have taken a step backwards. One reason is that the modern conveniences and technological advances found in each house are not reflected in the architecture. Instead, they try to provide a variety of architectural styles meant to make a statement about the personal characteristics of the families that live here. Many people will choose to live in a “neo-classical” design because it evokes images of wealth and good taste. Others will choose a more “modern” design, which shows they are more progressive and on top of current trends. The style of the house no longer represents the services it provides, but speaks only to the type of image the buyer wants to portray. The architectural designs of these houses are not at all integral to what is actually contained in them.

As the exterior designs of these houses do not reflect what is contained within them, the interior designs do not reflect what is seen on the outside. When the author visited some of Foxfire’s model homes, she overheard one potential buyer commenting that she loved the “architectural details” of one particular house. Usually architectural details stem from the way in which a building is put together, therefore how a building looks from the outside often indicates how it will look on the inside. But at Foxfire, the interiors of all the houses are surprisingly similar. Each house has a few different “details,” but they are merely surface treatments and do not have any structural or stylistic integrity; they are meant purely for “show.”

Aside from this, the interiors are one area of suburban housing where there has been more change in the past forty years. The most obvious difference is that these houses are much larger. The first Levittown houses were about 900 square feet and contained a kitchen, living room, bathroom and two bedrooms. This cramped design was one of the features that housewives in the 1950s cursed. Foxfire houses range between 1900
and 2600 square feet and contain a kitchen/nook, dining room, "great room," den, "master" bedroom suite (containing bedroom, bath and closets), two or three other bedrooms, two or three other baths, garage, basement and numerous closets.

Another distinct difference is that some rooms have disappeared, while others have been introduced. Most of the houses in Foxfire contain a family room. These are new relative to Levittown houses, but have actually been around for some time and are usually incorporated into standard designs for suburban housing. The family room is in the back of the house, privately located so it is protected from the street and directly linked to the kitchen and nook. The nook is a new space that is really part of the kitchen, but often separated by a counter. It is a space where a table may be located and is designed for informal family meals. The kitchen itself has not changed much, except that it has gotten larger, perhaps to accommodate two cooks, and it contains the most up-to-date appliances. The family room, kitchen, nook, laundry room and in some cases, a small "sun room," or enclosed porch, form the core of the house. These spaces all run together and form the place where most of the family’s activities take place. The living room and the dining room are more formal spaces designed for entertaining.

Another room commonly seen on the first floor of these houses is the den. In the two model houses that the author visited, these, on both occasions, were located next to the front door. The rest of the "family" rooms are always located in the back of the house with only the more formal entertaining spaces at the front. This indicates that the den, which has typically been associated with men, is still seen this way since the rooms typically associated with women and the family are in the back where they are more protected. The way the dens in these two houses are decorated also suggests that these are meant to be male rooms, at least according to the marketers of this subdivision. While most of the houses are done in pastel shades with lots of flowers and bunting, both dens are done in navy blue, with dark wood trim and leather seat covers. They are much more masculinely decorated than the rest of the house.

In the Foxfire houses where there is no family room, the living room is eliminated and replaced by the "great room." This serves as the communal living space for the fam-
ily and the place for entertaining guests. This combination of rooms is similar to the blended spaces in the family area and reflects the trend towards spaces which are less defined for specific purposes and more multifunctional. Daphne Spain notes one reason for this is that “housing designs of the late twentieth century reflect the concern that no function or family member be limited to a particular space.”

While this concern is reflected in some of the spaces in these houses, it is not seen in the dens, as discussed above, or in the “master” bedroom suite. This set of rooms is definitely designated for the heads of the household, the parents of the family, and meant to be its own separate world. This is very unlike the bedrooms in Levittown houses, which were right on top of each other and completely lacked any privacy. In some of the Foxfire houses, the main bedroom is on a different floor and opposite side of the house from the other bedrooms. It contains not only a large bedroom, but two huge closets and a complete bathroom with toilet, two sinks, a shower, and often a Jacuzzi bathtub. To further emphasize the importance of this suite, the bedroom also has a cathedral ceiling. The way these rooms are designed, and especially the way they are decorated in the model homes the author visited — with lots of pillows and a breakfast tray on the bed, imply that a lot of time is spent here relaxing. But it is hard to imagine a modern working couple with children having any time to lounge around. It is also hard to imagine wanting to spend leisurely time relaxing here and staring out the window, since the view is of a clear-cut field; soon to be filled with more houses just like this one.

Although the master bedroom is almost luxurious, the other bedrooms are nondescript. They are small, simple boxes with large closets. These are bedrooms for the children. What is most interesting about the design of these bedrooms in relation to the main bedroom is that these houses are designed for families, yet the children sleep inconveniently far from where the parents sleep. When the children are babies, it would be not only difficult to hear them cry, but also annoying to have to go so far to get to them.

The last major difference between contemporary suburban housing and previous suburban designs is the abundance of storage now incorporated into these houses. These houses are marketed towards a materialistic, consumer-oriented
population; thus connote that they will need space to store all of their acquisitions. Closets have become one of the biggest selling points for new houses.

CONCLUSION

We have not merely a housing shortage, but a broader set of unmet needs caused by the efforts of the entire society to fit itself into a housing pattern that reflects the dreams of the mid-nineteenth century better than the realities of the late twentieth century.26

Since the 1950s, with the advent of suburban middle-class housing as we know it, there have been significant changes in the economic and social fabric of this country. Yet the basic design of the suburban house and neighborhood is essentially unchanged. The lots are much bigger, and the houses have more “architectural detailing” that can be manipulated by the potential owners to better suit their tastes, but the overall design of the suburban development has not changed significantly since the 1950s. The houses are all roughly the same size and still isolated, with no industry or services. There are no through-streets and access is only by car. And they are still designed for the same middle-class nuclear family.

If one thinks of spatial separation in the development; clearly, it is not gender neutral. Even when mothers work, they are still primarily responsible for child care. Since there is no child care in Foxfire, mothers must find help elsewhere. This usually means an extra stop on the way to work to drop off the children, something that eats into a woman’s day. Of course, this assumes that a woman has access to a car in the first place. But “women have less access to private automobiles and are more dependent on public transportation for mobility...when there is only one automobile it is frequently the husband who uses it on a regular basis.”27 At Foxfire, not only is there currently no public transportation, but the realty agent seemed almost appalled when asked if there would be any in the future; there are currently no plans for this.

The issue of transportation is significant when one considers that women are also still primarily responsible for the care of the home. Houses such as the ones in Foxfire “require someone to undertake private cooking, cleaning, child care, and usually private transportation if adults and children are to exist within it”28 and this “severely restricts the time [women] can spend in commuting and increases
the ‘accessibility costs’ of getting to jobs and urban services.” In other words, women are limited in what kind of job they can accept because they still bear the added responsibility of home and child care. They “try to reduce the distance between home and work and the time spent in commuting” and are less willing to take a job with long hours if it eats into time they need to spend at home or with the children. This diminishes their “chances of competing in the job market or limits them to lower paying jobs.”

One reason that houses of this sort are still built, despite the noted drawbacks, is that “initial status differences between women and men create certain types of gendered spaces,” and “once spatial forms have been created, they tend to become institutionalized.” Typical suburban homes of the post-war era were designed for a very specific group of people, namely white, middle-class families, with a working father, homemaker mother, and a handful of children. The houses were a “spatial prescription for married suburban bliss that emphasized gender as the most salient feature of every citizen’s experience and aspirations;” one’s gender determined one’s responsibilities. Men were workers in the public realm, with earning and decision-making capacities. Women were workers in the home: responsible for its care and maintenance and for raising the children. This prescription for a happy, fulfilling life assumed that there was one type of family, and that men and women in these families naturally fell into their prescribed divisions. Unfortunately, it did not take into account any deviations from this so-called “norm.” It completely excluded a significant proportion of the population; namely anyone who was not in a white, middle-class family. It completely ignored the fact that the separation of responsibilities based on gender was due to stereotypical, generalized, largely incorrect notions of what defined men and women.

But this image lingers, and developments such as Foxfire help to perpetuate it. Foxfire, like so many others, is a development of single family houses which primarily targets white middle-class families. They may not discriminate in the legal sense, but pictures on display within the model houses show only white couples or families, implying that these are the only people accepted here. This type of housing completely ignores the fact that other families and groups exist that need housing, and that “many individuals and families are now experiencing serious difficulties in find-
ing housing that meets their parti-
cular needs.”

Even though the increasing inappropriateness to families becomes obvious in the designs of many suburban houses and communities, the difficult task remains in altering something that is an American icon. But, as Dolores Hayden points out, “because the form of housing carries so many aesthetic, social, and economic messages, a serious misfit between a society and its housing stock can create profound unrest and disorientation.”

We are currently facing this unrest and disorientation. Contemporary suburban housing design must begin to address the changes in today’s society in order to alleviate the problems with which we are confronted.

Contemporary suburban housing design also must address the issue of affordability. The ability to purchase a suburban home has become increasingly impossible for a large proportion of the US population since the boom time of the 1950s. When veterans returned from World War II, they were “encouraged by a national policy promoting home ownership in suburban areas to participate in the transformation of the American city and the American economy.”

Since then, suburban houses have become larger, and are growing ever more expensive. Today, most families must have two incomes if they are to afford this housing, which immediately eliminates groups such as single-parent families from the running.

Despite the problems with current suburban housing developments, including lack of services, poor transportation, and financial burden, there are indications that this issue is being reanalyzed and reconsidered. What is interesting about the new designs that take gender issues into account is that most of them are done by women (see Clare Cooper Marcus and Wendy Sarkissian, *Housing as if People Mattered* and Karen Franck and Sherry Ahrentzen, *New Households, New Housing* for examples of these type of projects). Most of the literary and research work done exploring this issue is done by women as well (note the references used for this paper).

