A traveling salesman got into New Haven late on a Sunday night. Standing forlornly at the crossing of Chapel and College, he asked the next cab driver:

"Where's the nightlife?"

"She lives over by Waterside Park, but she's out with the flu just now."

A visitor to an architectural thesis judgment at Pratt Institute or any other School of Architecture in the country, fleeing the pre-casting and curtain-wall onslaught in despairing search of historic significance, would most probably be told by Bill, the elevator man:

"Tradition, Mack? Third floor, first office to the left, but she's on a Sabbatical just now."

Fact is that historical significance in architectural education is considered about as entertaining and non-essential as nightlife or culture. Dispensers of architectural history and theory occupy a place in the faculty hierarchy comparable to that of the red-coated gentlemen at English banquets, proposing a toast to the Queen after which the real fun can begin. This embarrassed nod to cultural continuity is rather recent in architectural education. It dates from the early 1920's when a new species of men assumed design leadership, fancying themselves their own beginning. The purity of their Muse was uncompromised by illicit love affairs with past practitioners. If this might be termed ignorance, it was ignorance with a vengeance, trying to make up for a century of academic tutelage. The generation trained by this iron broom received none or only the scantiest instruction about the historical roots of its craft. The after-effects of this deficiency have been startling. In predietetic days the calcium-starved kid, feeding himself bits of plaster from crumbling walls, was a familiar phenomenon. The continuity-starved architects, raised on the lean diet of functionalist supremacy, have displayed a craving for architectural history and theory in their mature years that is quite revealing. Their design and their writing are full of connotations which would have shocked their elders as indecent exposure. The teacher of history and theory cannot help but see in this trend a development of great importance. Not that he is worried about his bread and butter; the tenure system takes care of that. Not even that he lacks confirmation of his knowledge. If he is worth his SAH membership he KNOWS that what he casts before the glassy eyes of comatose undergraduates are
recognizable features of their own. Wherever this holds as true of whole style periods as of individual architects, gifted enough to have cast our leading architects have broken the spell of viewpoint only. If they can, as in the case of touches on something in man that is older and more durable than his immediate presence, something that moves him because in it he meets his immortal alter ego. Through it he experiences the security of belonging to his kind, relieving the terrible fragmentation and isolation of technological society.

Between Western civilization as it is expressed in the accumulated evidence of building history, and the top performance of International Architecture as it developed in the 1920's and 1930's, existed no common bond — a fact which filled the then avant-guard with exultant superiority. The top designers of International Architecture, as it developed in the 1950's, have in some gratifying instances discovered a harmonic triad of contemporaneity, projection into the future, and responsibility toward the past, that expresses not feelings of superiority but an appealing cultural pride. Its influence on architectural education is still indirect, having not yet penetrated the solid phalanx of Harvard-bred design critics. But it already provides for students, capable of thinking for themselves, a justification of their professional choice through the tangible evidence of the difference between architect and engineer, and architect and builder. The four American architects, selected here to demonstrate this incipient reevaluation of the future of the past, are a PARS PRO TOTO choice, both in relationship to the sum total of current design and relative to their own work volume. Their least compromised projects seem to commit them to an "ideal standard" of architectural continuity that can be found also in Scandinavia, South America, and especially in Italy.

Whatever significance a building has beyond its immediate purpose generates from expressed tensions. Three-dimensional design is a free counterpoint composition, consisting of a strong basic theme and the accompaniment or challenge of one or several variation motives. Architectural solutions of value can rarely be judged from one viewpoint only. If they can, as in the case of Louis Kahn, they represent startling exceptions. This holds as true of whole style periods as of individual architects, gifted enough to have cast recognizable features of their own. Wherever these expressed tensions coincide in an historical style and in an individual talent, a bridge has been built that links history and actuality, leading from the splendid mausoleums of the past to the drafting rooms of the present.

The Cantus Firmus of Eero Saarinen

His contrapuntal tension generates from structural imagination as his main theme, and a protean approach to building form as challenge. Like a novelist or a poet he wrestles visibly with the intrusion of contents on form, "an expressive statement" confronted with the structural "service required." Even without his own pronouncements of "an almost religious belief in structure," and "structure as the dominant factor," it would be evident from his work that he constructs first and "lets the function be controlled by structure." The search for ideological justification follows, it does not precipitate the structural fact. This has worked well where the meaning of a building is unsophisticated and self-evident — in Saarinen's factories, laboratories, administration buildings and large assembly halls. It creates sometimes confused and confusing designs where the meaning is indirect, subtle, personal — a villa with Palladian crutches, the Milwaukee Memorial as museum, student dormitories as collective homes, and the American image abroad of the embassies.

