

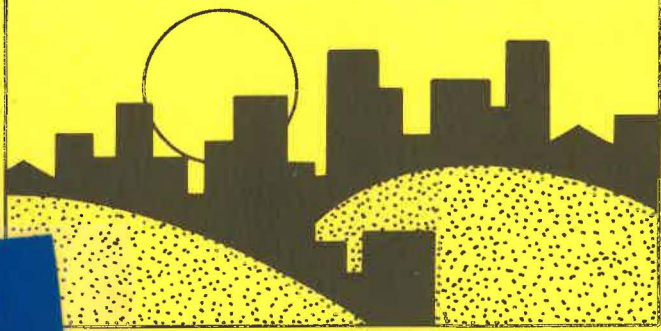


## BOUND SHELF

### POSTMODERNISM IN ARCHITECTURE AND PLANNING: What Kind of Style?

Steven C. Bourassa

URU Working Paper No. 12  
May 1989



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## ABSTRACT

*Is the phenomenon of postmodernism in architecture and planning a matter of superficial style, or does it represent something more fundamental? What kind of style is postmodernism, and what kind of style should postmodernism be? This paper offers answers to these questions by referring to a comprehensive theory of aesthetics as a basis for evaluating postmodernism. This theory is sketched out and then postmodernism is defined by comparison with modernism. A fundamental split within postmodernism is delineated; the postmodernism of reaction is characterized by empty formalism, while the postmodernism of resistance involves a critical appreciation of the various elements of local context. The theory of aesthetics, although only rudimentary, provides obvious support for the postmodernism of resistance, or critical regionalism.*

# POSTMODERNISM IN ARCHITECTURE AND PLANNING: What Kind of Style?<sup>1</sup>

Steven C. Bourassa  
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## Introduction

What kind of style is postmodernism in architecture and planning? Does postmodernism offer something of lasting value and profound significance? Or is it an affected, arbitrary style, a type of mannerism that is destined to be replaced by yet another stylistic paradigm? Moreover, given the fact that postmodernism is not yet well-defined, it is appropriate to ask the normative question: What kind of style should postmodernism be?

This paper seeks to develop answers to these questions. The next section of the paper sketches the outlines of a theory of aesthetics which will serve as the basis for evaluation of postmodernism. Postmodernism is then described by means of comparisons with modernism and the fundamental split within postmodernism is deliberated. The aesthetic theory is then applied to help determine the best orientation for postmodernism.

## A Theoretical Framework For Aesthetic Evaluation<sup>2</sup>

A major problem in developing aesthetic theory applicable to architecture and planning is the unduly constrictive concept of aesthetics employed by most philosophers. The word *aesthetics* is typically used to refer to the study of taste and beauty in the fine arts, yet its Greek root had a much broader meaning, encompassing sense perception generally (Punter, 1982). The typical concept of aesthetics becomes patently unworkable when applied to architecture and planning. This problem stems from the peculiar character of the relevant aesthetic object.

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<sup>1</sup> This paper was presented at the 1989 annual conference of the Royal Australian Institute of Architects, in Canberra.

<sup>2</sup> Some aspects of this theoretical framework are discussed in more detail in my paper, "Toward a theory of landscape aesthetics" (Bourassa, 1988).

The aesthetic object of architecture and planning is neither *environment*, which is too broadly defined, nor *building*, which is too narrowly defined. *Environment* is unsatisfactory, as it includes things that are not perceived. Building is unsuitable because it ignores the important relationship between a structure and its context. Scruton (1979) observes that architecture is (p. 11): "an art of the ensemble". That ensemble is best denoted *landscape*, defined broadly to include both the urban and rural scene.<sup>3</sup> *Landscape* is a better term than *environment* because, as Appleton notes (1980: 14): "'Landscape' is not synonymous with 'environment'; it is 'the environment perceived,' especially visually perceived".

Philosophers of aesthetics have tended to focus on discrete objects of art. This tends to exclude landscapes as aesthetic objects because landscapes contain elements of both art and nature and they are also inextricably bound up with everyday experience. The problem, then, is to extend the scope of aesthetics to include objects as complex as landscapes. A beginning of a solution to this problem is suggested by John Dewey in his *Art as Experience* (1934). Dewey argues that aesthetics is a part of everyday experience and not limited to certain experiences of artists or art connoisseurs.<sup>4</sup> In support of this argument, Dewey suggests that there is a biological basis for aesthetics, because that is the only way he can account for certain aesthetic responses to natural scenery which humans seem to have in common.