Perhaps as more and more women enter the fields of architecture and urban design, and take note of the effect that developments such as Foxfire have on women, they may begin to design housing that is more appropriate for a wider variety of people. If these new forms of housing can be shown to be financially successful, builders and developers will reconsider what
they have become so used to building. This will be a slow process, but unless the current situation takes a turn in this direction, the problems associated with substandard housing and homelessness will continue to rise. Housing developments need to provide services, activities and accessibility for a diverse and changing population if this country is to successfully move forward into the twenty-first century.

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chicago's monadnock block: the developer's dream

Christian Zapatka

During the late nineteenth century an architect in Chicago was not asked to design a temple to embody the spiritual sentiments of the age, to design a castle, or palace, or shop with living quarters overhead. The conditions of the high office building were without precedent. It was an architectural type new in every essential element. It depended largely on entirely rational processes.¹

John Wellborn Root's Monadnock Building (1891) in Chicago can be seen as one of the most cogent examples of the tall American building in transition at the turn of the century. With the introduction of the commercial office tower to late nineteenth century Chicago, the owners and developers of such buildings played as important a role as, if not a more important role than, the architects themselves in defining the image of this uniquely American building type. Within the context of architectural experimentation in Chicago at this time, the question of the appropriateness of ornament on a building dedicated to or financed by a large business became one of the catalytic issues upon which owners, developers and architects would begin to work in unison to set the standard for twentieth century building practices.

Evidence that the prevailing architectural aesthetic still engaged a broad eclecticism at the end of the century can be found in the pages of

Montgomery Schuyler's expanding national profile in which investors would, at least, "check artistic self-indulgence." Root's self-proclaimed position of building for business with cooperation and alacrity inspired his contemporary, Henry Van Brunt, to regard him as:

...the most American of all architects who have impressed themselves upon the history of our national art...[whose] practice, the volume of which...was unprecedented, was affected by no academic prejudices, no pride of archaeological learning, no stiffness of conformity to conventional formulas or creeds, to prevent him from adjusting himself with the utmost frankness to American conditions as he found them, or from an honest endeavor to express those conditions in terms of architecture.

Indeed, Root's consciousness was not just reflective of an American type of building practice but an effort to establish a regional one as well. His sentiments on this matter were not his alone. An 1879 Chicago Times essay proclaimed:

The conditions of Chicago are so unlike those of any part of the union or of the world that what has been learned elsewhere is of no great value when applied to this city... Nowhere else is the site so low and flat, the soil so uncertain and treacherous... What this city needs are architects who have been reared in what may be termed a Chicago atmosphere. An architect of this school should be per-
meated by the peculiar surroundings of our locality. He must be in sympathy with the soil, so to speak, for the reason that Chicago is sui generis and must have a construction such as would suit no other city. Before Chicago attains a complete success in its architecture, it must have a school of its own. The architect who would succeed must be adscription - must be as much a product of the soil as one of our scrub oaks, or one of our cotton woods. ́

One of the forums in which architects of the late nineteenth century in Chicago could express their views was Robert Craik Maclean's journal, The Inland Architect. Devoted to the concerns of American architects practicing in the West, this publication can be seen as having been instrumental in establishing, at least in writing, what became known as "The Chicago School of Architecture."

In the early 1880s when Root was finally obliged to collaborate on both practical and aesthetic levels with a strong-willed client from the East, Peter Brooks of the Brooks Brothers financiers of Boston, his stance towards ornamentation was tested. The resultant Monadnock Block of Chicago — easily his most compelling building — stands as proof of the applicability of his theory to his practice. The Monadnock was a building whose design Root had carried in his head for over five years and during whose construction he died. It was a structure which finally realized, in stone, his well-verbalized theory of architecture, especially as it applied to the housing of big businesses. This design was at the time, and perhaps still is, one of the most illustrative examples of an architecture at once devoted to and expressive of the power and practicality of the practice of business.

MASS AS ORNAMENT IN JOHN ROOT'S MONADNOCK BLOCK

"...sculptural ornament has indeed disappeared in the final design, but the symbolic function of ornament has been taken over by the building itself, which thus becomes a form of abstract sculpture..." ́

When Peter Brooks commissioned Burnham and Root to build a speculative office building in Chicago in 1884, the need to provide the maximum volume allowable on the site was his principal concern. Any element of decoration must necessarily have deferred to such a request. The Monadnock was slated for construction on a site at the corner of Jackson and Dearborn Street — two blocks outside the area of commercial activity which had only been nine blocks square at the time. The plot plan which, by an ordinance, was approved for building purposes only, had already


7. Gibbs, 49.
shrunk from one hundred feet square to one hundred by sixty-eight feet. Furthermore, the site still exhibited the traits of its original swamp condition by the time it was ready for excavation. The prospect of building on the site was a commercial risk at the time, and was thus naturally accompanied by strong sentiments from the owner and his agent. They desired a strong and speculative image which would announce the presence of a new commercial concern and draw business into the as yet undeveloped area.

The fact that the firm of Burnham and Root was prepared to design a building whose typical floor would offer sixty-eight percent rentable space was what Owin Aldis, Brooks’ Chicago manager, perceived as the most attractive projected feature of the building. This feature represented a gain in rentable floor space compared to John Root’s celebrated Rookery Building and William LeBaron Jenny’s Home Insurance Building, both also in Chicago. It should be understood that the demand for office space in Chicago at this time had increased beyond a rate that can be described realistically in percentile figures. The Santa Fe Railway, to cite one example of a company with headquarters in Chicago, had increased in size from a two-person operation in 1868 to a company of two hundred and thirty-five in 1884. Aside from the primary requirement for the absolute greatest amount of rentable space, the issue arose that Peter Brooks had been seeking not a mere limit to the amount of ornament used for his new building, but, in fact, an absence of ornament. In a letter to Owen Aldis, he requested, “an avoidance of ornamentation...[so as to] rely upon the effect of solid-
ity and strength, or design that will produce that effect, rather than ornament for a notable appearance."\textsuperscript{11} Brooks stated, "my notion is to have no projecting surfaces or indentations, but to have everything flush, or flat and smooth with the walls."\textsuperscript{12} The proposed building's very name was suggestive of sheer unencumbered mass. It was to be named after Mount Monadnock in New Hampshire, a regionally familiar landmark for Brooks. Brooks was not immune to sophisticated architecture in his own environment either, and appears to have had a penchant for massive forms. In a letter dated April 22, 1886, he referred to the work of Henry Hobson Richardson of Boston in the following statement: "plain massiveness is often most effective, as frequently and happily shown in Richardson's exteriors..."\textsuperscript{13} Root approached the problem of designing such a building with a characteristic interest in acknowledging first the topographical condition of the site. Since Chicago had been built on marshy terrain, he drew an analogy between it and the historically marshy region of Lower Egypt, which also featured a river feeding into a large body of water. Although such an analogy may seem wildly fictitious, it should be understood that immediately prior to this commission, Root had translated Gottfried Semper's \textit{Architecture as a Vivid Expression of Environment} and had been using organic-related metaphors in his writings for \textit{Inland Architect} as a matter of course. One of his maxims was "the best solution will always be the simplest...and its full growth will follow with a directness and ease which suggest the budding of a flower."\textsuperscript{14} Once settled on his exotic analogy to Egypt, Root experimented with the form of the lotus plant as a
symbolically potent decorative device. While successful as a cornice ornament, the lotus form, nonetheless, lacked the strength to convey the weight and height of the building’s intended mass. Root turned next to the image of bundled papyrus stalks: a conceit which had already been extensively employed by the Egyptians as column motifs. Properly suggestive of both the constraints of the narrow, marshy site and the intended height of the block, the use of the bundled papyrus form was the concept that enabled Root to make the leap from applied ornament as decoration to abstracted ornament as mass.

Extraordinary as such a gesture might seem today and perhaps did in the mid 1880s as well, the possibility still exists that the resultant block’s sloping lines at the base and cornice not only serve to alleviate the rigidity of such an overwhelming volume, but actually appear to exaggerate the building’s perimeters — practically calling into question its true mass. In June 1889, The Economist reported with no reference to Root’s organic metaphors that the structure will have no ornamentation whatever; depending for its massiveness and the correct relation of its lines. There is no cornice to the building; only a bell-shaped coping. There is no base: the entire building swelling outward at the bottom to insure the expression of pure stability.\textsuperscript{15}

Indeed, the Monadnock represented a massiveness that could only be seen as expressive of itself; of its own weight and simplicity — a trait perfectly in accordance with Root’s recommendations for ornament: “the very style of ornament should be simple enough to be easily comprehended. If not, if the unseeing eyes of busy men are daily saluted by delicate details, not

\textsuperscript{15} Gibbs, 46.
only are the details wasted, but they are so far vulgarized as to become impotent to produce pleasure even when men have leisure to contemplate them." 

Contemporary critics were so perplexed by this new tower that their commentary could only summon the most rudimentary expletives in its praise. In 1893, one year after its completion, a critic for the Architectural Review called the Monadnock “a pure expression of business, a building which told its story in the plainest and strongest words, and then stopped talking.” Architectural Record’s Montgomery Schuyler said of the Monadnock in 1895: “This, one cannot help seeing, is the thing itself.”

