Architecture and Civilization:
A Sketch

Peter R. Gleichmann

Building houses and cities is a part of our civilization. People are increasingly creating their own environment. To the extent they imbue that environment with meaning we have traditionally called it 'architecture' in many languages. The development of architecture is a characteristic subdivision of civilizational activities. The possible conditions for a relative autonomy of architectonic events can be determined from the overall framework of a civilizational process. We find the scholarly knowledge of these connections in theories of civilization.

The Process of Civilization and Planning Processes

For people accustomed to 'plan' every day — whether in economic life or elsewhere — it is often difficult to learn to distinguish between planning processes and turns of events which have until now been largely outside human influence. The process of civilization is an 'unplanned' process. It is part of the social evolution of humanity. An individual building may be 'planned'. The overall direction of architectural development or of urbanization has not been 'planned' by anyone. Nonetheless, such long-term social transformations can often be empirically determined. Plannable or planned processes are often surrounded by 'unplanned' social turns of events. Understanding this is difficult for people who are accustomed to apply their goal-oriented reason rationally as engineers or planners. Social processes controlled by chance often limit the short-term actions of such people; many experience the insight into such limitations as social demotion — even when they have abandoned faith in an automatism of social or technical progress.

If an architecture journal interested in theory asks, 'Is good architecture really good?' then it is implying that there are several *standards* of measurement. There are not merely specialized, intraprofessional standards for judging people or things. There are also more encompassing groups of events against which measurements can be taken. Within a specialty the standards must be justified. Hence even broader standards are not arbitrary; how the individual event is to be fitted into the entire context is determined by the state of scholarly knowledge.

The majority of social scientists designate only *analytical procedures to gain knowledge* as 'theories'. For the majority of architects, on the other hand, 'theories' belong to a much older type of knowledge. They tend to view theories as a normative *compositional design knowledge*, in terms of the theory of art, *contextual managerial knowledge* for *architectural production processes*. 'Architectural theories' are much older than modern analytical epistemologies. In essence they contain scarcely any analytical, but rather *form-integrating* components. The amount of *'tacit knowledge'* here is large (Polanyi, 1985); it is so obviously necessary for designing activity that it is never noted in writing. In contrast to these two types of theory the present contribution uses both analytic and synthetic procedures.

The Process of Civilization

Many languages have found their own concepts for the events which we describe as the 'civilizing' of humanity. By nature, people are not civilized, but they do possess aptitudes that make an individual self-regulation of momentary affective and instinctive behavioral impulses possible for them or permit those impulses to be diverted towards other goals. They must personally learn control of instincts and affect in the sense of civilization patterns specific to a society in order to be able to live with themselves and others. *Social universals* can be discerned in the conversion of social (or natural) constraints into self-constraints (Elias, 1986) and the learning of an individual self-control according to changeable civilization patterns. Structural transformation of *external constraints* derives from changes in the social power centers. These include: the centralization, and ultimately the monopolization of legitimate physical control of violence within certain regions (*'states'*), urbanization, the continual development of the means of production (*'industrialization'*) the reordering of the entire

human world view to a *techno-scientific development of knowledge*. The spread of architecture and its buildings also exert an influence on the proximity or the distance, the involvement or the detachment of people.

Architectonic Monuments

In the course of civilization buildings change their typical differentiation and their protective or symbolic functions. The majority of residences were produced *by the occupants themselves*. Only a minority of buildings, predominantly of the religious or secular rulers, were constructed with the assistance of specialized knowledge. Now, at the end of the twentieth century the overwhelming majority of all buildings are planned and built by professional specialists in most *industrial state societies*. Now similar specialists — mainly in state or local administrations — monitor both the plans and the subsequently executed buildings.

At the same time, most buildings, as immovable objects, real estate, have become *commodities*. In some cases they function as 'durable goods'. The range of building types and the relative number of individual buildings which are *destroyed* as soon as the capital invested in them has been amortized is increasing. When buildings turn into *means of production*, such as commercial real estate or factories, their absolute longevity is restricted even further. The ancient idea that architectonic monuments are meant to outlast transitory human life by generations has disappeared. The *property concept* connected to buildings has changed. The overwhelming majority of residences and most other buildings are under the administration of commercial enterprises or state organizations. The *emotional ties* of individuals to buildings have changed accordingly.

