Decadence: An Architectural Genealogy of Material, Lateness, and Style

by

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Dedication

To Rom, for your love, support, and partnership.

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Abstract

As the antithesis of Western rationality, mastery, and progress, the concept of decadence has a long yet obscure relationship within the modern discipline of architecture. Its use in the field often carries a negative connotation as it tracks across historical, aesthetic, social, economic, and ecological territories of meaning. This dissertation constructs a genealogy of decadence within architecture by tracing its appearance within architectural discourse at the time of disciplinary formation in the late-eighteenth century, its role in shaping nineteenth-century buildings and architectural theories, and its later extension into postmodernism. In addition to revealing the conceptual contours of decadence within a modern discipline that often sought to rout it out, this study argues for the possibility of an operative engagement with the term. Unique within the history of decadence is the *fin-de-siècle* decadent literary movement. Many of the authors shaping this genre use the built environment to highlight the physical, historical, and subjective connotations of decadence as they explore the concept. I take their work as a productive example of constructing a non-oppositional engagement with decadence, and I extend their thematic framing as a means to track the concept transhistorically to the analysis of architectural projects. Through the themes of *material*, *lateness*, and *style*, this dissertation traces three built works: the Sacré-Coeur basilica (1871-1914), Charles Moore's Centerbrook house (1969), and the Crystal Cathedral (1980). Together, these structures link questions of material networks, historical narrative, and identity to design strategies that oscillate between the formal and the representational. Ultimately, the study of decadence in architecture is as much about unearthing examples of critical practice that fall outside of the aegis of autonomy as it is about revealing the suppressed underlayers of a modern discipline.

Chapter 1
Itineraries of Decadence in Architectural Discourse

When the architect Philip Johnson pledged to produce "a fin-de-siècle version of the Seagram"[1] while detailing the gold-tinted Central Park West for Donald Trump at the close of the twentieth century, the aesthete designer signaled late-nineteenth-century decadence and its ongoing capacity to infect architecture's Modernist project [Figure 1.1]. Today, twin concepts of excess and exhaustion continue to come to the fore as postindustrial urban decline, financial instability, and environmental crisis dominate our increasingly globalized and politically polarized worldview. Despite the legacy of decadence extending to the present moment, it is no longer a term used critically by the public, and its academic discourse remains tethered to the late-nineteenth-century French literary and aesthetic movement of the same name. Scholars have expanded the social implication of decadent literature beyond its ties to aestheticism and have argued for an extended geographical reach of the literary movement by studying its influence on writing in the UK, Italy, Russia, Scandinavia, and America.[2] To date, however, little work has thoroughly examined the architectural dimensions of decadence and the ways in which the concept informs later design sensibilities.

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[1] Johnson quoted in Robert Stern, New York 2000: *Architecture and Urbanism Between the Bicentennial and the Millennium* (New York: Monacelli Press, 2006).

[2] For decadence beyond aestheticism: Debora Silverman, *Art Nouveau in Fin-de-siècle France: Politics, Psychology, and Style* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992). For geographical breadth: Jason David Hall, *Decadent Poetics: Literature and Form at the British Fin-de-Siècle*. (Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013); Luca Somigli, "The Mirror of Modernity: Marinetti's Early Criticism Between Decadence And 'Renaissance Latine': A 'French' Poet in Italy," *The Romanic Review*, vol. 97, no. 3-4 (2006); Olga Matich, *Erotic Utopia: The Decadent Imagination in Russia's Fin-de-siècle* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2005); Marja Härmänmaa, *Decadence, Degeneration, and the End: Studies in the European Fin De Siècle* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014); and David Weir, *Decadent Culture in the United States: Art and Literature Against the American Grain, 1890-1926.* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2008).

Where then might we locate decadence within the field of architecture? Is it in the gleam and ornamental form of contemporary designers such as Mark Foster Gage [Figure 1.2] and Hernan Diaz Alonso [Figure 1.3]? Is it in the organic fecundity of the Art Nouveau [Figure 1.4]? Or perhaps it is in the sumptuous materiality and spoils of late-imperial monumentality [Figure 1.5]? Decadence has little disciplinary and scholarly context in architecture and design to help answer such questions. Unlike literary history, in which the decadent movement can be delineated by seminal texts and critical discourse, architecture's intersection with the concept of decadence is largely tangential to philosophical, historical, and aesthetic theories. This dissertation argues that while the relationship between architecture and decadence is most often oblique, there are instances of overlap that remain unexamined. Furthermore, it is my contention that such an investigation provides a new lens on ingrained disciplinary theories about architecture's relationship to technology, the natural environment, and capital, and, in doing so, opens provocations for creative design and critical scholarly engagements with contemporary decadence via its legacy.

Locating decadence in architecture might seemingly start with a definition of the word, moving it from a lax common connotation to a more analytical classification. But this task proves perennially difficult in fields where decadence is conceptually established. Nearly every scholarly text on decadent literature must acknowledge the elusiveness of defining the term. Drama and literary critic Richard Gilman devoted a whole book to the problem of delimiting decadence in his 1979 *Decadence: The Strange Life of an Epithet* and concluded that "the shabby exploitation of its vagueness shows no sign of letting up."[3] Fifteen years later, literary scholar David Weir commits the first chapter of his *Decadence and the Making of Modernism* to the definition of decadence by beginning, "Practically everyone who writes about decadence

[3] Richard Gilman, *Decadence: The Strange Life of an Epithet* (New York: Farrar, Straus, and Giroux, 1979), 179.

begins with the disclaimer that the word itself is annoyingly resistant to definition."[4] In a recent edited volume, *Decadence, Degeneration, and the End: Studies in the European Fin de Siècle* Marja Härmänmaa and Christopher Nissen take as a matter of course, "the confusion over how to define and characterize the experience of late-nineteenth-century Decadence."[5] Rather than attempting a definition, they take the term's seemingly fundamental indeterminacy as an opening for multiple readings of *fin-de-siècle* culture.

However, in the field of architecture, decadence rarely rises to that privileged indeterminacy. It is by and large associated with the pervasive pessimism that Matei Calinescu refers to as the "rhetoric" of decadence,[6] which he and other scholars distinguish from the aesthetic qualities of the literary style found within the short-lived decadent movement that appeared in Paris roughly from 1860 to 1890. Introducing the idea of *concept*, as opposed to *word* or *label*, cultural analyst Mieke Bal characterizes concepts not as "firmly established univocal terms but as dynamic in themselves."[7] As such, they often operate via common use as well as through specialized analysis. Considering decadence as a concept rather than a pessimistic label (aesthetic, moral, or otherwise) opens up a wider territory of engagement that is neither categorical nor indeterminate, such that "while concepts are products of philosophy and tools of analysis, they are also embodiments of the cultural practices we seek to understand through them."[8] Indeed, this kind of expansive framing for decadence in the field of architecture is required to capture the concept's itineraries, which range from pointed polemics to the

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[4] David Weir, *Decadence and the Making of Modernism* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1995), 1.

[5] Marja Härmänmaa and Christopher Nissen eds., *Decadence, Degeneration, and the End: Studies in the European Fin de Siècle* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014), 6.

[6] Matei Calinescu, *Five Faces of Modernity: Modernism, Avant-Garde, Decadence, Kitsch, Postmodernism* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1987), 157.

[7] Mieke Bal, *Travelling Concepts in the Humanities: A Rough Guide* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2002), 11.

[8] Ibid., 21.

reconceptualization of major disciplinary theories and, ultimately, the question of design agency in the cultural context of late capital.

This dissertation provides a genealogical account of the connections between decadence and architecture. It covers 1) the emergence of the term as a concept born of Enlightenment philosophies of history and its overt use in Revolution-era architectural discourse, 2) the architectural dimensions of decadent literature in *fin-de-siècle* Paris, 3) the pathologization of the concept at the turn of the nineteenth century as underwriting Modernist architectural theories, and 4) later reverberations of decadence in the late capital context of postmodern America. By tracing this protracted history. I will show decadence to be an enduring concept in shifting theorizations of architecture, yet one that is not often leveraged beyond its negative rhetorical value, and highlight some of the strategies that emerge when it is deployed operatively rather than derisively.

This chapter therefore outlines a series of intellectual intersections between theorizations of decadence and architectural discourse. It will demonstrate that the concept inflects the discipline, though often indirectly, and it will identify three primary themes that occur across the conceptual territories of decadence. It will also argue for the possibility of an operative engagement with decadence. The *fin-de-siècle* decadent literary movement is one demonstration of a creative practice that leans into decadence rather than evades it. There architecture, design, and the urban environment are instrumental to the formation of a decadent poetic. But for architecture, there is still a question of what an operative deployment of decadence might look like.

Becoming an Operative Concept

Bernard Tschumi highlighted the typically procedural relationship between concepts and design when he observed that "in architecture, concepts can either precede or follow projects or buildings. In other words a theoretical concept may be either applied to a project, or derived from it." But he also offers the possibility of a more entwined relationship such that "this distinction cannot be made so clearly, when, for example, a certain aspect of film theory may support an architectural intuition, and later, through the arduous development of a project, be transformed into an operative concept for architecture in general."[9] In the tradition of interdisciplinary critical inquiry, concepts also hold an important methodological position.