Rising two hundred and twelve feet, with walls six feet thick at the base, supported by a floating raft foundation and fifteen foot piers (to manage the swampy site condition), this enormous masonry abstraction of a building must have signaled at the time both the end of an ancient building tradition and the technological competence of a construction system that could realize such mass in so direct and so simple a gesture — one last great gasp before the steel and glass minarets of the twentieth century began to sprinkle city profiles with their elusive heights and slenderness.

Ultimately, the detail of the twentieth century skyscraper would have very little to do with establishing its public image, for finally, only the gesture of its complete mass would ever have a chance of identifying it within a future profile of continuously-multiplying blocks and towers, the three-dimensional projections of so many plot plans.
The client and developer, as participants in this evolution, with their emphasis on real estate profits and business credibility, had been the ones to recommend pure forms suggestive of size and strength before those that would continue to give credence to an already badly distorted and overriding, neo-classical language of architecture. In this sense, such blunt gestures can be seen as having actually propelled the development of the architecture of the tall building in the spirit of John Root's suggestion that investors "check the artistic self-indulgence [of architects]."

The raising of such a massive and deliberately plain building as the Monadnock had already given fair testimony to the power of the speculative developer, as early as 1891, to control and shape the future image of the American city of commerce. It was the beginning of a relentless building process which would fill out the twentieth century with a breed of office towers featuring height, volume and rentable space above questions of style, scale and form. The impressiveness of their very structures would be celebrated as representative of the glories of modern building.

Urban Ramifications

Not only can the turn of the century style-free speculative office tower be assessed in terms of its architectural innovation, but also in its role in the restructuring of the economy of the American city from that of a late industrial manufacturing nucleus to a budding information-age metropolis. As methods of production were gradu-
ally consigned to the outer fringes of the city, their managerial heads had, in turn, become increasingly ensconced in towers in the center.

By the early 1900s, the footprints of great new towers had started to fill large parts of city blocks, or in some cases entire city blocks that formerly might have held a whole series of rowhouses or loft buildings devoted to the myriad number of activities that supported localized light industries. The socio-

economic effects of this formal phenomenon could already be seen in the replacement of groupings of small buildings that contained offices not necessarily related to the economy of the neighborhood with these new giants of centralized commerce. Through the following decades of the twentieth century, society was so saturated with the desire of investors to achieve real estate profit and the efforts of architects to be “modern,” to such daunting blocks as the famous “x, y, and z” buildings on Sixth Avenue in midtown Manhattan, the natural progression of this pattern of building would ultimately lead to the unadulterated inflation of pure building mass.

The role of the architect in this process is what must finally be questioned. John Root’s position on the use of ornament in 1890 coupled with his client’s demands for absolute plainness had led to the design of a building that can be perceived as the prototypical skyscraper — despite its masonry construction — in the sense that it was, first and foremost, a singularly conceived unrelenting gigantic volume. Perhaps the most intriguing notion about the building of the Monadnock is that it would never have assumed its plain massiveness without the insistence of its builder, Peter Brooks, for perfect
simplicity and economy. It must be remembered that Root's position on the ornament-free edifice had, up to this point, remained strictly within the realm of theory and not on the walls of his building trade.

In this light, it is possible to observe that the ingenuity of the architect's design, or design stance, is so often rendered negligible unless it can be made coincident with the developer's ideal. And, indeed, much, if not all, of twentieth century commercial building practice is based on just such an agreement. Whether or not the owners and managers working with the firm of Burnham and Root at the end of the nineteenth century were aware of what they were doing for, and to, the architecture of tall buildings is finally irrelevant in comparison to the precedent that they set for the phenomenon of speculative skyscraper building in the twentieth century city.

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teresa go
firestation
Christopher Townsend
successive approximations

Cathryn King
successive approximations
group
cabinet/case house
david sisson
longspan project —
indoor swimming pool.
j. peter liao
power station exploration
benjamin williams
airport for
thermopolis, wyoming
kevin forrester
ferry terminal for
toronto harbor and
fort niagara
scott engstrom
diving facility
Randall Whinnery
Diving Facility
heather hoeksema
university of michigan
north campus theater
sisia daglia
university of michigan
north campus theater
brent dykstra
houseboat
student works 113

amy finlayson
sports medicine clinic
Yesterday, Lois Plutus' name was released from the Federal Housing Entitlement waiting list. In six weeks' time, armed with her completed a-607 form and her perception of home, Lois will confab with the architect of her choosing. Eight months later she will be packing for the big move every American Citizen will eventually make.

All this is the result of the a massive world-wide study on the effects of housing on society. Following the lead of the EC, Architects and Physicians in the United States are now members of the same order. Universal Health Care has been expanded to include Basic Shelter for all citizens.
"Does baby see the little choo-choo train in the shadow?"

"I want cereal. I want a big boy. I want my footprint."

"Does the big boy see the choo-choo train?"

"I'm not a big boy. I'm Christopher Walkin."

"I don't wanna go bye-bye. I want some milk."

"Let's get your socks on, we have to get you to Grandma. Today, I get to ride with Henry."

"Let's just do it. My pleasure."
"H., how big is your house?"

"Why, in the name of!"

"Did you know they just took me off the waiting list?"

"Well, that's great! When they said you were A-cov, I was sure you were Brile."

"Oh, yeah, I'm not sure."

"Until the next little DAg will finally have his own room."

"We're within five.

"Forget it."
"Wow, there's a sucker born every minute."

"shut up Henry And get me a spot."

"UNIT TWELVE, UNIT TWELVE, PLEASE RESPOND—THERE'S A 323 @ C'EST FAUX, 1700 BLOCK."

"Damn, I hate having to have to go down there—place is depressing."

"People should learn how to chew."

"Yeah, running round pulling chicken out of them.

"it's not like it need (2) be it?

"Nope, but who would want it that way?"

The AHS employs architects who investigate suicides and other violent types of incidents to determine if their cause was environmentally induced.

Sprawn Bailey, AIA, is charged with investigating a string of incidents at the C'est Faux building development.

Ever since architecture was grafted into the federal government, Sprawn's branch has been red-tagging the remaining buildings that do not conform to the New Code. He sees buildings differently than other people: he sees their personalities; their dark sides.
In past years, many unnatural deaths per day were not uncommon in this city. It was the randomness of these occurrences that pushed peoples and governments to form multi-faceted coalitions. Though many powerful corporations were able to seat their lobbyists at the table, honest and hard-working participants from all walks were able to achieve progress on an historical scale. Jobs, education, and health-care reforms were fine tuned with a bent towards curbing violent behavior.

In the years since, a dramatic decrease in violence has occurred. TV news has been cut back 70% and replaced with, among other things, reruns of "This Old House". The process, however, has not been quick. Nonetheless, it has been estimated that by the end of the decade, every naturalized citizen in America will have been seated and served in the office of the architect of their choosing.
"Death, wetness and beauty are all non-negotiable. These are objective qualities.....

...A person cannot be partially dead, in a medical sense.....

...An object is either wet or dry; and once wet, cannot become more wet.....

...Buildings are non-negotiable, too.

"Can I use your bathroom, please?"

"Buildings distinguish themselves from architecture because architecture goes beyond the provision of shelter, privacy, and security to provide its inhabitants with an environment for positive outlook and productivity. "Spirituality" (as it is called),

To be considered a building in our culture, any assortment of manmade or assembled materials must provide shelter from the elements as well as privacy and security. These qualities are as objective as death and wetness....."
"has no limit and lacks any accurate means of measure. It is also utterly subjective....

Anything that keeps out the cold air, rain, predators, and degenerates is a building. It is important to note that it makes no difference whether anybody has ever been, or even will be, sheltered or protected in a particular space, as long as its configuration could provide these qualities upon inhabitation....

To be considered architecture, however, a space requires inhabitation. The presence of someone who's outlook and productivity are directly improved is the deciding factor between simple building and Architecture. However, the same space may be seen by one individual as merely providing the qualities of a building and by another as being magnificent Architecture...

Therefore, while it can be said that "once a building, always a Building," it cannot be argued conversely about Architecture...

ARCHITECTURE cannot exist, though architecture surely does.

This is also true for beauty, of which I know a great deal....

So how's the house coming?"

"Are you talking to me?"

"Yes, of course I am"

"You mean My Application. It's fine, I guess. There's A lot of stuff I really don't know much about, but I don't care. Next spring, we'll be in a new house, we'll have place. Did you have to fill one of these out for the studio?"

"No, Studio's weren't considered "basic富裕" until last year. I'm eligible for an appointment, but I don't feel its necessary. I'm happy. It seems like you could use a hand."

"I'll take what I can get. Do you have a suggestion?"
"Are you Eddie?"
"Ah, yes. "Fuss."
"Is that your last name?"
"Pern tootin."
"What nationality is that?"
"Farmer."

"Excuse me?"
"Farmer."

"... You too, I see."
"It did sort of dawn on me..."

"... that the difference that I see really has little to do with architecture."

"For example, there's something magical about a..."

The buildings are what they are; built by average..."

"... people with average materials and the like..."

"... buildings I know and..."

"Well, my biggest concern has been having a house at all."

"Especially with a youngin like your self..."

"You mean like the house down the road, I saw that coming over. When did they start that?"

"Oh, lordy, that was back thirty five years ago or so. Margie and I had just bought this place."

"'Fuss!"
"'Yep!"
"'Coffee?"

"Would you like some coffee ma'am?"
"That'd be fine - "
"'Yep, Margie!"
"My son tells me that I'm just used to a different set of standards. One that is not accustomed to architects and codes and such. But really that ain't it at all.

I would dare say to my son his job isn't worth anything like that - I mean he's helping people and the like.