The Position of the Architects

The *social position of builders* and architects changes accordingly. In particular, the paths from the medieval builders to the 'liberal professions', to put it in foreshortened terms, all become unilinear when viewed at the end of the twentieth century (Ricken, 1977). At bottom, however, the entire configuration of people who have a say in building is transformed; today these duties are differentiated into more individualized expert professions, while the authority of actual architects is *considerably narrowed* by comparison to the Middle Ages. The stratum of the architectural and

engineering intelligentsia has relatively enlarged and at the same time become more differentiated. Over the generations, some of its representatives have established themselves in the environs of the *state elite* (Durth, 1986).

What is the Source of Architects' Means of Orientation?

Architects' mode of thinking, their means of orientation, are transformed in the course of civilization. Only a study of longer periods of time can show whether at bottom there are relatively unchanged elements of thought. A few researchers, who are able to get an overview, concentrate on the emergence of certain architectural ideals (Collins, 1965), on particular architecture theorists in a specific epoch (Pevsner, 1972) or on certain contradictory ideals of construction (Zucker, 1951). But how, and in what social force field does this *theoretical work* take place? In what sort of cognitive communities are the central concepts, the architectonic paradigms formed?

If the thought of medieval clerics and builders is quite aptly termed 'metaphysical speculation' (von Simson, 1956), this also shows how much more independently and more attuned to reality theorists are at the end of the twentieth century; for they no longer recognize any sacred or profane numbers, nor do they subscribe to any mystical theory of proportions. In the event that they still do so, they are only using playfully a knowledge made available by modern architectural history research and not a craft secret they have been initiated into. Alongside the inventor-engineers and the artist-engineers of the Renaissance, who seldom write, we also find official town architects, sculptor-architects, and the early phases of aristocratic connoisseurs of architecture, who themselves seldom build (Kostof, 1977). As an example, let us mention the academization of architectural training, the creation of special bureaucracies under Louis XIV and Colbert. It is not only that the architectonic 'orders' are used here as medium for making the power balances between king and noble groups within the court symmetrical, or as a courtly *means of communication* to command *distance* from the illiterate peasants and urban masses; architecture also becomes a *means of physical force* of the burgeoning centralized state in general (Straub, 1949). Military engineers and military architects build fortresses. Master builders work for the courts of Europe. Finally, a kind of *polytechnic* training is established in Europe. This model served in France

and soon afterward in the German principalities to educate highly qualified technical civil servants.

With the decline of the nobility's influence in most continental European states, the commercialization of the building and land business in the cities and the industrialization of commodity production, the number of *private architects* grew. They planned for the rising urban middle classes and the growing needs of the new governmental-municipal authorities towards the end of the nineteenth century (Lane, 1983). Building *and* writing at the same time, a neo-humanist ideal, now became a 'weapon in the competitive struggle' of the architectural artists as well (Hauser, 1951). In the wake of the *surges of urbanization* special administrations arose in the cities to *monitor 'urban development'*. German city planning was said to be 'the most advanced in the world' around 1900 (Sutcliffe, 1981). Here the bureaucracy maintained by *official specialists* was particularly strong, just as the liberal bourgeoisie was comparatively weak. The cognitive work of the city planners occured close to the center of state power. The *first* publication of a *comprehensive survey* of 'western architectural theory' in 1985 elevated research into the cognitive context and the cognitive work of architects onto a new foundation. 'Architectural theory is any comprehensive or partial system of architecture recorded in writing, which is based on aesthetic categories. This definition remains valid even if aesthetics is reduced to function' (Kruft, 1985). Does such a formal definition simultaneously introduce the end of a tradition based solely on the 'history of ideas'? Anyone who wishes to know what cognitive means architects actually apply near the end of the twentieth century would do better to pay attention to their actual deeds, rather than to their writings. This points to the need to specify more precisely the *social force field* from which practically every scholarly objectification of architectural theory arises.

