michael benedikt

2000 raoul wallenberg lecture
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Raoul Wallenberg was born in Sweden and came to the University of Michigan to study architecture. In 1935, he graduated with honors and received the American Institute of Architects Silver Medal. He returned to Europe at a time of great discord and, in 1939, saw the outbreak of the war that was to involve the whole world in unprecedented terror and destruction.

Over the next six years, many ordinary citizens were killed. Jews, Gypsies, homosexuals, communists and those not of Nazi persuasion were exterminated. In March 1944, Hitler ordered Adolf Eichmann to prepare for the annihilation of the Jewish population in Hungary. In that summer, 32 year old Raoul Wallenberg was sent to serve as first secretary of the Swedish delegation in Budapest. Over the next year, he moved quickly to help save the lives of more than 100,000 people – Jews and many other minorities who otherwise almost certainly would have perished. He demonstrated extraordinary insight, intelligence and unbelievable courage. He issued fake passports that proclaimed their holders to be Swedish citizens. He set up safe houses and created shelters where people could get food and medical treatment. He bribed German officials using money from the United States War Refugee Fund and threatened others with war crimes trials after the war.
In December 1944, Budapest was surrounded by the Russians, and a month later Raoul went to meet the Russian commander. He was never seen again. To honor his life, the alumni and his former classmates initiated the Raoul Wallenberg Lecture Series in 1971. Five years later, an endowment was established for an annual Wallenberg Lecture. A sculpture commemorating Wallenberg’s courage, given in memory of his classmate Sol King, now stands outside the architecture building.

The Raoul Wallenberg Lecture focuses on architecture as a humane social art – one which recognizes the power of architects, as members of the community of human beings, to have a critical ethical dimension in our lives and work. Since 1972, the College of Architecture and Urban Planning has invited outstanding speakers to honor this most distinguished of alumni. The first lecture was given by Sir Nikolaus Pevsner, and subsequent speakers have included Rudolf Arnheim, Daniel Libeskind, Denise Scott Brown, Max Bond, Charles Correa, Vincent Scully and, most recently, Kenneth Frampton. It is an honor for the College and the University of Michigan to host these lectures.

Brian Carter
Professor and Chair of Architecture
Michael Benedikt is a practicing architect and Professor of Architecture. He is a graduate of the University of Witwatersrand in South Africa and Yale University. He holds the Hal Box Chair of Urbanism at the University of Texas where he is also director of the Center for American Architecture and Design and executive editor of its journal. He has been a visiting professor at the Graduate School of Design at Harvard and a Scholar in Residence at the Rockefeller Foundation Center in Bellagio, Italy.

Michael Benedikt publishes and lectures widely on architecture, design theory, computers, social trends, art, aesthetics and most recently, values. He is a clear, original and profound thinker. Like Raoul Wallenberg who cared about human life, Professor Benedikt cares deeply about human values, as well as architectural and planning values. He writes insightfully about the threat of, not too little political freedom, but too much economic freedom. The stakes today may not be as high as they were when Raoul Wallenberg snatched 100,000 people, one by one, from the jaws of death, but there are other serious risks afoot in our culture.

Benedikt has written eloquently on the not-so-eloquent subject of the invisible and insidious destruction of human community by our economic system. The free market, which is such a genius at establishing price but such an idiot at dealing with externalities,
and which has dealt us such false bargains as big box retail, is
summed up in a footnote by Benedikt in the following terms:

“In small towns across America, people flocked to WalMart in spite of
the complex damage done to their communities and landscapes, because
WalMart presented as simple a proposition, and as undemanding a face
as is possible: one-stop shopping, guaranteed lowest prices with, moreover,
no unwanted commitment (your money back if you do not like what you
got). Furthermore there would be no sticky social transactions such as the
likes of the old pharmacist or hardware store owners, just efficient and
smiling youths to help you when you cannot help yourself to the cornucopia.
Simple as 1-2-3. Long hours, easy access, and plenty of parking too! Availing
themselves almost robotically of this source of simplicity, ease, and apparent
money savings, Americans demonstrate how they choose freedom at all
costs. As long as the costs are rendered invisible, as when they are diffused
in tiny long-term “quality of life” degradations, as when they are borne by
the community rather than themselves, as when they are paid later rather
than sooner, and/or exacted in…nonmonetary tokens rather than monetary
ones… arrangements, all, which aggressive sellers, financiers, and politicians
are more than happy to make for them.”

Raoul Wallenberg might have agreed that the destruction
of human life and community can take many forms. Michael
Benedikt has reflected deeply and written provocatively on
both the subtle and the blatant transgressions against life
and community.

Douglas Kelbaugh
Dean, Taubman College
michael benedikt
It is a special honor for me to give the Wallenberg Lecture at the University of Michigan. I grew up the only child of two survivors, and this made knowing something of the Holocaust's unimaginable cruelty very much a part of my life. My parents’ eyewitness accounts to me of that period, though infrequent, as well as their own suffering-in-memory, set a certain heaviness into my otherwise idyllic youth – a sadness I could not speak of, an indignation my peers did not feel. My parents’ stories inspired a sense of mission in me too, a much larger one than they intended me to have. I wondered: Could I, with my life, somehow make up for the loss of all those Jewish lives? Or, if not make up for them exactly, for this mission would be absurd, then at least achieve something that would make their ghosts proud? Could I make the world a better place, one where a civilized people could not, would not, turn on their own again?

At eighteen, and in college, architecture for me could not be just an aesthetic pursuit, nor an economic or social one. Architecture had to be a moral pursuit, a search for goodness in beauty and beauty in goodness, with truth the royal road. The glory and comfort of buildings had to be One Thing, fine beyond measure, and everlasting.

And so, with me, it remains.
I knew about Raoul Wallenberg only in the most cursory way before preparing for this lecture. World War II hero, savior and shelterer of Jews, a gentile who lost — or perhaps gave — his life in the effort. This much I knew. My surprise at learning that Wallenberg was also an architect, and that he had studied at the University of Michigan, cannot be exaggerated. The question that occurred to me as supremely worth exploring was this: Given what Wallenberg did in German-occupied Hungary fifty-six years ago, and how he did it, does it matter now — did it matter then — that he was trained as an architect?

I think that it does matter, and did, and in this talk I’m going to try to explain why. Indeed, I think what Wallenberg did with his architectural training (he never really practiced) can challenge us to think about architecture in a different way. The connecting thread is the idea of shelter; and shelter, if you think about it, is something provided by both architecture and law.

How architecture is defined seems to me to be very important. Here is one definition: *Architecture is the art, science and business of conceiving significant buildings.*

Few people, I think, would object to this as a definition of architecture, especially if we allow “conceiving,” somewhat

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A colleague who teaches at SCI-Arc, Coy Howard, made a hobby of collecting definitions of architecture. I think he got up to something like 400 before he stopped. He planned to make a book of them, but never did.
archaically, to connote 'giving birth to' as well as 'thinking up' or imagining. As comprehensive and reasonable a definition as this is — it certainly covers ninety percent of what architects do — if we leave it there, we are not going to learn from Wallenberg. So I am going to offer you another broader, deeper definition which is the one I try to work with as a teacher and live by as a practitioner:

Architecture is the conscious shaping of the material environment to protect and enhance life.

By conscious, I mean intentional, foresightful, informed and free.

By shaping I mean designing, modeling, organizing and making.

By material world I mean the man-made as well as the natural world, physical and actual rather than represented or imaginary.

By protect I mean against aggression, accident, disease or inclement weather.

By enhance I mean to make longer and richer and more fruitful or productive.

And by life I mean all life, starting with human life — regardless of class, race, creed, etc. — and including animals, plants and even microbes, in descending order of importance.
Thus: Architecture is the intentional, foresightful, informed, free and conscious shaping of the man-made and natural material environment so as to protect life – all life, but primarily human lives – against aggression, accident, disease and harsh weather, in order to make those lives longer, richer and more fruitful.

At architecture schools we tend to emphasize the shaping part of this definition. Architects are deeply interested in shapes, in forms, in creating compositions that delight or awe and that people have not exactly seen before. This is why, more often than not, visiting speakers at architecture schools are talented shape-makers, inspiring action with their buildings and drawings while exemplifying, with their dress and language, the attitudes young architects might strike in order to become talented shape-makers – form-givers – themselves. This is well and good. I have no problem with form or delight or awe. Life thrives on invention apparently for its own sake.

But I want to dwell on the second half of my definition of architecture – the protect and enhance life part, the why of it all. I want especially to focus on the theme of protection. For be it a cave or tree, a hut or palace, architecture’s first purpose is to provide shelter: to shield, to cover, to give refuge, to seclude,
to harbor, to cup sunlight and peace in its rooms. The sheltering function of architecture, this set of things that even the plainest of buildings does to keep us safe and secure, tends to operate below the threshold of consciousness and without thanks from us – without thanks, that is, until bombs, bullets, strife, poverty, collapses or natural disasters reveal its contours, or we come home after a week’s camping grateful for our beds, or we open our eyes on a day like any other day and see, as though for the first time, the eaves of our house holding off the sun and patiently waiting, waiting to shed the rain. There is poetry in shelter, not just necessity.