For Walter Benjamin, the concept of the tragic, and indeed its conceptual status as closely linked to decadence, recalibrated the work of the historian. Benjamin writes, "Through their mediating role concepts enable phenomena to participate in the existence of ideas."[10] He situates his study based on the concept of tragedy as mediating between a philosophical idea or ideal and the specific historical occurrence of German-baroque-tragic drama. Benjamin contrasts a disciplinary use of the term from his conceptual method. In the disciplinary guise of expertise, concepts like the tragic and decadence were reduced to stylistic designation:

> For although it is clearly futile to assemble a series of works of art with certain features in common, if the intention is to establish their essential quality rather than to produce a collection of historical or stylistic examples, it is equally inconceivable that the philosophy of art will ever divest itself of some of its most fruitful ideas, such as the tragic or the comic. *For these ideas are not simply the sum total of certain sets of rules; they are themselves structures…*[11]

To further make his point, Benjamin relies on Alois Riegl's theorization of decadence to recast late works as not falling away from a classical ideal but as evidence of the development of new

[9] Bernard Tschumi, *The Manhattan Transcripts* [1981] (London: Academy, 1994): xix.
[10] Walter Benjamin, *The Origin of German Tragic Drama*, trans. by John Osborne (London: Verso, 2003): 34.
[11] Ibid., 44. My emphasis.

forms.[12] Riegl's shift in the conceptual terms of decadence, from degeneration to imminence, pushed against elitist conceptions of stylistic change and the devaluation of minor arts. For Benjamin, this was an early step towards a methodology that included the study of everyday objects and experiences that would be organized through a collage-like structure.

The techniques of collage, montage, and, ultimately, pastiche have intellectual ties to the idea of decadence and, in different ways, claim its end as an operative concept, either by reframing decline as an emergent form or declaring the loss of the "otherness" of the historical past within the horizon of an ever-present contemporaneity. And yet, decadence persists as a concept, most notably in three territories. First, in common usage it circulates without a critical edge and connotes a slack hedonism, such as decadent chocolate cake. Second, it remains operative in literature as well as the scholarly field of comparative literature. Contemporary authors such as Michel Houellebecq still take up the decadent mantel,[13] and the study of *fin-de-siècle* decadent literature has been examined through a range of theoretical lenses, including feminist, queer, and postcolonial studies.[14] Third, decadence persists as a concept on the political stage. Campaign slogans such as "Make America Great Again" are rife with the rhetoric of decadence, while at the same time few in a politically divided family gathering would object to identifying the current president Donald Trump as a decadent.

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[12] *Die spdtromische Kunstindustrie nach den Funden in Osterreich*-Ungarn (1901; *Late Roman Art Industry*) See, for example, in Benjamin: "For like expressionism, the baroque is not so much an age of genuine artistic achievement as an age possessed of an unremitting artistic will. This is true of all periods of so-called decadence. The supreme reality in art is the isolated, self-contained work. But there are times when the well-wrought work is only within reach of the epigone. These are the periods of 'decadence' in the arts, the periods of artistic 'will.' Thus it was that Riegl devised this term with specific reference to the art of the final period of the Roman Empire. The form as such is within the reach of this will, a well-made individual work is not. The reason for the relevance of the baroque after the collapse of German classical culture lies in this will. To this could be added the desire for a vigorous style of language, which would make it seem equal to the violence of world-events" (55).

[13] Michel Houellebecq, *Submission*, trans. by Lorin Stein (New York: Farrar, Straus & Giroux, 2015).

[14] See: Naomi Schor, *Reading in Detail: Aesthetics and the Feminine* (New York: Methuen, 1987); Emily Apter, *Feminizing the Fetish: Psychoanalysis and Narrative Obsession in Turn-of-the-century France* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1991); Ellis Hanson, *Decadence and Catholicism* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1997); and Robert Stilling, *Beginning at the End: Decadence, Modernism, and Postcolonial Poetry* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2018).

My methodological approach in this study is based on tracking how the concept of decadence travels, rather than on bracketing out a privileged aesthetic moment or on identifying an array of objects that a historically isolated period or disciplinary definition could label. For Mieke Bal, concepts mediate between ideas and projects, like they do for Tschumi and did for Benjamin, but she also brings to light that concepts involve migration across historical, geographical, intellectual, and vulgar domains. Tracing the transitive nature of a concept is to engage with its intersubjectivity, as Bal asserts, "Even those concepts that are tenuously established, suspended between questioning and certainty, hovering between ordinary word and theoretical tool, constitute the backbone of the interdisciplinary study of culture – primarily because of their potential *intersubjectivity*. Not because they mean the same thing for everyone, but because they don't."[15] Indeed, the intersubjectivity of decadence includes both popular and right-wing layers, in addition to its intellectual and aesthetic histories. Thus a study committed to the range of conceptual registers of decadence will gather not only "minor" objects of the everyday or from popular culture, but also "conservative" monuments. A transhistorical account of decadence is a first step towards establishing its conceptual range and import for architectural discourse.

Fin-de-Siècle Decadence

Late-nineteenth-century Paris remains the locus of decadence as a fully charged cultural concept. It is in this context that the term has wide-reaching social currency, polemical bite, and is in turn put to stylistic, structural, and critical use by literary authors, cultural critics, and visual artists. Previously, decadence was used in historical analysis to explain periods of decline, especially the fall of the Roman Empire, and was not seen as a threat to contemporary society.

[15] Bal, *Traveling Concepts*, 11.

Montesquieu's *Considérations sur les causes de la grandeur des romains et de leur décadence* (1734) constituted one of the first non-theological treatments of the collapse of the Roman Empire,[16] and with it decadence begins its semantic shift from a general term used to describe the cyclical and unpredictable fortunes of nature to a concept related to historical analysis, aesthetic judgment, and theorizations of temporal development.[17] Montesquieu's essay considers the sociopolitical causes that led to the fall of antiquity's most powerful empire, but it does not entertain the idea of a present-day decadence. As such it demonstrates the dual aspect of Enlightenment thought that seeks to both objectively observe historical change, which included cultural decline, and theorize a progressive faith in civilization. Decadence as historically distant, and the present safeguarded against it via the advancement of civilization, was a conceptual status the term still held by the early nineteenth century. In *De la littérature considerée dans ses rapports avec les institutions sociales* (1800), Madame de Staël like Montesquieu before her, does not allow for contemporary decadence. Indeed, this later author actively argues against such a possibility, maintaining decadence as an exclusively historical matter such that "European civilization, the establishment of Christianity, scientific discoveries… have… destroyed the ancient causes for barbarism. So the decadence of nations, and consequently of letters, is less to be feared nowadays."[18]

By the mid-nineteenth century, what had been an academic term used to theorize historically distant phenomena was increasingly taken up as a critical lens for the contemporary. Thomas Couture's painting *The Romans of the Decadence* (1847) represents this shift [Figure 1.6]. Here, in an academic painting, we find an early example of the undoing of the academic

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[16] Montesquieu, *Considérations sur les causes de la grandeur des romains et de leur decadence* (Edinbourg: Hamilton, Balfour, & Neill, 1751).

[17] For more on pre-modern conceptions of decadence, see: Arthur Herman, *The Idea of Decline in Western History* (New York: Free Press, 1997).

[18] Madame de Staël, *De la littérature considerée dans ses rapports avec les institutions sociales* (Paris, 1801), quoted in Calinescu, 160.

distance of decadence. While Couture's moral subject matter was painted in classical style, the painting takes direct aim at contemporary France. As such, an equivalency is drawn comparing the ancient Roman subject matter with the painter's critique of the present-day French government and the perceived decline of French culture in the nineteenth-century.

The argument of the painting is staged through a compositional contrast between the foreground and the background. The architecture in the painting represents Roman Republican ideals. Its heroic statuary is upright, and its structure based on rectilinear geometry. This monumental setting is juxtaposed to the debauchery of the foreground, where the languid figures are based on arabesque forms. Furthermore, these figures in the foreground collectively form an art historical pastiche, with overt references to painters such as both Peter Paul Rubens and Nicolas Poussin, as well as the then still-living J.-A.-D. Ingres, copied-and-pasted together. This again stands in contrast to the architectural and sculptural setting of the background – an unadulterated composition based on classical design principles. Finally, the debauched foreground is depicted with a use of color, light, and shadow that renders it more accessible to the viewer than the flattened and muted space of the classical background.

Couture's painting illustrates two important modulations to the concept of decadence in the nineteenth century. First, historical self-consciousness was on the rise. We see this reflected in the fact that Couture's political position was Republican rather than monarchist. By the mid-nineteenth century the Revolution was itself a historical condition, and as such its ideals were, for Couture, becoming corrupted and lost with historical distance. Second, there is a shift in use from a term of historical and aesthetic judgment to one of political polemic. The two-part structure of the painting maintains the derisive connotations of the concept of decadence. However the "rhetoric" of decadence offers little traction as any faction may level claims of decadence against its opponent. Indeed, as an oppositional strategy decadence is most often rhetorical bombast.