"Maybe it's just that people today have become removed from having to be self-sufficient so that when, you know,
you need your oil changed,
you take your car to an oil change shoppe.

"Oh, listen to me. I'm sorry. You wanted to know about the Form, right?"
"Yes, it has been rather overwhelming."

"In those days, if you needed something, you got it yourself -
Which was fulfilling - to build something, to grow crops and feed people -
to provide for the community and earn a living. 'Architects and health-care,' He says 'architects have a new role;' he says. 'Good,' I told him, 'they can fix these scars!'... Margie?"

It had long been stated that architects had the power to inspire and educate. When the brotherhood that held them together became stronger than the individual, the true essence of architecture was unearthed. From there, it was a brouhaha on the steps of the capital. Though many resisted, it could not be stopped.

With the help of the AMA, architecture was for everybody.
   Techniques & Architecture, Metropole 90, March 1990

2. Two Bison, Niaux, Black Salon, Cave at Lascaux
   The Cave of Lascaux, The Final Photographs

3. Maximum Moments Diagram
   Theory of Structural Analysis and Design by James Michalos
   The Ronald Press Co., NY 1958

4. Place de ‘Etoile and Avenue Foch
   Urbanismus in Industriezeitalter by Walter Klieb
   Ernst and Sohn 1991

5. The Ganis of Num Settlement
   Images from City Planning by Forrest Wilson
   Van Nostrand Reinhold Co. 1975

6. Photo of American Gothic House, Eldon Iowa
   American Gothic, oil on composition board, 30”x25”
   Grant Wood, A Study in American Art and Culture by James M. Dennis
   The Viking Press

7. Inner Loop around Kansas City
   Dan Ryan Expressway and Robert Tayler Homes
   Freeways by Lawrence Halprin
   Reinhold Publishing Co., NY 1966

   Holt, Rinehart and Winston, NY 1966

9. The Villas and Country Houses
   Mies Van Der Rohe by Wolf Tegethoff

10. Portrait by Giambattista Maganza
    Palladio and Palladianism by Robert Tavernor
    Thames and Hudson Ltd., London 1991

11. Andrea Palladio: Nuovi Contributi
    Settimo Seminario Internazionale di Storia dell’Architettura
    Vicenza 3-7, Settembre 1988

12. Bruce Goff, Toward Absolute Architecture by David G. DeLong

13. Nagoya Castle, Terrace of the Main Room
    Architecture of Japan by Hinotano Ota 1953

14. Alvar Aalto by Frederick Gutheim
    George Braziller, Inc. NY 1960

15. Figure 65, Lincoln’s Inn Fields, Entrance between dressing room and colonade.
    Sir John Soane’s Museum
    Susan Feinberg Millenson 1987
    UMI Research Press, Ann Arbor

16. Portico of the Colonia Gell, sta.
    Antoni Gaudi (1852-1926)
    Spanish Museum of Contemporary Art in Madrid, May - June 1985

17. Towards a Symbolic Architecture by Charles Jencks,
    Photos by Richard Bryant
    Rizzoli International Publications, Inc., NY 1983

18. The Little House - Her Story
    by Virginia Lee Burton
    Houghton, Mifflin, Co., Boston 1942, 1969

19. Solei’s sur Cheval 1972
    Giorgio De Chirco
    Filipacchi 1973

20. Goodrum House, Living Room
    American Classicist - The Architecture of Philip Trammell Shutze
    by Elizabeth Meredith Dowling
    Atlanta Historical Society, Rizzoli, NY 1989
planning, practice, and
ideas of community

Initial Reflections

There exists a fundamental belief in the fields of planning and design that communities should play a large role in one's work. Communities, of course, are where a practitioner practices, where one's clients come from, where they live, work, and play; the community may even be where the practitioner lives. Most practitioners would agree with the idea that they are responsible to communities.

Practitioners work for communities. It is community that defines our mission, commissions the designs, shifts the zoning, underwrites the construction, and so on until our ideas and dreams can become reality. We want to come to an understanding with community so we scatter within our practice public hearings, open meetings, community forums, design teams, presentations of models, competitions, and many other types of interactive processes.

We are responsible to the community that surrounds us as we are working. That community is made up of individuals sharing some common bond, a bond we trust exists and can guide us as we do our work. Our work is for them but it is also for us. The idea of community permits a balance between our individuality and a group goal. They ask for our
expertise and we are trained to carry out specific tasks at their behest. We are both fulfilled.

This responsibility and fulfillment, however, is a lie. In his 1980 book, *Community: Reflections on a Tragic Ideal*, Glenn Tinder writes:

*Community is not only alluring, however, it is also unattainable. Man [sic] is not capable of community — not, at least, in any full and stable form. No doubt relationships of a communal quality can be realized occasionally and in limits by a family, a town, a university, or even a nation. But no historical institution can be purely and simply a community.* (2)

It is as if we are looking in a mirror, pleased with the reflection, and observe a yawning vacuum behind the glass, a vacuum that appears as soon as we question what community is. Once one begins to pursue community, it becomes slippery and then indefinable, then non-existent. If non-existent, then to whom or what are we responsible? Are we responsible only to ourselves? This is a sobering thought, especially if we carry it to extremes.

In this essay I will first discuss various conceptions of community, then outline Tinder’s thesis and its implications on how practitioners represent their interactions with what we call community. Finally, I will discuss several ideas that might carry a practitioner of planning or design past that empty mirror and towards a more honestly responsible practice.

In general, we should dig deeply into our own assumptions and the assumptions of the groups with whom we are interacting as we carry out our practice; we should explore the nature of the interactions, and we should be careful to examine the ways we represent our interpretations (whether written, drawn, or modeled). This digging, this reflection, is often something we are wary of approaching.

In this essay I will take what I know — the often fractious and mostly disconnected world around me; a world that is decidedly unlike what I assume community to be, and try to find a way towards a more realistic practice. Glenn Tinder might call this practice civility. I do not know what I might call it, but I do know it draws on a constant observation of myself, my interactions with those at work, and what is left behind after I depart. This legacy includes physical representations of the interactions, but also includes changes in the structure of human relationships. This essay is pointed towards the nature of this legacy, for in our fields we are judged most often on what we leave behind.

COMMUNITY: IDEAS AND IDEALS

There are a wide variety of perceptions and definitions of what community is, could be, or has been. They range from dictionary definitions to ones described by social activists to those definitions of geographers, seminarians, social theorists and many others. Most people have an idea of what community is. Some would say that Ann Arbor is a community, while others would disagree, arguing that it is too large and too diverse to be a community. Other definitions are vague, some are all-encompassing, while still others are fairly specific. Tinder offers up a definition of community that is in some ways unique and that draws on more sources for inspiration and critique than many other authors. He draws on several thousand years of primarily western, or as Fred Goodman might say, “North Atlantic,” thought. Tinder draws on Indian, Chinese, and other sources for his discussion as well.

Beginning with what might be called standard conceptions or ideas of community, Webster’s dictionary provided a way to organize my thoughts and make sense of the range of definitions I have run across:

1: a unified body of individuals: as a: state, commonwealth, b: the people with common interests living in a particular area; broadly: the area itself; c: an interacting population of various kinds of individuals (as species) in a common location; d: a group of people with common characteristics or interest living together within a larger society; e: a group linked by a common policy; f: a body of persons or nations having a common history or common social, economic, and political interests; g: a body of persons of common and especially professional interests scattered through a larger society
2: society at large
3: a: joint ownership or participation; b: common character: likeness; c: social activity: fellowship; d: a social state or condition

Most people would probably agree with the range found in 1: They are the familiar definitions of community, ones we carry in our minds as we think about our lives and families. They are the ideas of community we carry with us in our practice. Other writers elaborate on this. Robert Nisbet refers to...

...much more than what is denoted by mere local community. I use the word...
in its oldest and lasting sense of relationships among individuals that are characterized by a high degree of personal intimacy, of social cohesion or moral commitment, and of continuity in time. The basis of community may be kinship, religion, political power, revolution, or race.
It may be...any of a large number of activities, beliefs, or functions. All that is essential is that the basis be of sufficient appeal and of sufficient durability to enlist numbers of human beings, to arouse loyalties, and to stimulate an overriding sense of distinctive identity.

Many people argue that the need for community has its origins in the gathering together of a group in order to satisfy basic needs for protection and food production. Going far enough back in time, the origins of human language probably stem from these arrangements. Communication is the building block from which all other relationships spring. Without communication there can be no human relationships.

Ngugi wa Thiong'o, in *Decolonising the Mind: The Politics of Language in African Literature* (13–14), defines community as a product of historical necessity; with its simplest form being a community of cooperation in production through the division of labour. This starts with the family and the divisions of labour therein. More complex divisions, such as branches of production and modern factories, spring out of this as well as other structures human beings erect to organize more complex relationships such as societies and culture. These basic relationships all begin with cooperation — which requires communication — which requires language.

Language at its most basic is speech and/or the written word.

Community cannot exist without communication. Language and community are the products of particular groups of people and cannot be the product of individuals. Any communication between groups is open to interpretation by all members of the groups. The development of groups of people, and of ideas of community, was most likely simultaneous with the development of language.

Yi Fu Tuan also defines and discusses forms of pre-modern and modern communities. In *Segmented Worlds and Self*, Tuan offers an interpretation or a cultural history...