Near the end of the twentieth century, a decisive influence on intraprofessional theoretical work arises within the *schools of architecture*. The most influential professors here *are at the same time managers of planning operations*. This produces a set of one-sided links of the schools and theorists to *clients*. Vitruvius dedicated his 'Ten Books' to Caesar Augustus and C.N. Ledoux his magnum opus to the Tsar. Modern thinkers need no longer announce their ties, real or only desired, to clients. Their commitments are less direct and much more complex. As *teachers*

they could investigate these ties more comprehensively. That would offer an objectively appropriate foundation for all theoretical work; they generally receive sufficient autonomy for this in largely state-run schools. In this way they could study the *origin* of the largest building projects in particular, the techno-functional 'programming' and the typical linking of public opinion-making with financial and political processes, which are often connected to long controversies in the judicial system. The entire *construction process*, and its conflict dynamics allegedly following only objective laws, would be viewed in a more realistic way. There would be less normative construction and more empirical and analytical investigation. Here scholarly investigation means making things more transparent and predictable. Why, for example, are the many *unintended* consequences of the construction of housing estates (Schildt, 1985), of entire urban neighbourhoods (Kratzsch, 1986) or of major airports or nuclear power plants (Radkau, 1983), not recognized as elements of the construction process and categorically included in the process models? If this were done, a socially relevant *knowledge of the process* could make the theories grasp reality more adequately.

As *managers of planning firms*, teachers of architecture hold back their knowledge of the reality of complex construction processes. They clearly do not reveal it in their teaching or in architectural journals. They are caught in a multi-polar dependency structure. First, this knowledge is a kind of *trade secret* of their firm. Next, they are acting as *agents* of their clients. Finally, they must protect their knowledge from *competitors*. They are in conflict with the latter over commissions. So what is left in writing, whether normative constructs or 'personal theory of art', can be safely turned over to the historians of art for safekeeping. It helps to confirm the belief that architects' thinking primarily revolves around how to find the proper artistic expression and which option for which style is to be taken in any particular case. What kind of professional image could be more welcome to architects? But involved observers, who manage to observe the social *function of architectonic buildings* with more detachment from professional ties, will have an easier time recognizing the peculiarities of architectural development within the process of civilization.

Architecture within the Process of Civilization

Buildings and Checks on 'Nature'
First of all, the opportunities for people to employ buildings for *greater control over 'natural' events* change strikingly. Someone who observed the debates of 'architectural theory' near the end of the twentieth century, thumbing through the architectural journals or delving into the newest works in architectural history would learn little of this. He or she could easily get the impression that the issues of the increasing checks on 'nature' play an insignificant role for modern architects. That would be a premature judgment. Vitruvius, to whom most theorists have referred over the centuries, had devoted a large portion of his 'Ten Books' to a broad variety of natural problems. And even at the end of the nineteenth century, the great handbooks for architects devoted considerable space to learned treatises on building materials, heating, ventilation or drainage. One can find a number of causes for the 'disappearance' of this entire sphere of problems from the 'theoretical debates'. In the established historiography of architecture everything non-artistic is excluded from consideration. A *shift of knowledge* from the control of nature *to other levels of production* has occurred in the practice of architectural planning. Artisans, skilled industrial workers, architectural engineers and the building materials industry now control this knowledge. At best, what remains for the architect is the task of integrating the knowledge or co-ordinating the corresponding products.

But to put it in more pointed sociological terms, architects have a completely different, *more suitable model of man* than, for instance, philosophers, jurists or sociologists with their faith in words and language. The great sociological theorists of 'communication', in particular, encourage their supporters to persist in the view that all people communicate solely through language — an anthropomorphism of the intellectuals.