One detail in Couture's painting suggests an altogether new engagement with decadence, and that is the artist's self-portrait as Bacchus amidst the decadent arabesques in the foreground – positioned on the right-hand side, below the second statue. The notion of exploring decadence as an aesthetic and of being a *decadent* was unique to the nineteenth century and unfolded primarily within the decadent literary movement. What was for Couture a subtle suggestion, was for Charles Baudelaire an overt proclamation. In an introduction to his translations of Edgar Allen Poe, the French poet wrote, "Decadent literature! – Empty words which we often hear fall, with the sonority of a deep yawn, from the mouths of those unenigmatic sphinxes who keep watch before the sacred doors of classical Aesthetics."[19] Baudelaire here acknowledges the well-disciplined aesthetic connotation of decadence as a fall away from classical ideals. This recognition of decadence through its academic definition is then expanded, as the poet continues:

> The phrase decadent literature implies that there is a scale of literatures, an infantile, a childish, an adolescent, etc. This term, in other words, supposes something fatal and providential, like an ineluctable decree; and it is altogether unfair to reproach us for fulfilling this mysterious law. All that I can understand in the academic phrase is that it is shameful to obey this law with pleasure and that we are guilty to rejoice in our destiny.[20]

The academic definition of decadence, as a contrast to the classical, becomes layered with language that evokes new scientific theories such that decadence is also cast as a law of nature. Following this double layer of meaning, and adding a third valence, Baudelaire goes on to employ the term generatively. He suggests decadence as a means to proffer an alternative aesthetic value:

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[19] Charles Baudelaire, *Baudelaire on Poe*, trans. and ed. Lois and Francis E. Hyslop (State College, PA: Bald Eagle Press, 1952), 127.

[20] Ibid., 128.

> The sun, which a few hours ago overwhelmed everything with its direct white light, is soon going to flood the western horizon with variegated colors. In the play of light of the dying sun certain poetic spirits will find new delights; they will discover there dazzling colonnades, cascades of molten metal, paradises of fire, a sad splendor, the pleasure of regret, all the magic of dreams, all the memories of opium. And indeed the sunset will appear to them like the marvelous allegory of a soul filled with life which descends behind the horizon with a magnificent store of thoughts and dreams.[21]

In this passage, which predates the stylistic designations of decadence as an aesthetic movement, Baudelaire turns the question of defining decadence on its head by revealing its itinerant conceptual status. Rather than offering a new theorization of what decadence *is*, the poet projects an evocative verbal-image of what decadence might *generate*.

Even if Baudelaire was not invested in pinning down a decadent style, other critics were. Théophile Gautier, in his 1868 introduction to *Les Fleurs du mal* published the year after Baudelaire's death, offers the first definition of decadence as a modern literary style. He describes decadent style as the ultimate expression at the "word" level[22] and goes on to compare it to the "gaminess" of the decomposition of language during the late Roman Empire.[23] The identification of individuated words is not the only marker of literary decadence, but it is the most codified and influential. While decadent authors such as Baudelaire, J.-K. Huysmans, and Edmond de Goncourt will use the decomposition metaphor stylistically, it also occasions for them a broader "loosening" and thus affords movements across boundaries, traditionally separating literary genres (such as poetry and prose) and artistic modalities (such as verbal and visual expression). Nevertheless, fifteen years after Gautier's preface to *Les Fleurs du mal*, Paul Bourget also emphasized the liberated word in his veneration of Baudelaire's decadent style as

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[21] Ibid.

[22] Charles Baudelaire, *Les Fleurs du mal* (Paris: Calmann-Lévy, n. d.), 16-17. Gautier says, for example: "Ce style de décadence est le dernier mot du verbe sommé de tout exprimer et poussé à l'extrême outrance."

[23] Ibid. Gautier writes: "On peut rappeler, à propos de lui, la langue marbrée déjà de verdeurs de la décomposition et comme faisandée du Bas-Empire romain et les raffi nements compliqués de l'école byzantine, dernière forme de l'art grec tombé en deliquescence…"

described in *Essais de psychologie contemporaine* (1883). There Bourget portrays "*le style de décadence*" as "one in which the unity of the book breaks down to make place for the independence of the page, in which the page breaks down to make place for the independence of the sentence and in which the sentence breaks down to make place for the independence of the word."[24]

By the end of the nineteenth century, what had been a stylistic attribute was increasingly being charged as effeminate and ultimately degenerate. Consequently the detail so strongly associated with decadent aesthetics was becoming "symptomatic" of a larger and threatening abject cultural decadence. Friedrich Nietzsche, whom Martin Jay calls the "diagnostician of decadence,"[25] extends the analysis of literary decadence in this way just five years after Bourget's stylistic definition. In *The Case of Wagner* (1888) the German philosopher writes:

> What is the sign of every literary decadence? –That no life dwells in the whole. The word becomes sovereign and leaps out of the sentence, the sentence reaches out and obscures the meaning of the page, the page gains life at the expense of the whole – the whole is no longer a whole. *But this is the simile* of every style of decadence: every time, the anarchy of atoms, disaggregation of the will…[26]

The German physician and social critic Max Nordau would push Nietzsche's simile of decadence further by diagnosing it as a social illness and would include Nietzsche's philosophies as a case in point. In his most influential text *Degeneration* (*Entartung*, 1892),[27] Nordau relies heavily on the term decadence, and more specifically on the, by then, well-established aesthetic movement of the same name, to extend his social argument of degeneration. Indeed, the author begins by establishing the cultural products of the *fin-de-siècle* before shifting into the role of a physician, in order to diagnose a social illness that is both reflected in and influenced by art. In

[24] Paul Bourget, *Essais de psychologie contemporaine* [1883] (Paris: Lemerre, 1893), 28, translation from Calinescu, 170.
[25] Martin Jay, *Fin-de-siècle Socialism and Other Essays* (New York: Routledge, 1988), 2.
[26] Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Birth of Tragedy and The Case of Wagner*, trans. Walter Kaufmann (New York, 1967), 170. My emphasis.
[27] Max Nordau, *Entartung* (Berlin: Duncker & Humblot, 1892/93).

addition to his criticisms of Nietzsche, he relies on Oscar Wilde and Richard Wagner, among others, as clinical case studies. Nordau was not the first to use the term degeneration,[28] but he did help to bring a serious medical connotation to it that was accepted until Sigmund Freud introduced his theories of psychoanalysis. The work does belong to a line of reactionary European thought that is complicated by the fact that Nordau was an early Zionist leader who understood nineteenth-century anti-Semitism as symptomatic of degeneration even though the Nazis themselves would later adopt the terminology of degenerate art. One line of distinction is what was being argued as lost in the process of so-called degeneration. For the Nazi Party, it was a mystical Aryan racial superiority, while for Nordau it was a loss of Enlightenment-era morality and the principles of rationality and progress.[29] Thus decadence, through its conceptual tethering to degeneration, retained and extended its long-standing rhetorical value.

Picking up the thread of the *cult of detail* as central to decadence,[30] literary theorist Naomi Schor traces what she describes as the "meandering course" of the "ancient association of details and decadence."[31] She notes that the posterity of the association puts unlikely companions in the same bed. One of those bedfellows for Schor is the Viennese architect and critic Adolf Loos. Through a comparison between Hegel's *Aesthetics* (1835) and Loos's manifesto "Ornament and Crime" (1908), she argues that Loos "decisively displaces the question of ornament" from an ontological need to an erotic quality.[32] Echoing Nordau, Loos criticizes the primitive and erotic instincts to ornament as "pathological symptoms"[33] born of an un-

[28] J. E. Chamberlin and Sander L. Gilman, eds., *Degeneration: The Dark Side of Progress* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1985).
[29] For more on this see: Hans-Peter Söder, "Disease and Health as Contexts of Modernity: Max Nordau as a Critic of Fin-de-Siècle Modernism," *German Studies Review* 14, no. 3 (1991): 473-87.
[30] For historical discussion of cult of detail as characteristic of decadent style see: J. Kamerbeek, "Style de Décadence," *Revue de littérature comparée* 39, 2 (Avril-Juin 1965): 268-86.
[31] Naomi Schor, "Decadence: Wey, Loos, Lukács," in *Reading in Detail: Aesthetics and the Feminine* [1987 by Methuen, Inc.] (New York: Routledge, 2007), 45.
[32] Ibid., 51.
[33] Adolf Loos, "Ornament and Crime," in Ludwig Münz and Gustav Künstler, *Adolf Loos, Pioneer of Modern Architecture* (New York: Praeger, 1966), 248.