Where the motivated pragmatism of Saarinen's structure succeeds, it relates his design to that of the early Mediterranean builders. After the terrible anamnesia of the Great Migration had wiped out all memory of Greco-Roman culture, there arose in Southern France and Lombardy a guild of masons who slowly felt their way back to mastery over thrust and strength, over the stone that wants to fall and the forces that uphold it. They learnt again to understand the earth that patiently bears man's heavy loads, so that after a thousand years time has not been able to refute their confidence in the anchored structure. Saarinen's concept is related to theirs because it is empirical, with a stated intention to endure. This historical analogy can perhaps be understood by contrasting it to the Gothic which minimized all bonds with the sustaining ground by abstracting loads into balanced ratios, and whose idea of survival was not physical but occult.

The contrast between Gothic and Romanesque is echoed in the contrast between the design philosophy of the second generation disciples of
the Founders of Modern Architecture and that of Saarinen. Against their plea for building obsolescence on grounds of technological progress he sets the architect’s purpose “to shelter and enhance man’s life on earth.” This traditional interpretation of the architect’s role expresses itself in his selection of building materials and methods ranging from the most primitive to the most industrialized, and quite specifically in his space rationale. For him as for the early medieval builders structure is the generator of space, while for Le Corbusier, Mies van der Rohe, the Bauhaus Collective, SOM, etc. “the (modular) plan is the generator” — just as it had been for the Gothic scholastics. In a modular building the space consumer looks DOWN to discern the successive floor areas. He appraises a building as designed from the plan up. In an empirical building the space consumer looks UP to discern the space-defining envelope. He appraises a building as designed from the structure down, as in Saarinen’s GM styling Auditorium, the MIT Auditorium, the Hockey Rink, and even in an aberrational design as the TWA Terminal project.

The counter- or tension-point to this emphatic shelter envelope was in Romanesque architecture supplied by a new diversification of building purposes. The society emerging from the Dark Ages groped for social and spiritual organization in need of shelter that had no precedent — fortifications and town houses, baptisteries and monastic establishments, whose inhabitants were lastingly shaped by the buildings that housed them. The mason-builders invented individual solutions for each emerging need but, being the form-givers of a new age, they “let the function be controlled by structure.” As Western culture consolidated, this imaginative response to a diversified reality was lost to academism. Empirical design vanished. It would have been unimaginable for the builder of the Duomo of Casale Monferrato (Fig. 1) to reencounter Moderna’s façade of St. Peter’s as backdrop to Salvi’s Trevi Fountain, or to discover in John Russell Pope’s Richmond Railroad Station the jaded twin of McKim, Mead and White’s Columbia University Library.

Not till 1907, when the WERKBU ND MOVEMENT consolidated its program, do we again find design solutions based on differentiation rather than on prototypes, differentiation not of function — this had been achieved already by
the Cast Iron Revolution — but differentiation of psychological and social meaning. In the best works of the first 20 years of this century by Behrens, Taut, Eliel Saarinen, Bruno Paul, Dudok and others, each building need generated a specific design solution, derived from an empirical approach to site, materials, massing and meaning. The historical cliché which had survived almost unchallenged in public and religious structures was liquidated in Fischer’s Garrison Church in Ulm, in Eliel Saarinen’s Lahti Town Hall, in Riemerschmidt’s Munich theatre. The Saarinens, father and son, demonstrated this revolution forcefully, and for America prematurely, in their design for the Smithsonian Institution (Fig. 2) which remained unbuilt, while the coeval National Gallery perpetuated the worst aspects of the eclectic public image. Form does not ignore function in the Saarinen proposal, nor does form follow function. Form as aesthetic-symbolic purpose, and function as expedient purpose were harmonized, made sympathetic to each other without any false attempts to minimize their antithetical character.

This Werkbund heritage has remained strong in Eero Saarinen’s design, in the MIT Chapel, for instance, in Concordia College, in the court of the Oslo Embassy, so closely related to Behrens’ court of the Hoechst Administration Building from 1920 (Figs. 3 and 4), and it reasserts itself quite startlingly in the projected Yale Colleges. The architectural criterion is not merely structure but the perfection with which structural solution and building content coincide in an unduplicable solution that spins, as it were, its own sheltering cocoon.