Reacting to Dewey, Susanne Langer, in her *Feeling and Form* (1958), argues that his theory goes too far in reducing aesthetics to animal drives. She sees aesthetics as the philosophy of art (p. 36):

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<sup>3</sup> *Townscape* and similar terms therefore refer to types of landscapes.

<sup>4</sup> Writing specifically about landscape aesthetics, Punter (1982) makes the same point; however, he bases his conclusions on a materialist critique. Speaking more generally, Habermas (1985) also sees a need to integrate aesthetics with everyday life. According to Boyer, if this were accomplished (1986: 46), "Then aesthetic expression, which includes architecture, would speak of the wholeness of the relationship between man and nature and not the alienation of both".

*The true connoisseurs of art . . . feel at once that to treat great art as a source of experience not essentially different from the experience of everyday life . . . is to miss the very essence of it, the thing that makes art as important as science or even religion, yet sets it apart as an autonomous creative function of a typically human mind.*

While Langer is correct to emphasise the uniquely human, creative aspects of art, her concept excludes the everyday landscape as an aesthetic object. What is needed is a theoretical framework which can accommodate the philosophies of both Dewey and Langer, recognizing the significance of biological motivation, while also respecting the significance of art and human creativity.

A hint of a solution to this problem is provided by Gaston Bachelard in his *The Poetics of Space* (1969). Bachelard suggests that human mental structure be used as a model for aesthetic analysis. In this regard, Bachelard refers to Jung's conception of the mind. Jung divided the mind into three levels: the conscious, the personal unconscious, and the collective unconscious. The conscious and the personal unconscious are uniquely human, while the collective unconscious is not. The latter contains the archetypes, which are analogous to instincts and serve as the biological underpinnings for aesthetic behavior.<sup>5</sup> Thus Jung's schema is compatible with Dewey's thesis. Jung's model is also quite compatible with Langer's aesthetics because it recognises that part of human mental structure is uniquely human.

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<sup>5</sup> Neurophysiological research, particularly that of MacLean (1973a; 1973b), has provided support for Jung's ideas. According to MacLean, the human brain is divided into three parts which he calls reptilian, paleomammalian, and neomammalian. Both in terms of structure and function, the reptilian and paleomammalian brains are similar to their counterparts in the brains of more primitive animals. The neomammalian brain (or neocortex) is more uniquely human and is the seat of those capabilities (such as language) which are found only in man. In regard to the reptilian brain, MacLean notes (p. 8): "On the basis of behavioural observations of ethologists, there are indications that the reptilian brain programs stereotyped behaviours according to instructions based on ancestral learning and ancestral memories". Research on brain physiology has also revealed direct connections between the visual system and both the paleomammalian (or "limbic") brain and the neocortex (MacLean, 1973a; 1973c). Furthermore, it appears that each of the different sections of the brain may respond to sensory information in its own way, indicating, for example, that instinctual and rational responses to landscapes could occur simultaneously.

Concepts of the existential movement in psychotherapy provide a basis for further articulation of a theoretical framework for the aesthetics of landscape. May (1958b) observes that the existential movement seeks (p. 7) "to analyze the structure of human existence . . .". One result of that analysis is the identification of three simultaneous modes of existence—the *Umwelt*, the *Mitwelt*, and the *Eigenwelt* (May, 1958a). The first of these is the biological world. According to May (1958a: 61):

*For animals and human beings the Umwelt includes biological needs, drives, instincts—the world one would exist in if, let us hypothesize, one had no self-awareness. It is the world of natural law and natural cycles, of sleep and awakesness, of being born and dying, desire and relief, the world of finiteness and biological determinism, the "thrown world" to which each of us must in some way adjust.*

Thus the *Umwelt* could be said to include the contents of the collective unconscious, as defined by Jung.<sup>6</sup> The second mode is the social or cultural world (p. 62): "the world of interrelationships with human beings". The last is one's personal world (p. 61): "the mode of one's relationship to one's self".<sup>7</sup> Thus there are three distinct and fundamental modes of human existence and, correspondingly, three potential modes of aesthetic experience of the world. Clearly, any comprehensive theory seeking to

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<sup>6</sup> According to May (1958a: 90), most existential analysts reject the concept of the unconscious (see also Binswanger, 1958: 326) and therefore would probably object to the reference to Jung in this context. Existential analysts would prefer to characterize biological responses to environment as non-verbal rather than unconscious. This is consistent with MacLean's (1973a) characterization of the reptilian and limbic brains (see footnote 5 above) as being non-verbal, yet in communication with the neocortex in other ways. He writes (pp. 123-124): "There are clinical indications that the reptilian- and old mammalian-type brains lack the neural machinery for verbal communication with the neocortex. . . . But to say that they lack the power of speech is not to disparage their intelligence. Nor does it mean they can be relegated to the unconscious, when in actuality they may be wide awake".