enlightened mysticism [Figure 1.7].[34] But pushing beyond the questions of civilizational advancement and declination, Schor puts forward that the most modern aspect of Loos's manifesto is "the pride of place accorded economic considerations" and further suggests that his writings reveal "that at the dawn of the twentieth century, at the height of bourgeois capitalism, the ornament controversy is nothing less than purely rhetorical, or to put the matter otherwise: rhetoric has invaded the market place."[35] She then extends the argument to an ecological dimension. By relying on the Loos quotation, "But it is a crime against the national economy that [in fashioning ornaments] human labour, money, and material should thereby be ruined," Schor identifies an important aspect of decadence new to its conceptual status – that "ugliness is pegged to waste."[36]

To summarize, in the nineteenth century, decadence was a concept taken up by Thomas Couture, Charles Baudelaire, Théophile Gautier, and Friedrich Nietzsche, among others, which is to say it was a historical moment when the term had social, aesthetic, and philosophical purchase. Furthermore, by the end of the century, we can locate three major transformations in the conceptual use of decadence – 1) its shift from academic use to contemporary polemics, 2) the emergence of the decadent literary movement, and 3) the pathologization of the term alongside new associations to material economies and ecological waste. Architecture is implicated in all three. Couture relies on classical architecture in his composition of visual contrasts. Baudelaire evokes "dazzling colonnades" and "cascades of molten metal" in his

[34] See Christopher Long, "The Origins and Context of Adolf Loos's 'Ornament and Crime,'" *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians*, vol. 68, no. 2 (June 2009): 200-223. Long states, "Loos apparently encountered Nordau's writings in the later 1890s, after his return from the United States. It is likely that it was again Kraus who inspired his interest. Kraus references Nordau repeatedly in *Die Fackel*, and the notion of degeneration surfaces often in his essays. Unlike Lombroso's books, Loos's writings suggest more than a superficial grasp of Nordau's main theses. In his essay "Kul-turentartung," for example, he pairs Nordau's belief in decadence and degenerate art with a scathing critique of the German Werkbund and its aims, and the same themes reappear in 'Ornament and Crime'" (208).

[35] Schor, "Decadence," 53-54.

[36] Loos, "Ornament and Crime," 228; Schor, "Decadence," 54.

figurative language. And the architect Loos declares ornamentation a criminal act. While each of these layers of meaning was in full play by the close of the century, it is the latter that persists most vigorously as critiques of Western decadence outpaced, but did not fully eclipse, extended engagements with the creative sensibilities cultivated by decadent authors.

Postmodernism, a Decadent Haunt

In the book version of his argument for the concept of postmodernism, Fredric Jameson extends eleven "secondary elaborations" as a means of conclusion.[37] The ninth of these is titled, "Decadence, Fundamentalism, and Hightech." Towards the beginning of the elaboration the theorist says, "Gilman goes on to tell us to stop using this noxious concept [decadence], unaware that everyone else has long since done so."[38] But Jameson's pithy claim that everyone had stopped using decadence as a concept was not exactly accurate. Indeed, over the course of the twentieth century, we can track a familiar oscillation between the use of the term as a period designation, though now applied to late-nineteenth and early-twentieth-century design as well as the late-classical, to its deployment (yet again) as a contemporary, and now distinctly American, problem. Interestingly, much of this runs through architectural discourse. And it is likely the architectural theorist Charles Jencks more than the literary critic Richard Gilman that spurs Jameson's engagement with the concept. What follows is a selective survey of that ebbing and flowing of decadence during the twentieth century, culminating in a closer examination of the ways in which "lateness" becomes a decadent thematic in writings by Clement Greenberg, Charles Jencks, and Frederic Jameson.

[37] Fredric Jameson, *Postmodernism, or, The Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1991).

[38] Ibid., 377.

As early as the nineteen-thirties Le Corbusier, through his associations with regional syndicalists, had shifted away from the view of America as the utopian possibility diametrically opposed to the European decadence associated with the *ancien régime* and toward the ideological position that American imperialism was in fact the cause of world instability and the decadence of twentieth-century France.[39] Writing on this transition, Mardges Bacon states that Corbusier "no longer viewed America as the utopia of advanced technology and efficient production that it had seemed in the 1920s. Even though he still believed in the lessons of Taylor and Ford with their techniques of standardization and assembly line production, he deplored the amount of labor engaged in producing unnecessary and wasteful consumer goods."[40] It is in this context that the architect began to use the polemical term decadence, which Bacon traces to the publication of Robert Aaron and Arnaud Dandieu's *Décadence de la nation française* (1931), noting that the architect read and heavily annotated this text. In *Quand les cathedrals étaient blanches. Voyage au pays des timides*,[41] Le Corbusier reports on his first trip to America in 1935 [Figure 1.8]. Invited by the Museum of Modern Art the architect gave a series of lectures. Macon describes that on the lecture tour Corbusier reasoned, "During the first machine age… mechanization had not just taken command, it had led America 'too far' into overproduction, waste, and 'spiritual decadence.'"[42] This position was then extended to the book *cathedrals* where the second chapter is titled, "Décadence de l'esprit."

[39] Mary McLeod illuminates Le Corbusier's associations with regional syndicalists in *Urbanisme and Utopia: Le Corbusier from Regional Syndicalism to Vichy* (Ph.D. diss., Princeton University, 1985). Mardges Bacon, *Le Corbusier in America: Travels in the Land of the Timid* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2001). Bacon builds on this work to tie it to Corbusier's positions on America, which were increasingly charged with the rhetoric of decadence. Bacon cites Robert Aaron and Arnaud Dandieu, *Décadence de la nation française* (Paris: Editions Rieder, 1931) as influential for Corbusier.

[40] Bacon, *Le Corbusier in America*, 207.

[41] Le Corbusier, *Quand les cathedrals étaient blanches. Voyage au pays des timides* (Paris: Éditions Plon, 1937). Translated as *When the Cathedrals Were White* (New York: Reynald & Hitchcock, 1947).

[42] Bacon, *Le Corbusier in America*, 67.

Coexistent with the growing identification of American hegemony as the source of modern decadence, the term also remains strongly associated with the *fin-de-siècle* as a period designation. Following the Second World War architectural critic Reyner Banham extends the concept's Anglo-American tradition with aestheticism. In a short essay titled, "Machine Aesthetes," he contrasts the aesthetic rules of "Thirties modernists" with the material honesty of the "junior *avant-garde.*"[43] The use of the term "aesthete" in the title indicates the critic's polemic against the "fakery" and "double-talk" that stems from a commitment to aesthetics. Banham avers, "The Brutalists and *Team Ten* have… put surface coverings behind them…" and, "they have been as honest about materials as one might hope an engineer would be,"[44] and, in so doing, promises a way out of decadence. Banham was more positive about the decadent aesthetics of Charles Rennie Mackintosh [Figure 1.9]. In an article titled "Alienation of Parts," the critic writes about the Glasgow School of Art.[45] He calls it "the weirdest building I have ever been in," and goes on to describe the effect as "just manic-depressive – exhilaration at its boldness, cunning and untrammeled imagination, alternating with something like sick panic at the dripping decadence of its detailing."[46] Banham's assessment that "Mackintosh's combination of unity in the whole with alienation among the parts is unique, masterly, and profoundly disturbing"[47] echoes the nineteenth-century stylistic definition of decadence as a cult of the detail.

Even if the British critic was well versed in the legacy of decadence as an aesthetic movement, and one that for a period did have some influence on architectural theory from

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[43] Reyner Banham, "Machine Aesthetes" *New Statesman* 55 (16 August 1958): 192-93. See also, *A Critic Writes* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1996), 26-28.

[44] Banham, *A Critic Writes*, 28.

[45] Reyner Banham, "Alienation of Parts" *New Statesman* 59 (5 March 1960): 331-32. See also, *A Critic Writes*, 64-66.

[46] Banham, *A Critic Writes*, 64.

[47] Ibid., 66.

William Morris and John Ruskin to Geoffrey Scott in the UK and Ralph Adams Cram [Figure 1.10] in the US,[48] he was mostly opposed to its "fate in becoming the aesthetic handbook of the Neo-Georgian and Playboy phases of English architecture."[49] By the nineteen-fifties the decadence of previous generations, be it a crime of aestheticism or misguided traditionalism, seemed to be all but put to bed. Banham could assert a new material honesty and Albert Bush-Brown could declare that a progressive gulf lies between "Ralph Adams Cram at Princeton in 1913, and Walter Gropius in 1950 at Harvard."[50] Nevertheless, by the nineteen-sixties and -seventies the question of American decadence, if not the decadence of the Modernist project full stop, comes back into focus.