The Syncretism of Philip Johnson

The most entertaining and instructive passage in a recorded symposium “Conversations regarding the Future of Architecture” (Reynolds Metal Corporation) occurred when Saarinen spoke of Le Corbusier’s Marseille apartments as “elephantine, strong and massive,” the refutation of “30 years of thinner and thinner sticks,” while Philip Johnson almost in the same breath celebrated Marseille’s “weightlessness, lightness, held up on a great expressive hand.” The first evaluation characterizes the visceral designer, the second one the syncretist — the designer who absorbs the heritage of his “spiritual fathers” and coalesces it into his own synthesis. Johnson’s design concept is based on a dichotomy of metric form and relational spaces, on the tension be-
Metric architecture first appears in Egypt when the designers of the Old Kingdom absorbed and recoin the heritage of Akkadian Gate Temples and Ziggurats. In Mesopotamia rhythmic pier-buttressing, the planarity of inclined walls, the stepped structure, had been sheer expediency, dictated by poor foundations and the small brick unit. In the hierarchic structures of Egypt, such as the early tomb temples (Fig. 5), the repetition of units and the unperforated surface became modular and decorative. It is a purely cerebral architecture based not on function but on the abstract of an idea. Its components are two-dimensional: plane, line, scale (in contrast to proportion which is three-dimensional). Each of these elements underscores a building purpose that lies "in the realm of significance" and not in the relative precincts of expediency. It is impossible to imagine an Egyptian building extended either vertically or horizontally at a later date, so self-contained are its metric relationships. The Greeks inherited what then already was a syncretic adaptation and pared it down to the pure essence of measured intervals of solids and voids. The third dimension of a Greek temple is not space but shadow. Two thousand years would go by till this syncretic two-dimensionality would again find an adequate interpretation. Palladio’s Villa Capra is of the same breed — metric and spaceless, thwarting any impulse at intrusion by four similar façades with four entrances similarly disguised. Of the subsequent Neo-Classicists only Schinkel’s Altes Museum catches this uncompromising metric dignity; he alone among the revivalists avoided degrading the portico to a front porch.

It was from him that Philip Johnson caught the meaning of syncretic formalism. He himself has emphasized AD NAUSEAM his dependence on Mies, yet the basic difference in their design concept seems obvious to anyone but himself. The American Mies is a builder of modular skeletons, indefinitely expandable in all directions. The membranes of his cellular networks are coincidental. The 24' module or its variant stretches impartially and impersonally over campuses, rustic glades, and downtown sites as if the world were one huge grid. To the innocent eye outside the fold the Farnsworth House or the Lafayette Townhouses in Detroit (Fig. 6) look like window bays broken off the great parent skyscraper. It is quite possible to imagine the
Lake Shore Towers of Chicago or their rapidly proliferating offspring in Detroit, Newark and elsewhere stripped of their sheathing without any noticeable change in esthetic impact. This is not possible in a Johnson building. The wall is the most essential unit, raised as a shield between withinness and withoutness as two different aspects of human environment. By its metric harmony the wall becomes a promise toward an harmonious interior space, as in the Utica Museum (Fig. 7).

There are three ways of approaching the relationship of a building to its site. First there is the garden concept in which building and surrounding area are in accidental or willed contrast to each other. Anonymous architecture deals in this way with its land, and so does the English Garden school, from Brown to Voysey. diametrically opposed to this laissez-fair attitude is the outdoor room ideal — the Roman Atrium, the Italian Cortile, the Spanish Patio. Their hypaethral spaces are part of the building unit except for the missing roof. Mies was the first of the 20th century architects to take up this tradition in his court houses; Le Corbusier has worked with it in roof gardens and terraces, and Bunshaft and other SOM designers have employed it in the plazas of their business shrines. Thirdly there is the open walled space as a syncopation, a change in rhythm from the enclosed interior, a second motif intimately connected with the main spatial theme but differing from it through its reference to nature. The Maya were masters of this concept of RELATIONAL SPACES (Fig. 8) which is free and dynamic, flowing around the solid walls, yet contained by their placement. Islamic builders brought it from the gardens of Schiraz to the two large courts of the Alhambra. The Baroque took up the theme in the Dresden Zwinger and in Stupinigi; and in our time Frank Lloyd Wright has worked with it in Taliesin West. In choosing between two of these traditional site-house relationships, Philip Johnson found the counterpoint to his metric formalism. During his long apprenticeship with Mies he shared his master’s addiction to the outdoor room. The Rockefeller Guesthouse and the Hodgson House have hypaethral courts. His own place in New Canaan breaks away from the limitations of the rectilinear enclosure. The distribution of volumes to site is not modular but relational and nature-oriented. The Boissonas House attempts a combination of site
approaches — modular outdoor rooms in the center, and a wide self-contained court on the periphery. The Museum Sculpture Garden and the emerging campus of the University of St. Thomas in Houston (Fig. 9) indicate the ultimate meaning of Johnson's compositional tension between metric form, indicative of self-centered enclosure, and spatial openness, relating man to nature and nature to the dominant will of the architect.