<sup>7</sup> Meyer (1979) uses a similar tripartite system to articulate his theory of style. He defines style as (p. 3): "A replication of patterning, whether in human behavior or in the artifacts produced by human behavior, that results from a series of choices made within some set of constraints". He outlines three types of constraints (laws, rules, and strategies) which operate at three levels analogous to the *Umwelt*, *Mitwelt*, and *Eigenwelt*.

explain human aesthetic experience of landscape must address each of the three modes of existence.

The biological and cultural modes of landscape aesthetics have been explored by Appleton (1975) and Costonis (1982), respectively, to cite two of the most notable contributors. As May (1958a) notes, the personal mode is relatively difficult to grasp intellectually; it is ill-defined because it is not quite clear what is meant by "one's relationship to one's self". It is perhaps for this reason that it has not been addressed by researchers in aesthetics.<sup>8</sup> It is helpful, as a starting point, to view the personal mode of existence as that which transcends the constraints or conditions of the biological and cultural modes. Before pursuing this point, however, it will be useful to outline some of the characteristics of those constraints and conditions.

Although it considers only biological aspects of landscape aesthetics, Appleton's book, *The Experience of Landscape* (1975), was the first major attempt to establish a theory of landscape aesthetics. Appleton's basic thesis is that a landscape which appears to offer satisfaction of biological needs is one that will also provide aesthetic satisfaction.<sup>9</sup> He calls this idea *habitat theory*. Since the "ability to see without being seen" is an important means for achieving biological needs, that ability is itself a source of aesthetic satisfaction. This part of his thesis is labelled *prospect-refuge theory*. Prospect-refuge theory describes a mechanism that protects individuals from hazards, a third type of environmental feature which plays an important role in Appleton's schema. Furthermore, it seems that the aesthetic appreciation of the refuge corresponds with the intensity of the dialectical relationship between the refuge and the prospect or the hazard.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> For example, my (Bourassa, 1988) attempt to synthesize a comprehensive theory of landscape aesthetics fails to address the *Eigenwelt* explicitly.

<sup>9</sup> It is of interest at this point to recall MacLean's (1962) observation that the limbic brain (p. 289; see footnote 5 above): "acts upon information in terms of feelings, particularly emotional feelings that guide behavior with respect to the two basic life principles of *self-preservation* and the *preservation of the species*". (See also MacLean, 1958a; 1958b.)

<sup>10</sup> One can cite numerous examples which support Appleton's theory. Bachelard's *The Poetics of Space* (1969) provides numerous examples from literature, while Jackson's (1970) descriptions of Grand Central Terminal and the Vienna *Hofburg* are also clearly in step with prospect-refuge theory. For other examples, see Cullen's discussion of



With respect to the cultural mode of landscape aesthetics, Costonis has put forth a convincing thesis in his article, "Law and aesthetics: A critique and reformulation of the dilemmas" (1982). Costonis rejects formalist approaches to aesthetics, and argues that symbolic, nonsensory aspects of objects are more important than formal qualities. He observes (p. 401): "We do not so much *discover* aesthetically compelling properties in the environment . . . as ascribe them to it on the basis of our individual and cultural beliefs, values, and needs". Costonis advances a "cultural stability-identity" theory of aesthetics, which maintains that aesthetic values are reflections of groups' desires to maintain stability and protect their identities.<sup>11</sup>

In contrast to the conservative character of the cultural mode, the personal mode is rooted in self-awareness and is the locus of insight and creativity. As Tuan notes (1986: 97):

*Stability is a condition of the good life. But so is growth. Without question, growth is desirable in the human individual. Well-being is an expansive feeling, whether one takes in great draughts of fresh air or consumes a lovely landscape with one's eyes. Life is mere maintenance without a sense of expansion and of moving on.*

Cultural change, as well as personal development, finds its source in the personal mode of human existence.

Architecture and planning must address aesthetic experience at all three levels of human existence. Although the preceding discussion of theory has

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"hereness" and "thereness" in his *Townscape* (1961), Hiss' (1987) account of Grand Terminal and Prospect Park, and Wilson's (1987) analysis of the aesthetics of Italian piazzas.

