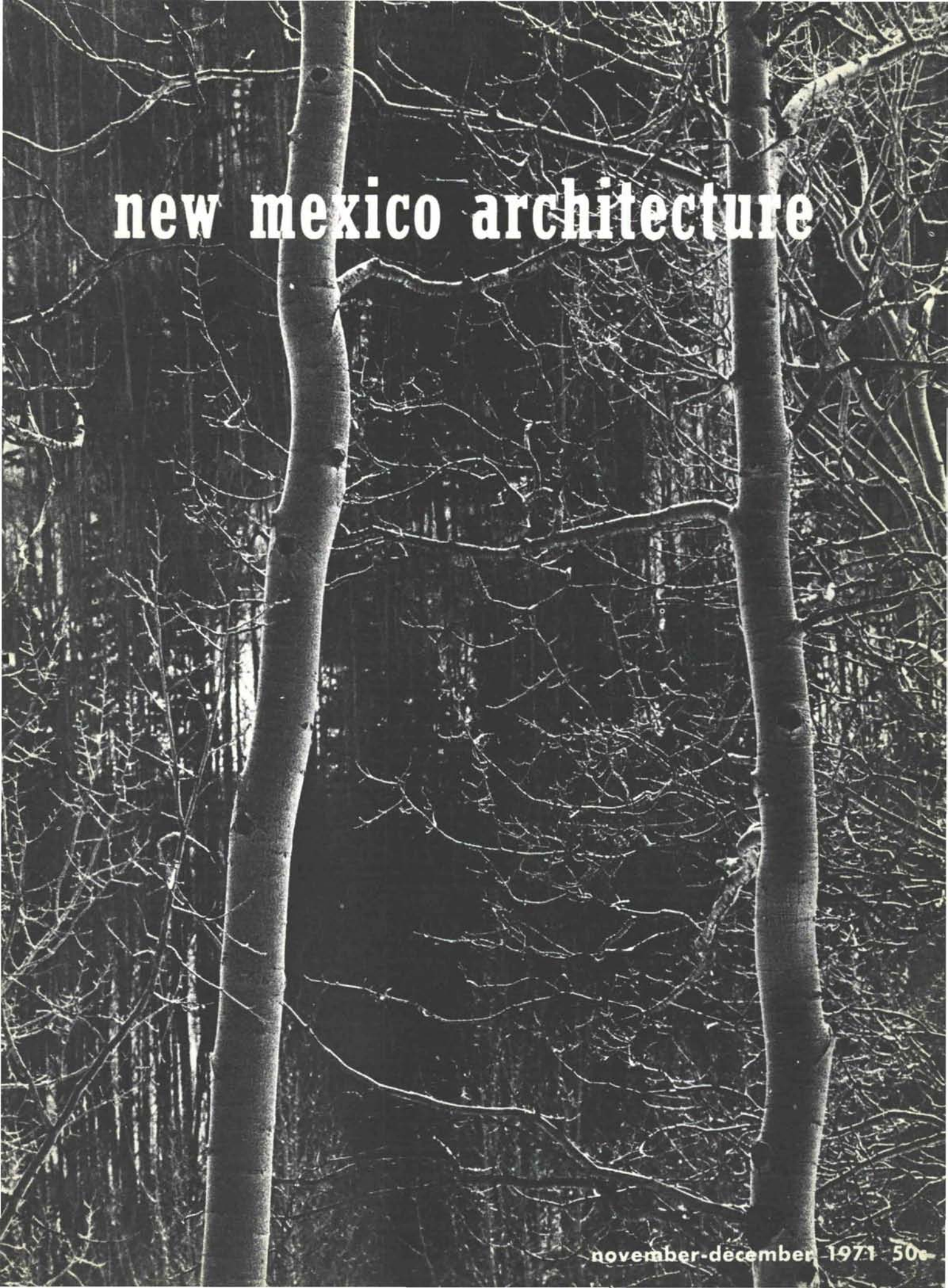

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And:

Curtiss K. Ewing received her master's degree in Sociology last June from the University of New Mexico. Currently she is pursuing her doctorate in Sociology at the University of Colorado.

While not architectural in nature, her article on the communes is, nonetheless, of importance to us all. Certainly the communes represent an increasingly popular life style for a growing population of youth. Disenchanted with the society which we, the so-called establishment, present to them, many of today's youth have elected to drop out to seek their own set of values and to form a society which they find meaningful for themselves. They are expressing a belief that what we are is not worth becoming. While we do not have to agree with their view of us, I believe that we can become the better by understanding them. Perhaps a look at us through their eyes would make us aware of our social failures, and environmental lassitude.

For the March/April 1963 issue of **NMA,** Mrs. Ewing gave us a provocative layman's view of Eero Saarinen's TWA terminal at Kennedy Airport in New York. JPC

Traditional Versus Contemporary Elements in Architecture **9**

—Anthony C. Antoniades, Visiting Lecturer of Architecture at U. N. M.

Communes and the American Society — Part 1 **15**

A Sociological View — Curtiss Ewing

Index to Advertisers **22**

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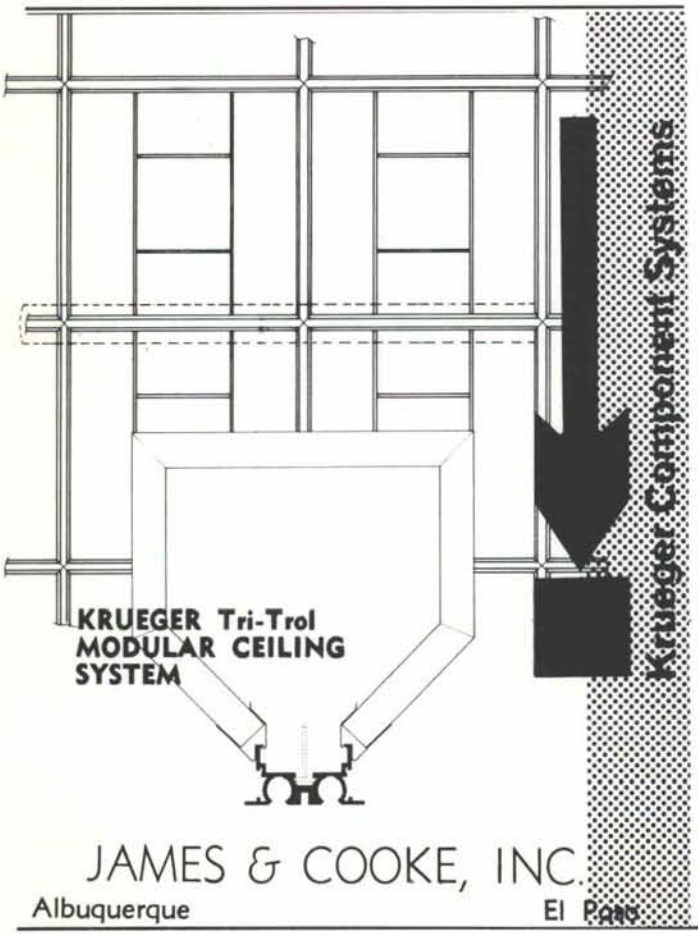