The Beau Geste of Paul Rudolph

Irwin Shaw wrote that if the majority of men were honest they would admit that they love sweet wine, fat women and music by Tschaikowsky. If architectural historians were honest they would admit that they love architecture with emphatically designed exteriors because it is memorable and therefore teachable. Our professed concern with the qualities of architectural space must needs be either abstract-philosophical or empirical. It lends itself poorly to slide projection and verbal explanation. Le Corbusier, being all quotes to all men, has defined architecture not only as the play of light on significant form, but also as the foot that walks and the head that turns. In default of this peripatetic experience for which no amount of verbalization can substitute, identification of buildings must rely on ARCHITECTURAL PHYSIOGNOMY. Teaching architectural history and theory consists mainly in discovering from external features the architect's intentions, a building's structure, and the social concept of its epoch. It is all very well to explain to a young man in Brooklyn or Seattle that the difference in column proportions between the Temple of Poseidon at Paestum and the Theseum at Athens indicates the fine difference between provincial and high classical Hellenism and between the tooling of limestone and marble; or that the piloti of the Unité d'Habitation in Marseille are oval while those at Nantes are quadrilateral. To him these buildings look alike and he couldn't care less which one has the Toni. If he is exceptionally willing, he might come to understand that buildings can be similar but non-identical. In general he will agree with Albertus Magnus that "thought produces a generality of form." What sparks his interest is visual diversity, something tangible either to love or to loathe.

If Paul Rudolph's plea for "an enrichment of architecture at the brink of Mannerism" is the beginning of a new design trend it might reshape
man-made environment within the next generation. The endurance of architecture, according to the Yale Dean, "revolves around environmental design" based on the duality of regional adaptation and visual satisfaction. "Interestingly enough the layman, especially the cab drivers of America," Rudolph once said, "recognize this more forcefully than many an architect. We might have yet to import a legion of cab drivers as architectural critics." In past centuries this function of the cab driver was fulfilled by devout multitudes to whom it made no difference whether the rich architectural fabric that glorified their towns served the Counter Reformation or Royal Absolutism, whether it could be classified as Eclectic Mannerism or whether its interior spaces were useless. Their senses and their civic pride were fed by beauty and local identification, and it is this tangible relationship between architect and community Paul Rudolph tries to reestablish. In a recent lecture he has come out with a frank plea for a return to decorative form, visually designed streetscapes, emphasis on planar rather than linear elements, and a preference for light and shadow in place of reflectivity, calling for solid rather than transparent building materials.

This love of visual delight is specifically American and Paul Rudolph is the most characteristically American among the four architects of whom we are talking here. The historical reference evoked by the Wellesley Art Center (Fig. 10) should have been Collegiate Tudor, but its prototype is much more recent and much more indigenous: the Electrical Building from the Century of Progress Exposition in Chicago, 1933 (Fig. 11). It strikes a consonant note of dramatic massing and decorative surface treatment with technological materials, just as the Blue Cross Building in Boston (Fig. 12) brings a spontaneous reaction: Woolworth Building in spite of its "electric blanket" of intricate ducts and conduits which are no concern of the layman passing by. It is curious and ethnologically significant that the appearance of technological building materials and mechanical equipment provoked in Europeans an austere "Sachlichkeit" with moralistic overtones; while in America these inventions became immediately ornamental, from the columned iron façades of Bogardus to Mizener's poured concrete Colonial and the exhibition architecture of 1933 and 1939. The "concrete orchard" of Rudolph's Greely Labora-

Figure 12: Paul Rudolph, BLUE CROSS BUILDING; Boston, Massachusetts
Moholy-Nagy

Figure 13: Building at the Nunnery Quadrangle; Uxmal, Yucatan; Maya New Empire, 10th Century, A.D.

tory in Yale could only be designed by an American who is unembarrassed by European purism which he has blamed for "thinness, paucity of ideas, nativeté with regard to symbols, lack of creativeness and expressiveness." In a heritage going as far back as the exquisitely eye-catching façades of Uxmal (Fig. 13), so disdainful of any identification through spatial function, lies Rudolph’s justification and peril— the specifically American preference for visual rather than rational values.