<sup>11</sup> As Costonis observes, the circumstances of actual aesthetic controversies support the argument that the symbolic aspects of the landscape are more important than any canons of visual beauty. Numerous examples could be cited in support of Costonis' theory. Three good examples are: Costonis' (1982) discussion of the Rice Mansion controversy in New York; my (Bourassa, 1988) discussion of the Rittenhouse Square controversy in Philadelphia; and Rowntree's (1981) discussion of historic preservation efforts in Salzburg.

been necessarily sketchy and suggestive, rather than conclusive, it is possible to make some preliminary and incomplete recommendations for architectural and planning practice. With respect to the biological mode, there is a need to emphasize the tension between refuge and prospect, inside and outside, enclosed space and open space. In regard to the cultural mode, there is a need to respect the need for cultural stability and identity. On the other hand, the discussion of the personal mode suggests a need to encourage creativity and constructive change. Controversy over change seems to arise when individuals act at the expense of cultural values. As Costonis (1982) points out, aesthetic controversy is essentially (p. 381) "debate over environmental change itself, or to be more specific, the question whether that change is culturally disintegrative or culturally vitalizing".

### Modernism and Postmodernism

As the term suggests, *postmodernism* is characterised by its differences from modernism. In its most general sense, postmodernism refers to a rejection of the rationalism of the Enlightenment, as embraced by modernism. Modernism adopted wholeheartedly the Enlightenment idea that rationality could be applied to solve social problems and that the human condition could thereby be progressively improved toward some unitary, consensual end. As Habermas notes (1985), nineteenth-century romanticism led to another theme of twentieth-century modernity; this was the novel idea that modernity did not involve idealization and imitation of some past era. Thus modernism came to reject tradition and it (p. 4) "freed itself from all specific historical ties". A related influence of romanticism was an emphasis on the artist's originality and creativity.

In architecture, modernism came to be associated with a specific aesthetic style, known as *functionalism*. Functionalism was a clear extension of modernism's rationalism and abandonment of tradition. It involved a rejection of all historical references and an emphasis on a machine aesthetics which expressed an image of rationality. Ornament was not permitted unless it contributed to the aesthetics of the machine. As Mumford notes (1986 [1962]: 77), functionalism "sought to make the new buildings *look* as

if they respected the machine, no matter what the materials or methods of construction". Functionalism was an "International Style" that was appropriate universally, at all places and times, regardless of the cultural, historical, climatological, or topographical context. Modernism also comprised the idea that each building should be a strong statement of the architect's creative ability.

In planning, modernism was epitomised by the idea that it would be possible to resolve urban problems through a rational process of comprehensive city planning. Land use could be rationalised through zoning, which would insure the separation of incompatible land uses and prevent congestion by enforcing low densities. Slums, and their attendant social problems, could be excised through urban renewal. More radical thinkers such as Le Corbusier diagnosed the city's problems and found that major surgery was needed to combat the evils of congestion and slums. Le Corbusier's *La Ville Radieuse* (1964 [1933]) involved a complete abandonment of the historic fabric of the city, including the "death of the street", in favor of a "dictatorial" plan (Figure 1).

The failures of modernism in architecture and planning are well-known.<sup>12</sup> Generally, it is argued that, instead of improving the human condition, modernism has contributed to its impoverishment. More specifically, and perhaps unfairly, modernism has been blamed for the destruction of the city.<sup>13</sup> As has already been suggested, however, the most fundamental critique of modernism is with respect to its uncritical acceptance of Enlightenment rationalism. The rationality of modernism is viewed skeptically as a naive optimism; there is no longer any faith in the idea of progress. As Huxtable puts it (1980: 22): "Today there is no certainty about

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<sup>12</sup> There have been a number of popular critiques, such as those by Blake (1977), Brolin (1976), and Wolfe (1981).

<sup>13</sup> Prince Charles recently contributed to the fray by criticising modern architects and planners for destroying London. Comparing them to the German Luftwaffe, he said (quoted by Lohr, 1987): "You have to give this much to the Luftwaffe—when it knocked down our buildings, it didn't replace them with anything more offensive than rubble. We did that".

anything anymore. There are no longer any approved verities to hang onto, no yardsticks or ideals that safely and universally apply".

Huyssen (1981), Lyotard (1984), and others have contributed to the general critique of modernism, while Habermas is an important defender of modernism. Both Huyssen and Lyotard emphasise the value of pluralism, while Habermas emphasises consensus. Huyssen, for example, writes (1981: 38):