The *architects' image of humanity* never shriveled into a figure of speech that can be produced and interpreted only by language, or interacts with the world solely by way of 'generalized communications media'. People, in the architect's view, are influenced by means of building manipulations in their *entire perception*: seeing, hearing, smelling, tasting, feeling — everything is given consideration. We find telling examples in architectural teachings (Rasmussen, 1957). Kinesthetic perception and people's continuing

need to overcome gravity, heights and distances remain concrete problems. A truly architectonic cult of stairs construction and the channeling of human freedom into ideal walking lines attests to this. There is no 'design theory' that does not take that into account. But most importantly, *metabolic and vital functions* are profoundly influenced. Architects are responsible for the domestic arrangement of places and equipment for preparing and consuming food, for the conditions of sleep and sexual activity, and for purifying and cleansing the body. The American architectural historian and theorist James Marston Fitch was one of the first to present these connections in scientific language and to make them the foundation of his critiques of such outstanding examples of 'new building' as Frank Lloyd Wright or Ludwig Mies van der Rohe. At almost the same time the architectural theorist S. Giedion employed his engineering knowledge to present the rapid development of *housing technology*. Since then an *'architectural biology'* has arisen in several different quarters; the adherents would rather join an activist movement than continue a long development in architectural engineering according to criteria from the social and natural sciences.

But the *formulation of the question in the theory of civilization* points in a different direction, making it necessary to pay closer attention to the changes among people without ignoring site engineering and urban planning technique. Something of these changes is apparent in common speech, in medical talk of 'diseases of civilization' arising above all from the use of the 'products of civilization', even though this has the purely negative meaning which the concept of civilization received from thinkers like Spengler and Toynbee and the European moods of decline and crisis they articulated. The older concept is repeated with this negative connotation by those thinkers with a natural science training who have difficulty in recognizing a social evolution in people as well as a physical one. The many observable tendencies to *shift* larger and larger portions of human existence *into buildings* has therefore been termed the enstructuration (*Verhäuslichung*) process. Behavior and state of mind at *work* are often probably controlled by means of site engineering, whether one is concerned with a homogenization of the visual field, a neutralization of the olfactory field or the anonymization of the aural field at any given point (Fritz, 1982). In housing we have investigated the tendencies to segregate domestic areas in which *sleeping* is socially permitted

or required (Gleichmann, 1980). The inclusion in residences of the processes of *bodily elimination*, the enstructuration of toilets, led at the same time to a concealment of these processes and the raising of the *standards of modesty and embarrassment*.

Buildings and Interpersonal Relations

A second general question revolves around how the opportunities to control interpersonal events are increased with the help of buildings.

The dominance of objects in social structures (Linde, 1972) is given little attention by social researchers as we near the end of the twentieth century. They have generally conceived of a 'pure sociology' which abstracts from the natural and objective conditions of human life. The great social scientists of the nineteenth century, and some of the historical researchers as well, viewed things differently. They had not yet reduced their models of society to mere 'interaction' or 'communication'. For architects the real dominance of objects in social structural contexts is a *fact*. Indeed, most architects believe that stones, parts of buildings, even entire monuments have a direct effect on interpersonal situations. At least it seems certain that the extent of human buildings and their protective function for people have increased in the course of social evolution. Social life without the lasting protection of buildings would become impossible in the more developed sections of civilization. The influence of buildings on social contexts, however, is *mediated by society*. And scant attention is given to this fact by architects. Objects, the world of things, which almost all people require, are therefore a suitable indicator of various forms of *the dominance of objects*. To put it in somewhat simplified form, the way in which people become dependent on one another can be investigated productively by applying the criterion of need and inquiring into both the extent and nature of the *interdependencies* between people (Elias, 1978). Now the reductionism of many architects which tends to mystify reality becomes obvious. In the professional practice of building programmers, for example, their 'homo architectonicus', their image of humanity recognizes only the 'user' of buildings. That is a distorting idealization of a generic quasi-tenant from the viewpoint of property owners, conceived by architects dependent on the latter. Buildings are *means of domination*. Whenever this fact is ignored in conceiving building projects, the way for most planning mistakes is well prepared. At least three tightly interconnected processes can be briefly traced.

The development of architecture offers a central example of the *broadening of control over space*. A main feature of all architectonic periods is the *structural anthropomorphism of edifices*. All essential concepts designating this conquest and subsequent control of space refer to the features and form of the *human body*. The actual expansion of the dominance of space by structures can be illustrated in the tendency for the relative *expansion* of the *headquarters of power*. Houses of religious worship, burial monuments, palace and park sites, and finally architecturally walled-in areas all indicate the tendency toward expansion of *enclosed spaces*, and with it the expansion of the actual *scope* of legitimate monopolies of violence, or 'states'.