Another uniquely American need is the Architectural definition of a native environment, no matter how spurious or naive. The ranch house and the bungalow, New England Salt Boxes and Cape Cod Cottages, are to suggest a regional preference bought on the installment plan. Against this misled romanticism Rudolph has defined "regionalism as one way toward that richness in architecture which other movements have enjoyed and which is lacking today." Like the forbidden delights of historical continuity, he and his generation of Harvard Graduates were indoctrinated with a guilt complex toward this American longing for a specific local response. So far only his new Sarasota High School has traces of overcoming this aregional conditioning. Decorative richness of form is combined with climatic control through concrete sunshades which overstate the case badly by extending along north and solid walls. But they are the beginning of regional inventiveness and represent a much more architectural solution than Mr. Kump’s California schools “constructed on the factory principle.”

As Rudolph himself knows “we have yet to see a Golden Age” producing “a great architecture that has to do with the eye — with a sense of scale and a hierarchy of building types, expressed in multiple images.” But he has come already a long way from the straight jacket of his international training when he concludes: “When you are really perplexed you can learn a great deal more from sound traditional than from modern architecture.”

Louis Kahn, Doctor Mirabilis

"This man," says Alkibiades of Socrates in Plato’s SYMPOSIUM, “he himself and his words are growths of such a peculiar kind that it is easier to compare him with Fauns and Satyrs than with other men . . . Anyone hearing his talk first will think him ridiculous. He wraps himself in expressions and formulations like a wild
satyr wraps himself in his fur. He talks of burros and smithies, cobbler and tanners. It looks as if he were saying eternally the same with the same words so that the inexperienced and uninitiated laugh about his speeches. But he who can enter into him will find out how his words are connected by meaning . . . and that they reach wherever man in search for improvement and ennoblement directs his vision.”

This is a portrait of Louis Kahn, forever in search of an audience and forever trying to transform the architectural rostrum into a pulpit. As a practicing architect he is unique because his design concept lacks the dichotomous tension between a basic principle and a challenge that was ascribed to his three colleagues. His design has a monolithic singleness of vision for which he himself has claimed the term “archaic,” not in the conventional meaning of superannuated but in the psycho-analytical sense of a return to subconscious or intuitive fundamentals. His latest building, the Richards Medical Research Laboratory of the University of Pennsylvania, (Fig. 14) might well become an archetype, the original pattern of a new building type based on design with prefabricated units. It still lacks the variations and refined balances of a style. In the relentless struggle of the creator with machine-made building material he comes out second best in places; but his vision, shining through imperfections, is so uncompromised, his determined unity of enclosing form and enclosed space so lacking in the usual schizophrenia, that it literally exudes the inspiration of a pure conscience.

The challenge faced by Kahn the designer comes from Kahn the teacher — “this growth of such peculiar kind.” It is fashionable today “to put the word people back where they belong” (Johnson) and to profess to a red-hot frenzy of creativeness that cannot be bothered with verbalization. Apart from the fact that this is an empty pose because architects are the greatest publicity hounds among the professions, A TEACHER MUST TALK; and every creative architect is part teacher. His success or failure as an influence on his chosen field depends largely on the power of his word to convey his convictions. In all forms of teaching, direct and indirect, personality takes precedence over performance. Louis Kahn was well aware of this when he said in a lecture “A man’s work is always less than himself — his works are always interior.

Figure 14: Louis Kahn, LABORATORY BUILDING FOR THE UNIVERSITY OF PENNSYLVANIA, 1959-1960
Contrary to the opinion, cherished by college presidents, the pious platitudes of convocation speeches are wasted on the young. They suspect today more than ever the clichés of conformism. Among themselves they share three adolescent attitudes characteristic for all students: they are more interested in interpretation than in facts; they are more willing to believe in mythogenesis than in historical truth; and they crave initiation more than instruction. A successful teacher will receive from his students faith beyond understanding if he seems to have at his command a very personal magic that transports his listeners beyond the threats of reality. It is no coincidence that Alkibiades' characterization of Socrates can be convincingly applied to Louis Kahn. The ambulatory, bookless, non-organized teaching method of the Stoa and the market place has always been the symbol of an inner quest typical for the formative years. The untenured teacher is willing and ready to replace at the touch of a doubt established principles with individual conviction. This was the Socratic magic and it is that of Louis Kahn. “The existence will of a school starts with a man under a tree who doesn’t know he is a teacher, talking to a few people about his realization.”