All that is by way of introduction. The rest of the lecture is in three parts. The first part considers the ways in which buildings in general, but architecture in particular – because it does so artfully, complexly, and well – satisfy basic human needs. I pay special attention to the needs for survival and security, as well as to architecture’s involvement in the provision of social legitimacy and personal freedom.

The second part focuses upon the life and exploits of Raoul Wallenberg, trying to understand him as a blessed provider of shelter in an expanded sense, that is, in both the legal and
physical senses of the term. Legal shelter – and what is law but a set of constraints upon others’ harmful behavior? – and architectural shelter overlap. They are in some part identical, interchangeable, the one standing in for, or obviating the need for, the other.

The third part of the lecture goes on to suggest that much of the formal freedom enjoyed by the major architects of our day continues to depend not just on the movement and accumulation of capital, but upon the legal and psychic shelter provided by the just rule of largely just law in the environing society.

I conclude that, with hundreds of lives in the balance – including, significantly, his own – Raoul Wallenberg pursued architecture to the deepest possible levels of its theory, to that place where laws and walls coincide, where speaking/writing and construction are one. He practiced, too, the deepest and most important of all arts – namely, the art of shelter – and he did so in the way, perhaps, that only an architect could.
People have many needs, but not an infinite number of them. Depending on how closely one defines a need, one can identify hundreds of them or boil them all down to one: the need to survive, to live on. I will settle on a manageable number — six, to be exact. These six basic needs are:

- Freedom
- Confidence
- Approval
- Legitimacy
- Security
- Survival

This selection of needs — I call it the stratigraphy of needs — is a modification of Abraham Maslow’s well-known hierarchy of five basic needs, but I will not go into the similarities and differences between his list and mine here. Suffice it to say that the dynamics are the same, to wit: Unmet lower needs have intrinsic trumping power over equally unmet higher needs, which means that it is only as our lower needs become satisfied that we can comfortably, indeed safely, turn our attention to satisfying higher ones. Thus: As one’s need for *survival* is satisfied, so one begins to look for, or demand, *security*. As one feels more secure, so one starts to seek *legitimacy*. After legitimacy, one wants *approval* — that is to say, one wants to be liked over and above being tolerated because the
law says you have to be. Feeling approved of, one seeks ways to feel more confident; and upon the basis of achieving confidence one progresses finally to experiencing freedom – and not just any freedom (not the freedom of the rogue or vagabond, the freedom of having “gotten away” with something), but a freedom that is sustainable because it is founded upon the mutually satisfactory arrangements one has made with other people, with institutions and, in a manner of speaking, with the physical environment.

Associated with each need too is a characteristic method of exerting influence on others – a characteristic force. Associated with freedom, for example, is the force of example-setting. Associated with confidence is encouragement; with approval, flattery; with legitimacy, authority; with security, power; and with survival, violence. Thus, free people influence each other mainly by their example. They act in ways that they would have others emulate, but leave them free not to do so. To someone needing confidence, however, one offers words or deeds of encouragement. If the other’s need is for approval, one turns to flattery. If compliments do not work, one appeals to, or wields, authority. If authority does not work, one uses power. If power does not work, one resorts to violence (or could). From this we see that built into the stratigraphy is a moral direction and a familiar moral rule, to wit: In every situation in which one wishes to

These are my observations, not Maslow’s.

Tellingly, if you say to someone: “Follow my example!” you are not leading or persuading by example. You are using authority.
Two things to note. First, some readers of this lecture might be perplexed that freedom is treated so lightly in the stratigraphy — last in line, as it were, in the list of needs that need satisfying. In the book from which these passages are taken (Value, see Note 66), I distinguish between freedom and liberty, meaning by “freedom” something more psychological, moment-to-moment, and personal, and by “liberty” something more freighted and political having to do with the right to be/become free, with autonomy. Liberty operates at the level of legitimacy. The American Revolution was about liberty, which is precursor to, and the essential ground of, personal freedom(s). On this definition, liberty is what “freedom-fighters” risk their lives for, not freedom exactly.

Second, there is more to the distinction between persuasion and coercion than I have just provided. Consider the difference between a promise and a threat. Promises are morally superior and less coercive than threats because they usually invoke value-positive, rather than value-negative, future states for the one to whom the promise is made. (E.g., “I promise I will kill you” is not really a promise. It’s a threat. One promises “good things” and threatens “bad things.”) This having been said, the moral rule stated earlier can be restated as follows: Do not use promises or threats that involve a lower need if you could use promises or threats that are associated with a higher need.


Influence or motivate another person, first apply the force associated with the highest possible stratum of need — i.e., start at the top. Dealing with people in terms of their lower needs (survival, security, legitimacy) is generally coercive; while addressing people in terms of their higher needs (approval, confidence, freedom) is persuasive. The moral belief that persuasion beats coercion, we see, is built into the stratigraphy.

This much in theory. To understand how it applies to architecture, I draw from my forthcoming book, Value. In the passages that follow I offer a phenomenology of how the six needs of the stratigraphy — survival, security, legitimacy, approval, confidence and freedom — work in architecture.

First and foremost, architecture addresses the need for survival. How so?

Well, do we not trust that buildings will not fall down around our heads, or burn at a spark or melt in the rain? We do. We count on them to protect us from the sun and heat; from wind and cold; from animals and insects; from dust, sand, stones, spears and bullets. We trust that the water we drink from their pipes will not poison us, that the air we breathe from their ducts will not harm us. We trust that their edges will not burn or cut,
scrape or stab. We store vital food and supplies in our buildings, and the waste we produce in their consumption – from garbage to sewage to bad air – is isolated and quickly moved away. Buildings hide our valuables, and they can hide us from our enemies.

No matter how elaborately or simply, the first obligation of all habitable buildings is to do these survival-related things. To be called architecture, buildings must do these things mindfully and well.

But what does this mean, “mindfully and well”? First, that the way buildings meet our survival needs, or any of our needs for that matter, is made aesthetically comprehensible to the senses, and second, that they provide the highest degree of satisfaction possible with current technologies and techniques. For at the limit, survival needs manifest themselves in the desire for far more than just staying alive. They express themselves in the desire for supreme physical health, cleanliness and comfort: the perfect temperature and freshness of air; the pleasurable feel and touch of every surface; the absence of glare or noise or dust or grime; effortless access to victuals, water, sun, and so forth. Sometimes, of course, a measure of physical discomfort or risk is sought precisely to provoke the need, to un-dull the palate. But the idea is, having provoked the need, to satisfy it nonetheless — indeed, to satisfy all the more.

\[ \text{Would it not be interesting to discover that health benefits ascribed to the “Mediterranean diet” — i.e., lots of olive oil, bread, fruit, vegetables, wine, etc. — were not really due to the diet, but to the Mediterranean environment: its sunniness, its ancient fields and towns, the pedestrianism and public sociability more or less forced by the architectural conventions of street and square and “too-small” private living spaces?} \]
With survival issues largely laid to rest, we move on to the need for **security**. We look to buildings, for example, for protection from trespass or seizure of person and property. We think of them as property themselves, as the castles that each man’s home is, with walls and gates and doors and locks, with security systems and patterns of visibility designed to make our castles defensible, and with countless subtle boundary markers saying “this place is mine – beware all ye who enter.” We want not just Vitruvian firmness, but reassurance of future firmness too. And we want privacy, that is, we want control over the flow of information to and from our bodies and in and out of the spaces that we inhabit. The security needs satisfied by architecture are also more subtle. When we are indoors, we need always to feel oriented and connected to the outdoors, however minimally. Thus, windows provide not only light and air, but views outside. And when I talk about views, I mean not just picture views, because a view could be provided by a painting or a video screen, a two-dimensional thing relating information from a real view, even in real time, as from a security camera. Rather, I mean views as three-dimensional things, shaped beams of information-bearing light that extend out into the world and lock into our consciousness, preventing our rotation. With real views, wherever we move in a room or building, we can understand at a glance how we are positioned with respect to the outside world and will not come loose from it… will not
Recall the low-level anxiety we feel when we get into an elevator, take a ride, and then step out onto an unfamiliar floor; or how oddly disconnected we feel when we spend more than an hour in a windowless room; or how disoriented we become in the fluorescent-lit corridors of hospitals or schools. The role of windows is more than to provide natural light or fresh air, as important as these things are. It is to fulfill our need for one profound aspect of security: geometric connection to the world as a whole, orientation. And they do so as no picture or video monitor could.