The practical control over space and the theoretical *spatial thought* of people develop side by side, but not always simultaneously. Medieval long-distance merchants, who still had to accompany their goods personally, had a knowledge of the trade routes but no theory of space. The architects and painters of the Italian Renaissance invented *representations in linear perspective* of building spaces and forms, which they subsequently executed (Edgerton, 1975). Ballistic innovations based solely on the practical knowledge of artisans led to a hitherto unequalled *degree of complexity* of architectonic fortifications. The growing power of many European courts subjected people to a continuous *drill* in the ballet or the military (zur Lippe, 1974), while the political leaders of the sixteenth to the eighteenth centuries planned the conquest of economic zones they had great difficulty controlling (Dockes, 1969), since the great transportation systems that could have opened up the business state had not yet been established. With the rise of relatively stable territorial states *spatial thought in terms of state finances* was also intensified (Läpple, 1985). From the nineteenth century onward, theories of overcoming space are more closely co-ordinated with the development of *practical systems* to that end. These 'theories' become indispensable aids to further domination of space. But there are also discrepancies between human action in space and a coherent theoretical comprehension of these events. We find examples of this in spatial events in our cities.

The *anthropometrization of the architectural milieu* is an event that has been known ever since people have spoken about architecture. We see beginnings in liturgical rituals, in the *enfilades*, the first 'stringing together' of building lines in castles, courts and

palaces. At the zenith of the royal patrimonial state, all of its buildings and architectural spaces were *axialized* and multiply *symmetrized*. They thus correspond to the axes and double-sided symmetry of the human body. Anyone who wishes to use these buildings must translate the constraints of the sovereign into constraints of his/her own. With the gradual establishment of territorial states and of many individual centers of administration in the nineteeth century, *all edifices* are permeated by the power actions of the state and anthropometrized.

These events have left their mark in the documents of the development of architects' thinking. Let us compare, for instance, German books of architectural models from the eighteenth century with Klasen's widely used work on *Exemplary Ground Plans for all Types of Buildings* from the year 1891 and Neufert's *Theory of Building Design*, first published in 1936. The building types in the eighteenth century are grouped according to ruling and status aspects. In the late nineteenth century, even the new building types, workers' apartment buildings, commercial buildings or factories, are multiply symmetrized. And the beginnings of a global architecture theory are present in the worldwide dissemination of 'functionalist building theory', as represented by Neufert, which was translated into many languages. It could be accepted as that, because it *took no account of 'cultural significance'* and was founded solely on the physiology, weight and movement features of the human body. Of course, all buildings continue to have 'cultural significance' as Max Weber put it. It's just that the functionalists were mistaken to assume that these *symbolic* significances, to put it more aptly, would develop automatically.

The process of *architectonization* of human behavior is not well researched; we speak of it when typically *new* building elements are introduced into an architectonic meaning system which is already *known and familiar* in its meanings that guide actions. The utilizing of the respective innovation must always be *rehearsed* and generally be *explained verbally* in order to become a consistent element of an already familiar *context* of action. The long development of building shows many examples of this. Innovations in *structural engineering* characterize the nineteenth century in particular, for instance, the introduction of water, gas, electricity, of new transport or illumination systems inside buildings. The relative increase in size of house buildings in both the horizontal and the vertical direction characterizes the development of building in the

twentieth century; *concentrations of people* which were previously unknown in a single building are the result. Now each individual must first *become accustomed to the buildings*. It now becomes a major task to *learn* one's own *orientation* in the structure. Information systems, signs and pictograms serve to find the ways within the structures better and to incorporate this knowledge into one's own 'cognitive map' or mental guide to the path structures.