...touching on how groups and cohesive wholes break down as their members grow in self awareness and withdraw into fragmented spaces; and also how individuals might then try to regroup, recreate cohesive wholes, regain a sense of unity, or regenerate objective (i.e. public) values, all at the conscious level. (3)

I would argue that much of what we now commonly think of as community are these efforts of rebuilding and recreation; perhaps of a something that never existed.
Yi Fu Tuan offers two types of pre-modern community, egalitarian and hierarchical. Egalitarian communities do not have social barriers that keep its members apart while a hierarchical community does. Tuan points to classical Chinese society as an example of hierarchical community, explaining the carefully demarcated bounds of each individual's position within a family or household that is an object of intense feelings of devotion. Egalitarian communities are generally preliterate, such as the !kung bushmen of the Kalahari and the Kaingang of Santa Catarina province in Brazil.

The trait that binds these two types of communities together is cohesiveness which Tuan defines as including the need for the physical proximity of kinsfolk and friends, a view of the world as given and objectively real, and "...the lack of self awareness and, hence, the lack of a critical stance toward the group and the world." (14) This resonates with the dictionary definitions and popular conceptions of community.

Tinder mentions that people often think of community as made up of agreements "...of any kind, [consisting], for example, in common acceptance of a narrow and stifling set of customs inherited from the past, or in widespread acceptance of an advertising message." (31) People often dignify cohesive social entities, such as small towns or ethnic neighborhoods as communities. In light of his discussion of inquiry, these are "...at best satisfying but unintellectual, at worst oppressive and anti-intellectual." (64) By intellectual, Tinder means the activity of inquiry, of comprehensive and probing communication into the nature of truth within the society or group. This sort of activity is often met with
negligence, disapproval, or downright hostility.

Inquiry, Tinder posits, is one of the basic elements of the ideal of community — along with the desire for social unity. Inquiry — the seeking of truth through communicating with others, brings about community. Valid inquiry can never be solitary. Others are sources of inquiry; never objects of inquiry. This drives Tinder towards the idea that true community is plurality, that others are different from us, and that such “…imposes the necessity of inquiring not only about, but with, other persons.” (30)

Striving for a unity of consciousness is identical to the striving for community. This desire prompts us to search for community, but also diverts us and heads us towards social unity. “Social unity temporarily alleviates the pain of estrangement and thus may eagerly be accepted in place of community.” (55) Social unity is a practical thing, but perfect social unity is a myth.

This enduring myth about perfect and palpable unity confounds ideas of community and social unity and appears in most societies: the utopian visions of settlers in the U.S. during the nineteenth century, the myth of a socialist or communist state — a worker’s paradise, the development of a Buddhist state ruled by a single benevolent king (Siwarak). It also appears in philosophies and social theories. Tinder mentions “…the limitless rule of a scientific and philosophic elite (Plato), of a morally pure and politically undivided populace (Rousseau), of a historically predestined party (Lenin).” (66) But human necessities and imperfections break down dreams and plans into the reality we have always had around us. In order for human beings to survive we have to come to agreement with each other and this agreement generally is counter to community.

Tinder outlines four elements of society as a result of this agreement: (1) it is organized out of necessity, and is not spontaneous; thus, there is a tendency to limit dissociation from the organization which in effect limits plurality; (2) it is organized for action: a society must constantly appraise the reality around it to see how that reality fits with the aims of the organization; (3) by being an organization and a sphere of appraisal, it raises a minority to the status of organizers and appraisers (here I think he is talking about planners); (4) finally, society is set in motion by the “logic of largeness,” in that a society is generally better off the larger it is; especially in terms of
economic and military power. Each of these things tends to limit community as Tinder defines it; especially plurality. Society is often hostile to community because social unity is often imperiled by community. Socrates, Gandhi, Martin Luther King, and others who strove for this kind of communality stood apart from social unity and brought people together in their essential being. Social unity consists of only transcending individuality or solitary thinking and living. It does not equate with community.

Contrary to the myth of social unity, the notion of plurality has many historical examples for support. Some of them have been detailed by the societies which originally allowed them: the destruction of the artistic movements in Berlin in the nineteen thirties while society geared up for war and needed to generate a more unified internal front, perhaps the most famous example is of the separation of church and state which sanctions two separate authorities in the United States.

In terms of policies, a lack of plurality often leads to disaster. The recent demise of the USSR might be seen as a case in point. Following a single economic doctrine, the state bureaucracy ground the economy to a halt. Laissez-faire policies in the US in the late nineteenth century also led to massive inequalities that were severely curtailed by early twentieth century reform movements.

Looking at any policy or paradigm from the light of multiple perspectives gives insight and, in addition, reifies the idea that no viewpoint, no culture, is wholly satisfactory.

No social entity — group, institution, or authority — should be uncriticized or allowed to provide the total environment for human beings. No ideology or policy should receive unqualified allegiance. Each person should belong to different groups, heed various authorities, and consider diverse social and political prescriptions. This, briefly, is the principle of plurality. (64)

This is what is contained in the ideal of community and it is an outlook that few places or people live up to. This is why Tinder regards community as something so rare.

Community is surely a state of life, and if that is so, it must in some way partake of movement, doubt, and insecurity. A person who is communal stands in a state of truth. Tinder discusses Socrates as someone of this stature. Merely
because there is an absence of mutuality in a society does not make a person any less communal. Mahatma Gandhi might be called communal as well. He was intent on speaking to the truth and building up communal relationships between individuals. He rarely let his personal relationships stand in the way of his search for truth. The essence of his being was communal in this way.

**Representations, Reflections, and Responsibility**

Tinder creates a persuasive picture of community as an ideal; clearly day to day interactions rarely take on the flavor of what Tinder describes. However, all of us know what that ideal is, what community could be. There is a lack of cohesion between reality and our representations of that reality and it is here that I want to head next. I will explore where Tinder leaves us as practitioners. He ends the books describing civility as a substitute for community and it is here that I part ways with him. Tinder proposes that people pursue what he calls civility, rather than community; civility involves efforts towards tolerance, autonomy, and “living according to the demands of the humanity that one recognizes in others and finds in one’s own identity.” (191)

I agree with him that this is something to work towards; however, he describes communities as something than can exist and do exist but cannot do so permanently. From this point and from other readings, I would argue that community is a process and not a product. It is ephemeral but it is that transience that makes our work valuable; for through dialogues envisioning the future, community is created. By not creating this dialogue we continue to create representations based on our assumptions.

We, as practitioners, create representations of our interactions. These interactions are with data, other people, the existing landscape, the definitions of problems (for problems are only problems based on who is doing the defining), the culture and ethos of the era, the historical understanding of the situation and of ourselves within that historical context, and the assumptions and teachings we bring to the situation. Each of these interacts with each other and we are caught up in those interactions — a bit of flotsam in a whirlpool. I would not say that individuals are powerless to create and cause change, but it is difficult, and often the effects of our actions are not felt until long after we have left the scene. We cannot judge...
the effects of our actions and that is why we must be careful in our representations.

This legacy includes structural representations of the interactions, but also includes changes in the structure of relationships. The core of this essay is focused on the nature of this legacy, for in our field we are judged most often on what we leave behind. Edward Said, in Culture and Imperialism, in a discussion of anthropology and its role in the unequal relationship between western (or North Atlantic) countries and underdeveloped and former colonial territories, raises the question of representations.

We live of course in a world not only of commodities but also of representations, and representations — their production, circulation, history, and interpretation — are the very element of culture. In much recent theory the problem of representation is deemed to be central, yet rarely is it put in its full political context, a context that is primarily imperial. (36)

Our representations take many forms: physical, mental, and the interactions between the two (including the structure of human relationships (culture if you will). With regard to imperialism, one could argue that our conceptions of community are often formulated about groups in society that are of lower social class than of higher. In a gross characterization, few people who go out to work with a community head to Bloomfield Hills; they go to Inkster or parts of Detroit. One could even argue that popular or academic conceptions of community are tinged by racism. Similar critiques were raised within anthropology, especially regarding the origins and practice of the field itself (See Anthropology and the Colonial Encounter for a good treatment of this subject). The commentaries on these critiques were the sources to which I turned to get my bearings on where practitioners might head next.

Paul Rabinow in Writing Culture posits that all statements are interpretations. I would argue that all representations are interpretations as well; interpretations being similar to assumptions. All appeals to facts are also based on interpretations and these interpretations are not individual, but societal or cultural. I would add “historically specific” because societies change over time, and I think that Tuan’s basic point of temporal shifts in the relationships between human beings should be integral to any thinking about community.

The guiding concern in those doing any kind of ethnographic writing is to create a relationship
with the other — as in the search for a medium of expression which will offer mutual interpretation, perhaps visualized as a common text or as something more like a discourse. Rabinow goes on to quote Marilyn Strathern who says feminist anthropology “...alters the nature of the audience, the range of readership and the kinds of interactions between author and reader, and alters the subject matter of conversation in the way it allows others to speak.” (255)

Augusto Boal’s idea of creating discourse while working on education and raising social consciousness also informed my conclusions. The main goal is a change from spectator to actor:

*The spectator delegates no power to the actor either to act or think in his place; on the contrary, he himself assumes the protagonic role, changes the dramatic action, tries out solutions, discusses plans for change — in short, trains himself for real action. In this case, perhaps the theater is not revolutionary in itself, but it surely is a rehearsal for the revolution. The liberated spectator, as a whole person, launchés into action.* (122)

Through these transformative moments, the spectator/actor realizes the potential for change and empowerment. It strikes me that community is like this too. Community is ephemeral. When a group of people are confronted with a challenge or a problem they transcend themselves. A synergy is generated that crescendos during the crisis and then slowly dies away, like the echoes of a bell long after it has been rung. The group of people may continue to live, work and play together, but arguments and dissension set in and the structures set up to maintain social unity again separate them from the unity of consciousness they had as a community.