A visual domain’s size and location also suggest its owner’s power, and what is power if not the ability to affect another person’s security? It is an ability, a right, that even the humblest of us must have if we are to feel fully human.

Once again, the difference between ordinary buildings and architecture arises in the extent to which, and the artfulness with which, needs are addressed and met. For example, a building’s conveyance of a general sense of reliability, which helps us feel secure, extends far beyond how proudly it shows off its structural and defensive components — its beams, columns and walls. It extends to how sensitively the building responds to the rhythms of day and night and season, which depends, in turn, on great...

Many would be surprised by my claim, here, that the ability to affect another’s personal security, for good or ill, in harm or in aid, is all but a human right.

This is not the place to argue the issue in full, of course. Suffice it to say that from childhood on, proof of one’s effectiveness in the world is essential to feeling that one exists at all, let alone exists as a free and responsible agent. One must know of the depth and strength of that effectiveness, and this is provided by testing the meaning of power, by tasting the color of violence, now as victim, now as perpetrator, on probably more than one occasion. These are experiences one must both have and “deal with” in order to mature as a person. Said another way: One of the first things children must learn in order to control them is that they absolutely do have the power to hurt or save others, be these ‘others’ toys, pets, siblings, friends, or especially parents. Only knowing they have the power are they able to transcend power relations – or sublimate them, as Freud would say – and move on to satisfying higher needs and learning the art of using gentler forms of force.
If I am right, then the children most likely to turn criminally violent are those whose parents were—or appeared to them to be—unaffected by them, positively or negatively. With parents impervious, “strong,” indifferent to any of the child’s parent-directed actions and showing emotion only in connection with actions outside of the parent-child relation, children, still not believing in their power, escalate their quest... their quest, that is, to matter directly, in their own right, to those who hold the keys to their life and legitimacy. The need to find and feel their own power is something such children never get over.

Some of these children, of course, do not turn to violence. Perhaps finding surrogate parents, they become Napoleons in business, or in some other worldly pursuit. It depends on the proximity of believable role models.

For more on Edenization, see [www.slu.edu/departments/medicine/as/eden.html](http://www.slu.edu/departments/medicine/as/eden.html), and [www.cnn.com/HEALTH/9701/27/nfm/mental.rescue/index.html](http://www.cnn.com/HEALTH/9701/27/nfm/mental.rescue/index.html)

More subtle still are the positive effects of proximity to non-threatening animal life, this on the ancient logic that nothing fearful could be imminent when the animals nearby are happy. Consider, when you look out of the window and see pigeons and sparrows and squirrels darting about, dogs trotting and cats sleeping, perhaps cows in a field (that slow munching, that dim regard)... are you not deeply calmed, reassured that all is right with the world? It has recently been proven that the introduction of pets into old-age homes and hospitals has a profound effect on extending life and health. The process is called “Edenization.”

“Oh dear,” I hear you say, “cats, dogs, aquarium fish, parakeets... how kitsch.” But as designers we should understand that these things act upon us in important and more-than-aesthetic ways, and we should find ways to deal with them.

Fortunately or unfortunately, so rudimentary is most people’s understanding of the ways in which architecture provides security (and here I include architects), that many architects, rather than...
attend to the subtleties of the matter, leap to playing games of dare. Applause is more easily won by designing invisibly thin glass walls, impossibly long cantilevers, and impossibly slender or irrationally placed columns; by creating vertiginously tall spaces and bridges across them; by using side-hung glass elevators, cable-stayed structures, floors that become leaning or slanting walls; by planning atypical juxtapositions of functions, provocative views between public and private, and so on. We are familiar with these Piranesian effects. Our magazines love them. Like carnival rides, they both stimulate and satisfy our need for security; they engender experiences that seem dangerous but are actually safe, that meet the building code even as they seem not to. Played well, such games of dare can turn into art, to be sure, but let us note that they constitute a socially useful art (or game) too. The important effect is to appear to others not to need to feel secure, and this “not needing,” believed, is what enhances one’s actual security.

Far from perverse, the logic of it all gives us a glimpse of how architecture, just as soon as it transcends concern with actual survival, enters fully into what might be called the psychological economy, the larger market of signs and gestures and tokens and objects that satisfy human needs psychologically — and far from straightforwardly.
This brings us to an examination of our next higher need, which is for **LEGITIMACY**. Announcing social identity, establishing authority, laying claim to property, distinguishing people’s memberships of different institutions, manifesting the authority to give people, things and places names... these are some of the ways that architecture conveys legitimacy. Just as old and permanent forms of architecture once underwrote the legitimating power of the state, so did the grandeur of religious buildings instate the ultimate authority of God. Notwithstanding our present day more secular and populist democratic ways, these ancient models of legitimation-through-architecture are still emulated by legitimacy-granting institutions such as schools and universities, and by public buildings such as museums, libraries and courts of law, not to mention by the homes of the wealthy.

Also well understood is how a city, when naming a street, square or building after a prominent citizen, confers legitimacy upon the person honored with little regard to his or her morality. Simpler yet is when building names are bought for money: Think of the hospitals, art museums, laboratories, libraries, stadiums and sundry campus buildings in your town that bear the name of a man or woman of whom you would not otherwise know.
In order to be regarded as a person of standing, one must have a physical address, and the better the address, the better. A business card alone will not suffice, nor will a web site, nor will a post box number or phone number. Moreover, one must be from somewhere – a town, school or university that is itself known as a place where people of standing come from, and one that, preferably, has a discussable landmark.

Buildings, like people, require permits to legitimately exist. Do we all not have birth certificates, social security cards, passports, driver's licenses, university ID's? Are not marriage licenses like building permits, permits to (pro)create? Buildings need papers too, from inspection certificates to tax records to financial statements by the ream.

Inside buildings it makes a great difference whether one’s office is large or small, whether it has a window or not, whether it is in the middle of the building or at a corner, on a lower floor or an upper floor. The volume of space overseen indexes degree of authority; the position indexes social status. When one takes up a seat around a boardroom or dining room table, the head of the table dominates the others, followed by the mid-position on either side. Then there are the officially assigned parking spaces, key sets, name boards, mailboxes, washrooms, and so forth.
Even bedrooms have legitimate status meanings: Not just the largest, but the bedroom farthest from the front door, has the highest status. Architectural styles, quite apart from whatever sensory and aesthetic pleasures they might afford, are also strong indicators of social class, and so is the state of the upkeep of a building and its grounds.

Just as soon as the issues of official validation begin to fall away, the need for legitimacy begins to shade into the need for APPROVAL. In democracies, we note, there is reversal of order — that is, in order to gain legitimacy one must first get sufficient approval, usually in the form of votes. In this, democracies follow the moral rule of “starting at the top” that we discussed earlier. The older, more natural pattern is to base authority on power, that is, to win legitimacy on the basis of the proven ability to provide security to some and withhold security from others.

When building in a democracy, the same thing applies. Construction permits must be won not only by proving to city officials that the proposed structure is safe and legal, but by winning the approval — the liking — of its future neighbors. A property owner might legally be at liberty to build in almost any way he pleases, but designing in styles and with materials that neighbors will like, or at least not object to, is one of the ways in
which he seeks their future acceptance and patronage. This also stabilizes others' property values. The process of community design review lends a normativity to design that rankles “creative” architects, of course, but there is a wisdom in the system.

Gifts are tokens of approval. Can buildings be gifts? Not often, but yes – when a donor anonymously finances a campus building, a mogul builds a Taj Mahal for his beloved, or an NFL star buys a house for his mom, and so on. But to the extent that architecture exceeds mere building because of architects’ and builders’ and owners’ non-economic devotion to its fineness, one might see all architecture as a gift from its creators to its users, to its neighborhood, to society as a whole. Louis I. Kahn called Architecture (he would most often capitalize the word) an “offering.”

From the outside, a building is a citizen amongst citizens. It has rights; it has duties. This is about its legitimacy. But inside, too, good architecture is careful to provide spaces for respect and admiration, not just of its own interior effects, but also of people. Architecture allows distinctions in the social realm to find appropriate locations; it allows people of all classes to go about their lives in dignified and dignifying surroundings. Why should every room in a building, in the way it is furnished and finished, not allow – indeed encourage – its occupants to look as healthy, handsome, smart and beautiful as they can?

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10 This would be the view of Lewis Hyde in his influential book, *The Gift* (New York: Vintage Books, 1983), although he does not discuss architecture per se.
Louis Kahn was very interesting on this point too. He called a good building “a society of rooms.” I always thought it strange to call a building a society of rooms. Obviously, he had in mind some kind of hierarchical planning principle, something about grouping. But I think what he meant was that in a good building, in Architecture, every room is like a person, or should be. Every room in a building, according to Kahn, deserves its own direct natural light, its own structure, its own front and back, its own breadth and width and height, its own character, its own dignity. Then, and only then – just as the people in a room form a community – do rooms in a building form a community of rooms. What a lovely and helpful thought!