Indeed, while Banham was falling in love with Los Angeles, Jane Jacobs was asserting that "there is nothing economically or socially inevitable about either the decay of old cities or the fresh-minted decadence of the new unurban urbanization." The latter of which she goes on to describe as being "purposefully manipulated for a full quarter of a century… extraordinary governmental financial incentives have been required to achieve this degree of monotony, sterility, and vulgarity."[51] Here we have a critical claim for understanding decadence as

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[48] See for example: Geoffrey Scott, *The Architecture of Humanism; A Study in the History of Taste* (London: Constable and company, ltd., 1914). For more on Scott, see: Mark Campbell, *A Beautiful Leisure: The Decadent Architectural Humanism of Geoffrey Scott, Bernard and Mary Berenson* (Ph.D. diss., Princeton University, 2014). Unlike Loos's identification of decadence with economic and ecological waste, and Le Corbusier's via his syndicalist association, figures like Scott identified decadence as a kind of humanism while Ruskin and Morris had a more pronounced social inflection; for his part, Cram wrote an early novel modeled on Huysmans and Wilde, titled *The Decadent* (1893); Cram's biographer Douglass Shand-Tucci describes the architect's youthful interest in the decadent movement as a minor indiscretion, I have argued that the concept has a theoretical import for the architect's work, see: Smithey, "Fiction as Theory in Ralph Adams Cram's The Decadent" (M.S. thesis, University of Washington, 2011).

[49] Banham on Scott's *Architecture of Humanism*, in *Theory and Design in the First Machine Age* (London: Butterworth, 1960), 45. Another significant line of inquiry is Rudolf Wittkower's attacks on Ruskin and Scott for their, as Alina Payne describes it, "hedonistic interpretation of architecture that privileges the sensuous aesthetic reception by the viewer" (325); see Alina Payne, "Rudolf Wittkower and Architectural Principles in the Age of Modernism," *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians* 53 (1994): 322-42.

[50] Albert Bush-Brown, "Cram and Gropius: Traditionalism and Progressivism" *The New England Quarterly* vol. 25, no. 1 (March, 1952): 3.

[51] Jane Jacobs, "Author's Introduction," *The Death and Life of Great American Cities* (New York: Random House, 1961) excerpted in *The Urban Design Reader*, eds. Michael Larice and Elizabeth Macdonald (New York: Routledge, 2010), 142.

strategically manufactured rather than as an ineluctable fate of history. And there were other decadent provocations afoot. In their 1972 text *Learning from Las Vegas*,[52] Denise Scott Brown, Robert Venturi, and Steven Izenour chose to analyze what still remains the American city most easily identifiable as decadent in its colloquial sense. The demolition of Pruitt Igoe tinted Modernist architecture as decadent in a morbidly physical sense, while the oil crisis and economic recession following the Arab-Israeli war signaled an end of the postwar golden age.

Perhaps most notably, Colin Rowe deploys the concept in *Collage City*.[53] In the earlier journal article version for *Architectural Review* in 1975, he offers passing reference to decadence, both as a cultural idea of decline and to decadent authors, by including a lengthy quote from Edward Gibbon's *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire* (1776) and by name-dropping the title of Huysmans's seminal decadent novel *À rebours.* While the latter is removed from the book form by 1978, Gibbon stays. Rowe uses the Enlightenment theorist to set up a lineage of utopian thought that he argues runs on to Darwin and Marx through the common aspiration of reconstructing society based on scientific principles. Rowe's theoretical engagement with decadence becomes critical rather than polemical as he uses it to run interference on the more dominant concept of utopia. We see this, for example, in the title of the first chapter, "Utopia: Decline and Fall?" There Rowe juxtaposes the terms decadence, decline, and fall with the modernist concept par excellence devised to overcome all forms of decadence. The book then concludes with a chapter titled, "Collage City and the Reconquest of Time," and an excursus, which he describes as a collection of "a-temporal" and "transcultural" *objets trouvés* for urbanistic collage. If decadence, as an academic term born of Enlightenment theories of history, science, and aesthetics, is both fundamentally a theorization of time and also deployed to

[52] Robert Venturi, Denise Scott Brown, and Steven Izenour, *Learning from Las Vegas* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1972).

[53] Colin Rowe and Fred Koetter, *Collage City* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1978). First appeared as an abbreviated article in *Architectural Review* 158, no. 942 (1975): 66-90.

stake claims that range from aesthetic judgment to political projects, then Rowe's construal of the collage city as a reconquest of time leverages the term of decadence to open up new urban possibilities both aesthetically and politically.

The emerging concept of postmodernism and the debates around its use occasioned a notable return of decadence in the literature. By the nineteen-eighties, following the publication of Jean-François Lyotard's *The Postmodern Condition* (1979),[54] the art critic Clement Greenberg substituted decadence for kitsch as the antithesis of the avant-garde. He argues in his 1982 essay, "To Cope with Decadence," that "the sense of 'lateness' goes deeper than the 'post' vogue. If Western lateness, which means Western decline, is an actual fact, then our culture is headed – in Spengler's scheme – toward the same fate that overtook all previous, all other high cultures. It will become lifeless in the same way."[55] For Greenberg, a condition of lateness did not undermine his theorization of Western Modernist art but rather made his claims for the importance of maintaining the aesthetic standards of "high art" more urgent. The chauvinistic stance of his argument becomes clear when he concludes:

> But this [lateness] will mean, as it now looks, far more than it did in those previous cases. Because then there'll be no more living high urban culture anywhere…In the upshot it looks as though it remains to modernism alone to resist decline and maintain the vitality of the Western arts, and by doing that to maintain the vitality of high art in general, or high art anywhere – given that high art lives now only on Western terms.[56]

And while the architectural theorist Charles Jencks in many ways contrasts the thinking of Greenberg, he too will take up the terms of lateness and decadence in response to the mounting debates about postmodernism as a new cultural concept. Jencks cites both Jane Jacobs

54 Jean-François Lyotard, *The Postmodern Condition: A Report on Knowledge* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1984). Lyotard argues that policies of economic deregulation, enterprise culture, and denial of society meant that political progress since 1789 might be over.

55 Clement Greenberg, "To Cope with Decadence," orig. in *Arts* 56, no. 6 (February 1982): 120-21; reprinted in *Clement Greenberg: Late Writings*, ed. Robert C. Morgan (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2003), 99-102.

56 Ibid., 102.

and Robert Venturi as important figures for his formulation of an emerging postmodernism in design.[57] Jencks celebrated the decadent kitsch of popular culture as a means of undermining and adulterating an aesthetically arid, and what was increasingly regarded as socially problematic, high modernism. But, quick on the heels of his formulation of architectural postmodernism, he had to contend with the growing popularity of the term beyond the field and beyond his rigorous efforts to formulate a specific definition.

His response was to differentiate between Postmodern and Late Modern.[58] In his 1987 article, "Postmodern and Late Modern: The Essential Definitions,"[59] Jencks explicitly uses the term decadence to structure an argument that accommodates postmodern architecture as an advancing mode of design practice and answers the growing claims against new building types emerging in the context of late capital. The essay opens with postmodernism presented as a decadent specter in a column of the French newspaper *Le Monde*: "In October 1981, *Le Monde* announced to its morning readers, under the section of the newspaper ominously headed 'Decadence,' that a specter was haunting Europe, the specter of Postmodernism."[60] Jencks then figures Late Modernists as High Church priests committed to an outdated orthodoxy. Coloring his argument with a religious tint adds to the decadent tenor of his essay. It recalls the ways in which decadence in nineteenth-century France was associated with the church as reactionary against social progress. He claims that "today's old-time Modernists are determined to be just as paranoic, reactionary, and repressive as their Beaux-Arts persecutors were before them. Indeed, the slurs against Postmodernists occasionally sound like the Nazi and academic vitriol poured on Le Corbusier and Walter Gropius in the twenties." And then asks, "Is history repeating itself in

[57] Charles Jencks, *The Language of Post-Modern Architecture* (New York: Rizzoli, 1977).

[58] Jameson suggests that Jencks moves from postmodernism as a cultural dominant or period style to Late Modern as one aesthetic mode among many to choose from.

[59] Charles Jencks, "Postmodern and Late Modern: The Essential Definitions," *Chicago Review* vol. 35, no. 4 (1987): 31-58.

[60] Ibid., 31.

reverse?"[61] The initial invocation of the French newspaper, the reference to degenerate art, and the allusion to academic aesthetic values all work to link postmodernism to decadence. This is not a positive connection for Jencks as he aimed to move postmodernism out of the ineffectual rhetorical label status it shared with decadence: "We can see in all these howls of protest something like a negative definition emerging, a paranoic definition made Modernists in retreat trying to hold the High Church together, issuing daily edicts denouncing heresy, keeping the faith among ever-dwindling numbers."[62] The way forward for Jencks was through rigorous definition; postmodernism for him may be varied and multivalent, but it was not an indeterminate epithet used to cast dispersions and manipulate the art market: "If they are not careful, there will be a panic and crash at the Museum of Modern Art as certain reputations dissolve like dead stock."[63] Furthermore, decadent indeterminacy was not productive: "To call a Late Modernist a Postmodernist is to call a Protestant a Catholic… Or it is to criticize a donkey for being a bad sort of horse. Such category mistakes lead to misreadings, and this may be very fruitful and creative…but it is ultimately violent and barren."[64]

Jencks insists on maintaining postmodernism as a "temporizing label" in contrast to its adoption as a phrase in artistic theory and cultural criticism. He condemns the latter use as "permissive categorization," arguing that "in short, it means almost everything and, thus, nearly nothing," and, finally, terming it "Nothing Postmodernism."[65] He then gives another axis of contrast to his architectural definition of postmodernism, that of the ongoing extension of Modernist abstraction. He describes this work as "extreme, exaggerated – in short, 'Late.'"[66] Accordingly he offers his essential definition of Late Modernism: "In architecture, it is pragmatic