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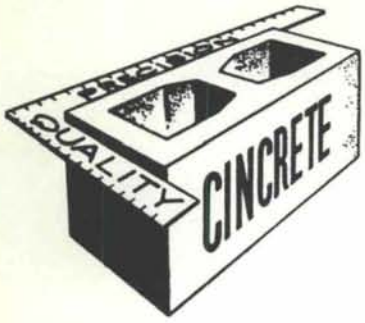

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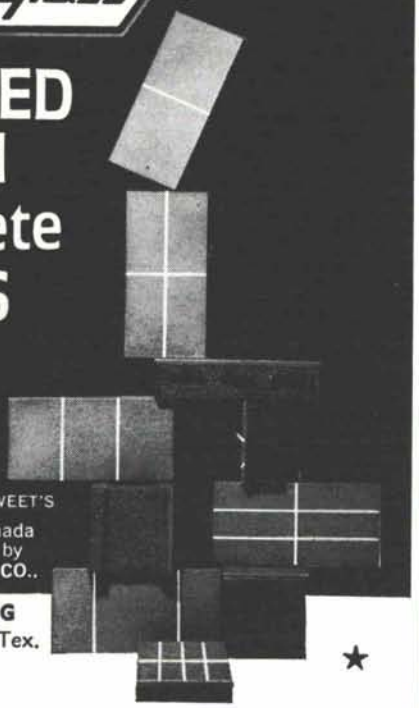

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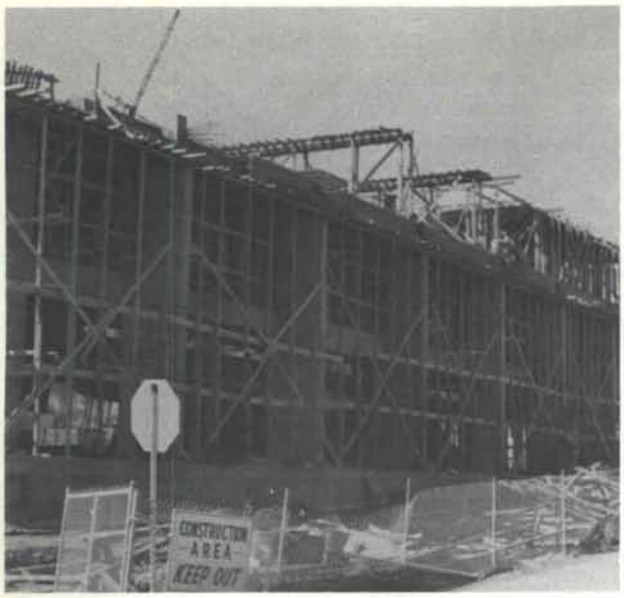

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Traditional Versus Contemporary Elements in Architecture

—Anthony C. Antoniades, Visiting Lecturer of Architecture at U. N.M.

There is a definite relationship between "traditional" and "contemporary." An architectural solution may be defined as "traditional" if it represents an unquestioned repetition of forms which evolved in the past and which had been accepted by previous generations as the universal way of solving architectural needs. The architecture of by-gone generations came about as a direct answer to two sets of fundamental design constraints. The first was physical, comprising climate and materials available in the locale; the second was cultural, comprising religious, individual and social attitudes.

A basic characteristic of traditional architecture is that it evolves over a long period of time. The general argument is that all traditional architecture represents the proper architectural answer to a specific environment. This argument, however, does not represent universal truth; it has been recently shown that there are a number of traditional architectural forms which do not represent the best solution to the problem concerned. The traditional home type of Boro of the western Amazon[1] or the open house in the area around the Iquitos area in Peru[2] represent typical examples of traditional architecture, which have long repeated wrong solutions adopted many years ago.

The evolution of traditional architecture, in spite of being positive or negative in respect to the problem solving result, has been carried down to present generations in an unquestioning, almost religious and doctrinaire way. Methods of construction and use of materials have become in this way the unwritten institutions of the society that practices this architecture. The result is to be seen in a number of characteristics common in almost any traditional edifice. The differences that occur have nothing to do in principle with the architectural result and, thus, a "traditional form" is easily recognizable by the architectural observer. Thus, in New Mexico, thick adobe walls, the adobe color and projecting vigas on the elevation represent the typical visual characteristics of Pueblo and later Spanish Colonial architecture. According to the understanding of tradition as presented here, it may now be suggested that the term "traditional" may be applied for as long as the materials used are the only ones commonly available for the service of certain specific building purposes (i.e., adobe for the building of walls and vigas for spanning the interior spaces).[3]

From the moment a new material appears, which may have different visual qualities (bulk, color, weight — e.g. brick), but which can serve the same functional purpose more cheaply due to mass production, an alternative to the traditional architectural solution is generated. This means that the traditional way of building ceases to be unique. Thereafter two possible solutions may be distinguished: the old one which we shall call "traditional," a new one which we shall call "contemporary."

The moment in the evolution of building technology in which two possible alternative solutions to an architectural problem appear, sees the beginning of a conflict between traditional versus contemporary. At that time a dilemma is generated and a number of criteria have to be established to help architects, their clients, urban designers, and the public to make a decision as to which solution to implement.

The "traditional" has an advantageous position as it has been tested by time and it has created a number of psychological effects upon the designers and users (the public). The "contemporary" is regarded as a stranger for at least a forty year period from the moment of its introduction.[4]

A major reason for the delayed adoption of the "contemporary" is to be found in public institutions. These institutions are so slow to change that "traditional" is favored by building codes and regulations. In most instances impetus for public acceptance of a "contemporary" solution is to be found in economic properties. Yet the economic aspects of new techniques and materials cannot be foreseen by the user and, thus, the adoption of new building materials emerges as what we might label "new traditional." (This is a self-contradictory term, as "traditional" requires time and is not created instantaneously.) We may define "new traditional" as the attitude in architecture and urban design which accepts the economic advantages that are provided by contemporary building technology (using new materials and methods of construction), yet seeks visual resemblance to what is understood as traditional. In this respect new buildings, with new program requirements and new possibilities, become reduced to a traditional romanticism which, as we shall show, represents nothing but a misunderstanding of the architectural lessons of tradition.

As in the historic New Mexico adobe buildings found in the Indian pueblos of Taos and Acoma, architecture reflects many basic and fundamental factors. These include such factors as methods of

Taos Pueblo

construction and the way available material is used; the architectural form evolves as an answer to a definite life style. These and similar influences may be considered the "contextual" elements of architecture, which in the final architectural vocabulary of the critic or the designer are to be seen in the concepts of "scale," "proportion," "measure," "rhythm," and "symbolism" as related to man.

The thesis here is that misunderstanding occurs because traditional architecture as reused for contemporary solutions has been understood in visual terms alone, while its contextual element has been totally disregarded. And for our architect-urban designer, the context of architecture should not be only in color and shape (i.e., the adobe sloped walls versus vertical) but should lie in the complete mastering of the fundamental concepts of architecture. In the majority of average contemporary architectural solutions, there is very little which might indicate a learned teaching of tradition. On the contrary many contemporary solutions try to appear traditional through the exploitation of visual means by promoting traditional resemblance.