Community exists often enough so that we know it when we are in it. We flow in and out of states of community, each one associated with interlocking or separate groups of other people. As we do our work, we work with towns and cities that most of the time represent anything but community. Yet at times a feeling exists that something greater has been created; even if just for a short time. Knowing that the possibility exists is enough reason for most of us to continue to work, live, and interact with that group; hoping to recreate that feeling and identity — that shared purpose.

Community is an active thing — a process — not a passive thing that rests only in small towns, glorified immigrant neighborhoods, or pre-literate cultures. With the genera-
tion of ideas about the individual being the heart of society came a companion longing for a fiction that an assembly of people — community — was being left behind. We have spent the better part of two and a half centuries inventing social, religious, and political devices to retrieve this shimmering vision. We would be better to accept it as a myth and move on with what is in front of us.

Because communities are transient, ephemeral creations does not mean we should all give up and go home. However, it does mean that by moving past our assumptions we can look closer at what is in front of us. The assumptions we make about communities being constant leads us to represent them as something they are not. They cannot be studied or visited as an entity. They must be approached fluidly and care must be taken as to how we discuss them and how we represent them. If we are careful in our practice we can even engender community.

Putting these ideas into action could take a cue from Boal. Having met with members of a neighborhood or town, and having generated ideas about the problems or issues with which they are confronted, the practitioner works with the group to develop a plan to gather relevant information. Gathering information leads to a further refinement by the group of what the boundaries of the problems are, or what the definitions of the problems are. John Friedmann suggests that the practitioner’s role here is not one of a leader, but one of a specialist who can bring the group closer to resolution of their problems and can help evaluate alternative strategies.

Having come to the definition of the problem themselves, the group is empowered, the bonds between them strengthened and their sense of common purpose or communality is raised. The next step is a search for solutions or strategies that make sense to the group. Again, the practitioner’s role here is of an additional, unique, voice in the discussion, or discourse. Friedmann adds:

Above all, it involves a willingness to engage the other players in the planning game in a common discourse and to be guided by their wisdom as well. Planners must be open to new facts, new insights, new understandings. If this renders problem solutions more complex, so be it. Nothing will be gained by simple formulations when the reality is not simple. (129)

On the surface the above description is neither new nor radical; rather, it asks us to closely watch
the kinds of roles we take, and assumptions we make about the groups with which we work. Friedmann suggests several types of discourse — moral, technological, and utopian — in which planners must engage. Discourse and dialogue imply information and understanding flowing in at least two directions. This resonates with Tinder’s ideas of inquiry, a core of the communal ideal, where the exchange of mutual respect and acknowledgment of particular points of view is paramount. This exchange carries a moral or ethical purpose to it, requiring practitioners to reflect on their practice and be ready for change.

Planning and design have purpose and a basic part of that purpose is to alter relationships and to effect positive change in society. These relationships are generally conceived to be physical but are often social as well. The purposefulness of change is something with which practitioners are familiar. Practitioners are not familiar with the idea of emerging from planning experiences with a different perspective. In altering relationships one of the things that is altered is the practitioner.

These ideas of interpretation and dialogue should guide responsible practice. By engaging in dialogue, one’s own ideas and thoughts are challenged; they shift. One may never approach a design or planning problem in the same way again: Indeed, one would never approach a problem in the same way, period. In effect, if community does not exist except as a rapidly changing design in the sand, then does the individual practitioner have a better choice? For me, the answer is “no”.

By questioning ourselves and our assumptions we make ourselves vulnerable. Yi Fu Tuan, in a 1987 lecture, said that making oneself vulnerable is not in the nature of academics who shore themselves up with quotes, definitions, and paradigms; questioning these is quite difficult and against our nature. Starting with these little things — with what we know or see before us, and carrying them all the way to conclusion is a road not often taken.

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artistic deconstruction of cultural power relationships

The term responsibility encompasses ideas of personal accountability, the ability to act without guidance, and the ability to make moral and/or rational decisions. The implications for misusing this responsibility are immense. In this paper, I will critically examine the relationship between art and architectural expression and the implications of failure within these definitions of responsibility. I will do so primarily through ideas of power and power relationships.

Through an analysis of Michael Foucault’s notion of power, I will examine Saddam Hussein’s the Monument as an art form embodying the notion of power. I apply the post-modern theory of deconstruction in order to pose questions regarding the nature of these power relationships manifested through the media’s view of art and architecture in Islamic society. Deconstruction can be used as a tool to challenge social and political structures manipulated by political leaders like Saddam Hussein.

After understanding the nature of more obvious power relationships, one stands at a critical point in trying to understand ideas of modernization in Islamic countries. Until now, modernization has chiefly meant an onslaught of mass imported western ideals with, at times, a dose of nostalgic references to the past, especially in religious and cultural structures. I have felt a great deal of discomfort with this fact since there has been
no dialogue in which one can question why Muslim society has reached this point in history, and where it needs to go from here. There is a need for rethinking ideas through the mediums of art and architecture.

The final part of this paper is an attempt to answer some questions dealing with these socio-political relationships. For instance, what should the definition of modernization be? If in proposing a different direction and reflection of ideals, then just what direction does it imply? How can one begin to talk about these ideals and responsibility as expressed through art and architecture?

In this paper, I will illustrate this problem from “within” Islamic cultures because that is where the problem actually lies. The mass importation of western ideals can be rethought only after one has considered internal power relationships and sociological implications of the manipulation of art as political propaganda. Dr. Ali Shariati’s idea of a “reconstruction” of inherent power relationships proposes a “return to self.” He sees art as a medium through which ideas, conflicts and dialogue can emerge. For Shariati, art becomes responsible for a construction of reality based on Islamic symbols, values, and meaning which reflects society itself. I will discuss through examples his analysis of art and architecture and question the extent to which it proposes a solution for future directions in Muslim society.

PART ONE

Frequently the very knowledge and control over the visible turns into the need to look over the horizon, beyond what can be seen; it is exacerbated as his very pleasure with the visible keeps on building up until he feels bloated with all that he might require of material things to the point of suffocation and emptiness brought on by this material fulfillment — only after he has climbed the highest peaks do you find the human being looking beyond the horizon, and even higher.
— Saddam Hussein

Power is the ability to act or affect someone or something. If power is the production of intended effects, it is entrenched in a relationship in which one dominates over the other. Michael Foucault, in his essay “The Subject and Power,” raises questions in terms of power relationships. There are inherent power structures behind the literal structure of a monument. Monuments are literally the physical remembrance or lasting record of a political or social event. The interesting point in the study of power relationships is how power
relationships come into play. An example is the Monument erected by Saddam Hussein in Baghdad in 1989. This is just one example of the distinct manipulation of power and authority through the use of art and architectural form as its medium.

Before embarking on these issues, one must study some aspects of power relationships. First, in the case of authoritarian political rule there is a distinct power structure which works its way through the power of the masses. Power becomes manifest in order to bring about a desired result. Second, power forms a relationship in that it requires more than one element — either social or institutional — through which to work. In either case, a relationship of power through the consent of the masses is complex. A reign of terror might enslave a whole nation simply by sowing seeds of mistrust so that their opponents never come to know their own political strength. To possess power (or to be powerful) is, then, to have a generalized potentiality for getting one's desires and bringing about changes in other peoples actions and conditions.

Michael Foucault's objective in the study of power relationships is to create a history of the different modes through which, in culture, human beings are made subjects. He states that power exists only where it is put to action. For Foucault, a relationship of power consists of actions which do not act directly or immediately on others, but it is an action upon another action. "To govern is to structure the possible field of action of others."*1

An interesting aspect of Foucault's analysis is the observation that power is exercised only over free subjects. Freedom disappears where power is exerted. Freedom is therefore a condition for the exercise of power. The relationship at play is, therefore, that of will vs. freedom. By using art and architecture as an expression of this manipulation, one can see how this is manifested in very diverse circumstances.

A monument is an art form and an expression of cultural needs. According to Sigfried Giedion in Nine Posts on Monumentality, Monuments have to satisfy the eternal demand of the people for the translation of their collective force into symbols. The most vital monuments are those which express the feeling and thinking of this collective force — the people. Every bygone period which shaped a real and cultural life had the power and the capacity to create these symbols.

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The scope of this paper does not allow detailed elaborations of political and historical factors in Iraq, however, they are an important background in attempting to analyze the sources of Saddam Hussein's power from both a western and Arab/Muslim perspective. In the western world, he is compared to Hitler and, since his accession to power in 1979, is seen to have led his people through a choreographed tirade of folkloric costumes and overblown mythology. He is seen as an avid historicist. According to James Gardner, "he understands that the coordinates of a people's collective mentality extended not only along the longitudes and latitudes of maps, but far back into time as well." However, in large segments of the Arab world, people view the Iraqi president in a different light. In the poorer Muslim countries and for thousands of dispossessed Arabs living in refugee camps, Hussein is a folk hero who ranks as the strongest champion of Arab unity, the most ardent opponent of Israel and its Western benefactors, and the best hope for redressing the glaring inequities among the Arab nations. Saddam Hussein invokes the glories from more than 1,000 years ago when Baghdad was the center of a prosperous Arab empire. The existing monument for which Saddam is notoriously famous is in Baghdad. When he acted the part for the opening ceremony of the Monument, President

Hussein appeared for the dedication on a white horse, a traditional symbol of virility and purity that is linked to Ali, the grandson of the Prophet.