[61] Ibid., 33.
[62] Ibid., 32.
[63] Ibid., 31.
[64] Ibid., 49.
[65] Ibid., 47.
[66] Ibid., 48.

and technocratic in its social ideology and, from about 1960, takes many of the stylistic ideas and values of Modernism to an extreme in order to resuscitate a dull (or dying) language."[67] The consequences of these categorical distinctions are grave for Jencks, as he asserts:

> What I am suggesting here is not a minor shift in nomenclature, but a complete reshuffling of categories: that is, to redefine what Davis, Goldberger, Foster, Jamieson, Lyotard, Baudrillard, Krauss, Hassan and so many others *often* define as 'Post–' is mostly 'Late' because it is still committed to the tradition of the New and not fundamentally concerned with a complex relation to the past, pluralism, the transformation of Western culture, a concern with meaning, continuity, and symbolism…what is at stake is more than a linguistic or pedantic distinction. It is a difference of values and philosophy.[68]

Even though Jencks explicitly positions himself in opposition to Greenberg from the get-go by stating, "Like our 'Decadence' columnist, he [Greenberg] saw the danger [of Postmodernism] as a lack of hierarchy in artistic judgment,"[69] both critics rely on a conceptual link between lateness and decadence born from art historical theories of style. A key term of connection within this intellectual tradition is the grotesque. In his study of the concept, Geoffrey Harpham traces the appearance of the grotesque in Rome via its critics. It was a style that drew fire from Horace, who deemed it an artistic absurdity in *Ars Poetica*, to Vitruvius. Harpham describes the latter's attack in *De Architectura* as "one of the most important denunciations in the history of aesthetic criticism."[70] The Vitruvian passage he refers to comes from the fifth chapter of Book VII in the architect's seminal treatise. It is the chapter that covers Roman wall painting. In this section of the treatise, Vitruvius criticizes the fashion for fantastical imagery that depicts oddities such as candelabras upholding shrines and floral motifs mixed with statue figures, both growing from reeds and stalks [Figure 1.11]. The type of composition he describes

[67] Ibid., 48-49.
[68] Ibid., 49.
[69] Ibid., 31.
[70] Geoffrey Harpham, *On the Grotesque: Strategies of Contradiction in Art and Literature* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1982), 26.

is what would in the Renaissance rediscovery of classical antiquity become known as the grotesque. Harpham argues that this style of painting "had no descriptive name and violated all categories."[71] Although the chapters of Vitruvius's treatise do not have titles in their manuscript form, the 1914 Morris Hicky Morgan English translation titles the chapter "The Decadence of Fresco Painting."[72] However, Vitruvius does not use the word decadence, rather, later translations substitute the Latin words for propriety and decorum with decadence, as theories of change, time, and history come to overlay concerns for convenance. Thus, in its art historical guise, decadence is closely related to the term grotesque (indeed, Harpham uses the two terms interchangeably) as a foreign "otherness" that threatens both abstract idealized form and healthy growth or progress. Greenberg's strand of Modernism is exemplified by the former and Jencks's strand the latter. Jencks positions himself squarely against the aristocratic/abstract values of Greenberg, but he still upholds an optimistic faith in healthy development. This is perhaps best demonstrated in the discursive image of his argument, "Evolutionary Tree of Postmodern Architecture" [Figure 1.12]. Mark Dorrian has noted that the question of form is "patterned by differing temporalities and valencies that are inscribed within concepts such as the amorphous (that which is beyond, or outwith, form); the unformed (that which is yet to come to form); the deformed (that which has departed or 'fallen', from form); and the anamorphic (a term, meaning 'back to form', which infers a play between form and deformation)."[73] For Jencks then, postmodernism is coming into form, though not a singular idealized form, through various concurrent strands of values, such as historicism and ad hoc urbanism. In contrast to this

[71] Ibid., 27.

[72] Vitruvius Pollio, *Vitruvius, the Ten Books on Architecture*, trans. by Morris Hicky Morgan (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1914). This translation remains one of the most influential and longest running publications.

[73] Mark Dorrian, "Surplus Matter" in *Architecture: The Subject Is Matter*, ed. Jonathan Hill (London: Routledge, 2001): 195. For Dorrian on the grotesque see: "On the Monstrous and the Grotesque," *Word & Image* 16:4 (2000): 310-17.

emergent formation, he reads Late Modernism as in a decadent state, or deforming and falling off from a dying language. Greenberg, rather than adopting an evolutionary scheme, maintains an idealized conception of form as separate from the grotesqueries of the rabble. Nevertheless, the negative qualities of lateness remain a shared line of critical judgment.

Cultural theorist Frederic Jameson picks up the decadent thread laid out in the architectural and aesthetic discourse on the postmodern but pushes against the moral valence that the concept brings to these debates. Contrasting the populist impulse of Jencks and the absolute pessimism of Manfredo Tafuri's Marxism, Jameson writes:

> Most of the political positions which we have found to inform what is most often conducted as an aesthetic debate are in reality moralizing ones that seek to develop final judgments on the phenomenon of postmodernism, whether the latter is stigmatized as corrupt or, on the other hand, saluted as a culturally and aesthetically healthy and positive form of innovation… In place of the temptation either to denounce the complacencies of postmodernism as some final symptom of decadence or to salute the new forms as harbingers of a new technological and technocratic Utopia, it seems more appropriate to assess the new cultural production within the working hypothesis of a general modification of culture itself with the social restructuring of late capitalism as a system.[74]

Jameson's reading of the concept is further elaborated in the conclusion section, "Decadence, Fundamentalism, and Hightech." There the theorist once again refers to Jencks directly, stating, "Within the postmodern system, one is tempted to adapt Jencks's formula and to speak of some 'late anti-modernism.'"[75] However, Jameson focuses on the historical and literary traditions of decadence rather than its ties to aesthetic judgment as deployed by Jencks and Greenberg. Jameson gives his reader a vivid image of a possible contemporary decadence:

> One would have thought that the world of headphones and Andy Warhol, of fundamentalism and AIDS, of exercise machines and MTV, yuppies and books on Postmodernism, punk hairdos and fifties'-style crewcuts, the "loss of historicity" and the *éloge* of schizophrenia, the media and obsessions with calcium and cholesterol, the logic of "future shock" and the emergence of scientists and

[74] Jameson, *Postmodernism*, 62.
[75] Ibid., 391.

> counterinsurgency strike forces as new types of social groups, would have all the qualifications to pass for ripely decadent in the eyes of any sensible Martian observer.[76]

Nevertheless, Jameson will ultimately outcast decadence as an operative concept within late capitalism. Decadence here is construed as an eccentric sensibility, and, as such, no longer operable in a postmodern condition. Jameson argues that "one of the other tactical achievements of the postmodern discursive system lies in the relegation of the *laudatory temporis acti* to the storeroom of no longer very plausible or believable literary characters."[77] He figures decadence as the ultimate "otherness" of history by which moderns define themselves, and a concept that "compels by its absence" within modernism but becomes ineffectual in the pastiche landscape of postmodernism.

Key for Jameson's argument of postmodernism is a loss of historical perspective, and, as such, decadence is a privileged concept that is born of modern historical theorization. Jameson makes this explicit as he writes:

> "Decadence"…as a theme or ideologeme is not some mere room in the imaginary museum (housing a "culture," for example, more peculiar than that of the Polynesians)…it is a secondary spin-off of a whole theory of history, and a special-case subset of what the Germans call *Geschichtphilosophie*. Unfortunately, therefore, one must start from that and work one's way down to Des Esseintes or Fellini's Romans."[78]

Additionally, Jameson asserts that "decadence is clearly something which both resists modernity and comes after it, as a future destiny in which all the promises of the modern go slack and unravel… *'Decadence' is thus in some way the very premonition of the postmodern itself.*"[79] And yet, with the loss of historical perspective the decadent sensibility of lateness is also effaced: "Late capitalism is in that sense a misnomer, insofar as 'late' now yields none of the fin-de-siècle

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[76] Ibid., 377.
[77] Ibid.
[78] Ibid., 378.
[79] Ibid., 382. My emphasis.

or late-Roman overtones we associate with it."[80] Ultimately, Jameson argues that with the loss of "the very 'otherness' that one can find offensive in the hubris and the exceptionalist ideology of modernity, the concept of decadence must then itself fade away, no longer available for characterizing and expressing our reactions to the postmodern."[81] Even though Jameson does not consider decadence as properly postmodern, he does consistently bring the two concepts together. One of the lines of difference between the postmodern and the decadent is the question of systems versus symptom. Decadence, for Jameson, falls outside of postmodernism on both fronts. One, it is born of an outdated system. As formal grotesque, it haunts the modern imperative to categorize based on the privilege and objectivity of historical distance, but offers little in the ubiquitous grotesquerie of the postmodern. Two, it is at best a symptom, a kind of surface effect that one can use for escape and fantasy or that one could deploy as "other." But in the dynamic context of late capital both of those modes of pleasure and oppositional critique are rendered ineffectual.