Here, some of the lessons of tradition will be discussed in the light of what the author considers to be the logically correct way of viewing tradition through its contextual meaning.

Taking Taos Pueblo as an example, the scale of the edifice is determined by the human resources. The pueblo builder had no cranes or machines available; thus, the scale of his building was determined by his ability to lift an adobe brick as high as he could and construct the wall "that high" and no more. The builder then created a roof to provide a setback which would offer him space to put his adobes and continue the construction of the second floor, etc. Thus, the Indian high-rise edifice is broken down to its parts, which means its scale is broken down to a superimposition of humanly created edifices through the actual use of the capacity and energy of human resources.

This constraint in the method of construction, which resulted in the "scale" of Taos and Acoma, is not applicable today. A wall can easily be built sixty to ninety feet high. Thus, the proportion of the edifice is changed to a considerable degree; a sixty foot adobe-looking wall is not a traditional adobe wall because its scale is so different.

The issue of scale, which, according to this analysis is the number one characteristic of traditional New Mexico architecture, is directly associated with the issues of rhythm and proportions. The difference appears through urban design considerations. The time-space experience of the two wings of Taos Pueblo is done in a pedestrian sequence. At Taos Pueblo the use of a strong central core of open space (fig. 1) summarizes a number of inner pedestrian experiences. The breaking down of the Taos volumes is experienced through the core. The time sequence is that of the pedestrian. In the case of the Fine Arts building at the University of New Mexico (fig. 2), on the other hand, the time sequence experience is only linear; from parking lot to point of entry with no intervals in that movement, which might suggest the rhythmic appreciation of the complex.

The issue of proportion may be seen as the linear exaggeration of scale consideration, and to my knowledge the most typical example is to be seen in the architecture of Johnson Gymnasium on the same campus. This building is a giant-looking adobe, which has grown in size without gaining anything in spirit (fig. 3). The large enclosed space required steel frames to cover the span, a span which would be impossible to cover with vigas. Yet the building has been built with an adobe-looking facade with details which promote it as an example of traditional architecture.

It is in public buildings that the conflict of traditional versus modern is often most harmful to architecture. Public buildings, today more than ever before, have to serve such large numbers of people in one large structure. Despite this necessary, nondomestic requirement they nevertheless often employ the proportions of traditional architecture originally found in domestic building. The aesthetic value of Taos is not to be found in the edifices per se but in the enclosed open spaces. The aesthetic value of the edifices is a spirit of the assemblance of a number of interrelated domestic domains. Taos solids are represented from an aggregate of elements, while Popejoy Hall, as a mass, is an aggregate of one need, a physical expression of a centralized function. The same may be seen in the "neo-traditional" architecture of the government buildings in Santa Fe, and in many other buildings in New Mexico.

New Mexico is not the only case where the elements of traditional versus modern have been often misunderstood. Tradition loving tendencies, without understanding tradition, are often promoted by national tendencies which see the national attribute only in form and not in context.

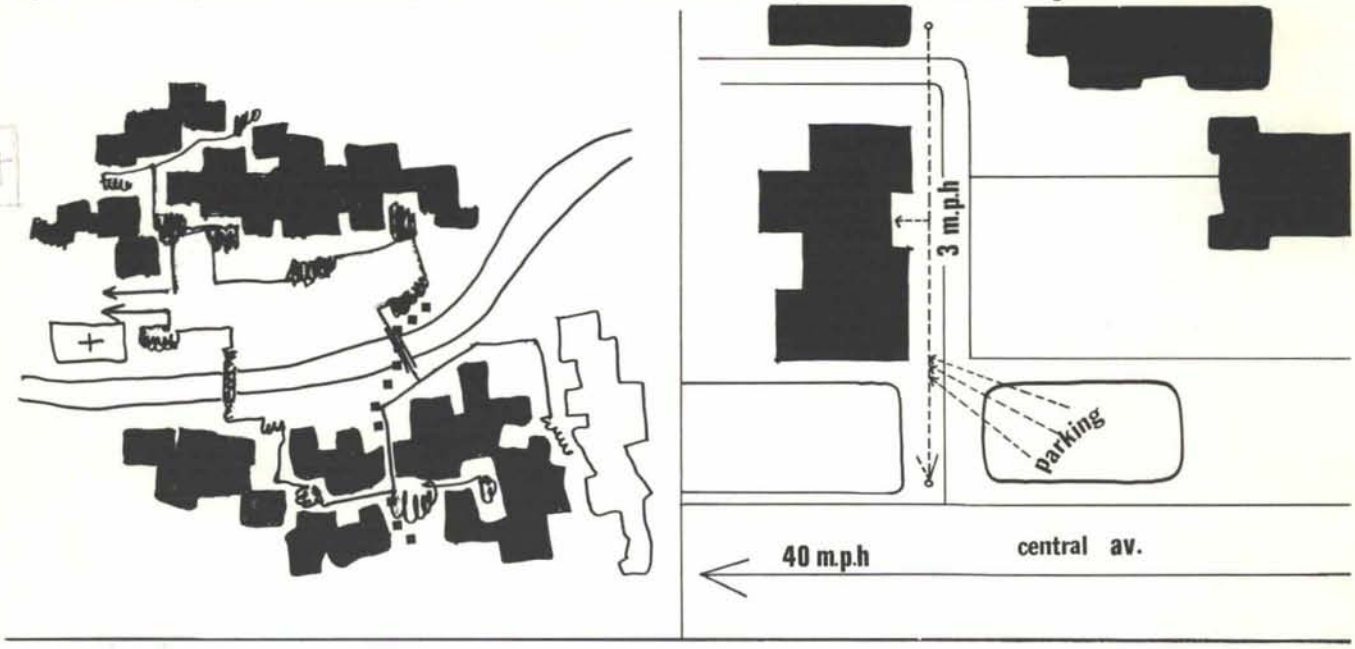
The new public architecture in Greece is authoritatively directed towards a style which might be called "neo-Doric." An example of this architectural misunderstanding is to be seen in the winning project for the competition for the new national theater in Athens.[5] The Parthenon, with the strict simplicity of its columns, was offered only as an example to the promoter of the competition. This, however, was misunderstood by them and it was used as design inspiration rather than as spirit. The freedom, which represented the context of Athenian democracy and which created the Parthenon and Greek architecture, was completely disregarded. The result is a lifeless building whose verticality seeks a visual resemblance to Doric logic.

A similar misuse of the Parthenon had its worst application in neo-Classic America which used direct copies of Greek temples as places to shelter banks and other temples of contemporary finance.

It may be argued that study and deep under-

Figure 1 TAOS PUEBLO **Figure 2 U. N. M. CAMPUS DETAIL**

Rythmic scale experience: diversified pedestrian (left) vs. no diversified pedestrian movement (right).



Ideograms of Taos Pueblo and contemporary New Mexico adobe looking building. The scale of Taos is an aggregate of A-1 experiences. The Neo-Traditional has different scale angle.