The Monument’s description (see illustrations) is on the back of the invitation sent to dignitaries on the occasion of its unveiling:

The ground bursts open and from it springs the arm that represents power and determination, carrying the sword of Qadisiyya. It is the arm of the Leader-President himself, Saddam Hussein (meaning literally in Arabic ‘the one who confronts.’) Hussein’s arm is enlarged forty times. It springs to announce the good news of victory to all Iraqis, and it pulls in its wake a net that has been filled with the helmets of the enemy soldiers, some of them scattering into the wasteland.3

The Maquette was worked in plaster directly from the President’s hands, from just above the elbow. The arms are a direct replica down to the last detail. Even the hair follicles, blemishes, and veins are visible. A sword is inserted into each fist. The forearm and the fist are 16 meters in length and burst out of the ground to an apex of 40 meters above the ground. 5,000 Iranian helmets from the battlefields are gathered into the two nets. (The idea which came to Khalil’s mind is the image of skulls having exploded inside those helmets) The swords were obtained by melting down the weapons of “Iraqi Martyrs” who died fighting.4

Foucault’s theory of power relationships comes to a grotesque peak in this example of a monument. Here is the idea of absolute authority and power. Ironically, the monument was designed several hundred thousand lives before the war.5 Its concept precedes the reality it is meant to commemorate.

According to Khalil, the Monument is simply “bad art” which results from a form of insincerity from social pressure in favor of that which society calls beauty. The thing about bad art is that insincerity which lies at its roots is not perceived by the artist himself.6

I feel that looking at the Monument from Foucault’s point of view leads to a deeper understanding of the power relationships at play. Insincerity is only one aspect of it. In the case of the masses of Iraqi society, there is a struggle between freedom and will, also. According to Foucault,

there is the struggle of the individual, on the one hand, they (those in power) assert the right to be different, and they underline everything which makes individuals truly individual. On the other hand they attack everything which separates the

4. Ibid., 5.
5. Ibid., 10.
6. Ibid., 24.
individual, breaks the link with others, splits up community life.]

Hussein succeeds in suppressing the individual since the individual is the one who has freedom. He controls the community through the manipulation of ideology, history, and religion. The Monument depicts the Iraqi’s “unfreedom” where, in front of authority, there is no freedom of the individual.

Lawrence Weshler, in his article “Profiles: Architects Amid the Ruins,” provides a very vivid example of this freedom versus will opposition. He narrates the life of Samir al-Khalil and the reasons why he wrote both The Republic of Fear and The Monument. Khalil, being an architect himself, felt that one of the things that most repelled him from Saddam Hussein’s regime was the dictator’s penchant for neo-Fascist architecture and, more specifically, the collusion of the Iraqi intelligentsia and the Iraqi artistic establishment in the realization of Saddam’s multi-million dollar schemes. One such architect was his own father Mohammed Makiya, the founding head of Baghdad University’s School of Architecture and one of the foremost architects in the Middle East. Makiya had started out in the fifties creating exquisite, understated modern structures appropriate to the ancient archaeological sites they surrounded, but by the mid-eighties, was submitting proposals at Saddam’s behest for projects like a huge, lavish, new Baghdad State Mosque.

Khalil studied to be an architect himself and, during the time he worked in his father’s office, saw first hand the manipulation of art and architecture by Saddam Hussein. After the Baathists stormed into power in 1968, no sphere of Iraqi life was allowed to exist outside politics. Everything became intensely political, and only one kind of politics was allowed. Makiya’s approach to these proposals was that no matter what the background behind his architecture, it was, in any case, a valuable contribution to the lives of common people in Iraq.

Somebody had to do it, and it might as well have been done well. I with my forty years of experience and skills owed it to my country — it had nothing to do with the regime. What did they matter? They would be gone. But who knew if Iraq would ever have such an opportunity again?

Here perhaps lies the miscalculation which later in his life, Khalil began to see. The vision, which his father saw, dovetailed completely with the Baathist vision and, in particular, with Saddam Hussein’s...
own vision of Baghdad as the once and future center of the world. Khalil's work is a critique of this very philosophy and is correspondingly against his own father — something which is inconceivable in the Middle East; hence making his search for truth even harder. In his analysis of the monument, one can see that the point of difference lies in the fact that Khalil did care about the roots and ideals upon which architecture and art lie. For him, that was fundamental to the issue and could not be ignored even if enforcing that sense of responsibility meant a critique of the whole system itself and his own father. The freedom of the artist becomes all important as someone who can make a substantive reflection of the models and ideals of the society. In the case of Khalil's father, his own personal freedom and reflections became questionable. This is a position that requires understanding. I have thus far given a political and historical context to the manipulation of art and architectural forms for political purposes. One now needs a tool with which to call these issues into question. In part two of this paper, I will use the post-modern concept of deconstruction in order to pose questions about the "monumental"

examples of distinct power relationships like those just illustrated.

PART TWO

"Deconstruction is not what you think."
—Geoff Bennington

For Jacques Derrida, "Deconstruction" is an idea — a method with which to interpret the real world. Ideas become fragmented as points of view are shifted. The questions which need to be considered are — first, whether deconstruction can be a means of interpreting the power relationships as set forth by Foucault; second, is deconstruction a tool with which to question the power structure from which art forms like The Monument are made; and finally, what does one mean by post-modern Islamic thought?

Deconstructive ideas stem from the ability to disturb our ideas of traditional or accepted values. In the case of the Monument and other art forms, it is not a demolition but a diagnoses of structural problems within apparently stable structures.

Deconstruction gains its force by challenging the superficial values of harmony, unity and stability, posing instead a different view of structure; the view that flaws are intrinsic to the structure.9

Hence, to find truth beneath the layers of the Monument, one can

speak of unearthing “the parasite from within the structure.”

The theory challenges the sense of stable, coherent identity which we associate with pure form. According to Derrida, “Deconstruction locates certain crucial opposition and binary structures. These include nature and culture, theory and practice, concept and metaphor.”

Deconstructive theory now produces a feeling of unease. There is need now to understand the inherent power structure beneath the outwardly pure forms of the Monument of Saddam Hussein. At this point, I have used the theory of deconstruction to question Saddam Hussein’s manipulation of power relationships through art. This investigation leads to the question I had raised at the onset of this paper: what possible directions evolve from this deconstruction of traditional thought within the Islamic context?

There is an obvious need for a “reconstruction” of thinking, which spans from the ideological past to the inevitably materialistic future, and still operates within existing legacies of power relationships. Dr. Ali Shariati speaks of the idea of reconstruction of inherent power relationships as a “return to self.” For Shariati, in the Sociology of Islam, power relationships become unbalanced through the dilemma of

Deconstruction is free. Through its freedom, it challenges social and political structures. The voice in deconstruction is, therefore, not authoritative and, according to Derrida,

we should let many voices speak. There is nothing more logical, no monologue that is the responsibility for deconstruction, it is never individual or a matter of the single, self-privileged authoritative voice. It is always a multiplicity of voices and gestures, and you can take that as a rule, that each time deconstruction speaks through a single voice, it is wrong, it is not deconstruction.11

Through this analysis, deconstruction is the tool which can be used to blur the boundaries of Foucault’s power structure — freedom versus will — and to investigate the nature of power relationships manifested through the medium of art and architecture. This theory can and has been applied to other media of expression but in this paper is restricted to art forms and an understanding of its defined role in Islamic society.
Muslim identity and the passively accepted western social values and models. He addresses the unanimous consensus that there is a need for an indigenous solution, one that would project fresh direction. He goes on to state that this idea is only a starting point. Recognizing the idea is not enough to realize that Muslims need to return to themselves and their own character. Instead, he states that there are questions to face; namely, what is the self? What are we referring to when we are seeking to return to our own culture?

The explicit notion in his 1962 speech, titled “Art Awaiting the Savior,” is that returning to the self does and should not mean the revival of superstitions, frozen traditions, fanaticism and uncivilized indigenous traditions.

Returning to self means to return to one’s own character. It means to breathe with the spirit, seeking the constructive, active and progressive aspects of culture which have in the past created societies, civilization and urbanization. It does not mean return to the problems, which have, through time and according to needs, died and are now extinct.12

For Shariati, the most immediate concern is to fight against elements which bind and weaken an Islamic nation and impede creativity and progress. A return to self does not mean a return to worn out ideas.

The most important aspect of Shariati’s writings for this paper is his proposition that the “returning to the self” means a revival of the arts. His views, in a sense, argue aspects of post-modernism. Shariati states that art can no longer be elitist; it has already broken beyond boundaries and has spread among the masses. In a sense, it is no longer accessible to only the elite, but “true art” is controlled by the renewed conscious and with a sincerity that is understandable by all.

How can art be the “savior?” As was seen in the case of Saddam Hussein’s Monument, the use of art and architecture has been manipulated to exemplify ideas of tyrannical power and symbolism. Shariati is obviously referring to a different art form which is different from the insincerity of The Monument and other political propaganda. According to Shariati, this art would be a means of understanding the human being. Even though efforts towards development and culture have been strengthened, they remain incomplete if the human being is not understood within the cultural framework. “Art can be the tool through which to understand the human since art can be subjective (revealing emotions and aspects of human needs) or else be very

It is important to notice that esthetic form manipulated to an end like that of the Monument is not taken into consideration as art.

Art is a medium for ideas and, ideally, is the medium through which conflicts and ideas are evolved. Nothing is stagnant about this process and its constant evolution, change, and struggle. There is room for open dialogue and a medium for all points of view. According to Shariati, "what is special is that there are different kinds of expression and each person can see the world according to the character of his reasoning." In a sense, Shariati glorifies the artist's role as a visionary and "savior" of society. The responsibility of art is to decrease the feeling of alienation and to express what does not exist and, in a sense, "needs to be." He reveres the artist as possessing an almost prophetic stature in order to be the "guiding light" of society.