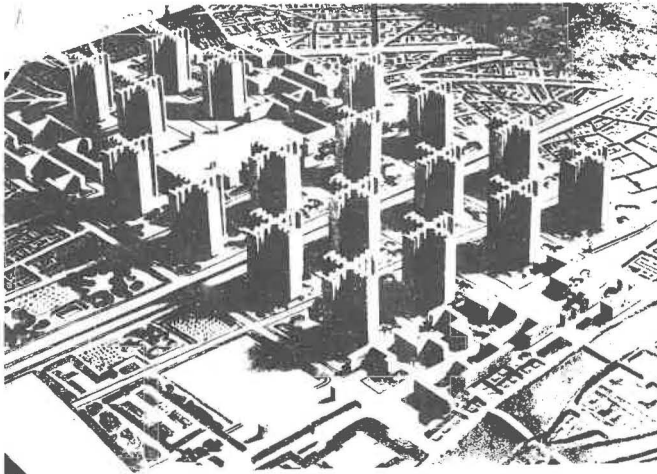
*Habermas ignores the fact that the very idea of a wholistic modernity and of a totalizing view of history has become anathema in the 1970s . . . . The critical deconstruction of enlightenment rationalism and logocentrism by theoreticians of culture, the decentering of traditional notions of identity, the fight of women and gays for a legitimate social and sexual identity outside of the parameters of male, heterosexual vision, the search for alternatives in our relationship with nature, including the nature of our own bodies—all these phenomena, which are key to the culture of the 1970s, make Habermas' proposition to complete the project of modernity questionable, if not undesirable.*

In this same vein, planners are no longer enamoured of grand comprehensive schemes; they are more comfortable with incrementalism and muddling-through. The modern emphasis on the use of zoning to rationalise city form by separating supposedly incompatible uses and maintaining low densities seems simplistic and contrary to what makes for an interesting and lively urban setting (Jacobs, 1961). Along with Robert Venturi (1966), planners have come to appreciate (p. 22) "messy vitality over obvious unity".<sup>14</sup> The emphasis on clearance of slums and other problematic parts of the city is viewed as being crudely insensitive to the value of existing social networks and historic forms.

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<sup>14</sup> Although he is criticised as being fundamentally a modernist (Jencks, 1978: 87-88), Venturi is given credit for being the intellectual father of postmodernism in architecture. According to Goldberger (1987), for example, Venturi's book, *Complexity and Contradiction in Architecture* (1966), "gave postmodernism its intellectual start". If Venturi, with his dubious postmodern credentials, can be considered the father of postmodernism in architecture, then Jane Jacobs is surely the mother of postmodernism in planning. Her book, *The Death and Life of Great American Cities* (1961), forced a radical reconsideration of modernist planning ideas.

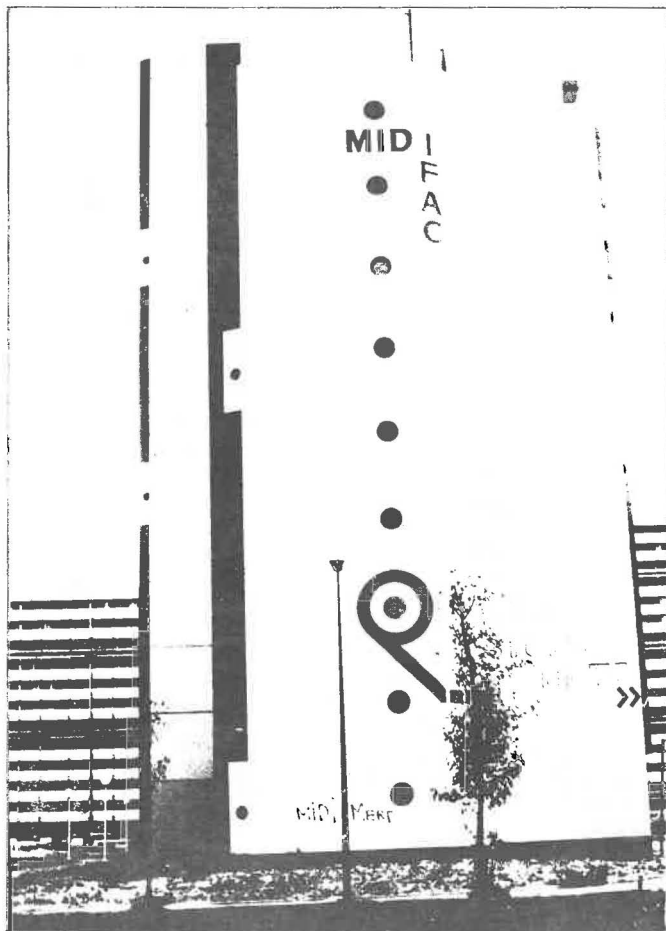
**Figure 1:** Le Corbusier's "Voisin" Plan for central Paris would have completely erased the historic fabric of the city, replacing it with a regular pattern of skyscrapers surrounded by parks. The traditional multi-purpose street would have been replaced by a system of unimodal transportation routes.



**Figure 2:** Postmodern kitsch in Atlanta. This recent condominium building, with its arbitrary hodge-podge of architectural elements, is typical of reactionary postmodernism.