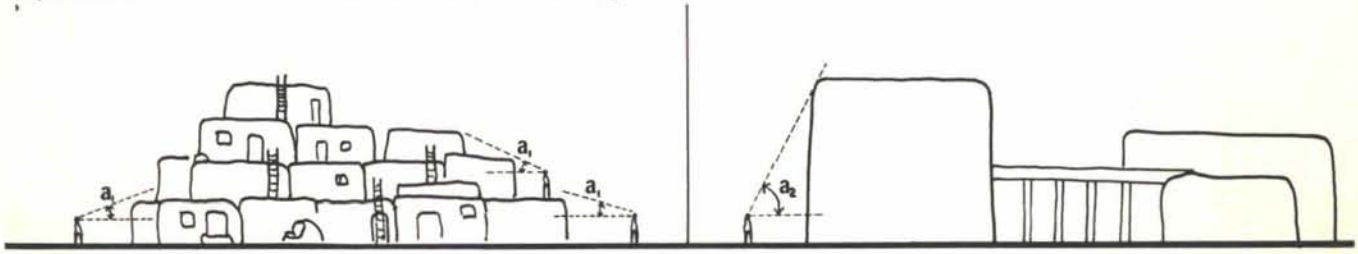
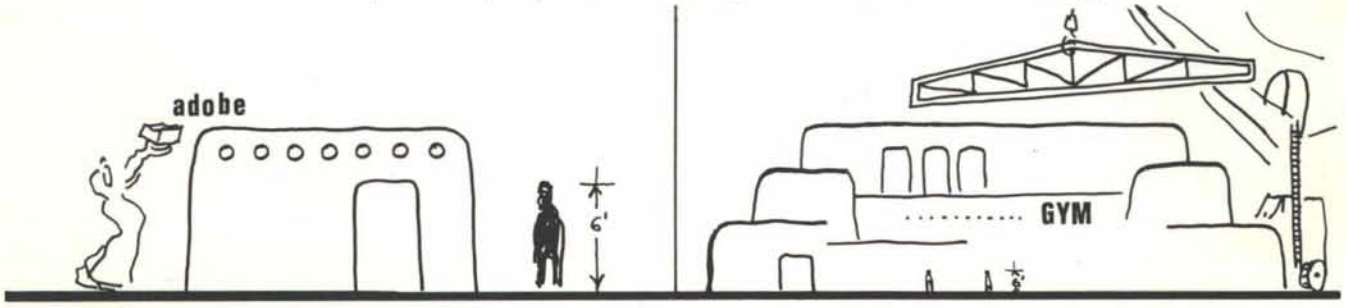
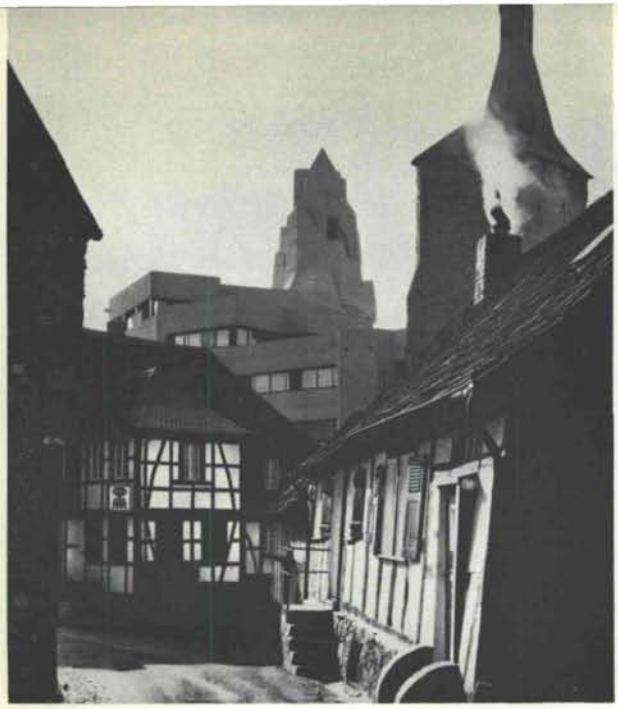
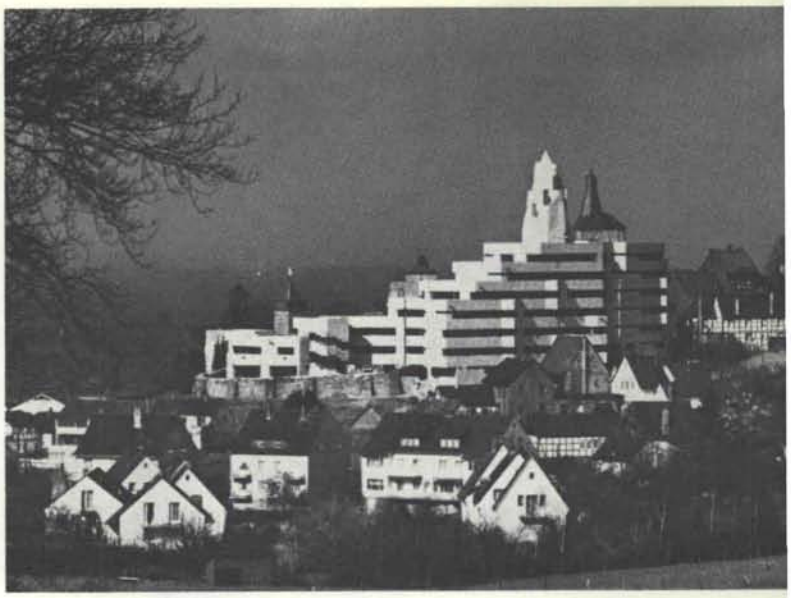


Figure 3 HUMAN RESOURCES . . . . **MACHINE RESOURCES**

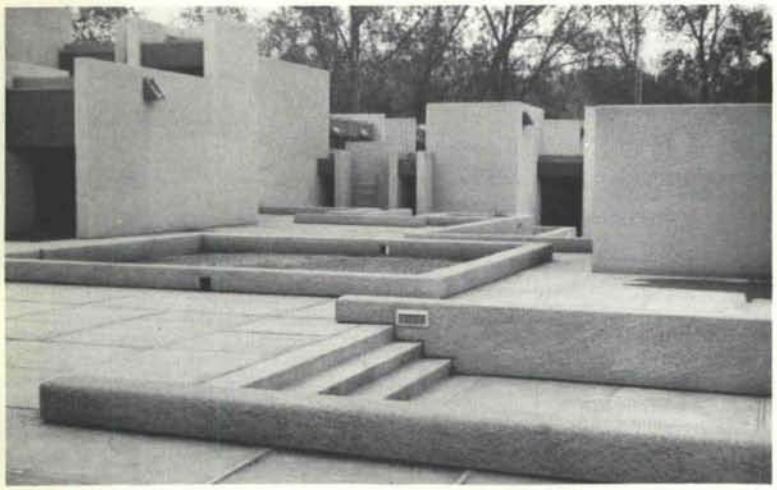
Methods of construction different yet contemporary results advocating visual resemblance to traditional.