Feeling sufficient approval, CONFIDENCE becomes the next most urgent need, because without confidence, one cannot get to freedom. Having paid our dues to convention, to laws and duties and titles, having gained some considerable affection from those around us, we finally fear no serious fall.

Architecture can help bring about this state of mind. We see this when a building seems forward but not pushy or callow or cheap; when it looks new but in no way raw or unfinished; when there is a touch of abandon, of promise, of adventure, in its forms and patterns and colors. Upon entering buildings like this, the feeling rubs off.
Are confident buildings stylistically strange? Not very, and certainly not necessarily. They can follow already-admired traditions quite closely but execute them with élan, the way a skilled jazz singer plays with the phrasing of a well-known tune and gives it fresh meaning without ever disrespecting the original.

Now, certain of the games I listed earlier – games that architects play with our need for security – can also produce feelings of confidence. But they can also undermine them, as when architects make daring forms that the building’s inhabitants and neighbors soon habituate to and find pointless, or never habituate to and then find endlessly irksome. In both cases, it is the architect’s need to show confidence in his or her medium that is satisfied, and no one else’s. It is the same with design games involving provocations of our other needs by dramatically omitting or reversing the gestures conventionally required for their satisfaction.

A confident building is not so much dramatic as unapologetic in its siting, materials and form. Secure in the knowledge that whatever it replaced was of less value, broadly conceived, it does not squirm or try minimize its impact by bobbing around every boulder and mound, or by dodging every tree (“excuse me, excuse me…”). It does not camouflage itself with rustic or reflective materials. It does replicate its neighbors. It does not cower.

To explore more fully the four properties of “presence,” “significance,” “materiality,” and “silence/emptiness” as they apply to architecture, see my book For an Architecture of Reality (New York: Lumen Books, 1987).

Nature is not really natural if “natural” means always in harmony and balance, or if it means untouched by man. On the contrary, nature is always recovering from one disaster or another – flood, fire, storm, infestation or disease, a tidal wave, an eruption, an oil spill. Man’s relation to nature is reciprocal. For as long as there has been man, man has been part of nature, and nature part of man. What grows with evolution is the whole system’s complexity-
and-organization, containing man, animal, plant and microbe within it. Change is the only constant, as has been noted at least since Heraclitus, circa 500 BC.

So-called new environmentalists seem to understand this better than the “old environmentalists” who would have nature be left alone to return to a somehow more natural (read: perfect, holy, pristine) equilibrium state. New environmentalists, like Daniel Botkin, on the other hand, see no harmony in nature, no equilibrium. They accept man’s valuating presence everywhere on the planet, think it rightful in a deep sense, even natural, and ask us to be responsible for making nature better – as best we can. This emphatically does not mean turning any or all wilderness into one gigantic, bug-free golf course. It means nursing nature’s variety and freedom too, allowing it, if you will, the slack it allows us. See Daniel Botkin, Our Natural History: The Lessons of Lewis and Clark (New York: Grosset/Putnam, 1995), and A. Dwight Baldwin, Jr., Judith De Luce, and Carl Pletsch, Eds., Beyond Preservation: Restoring and Inventing Landscapes (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1994).

It does not try to reduce its scale by breaking itself down into parts or refusing (as though it could!) to cast a shadow. It does not shrink from evidently having cost some money – nor, at the other extreme, does it try to impress with its expensiveness.

Architecture that is confident of its quality and raison d’être stands up straight. It adds to the public world; it does not free-ride on what others have done. It asserts its right to be where it is in the fullness of its presence, significance, materiality and emptiness, along with nature and other buildings. It does not mind that we are endlessly curious about how it achieves its liveliness nonetheless. It will happily show us how it works, but only if we ask.

Feelings of confidence, insofar as they are induced in us by the designed environment, can also result from the type of legal and economic relationship one has to it. Are we at home or visiting, a resident or a tourist? Are we owners or renters? The degree of control we have over our literal place in the world, together with our familiarity with that place, makes a difference to how confidently we act in it. So does the presence or absence of other people. These are issues that architects can address, though few do.

Finally, let me discuss FREEDOM, America’s supreme value and Americans’ highest need. How does architecture help us be free?
Buildings, after all, are about providing structure — structuring space and time with walls and doors, gates and clocks — and all this would seem to be fundamentally anti-freedom. The trick is to pay special attention to the ways in which structure actually opens up, and holds open, those spaces, places and times where free speech, free action and free thought can take place.

Consider the freedoms underwritten by the First Amendment — for example, freedom of speech and assembly. Think about how architecture supports and even inspires rallies and convocations with steps, backdrops and squares; how streets allow marches and parades, and how these, once recorded and put into the media, become examples to others.

See how storefronts and newsstands and billboards fill the air with persuasion and news; how restaurants, coffee houses, bars, clubs and malls provide destinations for people to meet and cultivate extra-familial relationships.

Freedom of faith and religion: See how churches and synagogues and mosques can be placed almost anywhere, tax free, at will.

Freedom of movement: See how our streets and highways and air lanes throng with people exercising their freedom to be wherever

32 American cities have rarely been about creating beauty or expressing power, or even about providing common amenity; they have always been about increasing access to opportunity, about creating efficient markets and offering greater individual freedom with respect to them, which is not to say that the results have been optimal, even by such self-given criteria. Automobile commuting times have become all but dysfunctional in America's larger conurbations, for example, and the poor in particular suffer crises of mobility unknown to contemporary Europeans. Freedom of movement or access is not addressed explicitly in the Bill of Rights. Perhaps if it had been, two hour commutes and twenty minute searches for parking would be illegal.

Of course, the convenience of online shopping, entertainment, news gathering and social interaction do siphon off the desire to achieve anything like the same convenience in the real world; and one wonders if the effect of cyberspace's filling up will be to relieve what little pressure there currently is to remedy urban sprawl. I make no predictions here. The growth of online and virtual worlds

Wright himself was influenced as a young man by the relaxed and relatively open planning typical of the Shingle Style, which was popular for homes and hotels in the 1880s. In particular, Wright drew on the Shingle Style designs of Bruce Price in Tuxedo Park, New York. Of course, we should not ignore Wright's much later Johnson Wax building in Racine, Wisconsin as exemplary of the best of what the "open office" might look like. Then there is Wright's life-long involvement with his dreams for Broadacre City — the acme of American freedom as a style of planning.

they want whenever they want, and see how architecture cooperates with driveways and drive-throughs, parking lots, garages, new roadside building types, suburbs — indeed, with the entire panoply of land use patterns in modern cities. And what is the soundest argument that traditionalists can use to persuade Americans to prefer environments of a pre-modern, pre-automobile era? Their civility or beauty or human scale? To some extent, yes. But more convincing is the argument that neo-traditional or "New Urbanist" plans can — by obviating traffic and parking problems through higher densities and public transit — provide greater freedom and ease of movement towards objects of desire.

The American romance with freedom has long influenced architectural ideologies and styles, and continues to do so. Freedom requires space. Deeper than that, freedom is space, real or abstract; and space is what architecture shapes in both realms (although sharing the second with law). Consider how quickly America embraced the *raumplan*, or space plan, as the generator of its architecture, and *bürolandschaft*, or office landscaping, as its commercial interior standard. Or consider how, in the residential realm, Frank Lloyd Wright could "destroy the box" and give us, not the intricate dance of weightless but enclosing planes (as Theo van Doesberg had done with the same idea in Holland), but instead broad roofs and dissolved walls and removed corners
to evoke liberatory images of settling the wide open prairie of the West. Indeed, with his potent mix of style and rhetoric, Wright almost single-handedly established the rambling, open ranch house as America's suburban ideal. And Frederick Law Olmsted, the great landscape architect, put his finger on exactly why American citizens needed urban parks: "the feeling of relief... from the cramped, confined, and controlling circumstances of the streets of the town; in other words, a sense of enlarged freedom." 13

And consider how many long-span, lightweight structures, once used only in factories and train stations, today provide column-free space for maximum flexibility and unobstructed views for a wide variety of building types, from office buildings to shopping malls to high schools.

All this architectural openness has its economic advantages too. Set aside the often only putative benefits of flexibility-of-use. Skylights, large windows, and the easy flow of space from room to room – or better, from area to area – all tend to make interior space seem larger. This is because each room free-rides on the visual volume of the next, and the building as a whole, around its edges, free-rides on the space outdoors which it "brings in." Advantage? The larger the apparent square footage of a building or leasable area, the greater the price that can be asked for it. 15


Indeed, I would claim that architects' passion in the past century for talking about space rather than rooms (his in the attempt to seem as modern as physics) had the long-term effect of allowing others to drain architecture even further than it otherwise might have been of its character. Space is a conveniently generic and property-less substance. If space is what you are after, you don't need rooms with their own structure and light, color, cabinetry, and accoutrements – just a metal shed, or a couple of floor slabs ten feet apart. This is why our office buildings so closely resemble loaves of Wonderbread set on end, each floor a slice of whiteness, the whole wrapped in clear plastic. It will not be long before huge ads and labels appear across them, on the glass, as they do today on city buses.