**Figure 3:** The aesthetics of the machine expressed in the form of student housing at the Université de Toulouse—Le Mirail. The graffiti reflects the residents' antipathy for the building.



**Figure 4:** Robert Stern's building (at left) and Philip Johnson and John Burgee's (at right) in Boston illustrate some of the differences between the postmodernism of resistance, or critical regionalism, and reactionary postmodernism. The Stern building reflects a careful study of its context, while the Johnson and Burgee tower is an arbitrary assemblage of historical forms. As Goldberger observes (1988: 31): "... it is hard not to feel that if the designers in Mr Johnson and Mr Burgee's office were looking at books for inspiration, Mr Stern and his colleagues were wearing out shoe leather on the streets of Back Bay". (Courtesy of Robert A.M. Stern Architects)



Architects have come to design buildings which respect the various dimensions of their contexts; it is no longer desirable for each building to be a distinct creative statement that stands out from its environment (Brolin, 1980).<sup>1</sup> Brolin maintains that the modernists' (p. 7) "indifference—indeed hostility—to harmonious continuity comes from the modernists' violent denunciation of derivative architectural forms". Today, an eclectic permissiveness prevails with respect to historic form and ornament. Architects now appreciate the symbolic function of architecture and the symbolism of historic forms and ornamentation. In adopting the narrow functionalism of the aesthetics of the machine, architects had denied the importance of symbolism (Mumford, 1986 [1952]: 86): "In properly rejecting antiquated symbols, they . . . also rejected human needs, interests, sentiments, values, that must be given full play in every complete structure". (Figure 3.)

This overview, however brief, has catalogued some of the fundamental differences between modernism and postmodernism. Modernism encompasses Enlightenment rationalism, denial of tradition, a universal functionalist style, prohibition of ornament and symbolism, a romantic individualism which valued buildings that stand out rather than fit in, and a penchant for grand and totalitarian solutions to urban problems. Postmodernism, by contrast, is characterised by skeptical distrust of human rational abilities, respect for tradition, an eclectic aesthetic, recognition of the importance of ornament and symbol, a contextualism which values buildings that attend to their surroundings, and an incremental approach to the solution of urban problems.<sup>15</sup> While this contrast of modernism and postmodernism has contributed to the purpose of defining, or at least describing, the latter, it is inadequate because it masks a major split within postmodernism. As Foster (1985) observes, there are really two distinct types of postmodernism (p. xii): "a postmodernism of resistance and a postmodernism of reaction". The critical dialogue about these two types constitutes the postmodern debate.

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<sup>15</sup> Writing in 1977, Robert Stern observed that postmodernism in architecture was characterised by contextualism, allusionism, and ornamentalism (see Stern, 1977: 275).



## The Postmodern Debate

According to Foster (1985: xi-xii): "In cultural politics today, a basic opposition exists between a postmodernism which seeks to deconstruct modernism and resist the status quo and a postmodernism which repudiates the former to celebrate the latter". These two streams of postmodernism are clearly evident in architecture and planning. The postmodernism of resistance is advocated by writers such as Boyer (1986), Frampton (1982; 1985), Huxtable (1980), and Jencks (1978), while the postmodernism of reaction is clearly exemplified in the work of Venturi (1966) and Venturi, Scott Brown, and Izenour (1977).

In architecture, the postmodernism of reaction is strictly a matter of style, in the narrow, mannerist sense of the word (Figure 2). Venturi (1966) spurred a radical change in the reigning tastes of the modern movement when he rejected the exclusionary style of functionalism in favor of a relatively eclectic, but purely formal, contextualism. Historical allusion and ornament became desirable elements of architecture and it was no longer necessary for buildings to express the functionalist image of rationalism.† The eclecticism of Venturi, Scott Brown, and Izenour (1977) even went so far as to extol the "commercial vernacular" of the Las Vegas strip. But again this was strictly a formal conceit, devoid of any critical consideration of content. This kind of postmodernism is rightfully criticised as "an instrumental pastiche of pop- or pseudo-historical forms" (Foster, 1985: xii), "do-it-yourself history" (Huxtable, 1980: 26), "cardboard scenography" (Frampton, 1982: 76), or an example of "precisely that avalanche of academicism, commercialism, and kitsch that is always ready to swamp our culture in the absence of a tradition vigorous enough to resist it" (Kramer, 1987: 327). Huxtable sums up the problem (1980: 26): "It takes a creative act, not clever cannibalism, to turn a building into art".<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> Goldberger (1987) notes that some current architecture students are so dissatisfied with the superficiality of prevalent postmodern theory and practice that they are reverting back to modernist forms (p. 56): "they fear that post-modernism is unable to look at architecture as something deeper than a question of choosing a few pretty cornices for a few multimillion-dollar houses".