This prophet speaking in the tongues and metaphors of Nietzsche’s Zarathustra is trying to come to terms with the architect in him who is a formalistic rationalist, heavily addicted to a priori solutions. Frank Lloyd Wright taught his students principles, neatly labeled and categorized for easy reference, and broke every one of his carbons as soon as he put pencil to paper. Louis Kahn teaches disdainfully that “design is a circumstantial act. It has to do with things like the money you have.” He emphasizes an intuitive approach to “art as self-revelation,” of “planes speaking of being and truth.” Yet the three buildings of his which we are able to analyze today are based on pure design ratios, produced by and perceptible only to the intellect. His pedagogical “somehow the spaces” becomes in real life an exercise in predetermined space classifications which evoke as their historical counterpart not the twilight of primordial caves but the cool rationality of an Islamic plan (Fig. 15).* In this bathhouse from the 15th century “the spaces that you serve and the serving spaces” are distinct and artificial entities.

*from Behcet Unsal, Turkish — Islamic Architecture
“their meaning immediate on the plan” as Kahn demands. His obsession with geometric order, overriding flexibility of space function with a rigid predetermined pattern, has another antecedent, the French Ledoux’ factory design from 1788 (Fig. 16) whose only romantic connotation is the architect’s faith in the magic power of the rectangle. For a science building or a bathhouse Kahn’s adaptation of this asceticism of form to calibrated building components is highly persuasive. The closest our undevout times will ever come to altruism is in the gainless service of scientific research. The aura of this cloistered dedication lies like an envelope around the laboratory building. Transposed to other, less depersonalized building purposes, Kahn’s monolithic dogma of prefabrication and geometry would chill the heart and blunt the senses. An identification, an at-homeness of men within an architectural environment, would become progressively impossible because the path of perfection must ultimately eliminate the last shreds of irregularity or personal variation. From this extreme commitment stated through his executed buildings Louis Kahn seeks relief by gathering around him the young birds of his profession, preaching to them like St. Francis the gospel of love, the beauty of nature, and the freedom of the soul.

Saarinen’s Romanesque inspiration, Johnson’s classicism, Rudolph’s American community consciousness, and Kahn’s magisterial magic — all of it points to a reevaluation of architectural tradition for the sake of the future. The question is how much influence has this liquidation of the traditionless thirties, how much HOPE does it hold for a vitalization of our profession. The answer is rather negative and pessimistic. The admission of past excellence as inspiration and not as imitation is considered a personal whim of a few successful men who can afford the luxury. The vast majority of offices and schools ignore the fact that the modular bird cage production has by now left the realm of architecture and has become an industry.

The blame for this lacking influence by our leading talent lies with the curious phenomenon of brightness without conviction, or CONVICTION UNFAITHFUL TO ITSELF. The revolutionary architectural movements of the past had a driving force that was relative to the depth of their creed and the solidarity among their adherents. The Chicago School, the Arts and Crafts Movement, Art Nouveau, etc. became decisive influences through a binding idea that inspired firmness of vision and a collaborative partnership. This is missing today. For each building, expressing principle and integrity, there is another one from the same drawing board that refutes the firm statement; for each courageous call to honest evaluation of principle by Louis Kahn there is the inverted vanity of the enigmatic personality, confounding his listeners with “the consciousness of a rose,” or “a street that wants to be a building.” The ghastly sellout to commercialism has fabricated the myth that revolutionary building ideas don’t get built, as if Suger’s St. Denis, Brunelleschi’s Pitti, every new beginning from Borromini to Wright, had been dreamt up by Bannister-Fletcher. The young architects of today feel cynical and irreverent about the unguiding lights of their profession because they expect an opposition of values, a conflict of issues to one side or another, calling for their loyalty. What they miss in their elders is the affirmative confession to a stated conviction which will develop in them the power of rejection. Without a stated ideal they have no measure of the virtues of design principles, and — worse — they have no measure of their own shortcomings to be corrected.

Architecture today has a high potential which will be wasted if it is not combined with the stubborn fight of the mature years to keep a principled integrity inviolate. The reevaluation of the past might indicate a genuine revolution — it might also indicate no more than a fad for want of better copy. The decision for or against a new era is the responsibility of our “big names.” The singleness of their convictions more than their executed buildings will decide whether architecture still has a future.