Car designers also increase interior spaciousness by increasing "greenhouse" area, minimizing "pillow widths, lowering the waistline, and so forth. One of the major benefits to building owners of using steel and glass curtain walls set to the outside
of columns and other structural elements in office buildings is that they can calculate rentable area as that measured to the inside of the curtain wall, without subtraction of the area taken up by (or inconvenience created by) those internal structural elements. And of course, the very thinness of the wall brings inside and outside area into near agreement. The thin and scooped-out doors of economy cars apply the same strategy.

It is interesting that while the average house has grown larger in area since the 1950s, and with more rooms, the size of the average individual workplace has grown smaller in area. In the 1980s, office workplaces were around 250 square feet per person (including their share of public and service areas), while today it stands around 200 square feet, with about 80 square feet per person for white collar sweatshop operations like telemarketing and customer support. Time clocks and a sea of cubicles. So much for spatial freedom at work! (See Ann Carms, "Office Workers Rub Elbows as More Workplaces Shrink," Wall Street Journal, 7 May 1997, pp. B1, B10.)

Complementary is the advantage of not having to provide as many room-making walls and doors in the first place. In addition, ceiling heights can drop, and partitions, glass doors, window walls and fixed glass picture windows can be used that are cheaper to construct than the equivalent area of solid wall or operable window. This delivers freedom twice over: once in feelings of greater freedom given by spaciousness per se, and once again in the money saved by faster, thinner, emptier construction. This in turn grants us the freedom of choosing how to spend the money saved on other goods.

In all, the rhetoric of modernism in art and architecture in the United States has gone hand in hand with the rhetoric of freedom in politics and economics since at least the 1940s. They were well suited to each other. This is not to say that their association was without salutary results. Americans have indeed created for themselves a society of unprecedented physical mobility and economic opportunity. In more than just a geographical sense, America’s openness – and I mean to new ideas, new technologies, new art forms, new neighbors, products, jobs, living arrangements and subcultures – is the envy of the world. One only wishes that her architecture and countryside, which did so much to make these freedoms real for millions of people in the twentieth century, did not also have to pay so heavy a price.
In our adulation of freedom and openness, it is easy to forget how important exclusion and privacy are to the realization of the freedoms offered by architecture. After all, it is the closed door to the bedroom that allows ease and intimacy behind it; it is the closed door to the boardroom that allows executives to speak freely of company matters. It is the right to exclude others from private property — making them less free because it forbids them access — that allows markets to flourish. Without walls and doors, there is no freedom, only embarrassment and conflict. Without rules, there is no freedom, only chaos. What history can teach us is how to find the correct, most life-promoting balance.

I want to say something more about how the environment meets our security needs. Remember the first chapter of Genesis? In Genesis 1, a glorious story is told of the universe's creation in six days. The story is scientifically true only in its barest outlines, and with a lot of latitude as to the duration of a cosmic day. But it is true almost completely on the human level, inasmuch as it has been absorbed into Western culture's laws and poetics, and inasmuch as it still makes conceptual and moral sense to ordinary people. In Genesis 1, the world begins in — is formed out of — a lightless, formless, watery and windblown void without direction or limits. The first act of creation by God is to give structure to this chaos, to separate it into two temporal parts:
light and dark, with the regularity of day and night. The second act of creation adds another degree of order: the separation of the waters below from the waters above by the vault of the sky, the expanse of air. We now have two modes of materiality—water and air—and a bi-polar, orienting direction—up and down, gravity. The third act of creation is to gather the lower waters to one side so that there can be dry land—another act of division and structuring, note—and on this dry land He causes all seed-bearing plants to grow. On the fourth day, God installs the sun, moon and stars in their perfect arcs across the sky to mark out the seasons. On the fifth, He emplaces the animals and, on the sixth, He makes Man—a man, the first man—and empowers him to name and rule all he sees.

This first and culturally all-important chapter of Genesis portrays God as good—indeed, as happy in His work. He creates the world we see as an ordered one, sheltered from chaos, protected from formlessness—or entropy, to use a more scientific term—and categorized. The garden of Eden is finite, protecting. (In neighboring traditions, as Paradise, it is thought of as walled.)

The story could have gone the other way. A perfectly good creation myth might start with the image of the Original Void as an infinite, frozen block of sameness, a rigid block universe
that thaws under God's warm "breath," which is His creative love, melting and differentiating the world, letting it flow with turbulence and accident... with freedom itself. In this creation myth, not more structure but less structure – more entropy – is the general direction of the Good.

But that is not the image we have. We privilege order. Think of some of the most intimate experiences of architecture you have around the need for security. Personally, I remember being in a tent on a stormy night and realizing – enjoying – that there was nothing between me and the raging elements (and wolves!) but a cocoon of flapping canvas. It was just me and a lantern, cozy, and all hell breaking loose outside. I remember too, as a child, the calm of being under the dining room table, stockinged and trousered legs all around, the edge of the tablecloth breaking the light, and the fragrant woody roof that was the table’s underside protecting me from the loud and meaningless chatter that bounced off the walls of the room. Ships, planes, cars, mobile homes, provide the same kind of tender containment too, the same intense sense of interiority, the same surprising largeness inside and ability to create a separate and safer world. What irrational trust we place in their strength! The first lines of architecture, I would say, are drawn in and from these experiences, these exclusions-from-consciousness of the incomprehensible, uncontrollable complexity out there.

In Value, I offer a way to reconcile these two notions about which direction, vis-à-vis altering entropy, is the good one. The matter is too complex to take up here. Interestingly, Genesis 2 tells the Creation story a little differently. It seems to pick up at a different time and place, one where day and night, earth and sky, are all formed and given. The scenery is distinctly Middle Eastern and proto-agricultural. There is only a lifeless desert, seeping here and there from subterranean upwellings of water. There is no counting of days, no Sabbath. God makes man – a man, the first man – quite abruptly out of dust and plants a garden for him in Eden, where it presumably rains for the first time and in just the right amount. Man tills and tends. I say Genesis 2 is interesting because it seems to follow the thawing/wetting model a little better, although the garden remains a haven of order.

This for at least two reasons: First, Big Bang theory posits a high-entropy, high-energy beginning to the universe, followed by expansion and cooling ever since. Second, the Genesis myth has percolated into all aspects of Western culture. Perhaps the first is still a reflection of the second.
Stanley Tigerman wrote a book called *The Architecture of Exile*, which I recommend to you. All architecture is exilic, he argues, necessary only because we were exiled from Eden where we had no need for architecture or clothing. All architecture, no matter how modern, is thus an exercise in nostalgia, an attempt to return to Eden by recreating it, through technology, in the largest chunks we can afford. True?

Well, something like Eden was a real place. It was located, not between the Tigris and the Euphrates as the Bible suggests but, as archeological evidence suggests, in Central Africa 500,000 to one million years ago. Over this time, everything was fine, every thing was perfect for the emergence of Homo sapiens. The temperature was, in fact, 72° Fahrenheit, and everything we wanted to eat was handy and available: seeds, fruits, nuts, roots, leafy plants, vegetables and animals, all in great abundance and variety. How do we know? Archeological evidence includes fossilized seeds and the remains of ancient dinners.

Then, around 200,000 years ago, either because of population growth, climatic change, or both, we had to migrate. At home for perhaps half a million years in the same generous ecological setting – Eden – and now ejected, we had to deal with hardship, cold, scarcity and competition. Our bodies lagged behind.
Fire, clothing, artificial shelter, tools and weaponry became crucial to survival, as did calculation, trade and language. Human life on earth has been like that ever since.

We have made the best of it, of course, but we have never forgotten Eden. Our bodies, our souls, will not let us. Nor will our enduring myths. So when you go into a shopping mall or hotel atrium and there is a big skylight with sunlight streaming in, and there are hundreds of ficus trees with little bird machines twittering in their leaves, and it’s 72° Fahrenheit and 50 percent relative humidity, and a brook bubbles over its blue-tiled bed on its way to a clear, clear pool, and there is food and friendliness and colorful good things everywhere — when you walk into a world like that, artificial as it is, tacky as it is, and it feels genial, comfortable, cheerful — don’t feel bad. Your instinctive memory of Eden is being jogged. With better taste and technology, Norman Foster’s Commerzbank in Frankfurt appeals to the same sentiment.