A reactionary postmodernism in planning parallels that in architecture (Dear, 1986: 379). Boyer (1986) and Jacobs and Appleyard (1987) note an inability to plan the form of the city—an abdication to market forces of control over urban form. Those authors, together with Krumholz (1987), also lament planners' apparent lack of social ideals. Instead of a reformist concern with improving the quality of life in the city, there is passive accommodation of the market. Planning is a matter of managing programs and reacting to market demands rather than a matter of imagining the future of the city (Neutze, 1988).

In contrast to the postmodernism of reaction is the critical postmodernism of resistance (Figure 4). According to Alexander Cooper (quoted by Ganem, 1987: 70): "As soon as we get through all this nonsense about fake Greek, fake Roman, fake whatever, the serious practitioners will be doing things that reflect very positively the place where they're being built". And: "If there is a trend that does make sense right now, it is a very powerful sense of regionalism". Frampton (1985) calls this trend *critical regionalism*, a term which he attributes to Tzonis and Lefaivre (1981).<sup>17</sup> Frampton, more than anyone else, has succeeded in elucidating a meaningful direction for postmodernism.<sup>18</sup> Critical regionalism is a highly self-critical approach to architecture and planning. It recognises the importance of context, but this recognition is not limited to the acknowledgement of existing architectural forms. It also appreciates the significance of local culture, social institutions, techniques, climate, topography. The critical regionalist is aware of universal techniques, but does not try to apply them arbitrarily, without respect to local conditions. At the same time, the critical regionalist does not resort to a sentimental vernacular or a reactionary historicising.

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<sup>17</sup> Jencks' (1978) calls his version "radical eclecticism". Jencks' concept, while useful, is somewhat limited by its focus on the semiotic aspects of architecture. Frampton's critical regionalism deals more broadly with the problem.

<sup>18</sup> There are, however, some aspects of Frampton's critical regionalism which could benefit from further clarification. Some of these points are discussed in the commentary on Frampton's *Modern Architecture: A Critical History* (1980) which appears in his subsequent book, *Modern Architecture and the Critical Present* (1982: 46-59). Particularly noteworthy are Colquhoun's observation that Frampton is perhaps too critical of the use of historical forms (p. 49) and Dunster's desire that Frampton be more explicit about the politics underlying his critical history (p. 51).

The critical regionalist goes beyond the vernacular and the universal in a creative synthesis which seeks to increase (Frampton, 1982: 76) "*the cultural density of the built fabric*".\*This is another way of saying that the critical regionalist seeks to enhance the identities of places, to intensify their cultural significance. Webber's (1964) "non-place urban realm" is explicitly rejected as a model for city form (Frampton, 1985: 25). The critical regionalist realises that urban form must be bounded and defined if it is to serve as a repository for human meaning. Critical regionalism's (Frampton, 1982: 81) "salient cultural precept is 'place' creation; its general model is the 'enclave'—that is, the bounded urban fragment against which the inundation of the place-less, consumerist environment will find itself momentarily checked".

### **Conclusions: Aesthetic Theory and Postmodernism**

The theory of landscape aesthetics provides clear support for the postmodernism of resistance, critical regionalism.<sup>19</sup> Although the implications of the theory are only rudimentary, critical regionalism is patently consistent with them. The theory of aesthetics presented here is based primarily on the idea that human beings have three modes of existence. These three modes have been referred to as the *Umwelt*, *Mitwelt*, and *Eigenwelt*, or the biological, cultural, and personal worlds. The biological mode of aesthetic experience is addressed by Appleton's habitat theory. This theory leads to the conclusion that contrasts of refuges and prospects or hazards afford aesthetic satisfaction. The critical regionalist's concern with contained forms or enclaves and their boundaries is congruent with the implications of Appleton's theory. It is clearly impossible to have a dialectic of refuge and prospect or refuge and hazard without bounded spaces.

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<sup>19</sup> Although the aesthetic theory was presented here in an *a priori* manner, this was done only for expository purposes. The facts of postmodernism have helped to inform the theory, just as the theory helps one to evaluate postmodernism. Thus it would be more correct to say that the theory of landscape aesthetics and the critical postmodernism of resistance are mutually reinforcing.