As mentioned earlier, there are aspects of post-modernism in Shariati's thinking. First, there is the common understanding that knowing oneself is not limited to the individual level but finding the true character means understanding the universal world. This understanding must include the West and foreign ideas since weakness can and does stem from misinterpretations and cutting oneself off from reality. Value exists in removing oneself from one's culture in order to appreciate its value; which is different from an escapist attitude. Now, from Shariati's thoughts, the responsibility of art arises in the need for an honesty of spirit and, through art, a shaking of pretensions, customs, and delusions and an active questioning of inherent power structures.

Post-modernism can be a new way of thinking about Islam and can push the philosophy of Shariati still further. According to Michael Fischer and Mehdi Abedi in *Debating Muslims, Cultural Dialogues*...
in Postmodernity and Tradition, post-modernism when applied to Islam refers to the increasing pervasiveness of global interaction, from small-scale communities to international networks. "Post-modernist" play affects the elites, while belatedness in all its virulent anxieties and political and economic inequities affects the proletarianized masses. They, for instance, call the global recruitment of labor force in the Persian Gulf an increase in cultural interference, or a cross cultural discourse. In the case of the 1989 book burnings, pressures on governments to ban Salman Rushdie’s Satanic Verses is an instance of Islamic Fundamentalist uprising not only in Pakistan and Iran, but England, and even South Africa. The same repercussions can be seen in revolutionary Iran:

The impact of the language of art has frequently and effectively been used in the struggle against two enemies namely, the Shah’s oppressive regime on the one hand and the Eastern-Western blocks on the other. Even before the rightful crisis of our “ummah” crumbled the walls of the oppressive ruler, the walls of our cities had gone to war against the walls of the oppressive regime consequently weakening and shaking their very foundation. Abedi relates these themes of intercultural dialogue and transnationally extended discourse systems by using art as an example of a medium through which dramatic and complex social changes are portrayed. He refers in particular to poster art and cartoons of the Iranian revolution. Where words are slippery, the visual sometimes is direct and clear and this is especially true for cartoons. The “small media” jokes, songs, tapes, graffiti, posters and cartoons are revealing indices of consciousness, world historical locus, and sociological positioning.

The revolutionary posters of the Iranian revolution vividly articulate the cultural inter-references in modern Iran; bringing together, on the one hand, the graphic traditions of


18. Ibid., 339.
the Persian miniature, of murals used as props by epic story tellers, and of calligraphic and arabesque design and, on the other hand, an international third world revolutionary modernist graphic lineage that dates back via the Cuban revolution to the Russian revolution. Cartoons on all political sides of the Iranian revolution provide not only inventories of images, symbols, and visual puns; but perhaps also an access to the increasing politics of signs in the postmodern world. This goes beyond stereotyping as cartoons primarily work as oppositional forms: exposing and poking fun at the pretensions of the national or international political order and its claims for legitimacy.

According to Fisher and Abedi, they intrigue esthetically through their gestures at abstraction which forward insight, optical purity, access to essence, form or spirit through suppression of an interest-laden play of language. Through this abstraction, gesturing remains in the realm of the recognizable picture as well as being in a mixed textual-visual form through captions, labels, thought or voice balloons, and the depiction of verbal metaphors, etc. Fists and victory signs merge with Islamic symbols and also with photos of demonstrating crowds. A colossal fist breaks through barbed wire in a fury of fire that also ignites an American flag in the foreground. Another hand chokes the serpent of imperialism whose skin is designed from the US flag (see illustrations).

These examples are problematic because they must be dealt with on two levels: they are self-representational, used as a form of political propaganda, and they represent a relation between the ideologies and their social carriers. This creates a multi-faceted political picture: in postmodern terms, there is a multidimensional text with multiple meanings on the three different levels. Deconstructive theory now becomes the tool through which a critical anthropological practice can “locate, place, and critique from the ‘inside’ as well as from ‘without.’ Hence, there needs to be a stress on discourses and sociologically based linkages.”

There is a definite conflict between the two aspects and ideas of art. On one hand, Shariati seems to hold an ideological approach to art as a means with which to disrupt the imbalance in power relationships towards a goal: a “return-
artistic deconstruction
ing to the self” and constructing a reality based on symbols, values and meanings. Art, in this respect, becomes more of a proposition rather than an imposition.

I think an example of this kind of art is calligraphy which mediates between the linguistic and the visual and is a flexible design device which, like the flowing arabesque, can integrate and harmonize new elements with the old. Calligraphic emblems of the revolution, such as the emblem on the flag of the Islamic Republic, are not only ideological and symbolic but also a link between the past and present: modernity and tradition. For Shariati, art would seem to fall between idealism and materialism: idealistic in that art should embody the meanings of Islam and reflect the values of society, and materialistic in that art should show how to achieve direction which idealism does not. On the other hand, the manipulation of idealistic terms through power, competition, domination, control and power structures has been clearly shown in the example of Saddam Hussein’s monument as grossly inadequate. In the posters of revolutionary art, these signs and connotations are used to manipulate the masses in a materialistic approach. The kinds of gaps that must be filled in both binary oppositions must be deconstructed, and ideas of power structures called into question.

An example of both oppositions is seen at work in Shaaban’s *Both Left and Right Handed*. Relating to a Palestinian women’s handicrafts exhibition held in the center of the Palestinian refugee camp Al Mokhiam in Damascus. The book notices that most of the pedestrians and organizers were men. Shaaban, a woman explicit in her judgment of the situation states, “this is an exhibition of female handicrafts held by a women’s organization in its own headquarter, and yet women are pushed back into a second position.”22 Her insightfulness into the situation showed that despite men’s desperate efforts to be masters, the presence of the women’s work in the exhibition hall stated that women were the true creators. It was incredible to see how tragedies, massacres, and sufferings were reborn as beautiful embroidered pieces. The traditional embroidery on the front of Palestinian dresses was turned into drawing on glass, pottery and emotive political posters; not unlike the messages from the Iranian revolution.

There are two levels of power relationship at play in these examples. First, the external political...
pressure on the Palestinian people; and, second, the internal domination of women by men within the Palestinian social structure. The exhibition thus played a dual role: to display the Palestinian heritage and pride despite foreign pressure and to publicly display the gender of the real creators within internal Palestinian life. The beauty of the handicrafts attest to this power and speak louder than words.

What is the context of what the women are saying that makes it so powerful? Symbols from costume embroidery are used to revive nationalistic feelings in the face of Israeli occupation and suppression. One example is the prevailing cactus motif which only recently became an important design in Palestinian costume embroidery. The cactus is the symbol of hope. According to Palestinian villagers, the cactus springs back to life even after Israeli settlers attempted to eliminate it by burning it to the ground. The moral, according to Ted Swedenberg in his article “The Palestinian Peasant as National Signifier,” is simple but powerful: the Arab presence can simply not be buried. The cactus signifies Arab survival; the ineradicable mark of the Palestinian farmer, and by Metonymic extension — the nation in the land.23

The questions then seem to be — Is it proven that art and architecture are both the middle ground of materialism and idealism? Is it a sufficient tool with which to question existing power relationships — in particular that of materialism vs. idealism? Does post-modern thought prove to be the adequate means to call these relationships into question?

In attempting to synthesize the question of whether art proves to be the middle ground between materialism and idealism, one must understand the vacuum which Shariati’s ideas are attempting to fill. Both Shariati and Hussein approach art from different standpoints. Shariati, on the one hand, focuses on the individual artist where art does not have value in and of itself but its value lies in its ability to do something and achieve a goal. In his case, art would be a reflection of society’s values and a medium for dialogue, conflicts, ideas; and, accordingly, a medium for future directions in Islamic society. In other words, a more indigenous modernization is appropriate through which all aspirations are heard and shifted towards a common goal. The extent to which Hussein twists these ideas of Shariati becomes problematic. Hussein’s source of failure is that he sees the use of art as a vehicle

for his own political expression. He is manipulating history, ideology and symbols from a broader national and international context toward his own goals. His voice is a monologue which does not include the desired values of society — which deconstruction deems necessary. It is in the face of such power manipulation that Shariati's return to self becomes important, and how; in a one hundred and eighty degree change, art becomes the critique of the power relationships of Saddam Hussein.

Clifford Geertz, in his chapter on "Art as a Cultural System" agrees with the notion of an artist's responsibility to focus on the broader picture because it is the individual artist who operates within the society, and ultimately reflects it in his or her art:

The feeling an individual becomes more important because no man is an island but a part of the main, the feeling a people has for life appears of course, in a great many other places than in their art. It appears in their religion, their morality, their science, their commerce, their technology, their politics, their amusements, their law, even in way they organize their everyday practical existence. The talk about art...is largely directed to placing it within the context of these other expressions of human purpose and the pattern of experience they collectively sustain.24

I feel that Geertz provides a fitting sense of closure, he claims the issues of power relationships and

future directions are a part of a system that needs reconstruction. As Geertz indicates, the factors involved in this reconstruction are particular, events and movements which are tied to a complex number of implications which must be understood without bias. The outsider needs help to reach these interpretations and then, understand the symbols of embroidery, calligraphy and other indigenous art forms that genuinely speak of people and real sociological issues. The outsider must understand that these changes should not be seen as a threat in any way, and that Muslim creativity and progress gains its value from open dialogue; not from a revival of frozen traditions. In these respects I feel that Shariati’s analysis poses a satisfying beginning through which ideas and issues can be expressed through the medium of art. I feel that these ideas will come a long way in achieving a method by which to understand the meaning of art both cross-culturally, and internally.

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