I am fully aware, of course, of the popularity in Continentally-influenced academic writing since Foucault (or really, since Marx) of the use of the word power to explicate all human relationships in which justice, legitimacy, unequal strength, privilege, etc. are a factor. Here I take a more fine-grained approach, distinguishing six forms of motivational force: example, encouragement, flattery, authority, power and violence. Legitimacy begins in authorized power, just as security begins in the power—the capacity—to deliver or withhold survival-level benefits. This logical pattern extends to the higher needs too: Approval begins in flattering authority, confidence in encouraging approval, and freedom in exemplifying confidence.

Having rhapsodized about architecture’s capacity to protect and provide at the most basic levels of need, we might be disappointed to realize that we do not need architecture to shelter us as much—or, in certain ways, at all—if we have law.

Laws—just laws anyway—function to satisfy needs for legitimacy and to distribute that legitimacy fairly. This is good. Certainly, it relieves architecture from having to portray its owner-occupant’s legal and social status with any great explicitness: CEO, professor and successful plumber can live on the same street in a state of architectural “don’t ask, don’t tell.” But legitimacy has value because it seals over and guarantees security. And it does so by installing symbolic, non-physical, and less lethal authority structures over less symbolic, more physical, more lethal power structures, which themselves cover over and keep us one step away from having to take violent or life-saving actions.

Let me try to make this more concrete. If you are walking along and you see a sign that says STOP or NO ENTRANCE or KEEP OFF THE GRASS, or if someone in uniform steps up to you and demands you produce “papers”... well, there might as well be a wall. When you cross a line of trespass, it is a legal line in the ground. Surveyors mark land with geometries that have no real existence, only legal existence. One has to search for them before starting construction. They are invisible boundaries, created by law and only underlined, sometimes, by fences.
A foreign flag outside a house can mark it as an embassy.

You can have privacy by putting a wall between you and the rest of the world, or you can have privacy by using the law. We can live in glass houses rather than stone castles if the law effectively prevents people from throwing stones at them, or bullets, and if Peeping Toms can be arrested. Similarly, with arson a crime and insurance available, buildings need not be utterly fireproof or impregnable to theft. The point is that, with law and order in effect, many of the protections afforded by natural and architectural features are unnecessary, and that frees up design in very important ways.  

Wallenberg used both legal and architectural shelter as his method.

One cannot help but be impressed by the richness of Raoul Wallenberg’s rather short life. His father died a few months before he was born in Stockholm in 1912, and he was raised by his mother. He disappeared into the chaos of post-World War II Russia thirty-three years later.

The Wallenberg family was as wealthy as it was well-known in Sweden, and Raoul’s education reflected that privilege. In 1931, with the support and urging of his diplomat-grandfather, he enrolled in the University of Michigan with his grandfather as
patron and guide. Raoul was to be progressive and worldly, unlike (his grandfather thought) most Swedes of Raoul’s class and generation. While in America, he not only studied architecture but traveled widely, driving and hitchhiking across the country to California on one occasion and Mexico on another.

Graduated and back in Sweden, he entered a competition (which he did not win) to design a public swimming pool complex next to the ocean in Riddarholm. I bring it to your attention only because Wallenberg’s solution looks so much like his mother’s embrace of him as a child, and his of her: arms around the pool protecting the calm, clean water within from the chopping salty waves just a few feet away, on three sides; not a new pool dug safely on land, but a little piece of the sea claimed – sheltered.

A couple of stories will give an idea of his character.

While studying at Michigan, Raoul found between-semester work at the 1933 Chicago World’s Fair. Only 21 years old and a hired hand, it took maneuvering and persuasion, but he convinced the organizers of the Fair to redirect the fairground spotlights to better illuminate the Swedish Pavilion.
In a letter to his mother in Sweden, he recounted one of his return trips to Ann Arbor after a stint of work at the Fair:

> When it was time to head home, I packed my stuff in two large suitcases, which were so heavy that I felt pretty athletic carrying one on my shoulder and one under my arm. It got very hot again, but it felt good to work up a real sweat. I was carrying my pay, and what was left of my money, and that meant that for the first time since I took up hitchhiking I was carrying cash rather than travelers’ checks. A short ways outside Chicago I was picked up by a gentleman in a nice car.

They have a rather serious accident, but neither is hurt. Raoul goes on:

> Now it was a matter of finding a tow truck. I unloaded my luggage, and the owner of the car got into the car with the shaken old lady and drove off. So I was left alone in the middle of the road, and it was starting to get dark. I tried very hard to hitch a ride and was delighted when a car with four people in it stopped and picked me up. They had Iowa license plates and, since that’s 60 miles east of Chicago, I was surprised that they had no luggage. They were in their mid-twenties and looked a bit suspicious.

> One of them asked me, “How much would it be worth to you if we took you all the way to Ann Arbor?” “Nothing,” I replied, “because in that case I would have caught the bus.” Suddenly we heard a noise
from the back of the car, and the driver stopped to see what it was. It surprised me that they all had to get out of the car for this. Suddenly another car passed us, and the four of them got back in.

By now I had become very suspicious because of their questions about money, their lack of luggage, and the sudden stop. I started to work my poverty into the conversation. Suddenly the car turned off on a country road so abruptly that it almost turned over. Fearing the worst, I tried to keep a cool head, so as not to make things worse. After another couple of miles through a dark forest, they stopped and after a rather clumsy and theatrical bluff: “Get out and let’s see what’s the matter with the gas tank, Joe.”

They got out one after the other and then I was asked to get out “so that they could take a look at me.” One of them had a large revolver in his hand. It might not have been loaded.

They demanded my money, and I gave them what I had in my breastpocket and I said that I had more in my suitcase. They opened it and took out an envelope that in addition to the money contained some papers and the key to my safety deposit box. The latter items I managed to retrieve by bluffing. “Sentimental value to me, no value to you.” I didn’t tell them it was the key to my bank deposits.
Maybe it was stupid of me to volunteer where I kept my money, but I'd heard so many stories about people being searched and occasionally left without any clothes at all. I did forget to tell them that I had three dollars in another pocket, however. When they thought they had all my money, I decided it was their turn to show some goodwill, so I asked them to drive me back to the highway, since it was late and my suitcases were heavy. They let me sit next to the driver and then put the luggage up on top to keep me from jumping. By this time, they were the ones who were frightened, maybe because I was so calm. I really didn't feel scared; I found the whole thing sort of interesting. Maybe they thought I was planning to lure them into a trap. The result was that all of a sudden they threw me into a ditch and then tossed my luggage after. I immediately flattened myself under a bush, for fear that they might fire a farewell shot from the revolver. Later, I managed to stop a suburban train that took me to South Bend, 200 miles from Ann Arbor, where I reported the incident to the police.

This will not make me give up hitchhiking, I'll just carry less money on me, and try to become more devious. I think it was bad psychology to hand over the money. They were amateurish enough to have let me go with the money from my breastpocket as their only booty.

Summer school has just started.

A thousand greetings from your unharmed

Raoul.
He graduated and went to South Africa, working at various endeavors in construction supply, but not practicing as an architect. He then spent a year in Palestine working in a commercial bank. By this time, Hitler's plan for the Jews of Europe was clearly beginning to play out, and stories were circulating.

In 1937, Raoul, now 25 years old, arrived back in Sweden looking for something to do with his talents and experience. By 1943, he was a successful importer-exporter of Hungarian and Swedish goods, with a considerable reputation in Stockholm for his personal charm and business acumen.

Distressed at continued Nazi domination of Eastern Europe (though, by 1943, the Germans had suffered major defeats) and alarmed at the Nazi treatment of Jews there, the Swedish government asked Wallenberg to "volunteer" to see what could be done about the situation in Hungary. He readily agreed to the assignment, but not before negotiating a carte blanche budget and full consular powers in the name of the King of Sweden. His mission was to save Jews however he could. He had a plan.

Wallenberg set up an office in Budapest and immediately set to manufacturing false passes, work permits, immigration permits, etc. - all kinds of official "papers" with the imprimatur of Sweden. These documents were hand-designed by him. Knowing that the
**SCHUTZ-PASS**

**SAFE-PASS**

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**SCHWEDEN**


Bis Abreise steht der Obenennannte und seine Wohnumgebung unter dem Schutz der Kgl. Schwedischen Gesandtschaft in Budapest.

Gültigkeit: erlischt 14 Tage nach Einreise nach Schweden.

Reiseberechtigung nur gemeinsam mit dem Kollektivpass, Einreisewissen wird nur in dem Kollektivpass eingetragen.

Travel arrangements are only in the Collective Passport, Entry Visa will be affixed only to the Collective Passport.

Budapest, den 28. September 1944

ROYAL SWEDISH LEGATION
KOENIGLICH SCHWEDISCHE GESANDTSHAFT
SVED KIRALYI KOVETSÉG

Kgl. Schwedischer Gesandter.
Germans were really impressed by authoritative paperwork, he took great care in making these documents look official, authentic in the way the photographs were taken and mounted, the kind of typewriter he used, the ink stamp, the paper type, the crown seal, every detail. Most of the documents were improvised; few had previously been seen by any Swedish diplomat. Wallenberg was printing as fast as he could – a legitimacy factory!