Towards the Domestication of Man
We observe a long-term transfer of more and more human activities into *structures*. The word structure (or domus, house, maison) in most languages designates a whole which consists of several parts. In that sense 'structures' are always buildings and social objects at the same time. The term 'enstructuration process' thus always refers to at least two analytically distinguishable processes that are tightly interwoven. On the one hand, people erect, maintain or increase the stock of *buildings*; step by step almost all the activities of humanity (including significant parts of natural commodity production) are moved into buildings. And, second, almost the entire power and *control structure* of people changes in the process.

We find many examples of the first process. With the transition from agricultural to industrial labor, the majority of humanity is no longer at work in the open air, but rather in workshops, offices, factories and other buildings. All children must now also spend an increasing portion of their time in buildings. Two processes bring this about: the establishment of a general requirement to attend school and the extension of this requirement up the age scale.

But what happens in the second process? The classical economists and, later the historians as well, investigated the rise of 'capitalism', 'industrialization', 'rationalization' or world 'markets'. They looked primarily at the processes of *division* of labor and of traditional housekeeping. But how, and in what sorts of social relationships, were people reintegrated in *buildings*? Specialized disciplines developed that dealt with the operational rules or the history of the modern family; technical disciplines also arose to erect buildings. But the issue of the structural change in the *head of household* drifted into the marginal zones of scholarly interest (John, 1982). The changes in the concept of property and above all in the *behavior of owners* were neglected by scholarship.

People view things quite differently when they use buildings.

They experience a very distinct canon of generally quite clear *behavioral rules and prohibitions*. Individuals' risks of harming themselves, others or the owners by their behavior is usually covered by insurance. All those who participate in the planning, construction, furnishing or cleaning of buildings also see things differently. They know the rules of *building management* very well. Those rules are a part of their unspoken professional knowledge (Polanyi, 1969), without the use of which buildings could not function in the long run. What changes? On the level of the *relations between people*, we see that the individual physical function is sociated in a special way in buildings. The separation of bedrooms, for example, the furnishing of special rooms for sleeping, runs parallel to the creation of other zones in the house in which sleeping is no longer allowed (Gleichmann, 1983). Closer monitoring in the workplace means that the individual is no longer allowed to sleep on the job, whereas he could nap for a relatively long time back in the country. Or the actions of bodily cleansing and elimination are moved into the house, while at the same time each individual is 'attached to the sewer system' and therefore subject to strict rules of behavior determined by 'drainage offices'.

On the level of relationships between individuals the most obvious example of new integration events in the course of enstructuration is above all the change in family ownership of houses. The pater familias of the old closed household largely *loses* his functions. Work tasks are integrated into separate operations. His power as head of household or frequently his adjudicatory powers are transferred to the state judicial system. His duty to take care of supporting each member of the 'house' (and in turn to be supported in the house in his old age) pass over to the *social welfare* system. The tasks of raising children — no matter how rudimentary — are assigned to the *school* system.

Buildings and Individual Self-control
Buildings have increasingly lost their magic significance in the course of civilization; nevertheless, they still have numerous symbolic functions for people. We use the word 'civilizing' for all the events through which the momentary instinctive and affective behavioral impulses are increasingly made accessible and subordinated to individual self-regulation. Buildings serve multiple, often ambivalent purposes here. Often they literally embody those

'backdrops of social life', behind which everything disappears which is to be hidden from the gaze of others. The feelings that we connect with buildings are continually transformed. The more uncontrolled a certain area of activity for people is (Elias, 1983), the more affective is their thinking about this area, and the more affective and fantasy-laden their thought about an area, the less they are able to form more suitable contextual models of these events and correspondingly to control the contexts more completely. People who see no opportunity to have a formal influence on certain buildings often strive in their rage and anger to damage those buildings. Others who are easily able to judge soberly the structural changeability, the *designability*, of even the largest buildings, based on their professional knowledge as planners, being planning rationally, because they can exert influence on the changes. We find little understanding from them of the violence committed by others.