Town Hall at Bensberg, Germany—completed in 1969. The seemingly arbitrary and bizarre design, which was awarded the First Prize in a competition, has been influenced by a variety of given topographical aesthetic and even historic restraints, however, so far from being allowed to mar the design, these restraints have been disciplined in a self-confident ensemble of great distinction. Architect Gottfried Bohm's terraced design emphasizes the slope of the Castle Hill, yet succeeds, at the same time, in reconciling the large building volumes with the miniature scale of the old town. The town hall was erected on the site of a medieval castle of which the high "Bergfried" tower on the hill, two smaller towers, some ruins and the southern wall have remained. All these remnants have been integrated with the new "citizens' castle." As the towers are on a straight line so that, seen from the south, they appear to be one, the architect provided a fourth vertical accent by crowning the main staircase at the east wing with a superstructure which represents a fanciful variation of the irregularly shaped helmet of the old tower. Together with the old ruins, the new wings form the enclosure of the castle yard which has retained its original slope.



← The new courthouse in Taos. A new architecture with an understanding of the heritage that is Taos Pueblo. (See the May-June 1971 **NMA** for a full report on the new courthouse).

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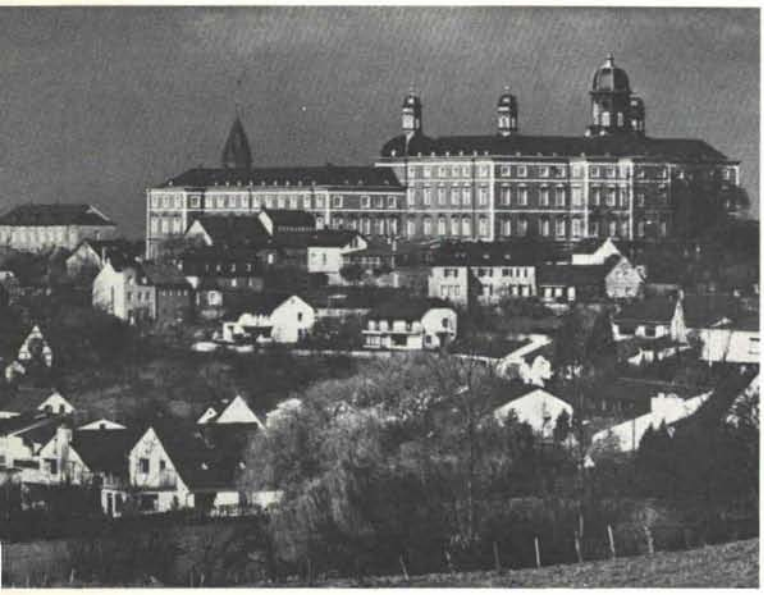

standing of the values of "tradition" will represent the best tool of the architect in his effort to solve the conflict between the traditional and contemporary. In New Mexico there are examples of architecture which are direct results of this understanding, yet have no visual resemblance to romantic memories. The first example is the new courthouse in Taos. This complex has incorporated the time experience one gets from Taos Pueblo. It emphasizes the main core as the capital design element of the whole composition, and it respects the humble human scale which represents the property of the pueblo. The complex has the hard edges of the concrete and it says that it is built of this material. Located beside a generous stand of trees the building is provided with a setting similar to that furnished for the pueblo by the Taos Mountains. It is ironical that a building in which a joy of life and freedom of movement is so evident should also be used as a jail.

Through the use of modern materials and techniques, the house of Joe Haydock outside Santa Fe, which is being constructed by the hands of the designer, represents another good example of proper interpretation of traditional values in architecture for the use of a modern family. The "Good Kind" house designed by architect Hildreth Barker in Albuquerque, represents another example of contemporary New Mexican architecture. The design is in line with the values of tradition where such are sought in the "rhythmic" value achieved through proper manipulation of interior space. This space provides the guest with a rhythmic experience similar to that which one gets when observing the people of Taos Pueblo. Taos movement consists of space-time experiences conducted from one terrace level to another thus producing through the colors and the gowns of the people a visual symphony. This results in the rhythms of Taos.

So if scale, proportion, measure, rhythm are the elements to give contextual reasoning to architecture, it must be in them that architects seek the answer to the conflict. The adobe and vigas of old Taos Pueblo are pointless even in today's domestic architecture. One might provide the argument that he might be able to build his adobe with his own hands. That might be true. Yet he will have to realize that he ought to rely upon his efforts to bring wood from the forest and, thus, warm his house in winter, a tedious operation now avoided by central heating. But central heating and the addition of roof top air-conditioning devices are all contradictory to traditional adobe house architecture.

One may respect the areas of urban New Mexico where traditional architecture exists. The historic plazas and unique Santa Fe streets have to be saved to provide lessons of imageability, diversity and human ingenuity to the future public and architects; yet this should not mean that, if something new has to be created, it should simply conform to formal, purely visual, traditional imagery. A new building will be truthful to tradition only when it respects the contextual traditional lessons; only through the use of scale, proportion, measure, and rhythm will the answer to the solution of the conflict be found. The summary of all these considerations, expressed in a painfully developed design, would be called architectural and formal honesty. A new building next to an old one will sincerely represent truthful creations of our civilization. As typical examples of this case one may point at the lessons of modern German architecture.[6] To the mind of the author this is the most successful architecture which has given answer to this conflict. New buildings of the twentieth century are in happy co-existence with their medieval neighbors and all together play the symphony of the "modern-historic" German town.

So if tradition has to offer a doctrine, then it is the doctrine of knowledge acquired through the pain of experience over many years. Pain is a key word here. If architects and students do not submit to the *pain* necessary to discover the secret of a work, then their work will be condemned to be an exercise of "surface" design and an imitation without life, a money-creating, yet not life-helping profession. This can be avoided, however, through the proper study and discipline which is required to learn the virtues and contextual properties of traditional architecture.

The issue of traditional versus contemporary is one for the understanding of which architects must fight; through their understanding and analysis the public should become enlightened. A new building, built with the most immediately available materials and totally serving its user's needs, is the most sincere response to the building lesson of tradition. And in that sense I would call this building traditional; that is, an overlap of knowledge, both knowledge of the old and knowledge of the new, expressed through a building which is a product of today.

—Anthony C. Antoniades
Visiting Lecturer of Architecture

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COMMUNES AND THE AMERICAN SOCIETY — Part 1

— a sociological view of communes today and a glance at their historical counterparts of yesterday. — by Curtiss Ewing, M. A.

Communes, or utopian communities, are to social science what the weather was to Mark Twain: everyone talks about them, but nobody does anything about them.

The layman has four ways of finding out something about communes. First, he may read journalistic descriptions of communities where the author spent a day and which examine phenomena like excessive dirt, open sexual activity, and the like. Second, he may find fleeting reference to communes in the works of social critics who include the communities as examples of how far-out the younger generation has gotten. Thirdly, he may again find fleeting reference to communes in works by social scientists who use them as examples to illustrate a theory. Fourthly, he may go to a commune on his own and allow himself to be tolerated by the members, while he observes a form of social life that he finds difficult to understand.

However, there is another approach; one which focuses on the social background of communes, as well as their social structure and values. This is the first in a series of articles about communes in which the author hopes to adopt this approach.