And he acquired buildings all over Budapest. Each flew a Swedish flag and was thus off-limits – protected, foreign territory, legally sheltered from both the invading Germans and the Hungarian army. In fact, his operation grew so large that his organizational chart included lodging, housekeeping, children's homes, sick rooms, orphanages, old age homes, workshops, kitchens, clothiers, courier services and more. He ended up employing 400 people, nearly all Jews. He did not need all 400 people, but everyone who worked for him worked for the Swedish Government and was thus immune from being carted off.

In the last few months of 1944, conditions in Budapest were deteriorating. The Germans were beginning to lose ground. Adolf Eichmann, charged by Hitler with ridding Hungary of its Jews, Gypsies and homosexuals, wanted to step up his operations before it was all over. Local Hungarian militia, who called themselves the Arrow Cross and were more brutal than even
the SS, were roving Budapest raping, robbing and executing the few Jews who still dared to walk the streets. Supplies of everything were short. The Russians were getting closer. Wallenberg had to work faster still. Going for days without sleep, he would often show up unannounced at some site of exportation, like a railroad or bus station that was packing Jews off to extermination camps, and brandish a list of the names of Swedish "passport" holders.

"You may not take these people away!" he would declare with complete confidence. "These people are guaranteed Swedish citizenship and are therefore under my protection!" Assuring the soldiers of ferocious reprisals from their own higher-ups if they disobeyed his orders – such were his "connections" – he proceeded to call out names and generally take over the situation. Here are some eyewitness accounts:

Raoul usually had with him a book of names of passport holders. Sometimes the book had all blank pages. When he arrived at the train, he then made up Jewish names and began calling them out. Three or four usually had passports. For those who didn’t, I stood behind Raoul with another fifty or more unfilled passports. It only took me ten seconds to write in their names. We handed them out calmly and said, “Oh, I’m terribly sorry you couldn’t get to the legation to pick it up. Here it is. We brought it to you.” The passport holder showed it to the SS and was free.
I myself carried forged identity papers for various occasions. One set identified me as a doctor for the German SS; another proved I worked for the Swedish delegation. If anyone had ever searched and found those phony papers, I would have been shot then and there. All those who worked with Raoul Wallenberg took unbelievable risks. But we were his disciples and followed his courageous example.\(^\text{24}\)

Wallenberg thought himself a free man and treated those who would help him as free men too. He led by example. "(The job) is dangerous and difficult," Wallenberg said to Sandor Ardaï, who would be his driver, "You do not need to if you do not want it." Ardaï reports: "I did not hesitate a second, but accepted." \(^\text{25}\)

Together they would drive from mission to mission with about six pairs of license plates. Moreover, they never had the same license plates on the front and back of the car, so that if anyone wrote something down from the front, they would get into an argument with the person who wrote something down from the back. Wallenberg would joke about how much he really wanted to invent a device that rotated the license plates automatically. Ardaï:

\[M\]any times...I have remembered my meeting with this remarkable Swede. He did not at all look like a hero, not as you imagine a courageous, strongwilled and freeborn hero type. He seemed rather dreaming and weak. My first mission was to drive him to the headquarters of the Arrow Cross and wait outside until he got Langfelder back. I thought silently that "this will never go well"\(^\text{26}\)


\(^\text{25}\) Ibid., pp. 86, 87.
when he disappeared with long strides. How could the Hungarian Arrow Cross release a prisoner, just because one man requested it?

But when I saw him again on the stairs he brought Langfelder along. They jumped into the car and I drove them to the legation. Nobody commented on what had happened and I started to understand the extraordinary force which was in Raoul Wallenberg.

I never heard Wallenberg speak an unnecessary word during the month and a half I and Langfelder took turns as a driver – not a single comment, even if he could not sleep more than a few hours for several days.

One imagines Raoul had had some practice at sleep-deprivation at architecture school! But to continue:

On one occasion we had come to a station where a train full of Jews was on the point of leaving for Germany and the concentration camps. The officer of the guard did not want to let us enter. Raoul Wallenberg then climbed up on the roof of the train and handed in many protective passports through the windows. The Arrow Cross men fired their guns and cried to him to go away, but he only continued calmly to hand out passports to the hands which reached for them. But I believe that the men with the guns were impressed by his courage and on purpose aimed high above him. Afterwards he managed to get all Jews with passports out from the train. His only aim was to save as many as possible. And by his personal courage he managed to save thousands.
We see here, I think, the same young man who faced down a bunch of thugs in their car in Illinois on the way back from the Chicago World’s Fair.

1945. The Russians were finally at the edges of the city. The Germans were clearing out. Bombs were falling. Raoul drove to the outskirts of Budapest to meet the Russians personally, to tell them, as they moved in, to take care not to damage the few remaining properties like the orphanage that had Jews and other innocents protected in them, and to arrange for their liberation. He was never heard from again. Lubyanka Prison in Moscow was the last place Wallenberg is known to have been seen alive. Enquiries after the war as to his whereabouts led nowhere, and have not to this day.
I shall save for another day an account of modern architecture’s involvement, for better and worse, with the rise of the National Socialism in Germany in the 1930s, a story starring Walter Gropius, Mies van der Rohe and others. Suffice it to say that it remains a mixed blessing that Adolf Hitler, a frustrated architect himself, hated modern architecture about as much as Benito Mussolini, a few hundred miles south, loved it.

The building probably most emblematic in the popular mind of the arrival of International Style modern architecture in the United States was the Farnsworth House by Mies van der Rohe. Now, like Philip Johnson’s Glass House in New Canaan (which was actually completed slightly before the Farnsworth house much to Mies’s chagrin, since it used his ideas), the Farnsworth house keeps out the rain and wind and sun and not much else. It offers extremely little protection from cold or heat, and it depends entirely on there being enough distance from the street—enough private property around it—to ensure that strangers neither look into it nor approach it. Both of these houses rely on people’s good manners, and on the rule of law, for their provision of security.

Of course, and as you know, there have since been innumerable imitators of this fundamental Miesian style—of the transparency, the defiance of gravity, the slenderness, the dematerialization, the stark simplicity, and so on. Why has it succeeded? Why did it catch on? In a phrase, because it was cheap to imitate.
But there is more to say about how it developed in the capable hands of good architects with generous budgets. A contemporary example of the Miesian style at its best is Norman Foster’s Carré d’Art in Nimes. A Roman temple, the famous Maison Carrée, dominates the square that the library faces. Foster’s portico, with its impossibly slender steel columns and flat, thin roof, is seen in sharp contrast to the bulky, carved and time-worn ancient Roman columns carrying a heavy pediment.

Now, Foster’s columns and portico respond formally to the Roman temple, but they seem to mock it somehow, as if to say, “See? I don’t need to do that.” The glass of Foster’s building (it is, in fact, a glass box) seems also to mock the thickness and solidity of the temple walls, now seen to be soft and stainable, the two things glass and steel are not. “See?” it seems to say, “Being Highly Engineered, I do not need to be thick and bulky to reassure my inhabitants that I will not fall down. Nor is there much need to shelter them from just a few drops of rain. My own lower needs as a building, and my visitors’ lower needs for security and survival and legitimacy are all met. I am legitimate, liked, confident and free – and so are the people inside me.”

Let’s take the argument a step farther. What word is opposite in meaning to “shelter?” Answer: exposure. As Miesian International Style modernism developed, so, in time, did more and more
components of a building become exposed to view – structure, services, joints, ducts, cable chases – all in the name of honesty. Then too, the indoors was to be maximally exposed to the outdoors. Indeed, the building’s very innards could be exposed to the outdoors in an act of total inside-out reversal, as at the Pompidou Center in Paris by Piano and Rogers. The message? Shelter of anything, even of the building’s anatomy, is not necessary. The unspoken accusation? Only the unworthy have anything to hide. The aesthetic agenda? Two-fold: increasing the visual complexity of the building without resorting to classical or bourgeois decorative systems, and displaying an early twentieth century pride in industrial prowess.

The Cartier Foundation headquarters in Paris, by Jean Nouvel, is another case in point. Exquisitely detailed, in certain light it is a beautiful apparition. At a further and more didactic extreme is the video pavilion in Gröningen by Bernard Tschumi. Here, everything that you would expect from a building in terms of its ability to shelter, protect, and so forth has been provocatively deconstructed. The floor is metal at a slippery tilt; the walls are glass, no mullions; and the roof is glass too. Moldings: none. Vulnerability to bad weather: 100%. Air circulation: minimal. Exposure to view: 100%. Self exposure as a “machine:” 100%. Privacy: none. Remember the old saw about people who live in
glass houses? No one will throw stones here, and that, of course, is exactly the point. That is what is worth demonstrating and what Tschumi's little building, and those that it stands for, tacitly establish. Have you ever watched a hot air balloon drifting high over your city on some sunny Sunday afternoon? What a picture of peace, and time (oh, time) to spare! A demonstration of the laws of physics, high-tech in detail, delicate and quite dangerous to fly, hot air balloons fly only in – and on the expectation of – perfect weather conditions. And not just perfect weather conditions but perfect social conditions too. The people who balloon have the money, the peace of mind and the confidence to do it, and fully expect cries of delight from the ground below.