To make his argument, Jameson expands the conceptual territory of decadence beyond the aesthetic tradition deployed by Jencks and Greenberg. Indeed, he pulls from the term's use as a tool of historical theorization and relies on philosophical engagements with decadent literature, for example, suggesting that Sartre's reading of Flaubert is "an unwittingly genealogical type, in which certain latent or subordinate, properly postmodernist features of Flaubert's style are anachronistically foregrounded."[82] But ultimately, Jameson uses the concept of decadence to critique architectural theorizations of the postmodern, and, in so doing, he takes its art historical and aesthetic meaning that over the course of the twentieth century had become the term's

[80] Ibid., 383.
[81] Ibid.
[82] Ibid., 30. For Sartre on Flaubert, see: *What is Literature?* (London: Methuen, 1950).

dominant conceptual tradition in the field of architecture and plays it out to its end. We see this, for example, when Jameson asserts:

> The conception of postmodernism outlined here is a historical rather than merely stylistic one. I cannot stress too greatly the radical distinction between a view for which the postmodern is one (optional) style among many others available and one which seeks to grasp it as the cultural dominant of the logic of late capitalism: the two approaches in fact generate two very different ways of conceptualizing the phenomenon as a whole: on the one hand, moral judgments (about which it is indifferent whether they are positive or negative), and, on the other, a genuinely dialectical attempt to think of our present time in History.[83]

Consequently for Jameson, decadence remains an externalized concept that cannot contend with the embeddedness of the postmodern condition. The art historical stylistic label of lateness has to give over to a new all-encompassing lateness, a whole system of lateness within which one exists rather than one designates from historical or aesthetic distance.

The question of existing within a contemporary decadence is, however, as much a part of the term's conceptual history as its academic use for casting judgment and constructing temporalizations, or moralizing and periodizing. Nevertheless, this aspect has the curious status of being the most enduring and the most suppressed. Claims of decadence within the contemporary emerge in the nineteenth century, recur throughout the twentieth century, and continue to persist today. And yet, ornamental decadence is criminalized and, in its late phase, must be "coped" with. Even scholarship on literary decadence, a moment of artists looking into decadence rather than away from it, is often predicated on bracketing off what might be considered the "good" decadent aesthetic from the "bad" decadence of an opulent society. Thus we might do well to substitute decadence for postmodernism, when Jameson writes:

> The point is that we are *within* the culture of postmodernism to the point where its facile repudiation is as impossible as an equally facile celebration of it is complacent and corrupt. Ideological judgment on postmodernism today necessarily implies, one would think, a judgment on ourselves as well as on the

[83] Ibid., 46.

> artifacts in question; nor can an entire historical period, such as our own, be grasped in any adequate way by means of global moral judgments or their somewhat degraded equivalent, pop psychological diagnoses.[84]

While Jameson ultimately leverages decadence against the architectural debates around postmodernism, he and the architectural historians miss a theoretically significant but historically obscured moment of an architect engaging with the question of contemporary decadence in ways other than its well-disciplined aesthetic use. Indeed, while decadence was an essential concept to the modern discipline of art history and its focus on stylistic analysis, the term also appears at the time of architecture's disciplinary formation before being ultimately relegated to its haunting status.

An Undisciplined Concept

Charles-François Viel's writings on decadence, including three chapters in his expansive treatise *Principes de l'ordonnance et de la construction des bâtimens,* published in 1797, and his more focused thirty-page polemic *Décadence de l'architecture à la fin du dix-huitieme siècle,* published by the author in 1800 [Figure 1.13], contain both the analysis of historical periods via the term decadence, following Enlightenment models such as Montesquieu, and the transposition of decadence as a term of critique onto the author's contemporary period. In these pages, the conditions of decadence that were once observed and theorized solely through historical distance are brought into the horizon of the present. Both kinds of decadence are accounted for as an effect of a cultural cause. However, for Viel, the causes of antique decadence and contemporary decadence are not one and the same.

In these two texts by Viel, we encounter decadence emerging as an operative theoretical tool, but the lineage of decadence as an actively theorized concept in architectural discourse

[84] Ibid., 62.

begins and ends with Viel. This can be traced in large part to the dominance of functionalist theories that shaped architectural practice, on the one hand, and formalist historical accounts, on the other. The former arguably begins with the opening of the École Polytechnique in 1794 and the design approach developed there by Jean-Nicolas-Louis Durand. In Durand's theory, geometry was no longer bound to the classical tradition of proportional systems but, rather, applied as a means of efficiently producing building compositions. The conceptualization of architectural design as a technological process that emerged in the late-eighteenth century continued to inform the major twentieth-century design theories that came to dominate the disciplinary discourse through both the Bauhaus and the Modern Movement. The eclipse of technique over metaphysical speculation within design theory was paralleled by a formalist approach to history. Emil Kaufmann's *Three Revolutionary Architects, Boullée, Ledoux, and Lequeu*, like his earlier study of Ledoux and Le Corbusier, resurrected eighteenth-century architectural theory in order to argue that the "revolutionary" character of designs by these neoclassical architects provided a historical precedent for the abstract forms of the International Style. In his account of the period, Kaufmann presents Viel as the antithesis of the revolutionary approach, calling the theorist "reactionary" and declaring that "perhaps he [Viel] was the villain in the drama of the revolutionary architecture – always against the successful."[85] Nevertheless, through the critique of his contemporaries, Viel affirms for Kaufmann the presence of an architectural revolution: "If nothing were left of late eighteenth-century architecture and architectural criticism but this publication [*Décadence*] by Viel, we should know that there existed an Architecture of the Revolution… Thus, the first prosecutor of the Architecture of the Revolution became, involuntarily, its first historiographer."[86]

[85] Emil Kaufmann, *Three Revolutionary Architects, Boullée, Ledoux, and Lequeu* (Philadelphia: American Philosophical Society, 1952), 457-58.

[86] Ibid., 458.

Where Kaufmann relies on Viel's supposed conservative critique as evidence of a more progressive revolutionary architecture, more recent historical accounts have questioned the reactionary status of Viel's theories and include him in an effort to capture a fuller analysis of the period, characterized as a moment of cultural transition rather than of a radical break.[87] All of the historiographical accounts that include Viel's theoretical and polemical writings acknowledge his use of the term decadence, but do not investigate the architect's critical deployment of it. Indeed, while Kaufmann asserts that "the *Décadence* sheds more light on the architectural situation at about 1800 than any other written record," he limits the role of decadence to his twentieth-century connotations of the concept, such that "it tells of…the narrow-mindedness that was to delay the further development of architecture."[88] For Kaufmann, decadence was in opposition to progress. However, for Viel, the term did not yet constitute such a fixed meaning. And, perhaps more importantly, his use of the concept both enriches and appears in advance of the later nineteenth century's obsession with decadent style. Kaufmann claims, "Viel himself was to share the fate of those whom he assailed. He, too, fell into oblivion."[89] For this dissertation, it is decadence itself that leads us back to Viel.

Charles-François Viel's use of the term decadence in the late eighteenth century sits at the cross roads of Enlightenment and Modern theories of history and aesthetics. It is important to remember that Viel's writings come before the major publications of Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, Augustus Welby Northmore Pugin, and Charles Darwin, which is to say that his texts predate the teleological, reactionary, and evolutionary connotations that decadence accrued over the course of the nineteenth century. Instead, the French architect drew primarily on

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[87] See, Alberto Pérez-Gómez, *Architecture and the Crisis of Modern Science* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1983) & Antoine Picon, *French Architects and Engineers in the Age of Enlightenment* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1992).

[88] Kaufmann, *Three Revolutionary Architects*, 458.

[89] Ibid.

Montesquieu's historical writings, including the previously discussed *Considérations sur les causes de la grandeur des romains et de leur décadence* (1734). While Montesquieu's essay does not perceive a contemporary decadence, the work does approach formulating a general law of decadence, which for Montesquieu was linked to prosperity, as he states, "In the history of empires, nothing is closer to decadence than great prosperity: likewise, in our literary republic, one worries lest prosperity lead to decadence."[90] In as much as there was a threat of decadence entering his present day, excessive wealth was posited as the likely avenue.