Some of the most satisfying spaces are enclaves open to prospects. One thinks particularly of the Piazza San Marco in Venice. A less familiar example is in the French hill town of Cordes. Smith (1977) describes the two squares in the center of Cordes (p. 133):

*One is partly covered, in a manner which is common in France, with a kind of enlarged version of a medieval barn. This space is tightly enclosed except for one corner which provides access up a wide flight of steps to a higher plateau, shaded by tall trees and placed with a dramatic view over the distant hills.*

While these types of spaces<sup>20</sup> serve as ideals for the postmodernism of resistance, the postmodernism of reaction is not particularly concerned with the enclosure of exterior space. For example, Venturi, Scott Brown, and Izenour (1977) are willing to place the A&P parking lot in the same historical tradition of "vast space" as Versailles, despite the lack of enclosure of the former (p. 13):

*The space that divides high-speed highway and low, sparse buildings produces no enclosure and little direction. To move through a piazza is to move between high enclosing forms. To move through this landscape [i.e., that of Las Vegas] is to move over vast expansive texture: the megatexture of the commercial landscape.*

In contrast, the critical regionalist would characterise the A&P parking lot and the Las Vegas landscape as "anti-space" or "lost space", to use the terms of Peterson (1980) or Trancik (1986).

With respect to the cultural mode of aesthetic experience, there are quite obvious points of tangency between aesthetic theory and the postmodernism of resistance. The cultural mode is addressed by Costonis' cultural stability-identity theory, which emphasises the symbolic meanings of places for groups of people. Aesthetic value is attached to places which afford symbols of cultural stability and identity. Critical regionalism is similarly concerned with cultural stability and identity. The critical regionalist wants

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<sup>20</sup> For other examples, see the references cited in footnote 10 above.

to intensify cultural identity by increasing the "cultural density" of places. The reactionary postmodernist, on the other hand, seems to have little concern for such matters.

The personal mode of aesthetic experience is also addressed by critical regionalism. The personal mode has been identified as the locus of creativity and the source of cultural change. It has been suggested that creativity in architecture and planning requires careful attention to context. This is appreciated by the critical regionalist, who recognises the role of individual creativity as the source of "culturally vitalizing" change.<sup>21</sup> The reactionary postmodernist, in contrast, tends to engage in "clever cannibalism".

In summary, the theory of landscape aesthetics provides a basis for embracing the postmodernism of resistance, critical regionalism, and rejecting the postmodernism of reaction. While the witty or ironic forms of reactionary postmodernism may be amusing to the architecturally erudite or appealing to the general public, they ultimately reflect a superficial formalism. In planning, the acceptance of the *status quo* may satisfy market demands, but it fails to provide a vision of what the city could be. While the postmodernism of reaction may not be "culturally disintegrative," it is surely "culturally stultifying". As an alternative course for postmodernism, critical regionalism offers a means for achieving "culturally vitalising" change.

The postmodern debate is a debate about the kind of style that postmodernism is, or should be. Will postmodernism be a style of reaction, or a style of resistance? Will it be characterised by an empty formalism and a passive commercialism? Or will it be defined by a creative engagement with the various dimensions of local context? At present, postmodernism runs the risk of degenerating into triviality. But it manifestly has the potential to be a powerfully invigorating force in the human landscape.

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<sup>21</sup> Frampton agrees that creativity is essentially an individual matter (1982: 81): "Regionalism . . . is not so much a collective effort as it is the output of a talented individual working with profound commitment to a particular local culture".

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the 1990s, the number of people in the world who are illiterate has increased from 1.1 billion to 1.5 billion.

There are many reasons for this. One is that the population of the world is growing rapidly. Another is that the number of people who are illiterate is increasing in many countries, particularly in the developing world. This is because of a number of factors, including a lack of access to education, a lack of resources, and a lack of political will.

One of the main reasons for the increase in illiteracy is the lack of access to education. In many developing countries, there are not enough schools, and the quality of education is poor. This means that many children do not go to school, and those who do often do not learn to read and write.

Another reason for the increase in illiteracy is the lack of resources. In many developing countries, there is a lack of money to invest in education. This means that there are not enough teachers, and the schools are often overcrowded. This makes it difficult for children to learn.

A third reason for the increase in illiteracy is the lack of political will. In many developing countries, the government does not prioritize education. This means that there is not enough money spent on education, and the quality of education is poor. This makes it difficult for children to learn.

There are many ways to reduce the number of illiterate people in the world. One way is to increase access to education. This can be done by building more schools, and by improving the quality of education. Another way is to increase resources for education. This can be done by increasing the amount of money spent on education, and by recruiting more teachers. A third way is to increase political will. This can be done by making education a priority for the government.

It is important to reduce the number of illiterate people in the world because illiteracy is a major barrier to development. People who are illiterate cannot read or write, which makes it difficult for them to find

work, to access services, and to participate in society. Reducing the number of illiterate people will help to improve the lives of many people in the world.

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