One wonders, though, how legitimate or how satisfying all this is as a general solution to building design – which, of course, International Style modern architecture (and today, its descendant in super-light and/or Rotterdam style architecture) proposes itself to be. In America, when you are in the average curtain-walled office building, you soon become desperate to get some fresh air. You begin to feel like a fish in a tank; you want to beat silently on the glass wall, gasping for a breeze, straining for a sound from outside.
Buildings that spurn the needs for survival and security, or that assume them dealt with satisfactorily by law or technology, do so at some psychic cost. For one, you have to pretend that you do not notice that the air in them is stale and recirculated. You have to pretend that the light from distant plates of glass is not glaring and that the overhead fluorescents, bearing down on plastic everything, are not just some engineer’s idea of illumination but are also light. You have to ignore the security cameras, the sprinkler systems, the clanging push bars to the crypt-like fire stairs you have to use because code, or economics, won’t allow open staircases between floors. You have to not be bothered that the floor trembles as people walk by because the long-span floor structure below is so whip-light, or that just above the ceiling there is a writhing mass of ducts, cables and pipes, feeding the space below like a patient on life support. You have to pretend that garage-raw concrete and cheap finishes and bolt-on rails are satisfying, and that all those open, “flowing” spaces mean that you can avail yourself of them freely.

In my book I call this set of attitudes “place-machismo,” that is, the socially useful ability to withstand or tune out environments that are actually highly controlling, abusive and depressing. Or to appear to. Architects are no less subject to place-machismo than others. Aggressively neo-modern young architects today
are even more prone to it, to judge by the adulation they offer Rem Koolhaas and his followers, architects who think of the word “brutal” as a compliment.

I am being critical, of course. Fifty years after Mies, twenty-five years after postmodern classicism, and ten after deconstructivism, I think that there is much to be said about how the best clearly Modernist architecture can now go beyond symbolizing the security, comfort and freedom we want, and deliver it with a minimum of place-machismo required from us. The problem with this new high-tech/high-touch architecture is that it’s expensive. Nonetheless, two recent buildings by Lord Norman Foster are exemplary. The first has an interesting political history.

In 1933, at roughly the same time that Raoul Wallenberg was working in his studio in Ann Arbor, the Reichstag building in Berlin was burned by Hitler’s supporters, an act of arson that threw the government into turmoil and left a vacuum for Hitler to ascend to real power. After the war, the building was almost destroyed again.

During the 1960s and 70s, the Reichstag was refurbished, its interiors bland but useful. A second generation of refurbishment was completed in 1999 by Norman Foster, the result of his
winning an international design competition (with quite a different design from the one built, as it happens). The remains of the old Reichstag dome were taken down and replaced by a dome of glass. Not only is it made of glass, but the public is invited to come into it. A spiral ramp along its outside edge enables people to come up into the dome and look out at the urban landscape, perhaps to feel dominion. But they may also look down into the parliament chamber to see (and hear electronically) what is going on. Although more dramatic, this works like the public galleries common in Western democratic institutions.

Down the center is a reflecting needle that is less, I think, about the real illumination it brings down to the chamber than about the gesture, the idea, of it doing so, warranted by the occasional glint of sunshine down and splinter of view up and out, periscope style. A gigantic leaf of perforated metal hanging within the dome moves, tracking the sun, to keep the heat load down. At night, the dome glows. In all, the openness, the exposure, the public invitation, is very much a part of the democratic dream.

I am quite sure that a lot of the governing in this building gets done in hallways and back rooms. But that is true everywhere, at all levels of government. Seeing legislators at work on the parliament floor does not really make that much difference.

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Being glass, most of the light that gets into this dome goes right out the other side.

At the Greater London Council Building (under construction at the time of writing), Foster again proposes a transparent glass ball from which all of the processes of government are symbolically exposed to the entire city, to the view of everyone, a rather anachronistic gesture in a world of television, electronics and the Web, all of which can provide deeper and more significant access.
and besides, television does a better job of making political proceedings transparent to a large voting public. Less noticeable are the security cameras and security personnel that have to be everywhere to maintain the building’s safety and that of its occupants. Nevertheless, Foster’s transparencies are real, and they count psychologically. Moreover, large sections of the old Reichstag remain in place. The old, war-damaged stone is aestheticized by framing, to be sure, but it also gently reminds the German people of the sheltering functions of both architecture and law, and of the fateful and simultaneous assault these suffered there some sixty years ago.

The second building by Foster I would like to note is his Commerzbank Headquarters building in Frankfurt, completed in 1997 – a less overtly political building with a less obviously ethical program.

Three hundred meters high, it consists of three circulation cores at the corners of a triangle, with long span floors between sheathed in a sophisticated, heat-shedding, double layer of glass. Fresh air is allowed in at each workspace along the perimeter, and four story high garden terraces spiral around the building, letting light into the interior court and providing natural ventilation and light to interior offices. The list of innovations goes on.
This building fairly exemplifies the state-of-the-art in what "New Modernist" or high-tech/high-touch architecture can do when it is committed to providing a secure and truly healthy environment. It is also worth noting that German building codes are far more protective of things like access to daylight and fresh air than ours are.

Architects like to talk about Foster's buildings as feats of engineering and design, which they surely are. But these two structures, at least, are more than just design and engineering feats. They are social achievements, and I hope that my lecture has made this a little more obvious. Buildings like the Reichstag and the Commerzbank are the proper fruit of prosperity and a fitting manifestation of the rule of liberal and just law. (I pass over the significance of the fact that they are both built in Germany, by an English architect.) They are a celebration of the poetics inherent in the seemingly cut-and-dried issues of survival and shelter. This kind of architecture owes as much to the sacrifices of someone like Raoul Wallenberg — and to the efforts of all the great defenders of justice and of freedom everywhere — as to the great designers, artists and engineers we usually idolize.

With continued peace and prosperity, where will this avenue lead? I do not know. As provocatively imagined by Lebbeus Woods, perfect freedom and perfect safety would have to end in personal,
bird-like flight between floating architectures moored and billowing in the sky like old schooners. In some ways, this is the final condition of architecture, prefiguring the sorts of things we see Frank Gehry doing in Bilbao, a building beginning to float, to be blown like a scarf.

In a completely virtual world, architecture drops its boundaries, leaving law and art to satisfy our needs. Shelter falls away as anything other than a source of poetics – a memory, a reverie on ancient themes. Is it still architecture? By my earlier definition, which demands materiality, it is not – not any more.

As democracy and justice continue to evolve under the sign of technology, might virtual architecture be the future of our discipline? Long before computers, long before this was an interesting question, Raoul Wallenberg pursued architecture to the deepest possible level of theory also – to that place where laws and walls coincide, and where speaking/writing and construction are one. He practiced the deepest and most important of all praxes too – the art of shelter – and did so, perhaps, the way that only an architect could.

Let us be proud.

*Michael Benedikt*
The Raoul Wallenberg Lecture was initiated in 1971 by Sol King, a former classmate of Wallenberg's. An endowment was established in 1976 for an annual lecture to be offered in Raoul's honor on the theme of architecture as a humane social art. The following distinguished architects and historians have been invited to present the Wallenberg Lectures to the Taubman College of Architecture + Urban Planning at the University of Michigan:

1972 Sir Nikolaus Pevsner
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1985 Grady Clay
1987 Joseph Rykwert
1988 Spiro Kostof
1989 J. Max Bond, Jr.
1990 Elizabeth Hollander
1991 Joseph Esherick
1992 Denise Scott Brown
1993 James Ingo Freed
1994 Jorge Silvetti
1995 Daniel Libeskind
1996 Vincent Scully
1997 Michael Sorkin
1998 Richard Sennett
1999 Kenneth Frampton
2000 Michael Benedikt
raoul wallenberg scholarship

The Raoul Wallenberg Scholarship is awarded through a design competition which is held annually for undergraduates in their final year of study in the Taubman College of Architecture + Urban Planning at the University of Michigan. The following students have been awarded the scholarship:

1988  John DeGraaf
1989  Matthew Petrie
1990  Elizabeth Govan
1991  Paul Warner
1992  Dallas Felder
1993  Eric Romano
1994  Charles Yoo
1995  Matthew Johnson
1996  Jo Połowczuk
1997  Joseph Rom
1998  Michael Lee
1999  Adam Clous
2000  Lina Lee / Jonathan M. Dickson
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