One reason why the sociologist is interested in communes is that communal movements are phenomena which have repeated themselves twice in the United States during the last century and a half. When a social phenomenon arises twice in a culture, it indicates that conditions in the society in which it arises may be examined and may reveal things hitherto unknown. Therefore, the first task of these articles will be to communicate something about the social and cultural source of communal movements.

Another reason for taking communes seriously is that they are complete social systems in themselves, i.e., institutions like any other. The various facets of these small social systems are more easily discerned, however, than are the same dimensions in other institutions. They are communities that are small enough to be analyzed; they are isolated from other social institutions and, therefore, display a lower degree of influence from other institutions. In a sense they may be seen as social laboratories where one may make observations about how communities work.

Historical Background. The view that communes are institutions comprising a rebellion against society, or are a "counter culture," is not quite accurate. Instead, they are both stimuli and reflections of the society in which they grew. Utopian thought has been a recurrent phenomenon since Plato, and literary utopias reflect the major trends of the thought of the day. During certain periods in history

Assembly Hall at Economy, Penn. Founded in the mid-1820's by the Harmonists on the banks of the Ohio River 20 miles north of Pittsburgh.

utopia, or the perfect society, has been seen as existing in another land or on a distant continent. During other periods, the "heaven on earth" may be seen as existing here, but not now. In other words, depending on the social conditions of the culture in which the utopian work was written, the perfect society may exist in a different dimension which is either spatial or temporal.

Further, the great ideas of each century strongly influence the concept of the literary utopia. Rousseau conceptualized the solutions for man's problems as existing in the political sphere of society, and he wrote *The Social Contract* on the basis of the new view of human nature that was current during the Enlightenment. Enlightenment thinkers saw man as good, not bad, as had the adherents of the doctrine of original sin. For Rousseau, man and human nature were good; it was the social institutions which he created which were bad. Political freedom was to be the cure for the ills of the world, and man was to be released from the bonds of the static institutions which prevailed during feudal days.

Darwin and Freud influenced utopian thinking. With Freud, man again took on the look of an animal who needed structured institutions to control his evil "id." This concept returned man to the garbage heap and social institutions to the pedestal. During the days when physicists believed in Newtonian principles, which saw the universe in a mechanical, deterministic way, the utopian plans took on a similar form. B. F. Skinner's *Walden Two* shows that, as knowledge of the laws of human behavior grew, scientists saw this knowledge as a possible solution to the problems of society.

Hence, the idea of the perfect society has been influenced and colored by the ideas of the intellectual giants who lived during different periods. The pattern has varied over time. Utopian works always accompany new kinds of knowledge, as if life on

earth could be turned into a heaven by the acquisition of knowledge. Society and social forms are cultural phenomena, and views of man and his relationship to social institutions have been subject to changes in knowledge in the areas of science, political philosophy, and geography.

The influences giving rise to the concepts of the literary utopias are easy to detect in comparison with the complexities of the concrete societies which were the spawning beds of the actual utopian communities. Ideas alone do not create new societies. To find the explanation for the birth of hundreds of communes and utopian communities in the United States during the nineteenth century, it is necessary to look at the condition of the American institutions of the day. What did "the establishment" in American society look like when the Shakers, Hutterites, the Mormons and others decided to found their own communities and, hence, avoid participation in the established American institutional system?

America was in the throes of industrialization, urbanization, and democratization in the 1840's when many communes were founded. Industrialization changed the way a man earned a living. It demanded a personality that was machine-like in its obedience to the clock and to the machine he worked. The values needed to survive in an agricultural economy were not functional for the man who now worked the machine and who must live in an urban center where the jobs were. The urban industrial life made the old institutions dysfunctional. The extended, "multi-childed" family could not survive apartment living. Methods of socializing children, concepts about barter and trade, of marital stability, of authority all had to adapt to life built around the machine.

Besides his personality, his family patterns, his economic habits, his political beliefs, the man of the 1840's saw the end of the national banking system, the end of old ideas about the American class structure and other institutions, such as the original political parties which had grown up as America became a nation. Even his religion was not extant in the old form. The Anglican Church in the South and the Congregational Church in the North lost their old cohesion and gave way to sects and camp meetings which sprang up like ragweed.

The new democratization meant that many old American political institutions, previously dominated by the old trading elite, were now left vacant. This elite saw greater opportunities for profit in the new, growing industries; thus, they gave up politics as a source of income. In the presence of this vacuum, that old political institution of the American aristocracy, Tammany Hall, was taken over by immigrants from Europe. As its social base was changed, so also was its function. Tammany Hall became a political force for immigrant interests.

American intellectuals left their accustomed sanctuaries, the universities, and took to the small towns and to solitary life styles. The New England Transcendentalists rejected the safety, support, and prestige that the universities offered. They preferred to work outside of the American institutional framework.

At the same time that the economic, political, educational and religious patterns were changing, floods of immigrants poured into the country bringing with them values, skills, and life styles from the villages of Europe. They lived in the worse slums America has ever known. They tried to change their cultural patterns of family, occupation, politics and education to conform with the new styles they met in America. Millions of people entered the social system with deeply held attitudes, habits, and cultures. They worked in the factories and on building construction. They began to aim for economic and political power and elected some of their own to political office. They began to take on the value system of the country which admired education, political participation, Protestantism and the machine.

While American intellectuals and the "mountain men" took to the hills and pioneer settlers took to the plains, groups of immigrants, as well as native Americans took to the countryside. They founded little societies and lived in groups organized around cultish ideas that ranged from ascetic Christianity to political anarchy. Some of these societies had a life span of four hundred years, counting the time they existed in Europe; some lasted less than four months. There were communes founded by blue collar workers, Transcendental intellectuals, middle-class Socialists, French Revolutionaries. Some were religious, some intellectual, and some were Socialist, Marxist or Fouriest. The nineteenth century communes contained people from all classes and nationalities.

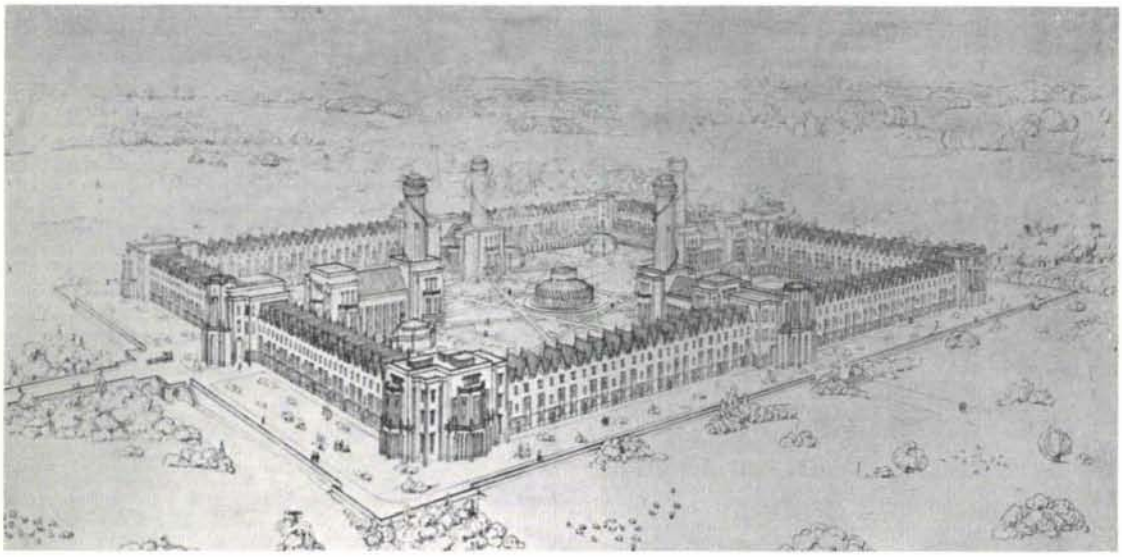
Two trends in the development of nineteenth century American institutions were clear. First, the democratization of the political system, the mechanization of industry and the growth of factories, the disorganization of the established churches and the necessity of adapting to urban life caused radical changes in social institutions like the family.