Dreaming up Buildings and Planning Them

Many ideas of paradise also contain architectonic ideals. Ideas of paradise lost are seen in the architectural theories of the 'primitive hut', from which all architecture is supposed to have arisen (Rykwert, 1972). We find ideal architectures in fairy tales, in literature (Goebel, 1971) and especially in painting. Buildings that represent a better world (Bloch, 1959) determine the hope of paradise, especially for those who are so poorly off that they can locate these hopes only in the afterlife. They do not have their architectural fantasies and housing wishes sufficiently under control. That is why the steps that lead to images of the *feasible paradises* are also steps in the individual self-regulation of momentary affectively determined behavioral impulses, they are deflected towards secondary impulse goals (Hahn, 1976). The development from magical or mystical commitments to buildings towards dream objects of a utopian type is not a mere change of 'world views' — as mechanical, perhaps, as the progression of images in a slide show — rather it is the expression of profound transformations to bring one's own action impulses under one's own control. The urban design in Thomas More's *Utopia* and the many other ideal city plans are not mere ideal images (Rosenau, 1959), they increasingly become 'feasible paradises'. The urban expansions of Amsterdam in the seventeenth century, for instance, religiously named 'the promised land', were designed with the greatest rationality (Taverne,

1978). And the city plans of the nineteenth and even the twentieth centuries clearly contain such ideals.

Symbolic Arbitrariness of the Architects and Institutionalizing of Artistic Knowledge?

Two interwoven processes are particularly conspicuous. The growth in the *relative professional autonomy* of the architects, a 'profession atomisée' (Moulin, 1973), is discernibly being limited to more and more narrowly framed fields of professional competence — essentially design and aesthetic questions. Most tasks of an improved control of nature and the site engineering work are passing into the hands of industrial and engineering specialists. In the development of architectural thought in the late twentieth century the 'theories' show this clearly. Most academic theories are related to individual *aspects* of construction, particularly its 'semiotic' character, to analogies with 'language', to 'mental perception' which then usually means visual perception alone, or to 'gestalt-psychological' or aesthetic sides of constructing. Another group concerns itself with the organizational elaboration of the managerial work processes of the architect. These are no design or planning theories. By far the majority of recognized practically active architects follow purely *personal architectural theories* (Prak, 1984). To put it another way, they take advantage of the accumulated designing scope of *'symbolic arbitrariness'* as much as possible for their own stylistic freedom (Bourdieu and Passeron, 1990).

Already in the nineteenth century we find great architects who are simultaneously researchers of architectural history. It was only the careful collection and publication of all the 'architectural styles' that made it possible for architects to make use of this knowledge at will. Preserving this knowledge permanently, *institutionalizing art history* (Dilly, 1979), thus becomes an essential prerequisite for the architects' 'freedom to design'. The great majority of people show little understanding of these architectural results of the architects' symbolic arbitrariness of form. And just that, 'distinction' (Bourdieu, 1984), the emphasis on the gap between the client and everyone else, seems to be the actual function of arbitrariness of taste. The stylistically irrational traits serve recognized architects, who create for the power elite, to create the social distances from those for whom *the symbolic language of architecture* means little (Reinle, 1976). But these 'meanings' do not reside in things, in building elements; they are given to the

things by people. That is why the majority of neohistoric buildings of the present are so aesthetically meaningless. We cannot accord any clear meaning commonly recognized by the majority of people to the mass of older and now reused building forms.

Global Urbanization and Global Architectural Theories

Tendencies to plan cities according to strict rules have become stronger in the wake of worldwide urbanization processes. The permanent establishment of a state-communal *urban planning* has been most successful so far in those places where the balances of power between state and bourgeois society have turned clearly in favor of state dominance. When the business bourgeoisie was stronger, only the weak beginnings of city planning came into existence (Sutcliffe, 1983). And finally, where young states are still coming into being there may be large-scale urbanization processes under way, but a protected city planning is lacking.

Nevertheless, there are corresponding global rules for city planning. In particular, these deal with building safety, illumination, fire protection, building spacing and similar matters. These construction rules are *largely legally codified*. Everyone wishing to build, every building planner, must learn and follow them. Here we find actual *universal* rules of architecture. Not following them can be punished by the judicial system. For architects who must learn these rules everywhere, they act as a *secret architectural theory*, which simultaneously limits their personal arbitrariness.

Translated by Mark Ritter

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Peter R. Gleichmann is Professor of Sociology at the University of Hannover, Germany.