Second, values, those culturally determined attitudes of mind which change to accommodate changing circumstances, developed to support the new social structure. America developed myths about independent action, the common man, the benefits of education and ambition. The man who saw opportunity in the needs of the new society, and took advantage of them, came to be admired as representing the new value system. Thus, the explorers, the industrialists, the capitalist barons—the men who put to use the vast resources, human and natural, of the continent—were idealized.

Although structures and values were largely determined by the trends toward industrialization and the accompanying urbanization, the influence of the traditions of rural life never left the scene. Idealization of the simplicity, healthfulness, idyllic peacefulness of rural life along with its virtues of frugality,

honesty, and stability continued to be the American ideal until the present. In fact, the influence of rural life had been at the root of over-representation in political institutions until the 1970's.

While the double-strand influences of urbanism and ruralism were the dominant trends, other minor influences were felt which derived from European customs, American village life, and frontier tradition. The situation might be said to have been "fluid." The shape of institutional structures and the nature of values were colored by facts of social class, regional district, stage of industrialization, and particular national groups. The whole country was a social experiment. It had been seen as a natural and social utopia ever since the first settlers had cleared the forests and reduced the Indian menace to manageable proportions. There were no legal or traditional restrictions, as there had been in Europe, to the formation of mini-societies. The society contained a multitude of cultures and rapidly changing institutions which all existed side by side in magnificent confusion.



Proposed new community at Harmony, Indiana.

The dream of Robert Owen. ca. 1825

PROFILE OF CURRENT AMERICAN INSTITUTIONS. Industrialization, modernization, urbanization, and democratization were trends in nineteenth century America which produced values that existed side by side with rural, agricultural values. This combination culminated in a technocracy which was the ultimate result of earlier social and cultural changes.

The economy of the twentieth century is no longer based on production of goods to satisfy the needs of the population. Needs are manipulated for the purpose of selling the goods, and since the American population cannot possibly buy in quantity large enough to use up what the machines produce, foreign markets must be found where the need is greater.

Highly sophisticated products cannot be produced by unskilled labor, and the road to a high place in the economic system is seen to lie through the acquisition of a high degree of knowledge of a technical and intellectual nature. Highly trained engineers, scientists, and administrators form status groups which control the production of goods and services and they jealously guard the boundaries of their group against encroachment of competition. The technocracy requires the presence of experts in the field of education, medicine, economics, industry, and government, who have been trained to operate on the basis of rationality and who can be trusted to take responsibility for the enormous sums of money invested in the technology of their field. Expertise brings with it social status, high income, membership in an elite group, and a vested interest in keeping a tight rein on the power of knowledge. It also brings an authoritarianism designed to maintain the mystique of the possession of secrets on which the maintenance of status depends.

In the area of politics, the single most important fact is that the single citizen no longer stands a chance of affecting even the smallest of the many bureaucracies under which he lives. The policies of the political party in power are difficult to differentiate from those of its opponents, due to the spread of the most stable and rigid social form ever invented—bureaucracy. The housekeeping functions of government are maintained by a giant bureaucratic corporate system which no political party, to say nothing of an individual, can shake.

Educational institutions, where students used to congregate in order to become cultured citizens, have been put to the service of the demands of the specialist economy. Higher education now has an instrumental function. The higher academic degree no longer indicates a broad range of knowledge and cultivation, but rather becomes an instrument serving to place the individual at some level in the social system. It determines his place in the heirarchical ranking of expertise. As the technocracy developed in America, the division of labor became based on the degree of specialization of one's knowledge; and following the successful flight of the So-

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viet Union's Sputnik, the field in which to specialize has become science. Preparation for this area of expertise begins in the lower school grades and continues through graduate school.

Churches have changed their function, as well as their structure. Protestant churches have become bureaucracies dedicated to the attraction of new members, not on the basis of an ideology, but rather, on the basis of provision of social settings for people on the move. Christian ideology has become too dangerous to preach from the pulpit. People are in church to meet other people, not to be taught the dogma of Christian faith and morals. Faith in science has replaced religion as the source of solutions to life's problems. Catholic churches increasingly have adopted a stance similar to that of the church in Brazil during slave days. Priests take up the cause of social justice and proceed to go to jail on behalf of downtrodden minority groups. They join the crusades being fought by the Blacks and the Chicanos.

The basic institution of society, the family, has lost all the characteristics of the stable, security-providing unit of the old days. Marriage is no longer a life-time matter, but rather, takes a new form: serial monogamy. Socialization of children in the family is a chancy thing; therefore, the schools take over the larger part of this activity from the family. What cultural norms should parents inculcate in their children? By the time a child is eighteen, times will have changed so much that what the family has taught will be obsolete. Whatever stance the parents take will no doubt be contradicted by one or another expert in child-rearing or by the influence of the peer group. The family no longer feels its own power and authority and, consequently, hands over children to experts in pediatrics, psychiatry, and education. In an era when the culture is so complex and such a high degree of complex knowledge is necessary to belong to a self-respecting status group, the family cannot by itself hope to train the child. Few fathers can contribute to their son's knowledge of nuclear physics or psychiatry. The schools must take over the functions that at one time in simpler technologies the family could provide.

Expertise reaches even into the area of a man's adult peer group—his circle of friends and companions—which used to be comprised of a spontaneously-gathered aggregate of people mixed with relatives. The middle-class man, armed with a college degree in some specialty, moves his family where he can find a job commensurate with his education. With every move, geographical or social, he once again leaves the familiar group and looks for churches and clubs established for the express purpose of providing him with a social group to which he may belong. The group is, of course, run by an expert in human relations.

If the instability of marriage and family life, occupational mobility, political impotence, the religious vacuum and the threat of educational obsolescence have tended to alienate contemporary man from his institutions, as well as from himself, he can take advantage of that instrument of the middle class, the psychological therapy group. Here an expert in personality will help him to adjust his values to a philosophy which originated a hundred and fifty years ago in France and which was functional where individualism was a necessity. This philosophy encourages him to be a self-directing individual with a strong sense of the importance of his existence as a "natural man," a man with emotions he can learn to treat, just as the expert and the artificially-joined therapeutic peer group treats them. In an age where there is no stability in marriage, family, village, school life, or occupation, the ideas of the French Enlightenment are brought into the battle, to encourage the individual to live as though he really is in control of his own fate and, since he cannot affect his society, to manipulate his mind into a state of adjustment to it. In a day when there are no stable groups which support the individual's view of himself, Rousseau's vision of the goodness of "natural man" is brought to bear. Today the individual can find no support in institutions which might counteract his sense of isolation, depersonalization, dehumanization and his over-rationalized life-style. The solution: take the expert's word for it; resurrect the nineteenth century's value of atomistic individualism, as filtered through a peer group, organized by a personality expert, and artificially gathered around a common interest in personality disturbances.

In an era when we can see the culmination of all the earlier trends in American institutions, there is again a wave of utopianism. Again, communes are springing up and young people are taking themselves into the countryside and living in small, isolated groups.

In an era when a single social form, bureaucracy, has been shown to be the ultimate form of control for all functions of a modern society from government to medicine; when to participate in this social form requires that one possess expertise and uniform rationality; when the sole remaining institution where man can be irrational, the family, has become fragmented and unstable, why is utopian thinking enjoying a renaissance?

In an era when the old Calvinistic ideals of prosperity, rationality, and cleanliness are accomplished facts at least for the members of the middle-class; when French Enlightenment ideas about individualism, political democracy, and human nature have carried the day; when the utopian ideal of democratic representation, economic affluence, educational opportunity for all, and freedom of association have been accomplished for most citizens, why are new institutions growing up among the old ones that served the culture so well? —*Curtiss Ewing*

To be continued . . . .

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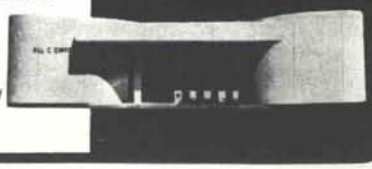

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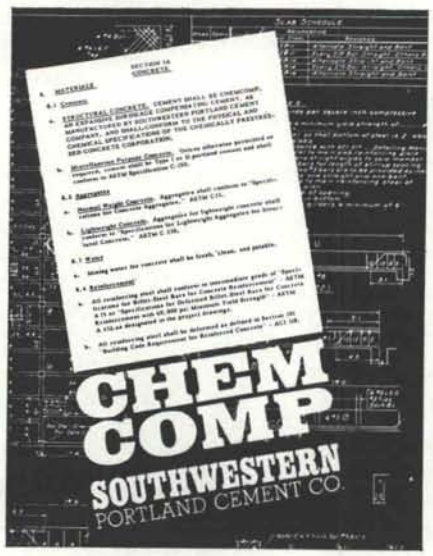

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New Mexico Marble and Tile Co. 6
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Public Service Co. of New Mexico 14
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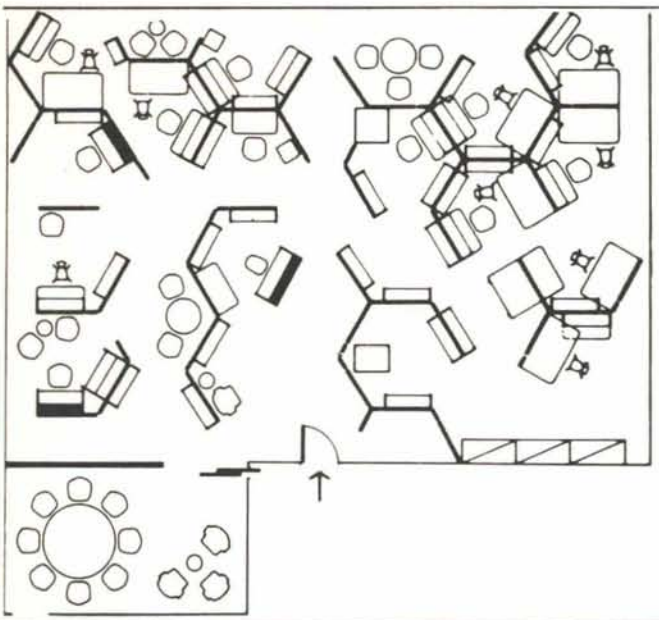

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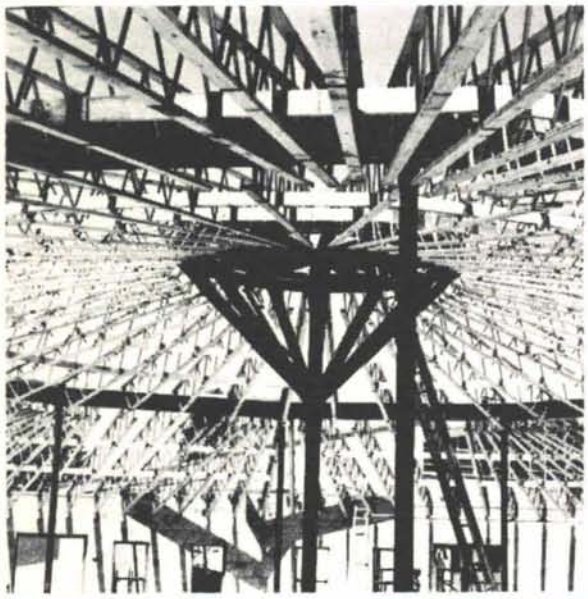

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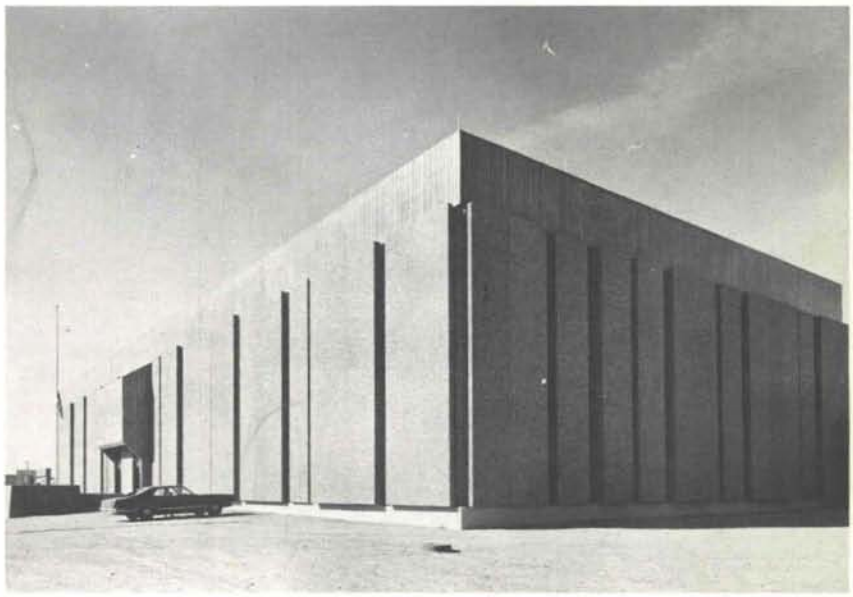

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