While Viel refers to Montesquieu directly in the opening pages of his polemic *Décadence de l'architecture à la fin du dix-huitieme siècle*, the architect's application of decadence goes against the then standard usage of the concept in three important regards. First, he designates his contemporaries as decadent. Second, he identifies systematization rather than opulence as the cause of modern decadence. And, finally, his polemic does not rely on organicist metaphors of periodization. Each of these features will come to play a role in the *fin-de-siècle* decadent movement, but scholars of decadent literature do not identify these shifts until approximately thirty-five years after Viel's publications and about fifteen years after his death. In literary accounts, Désiré Nisard makes the leap from analyzing a historical style identified as decadent to applying it to a contemporary artist with the publications of *Études de moeurs et de critique sur les poètes latins de la décadence* in 1834 and his subsequent article on Victor Hugo in 1836. Quickly following the deployment of decadence as a term for contemporary critique, self-proclaimed decadents emerged, including Baudelaire, Gautier, Goncourt, and Huysmans. These authors routed the organic metaphors that had previously underwritten period conceptions of decadence, advocating instead for authorial agency via cosmetic analogies that interfered with naturalist ideologies and synthetic constructions that further subverted them. They also shifted

[90] Quoted in Calinescu, *Five Faces of Modernity*, 159.

from a literary approach that described, in opulent detail, the sumptuousness of antique decadence to an exploration of the ways in which compositional part-to-whole relationships break down on the page of decadent literature. This privileging of the word over compositional units such as the sentence, paragraph, or chapter has remained arguably the most enduring identifying feature across varying conceptions of decadence: Nisard's academic analysis of Silver Age Latin poets, Bourget's celebration of a contemporary decadent style, and Nietzsche's cultural critique of Wagner. The eighteenth-century architectural theorist Viel did not extend his conceptualization of decadence into a creative practice, but his use of the term does contain more nuance and potential than Kaufmann afforded it from his twentieth-century perspective. Looking closer at Viel's texts, to better understand the ways in which he pulls decadence into his contemporary context, highlights systematization over affluence, and pushes against organicist metaphors, can offer insights into an architectural deployment of decadence that was cut short.

Just three years separate Viel's architectural treatise *Principes de l'ordonnance et de la construction des bâtimens* and his polemic *Décadence de l'architecture à la fin du dix-huitieme siècle*. Across these two publications, we can track a significant leap in the conceptualization of decadence as a critical term. In two hundred and forty-seven pages, the earlier treatise follows the conventions of an architectural genre rooted in the classical tradition. It unfolds over numerous (forty-four) chapters, beginning with a declaration of nature and antiquity as the true sources of architectural principles, before expounding on topics such as the orders, profiles, moldings, and ornament. However, there are some chapter-titles that indicate this treatise is different from its predecessors and arguably hint at the waning of the genre itself. Between the introduction and sections on familiar topics, such as the Doric order, one finds three chapters devoted to decadence. The first two of these three sections largely adhere to the accepted use of the term as a historical designation for periods of decline theorized as an effect of prosperity eroding social propriety. Nevertheless, Viel explores decadence as an architectural theorist, which is to say that he has a vested interest in its relationship to the arts rather than approaching the concept from the intellectual distance of a historian or a philosopher. Given this, he has to account not only for the historic occurrence of the fall of Rome, but also for the long period, between classical antiquity and the Renaissance, during which the arts were then seen to remain in decline. Viel understands the persistence of the decadence of the arts to be the result of the social instability of warring states. He implicitly argues that the arts flourish in times of peace, stability, and responsibility, an ethical position that was soon to be replaced by evolutionary and economic theories postulating that competition advances development. His conceptualization of decadence being born of destabilizing forces more generally allows Viel to move towards a theorization of modern decadence. Therefore the architectural theorist expands the long-standing idea of wealth as the primary cause of decadence, by figuring it through commerce such that *competition* becomes a destabilizing cause common to both war and business.

While the present problem of decadence is implicit in this earlier tract, in that the audience for an architectural treatise is other practitioners, the genre is as much about extending discourse on the classical tradition as it is about contemporary design. Viel's treatise sets up the terms that allow him to transpose decadence into a contemporary critique, but it is in his polemical essay that we find his most overt claims. Indeed, decadence moves from a set of embedded chapters within a larger meditation to the title position of a pointed essay directed at the architect's contemporaries. In this iteration, the historical accounting of decadence across periods is gone, although Montesquieu is referenced. The classical tradition is still held up as the appropriate design method for the field, but instead of explaining periods that fall away from this approach, Viel is now explicitly enumerating the ways in which the contemporary discipline is falling into decadence. For the theorist, these include fame and self-promotion on the part of designers and owners as well as the systematization of both structural analysis and design composition. On both counts, he is highlighting an economy of design that is emerging within the disciplinary formation of architecture, now aligned with modern engineering techniques and mechanized technology.

If decadence as a theoretical concept was born of historical account, surely it is the claims of technology and economy, from mass-produced kitsch objects to excessive displays of wealth and self-indulgence, that constitute its most lasting legacy in common usage. I argue that Viel's focus on systematization as the vehicle of decadence pinpoints a critical aspect of the concept that few studies of decadence acknowledge. Furthermore, his theorization offers a way to understand the economic, technological, and aesthetic valences of decadence, alongside its emergence as a historical concept rather than solely as later developments in its usage. Indeed, the economic, technological, and aesthetic aspects become the focus of the term, as it grows and wanes in popularity as a rhetorical quip across the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. However, through Viel, we find a critical account that gathers these together and, in so doing, implies larger stakes.

In his seminal questioning of technology, Martin Heidegger turns to the notion of *causality*. His analysis can help to further illuminate Viel's argument as the terms causality and decadence are etymologically connected. Central to Heidegger's argument about modern technology is the reduction of the four-part classical conception of causality, which he characterizes as indebtedness to a singular idea of cause and effect. The philosopher describes how "for a long time we have been accustomed to representing cause as that which brings something about. In this connection, to bring about means to obtain results, effects. The *causa efficiens*, but one among the four causes, sets the standard for all causality."[91] He further claims

[91] Martin Heidegger, "The Question Concerning Technology," *The Question Concerning Technology and Other Essays* (New York: Harper & Row, 1977): 7.

that “so long as we do not allow ourselves to go into these questions, causality, and with it instrumentality, and with the latter the accepted definition of technology, remain obscure and groundless.”[92] When he tells us that “*causa, casus,* belongs to the verb *cadere*, ‘to fall,’ and means that which brings it about that something falls out as a result in such and such a way,”[93] he is very close to the function of decadence as a tool of historical explanation. Moreover, *cadere* is also the root of the word decadence. The *OED* tells us that decadence comes from the Latin *cadĕre,* to fall, with the addition of *de,* indicating down, thus to fall down or to decline. In Viel, we have a theorization of modern decadence as the insistence on explicating the world wholly through the paradigm of cause and effect, a reduction of every aspect of design to an abstract system of mechanics: be it material performance, design composition, or economic factors. This eighteenth-century architectural theorist is arguably taking the emergence of decadence as a concept, used for cause-and-effect explanation or the shift to immanent historical accounts, as the occasioning of decadence as a concept, and reading that impetus to understand the world as a set of causalities as in fact the primary generator of contemporary decadence itself.

Material, Lateness, and Style

Taken together, the various deployments of decadence show a concept in transit. It travels across periods and disciplines, and it also overlaps in specialized and vulgar usage. The concept remains particularly liminal within the field of architecture, despite Viel’s contribution. By contrast, in literary studies, it is shorthand for a whole aesthetic movement, and, in the history of art, it underwrites theorizations of style. Within the context of design, its academic ties to aesthetics dominate, but it is also put to polemical use. This is not surprising, as the production of

[92] Ibid.
[93] Ibid.

buildings remains tied to material resources and labor economies. And although decadent literature both relies on architecture as a major thematic and constitutes a creative rather than moralizing engagement with decadence, we do not find a direct dialogue in Modernist architectural discourse with that literary movement. Rather, what we can trace is largely second hand, such as Loos reading Nordau, who based his theory of degeneration on decadent authors, or Banham reading the cult of the detail in Mackintosh's design work but not discussing contemporaneous literature.

Within the aesthetic tradition of decadence we find conceptual partners that may help us define the term. These include the kindred ideas: grotesque and kitsch. However, such associations maintain decadence as a periodizing, formalizing, and moralizing concept. Furthermore, the use of decadence as negative affirmation of a more positive modern project has been shot through. Nevertheless, decadence has not disappeared as a concept. As such alternative modes of operative engagement surely remain on the table. Indeed, a shift from questions about period designation to the operative nature of decadent writing has fueled literary scholarship on the concept. We see this, for example, in the move away from debates as to whether decadent literature more properly belongs to a late phase of Romanticism or constitutes a nascent Modernism and towards an investigation of its tactics – such as the ways in which it deploys strategies of subversion and interference – a shift motivated in part by feminist and queer theory.

If in architecture we are to develop a productive and inclusive engagement with decadence, we must do so through thematics that allow for the expansive conceptual territories of the term and that gather its persistent problematics. I argue that the motifs of *material, lateness,* and *style* offer a means for operative readings of decadence, rather than giving it conceptual clarity or disciplinary specificity by differentiating it from other specialized terms. Instead, these three themes track across the domains of decadence, including its historical, aesthetic, polemical, and literary deployments, and they gather perennial concerns within the field of architecture. A cursory review of each motif as it relates to the territories of decadence and architecture follows.

The material dimension of decadence is surely its longest standing and most enduring aspect. Before its application as a theorization of historical development, decadence existed as a general term originating from the Medieval Latin word *decadentia*. It stems from notions of decay and falling away. From its earliest documented movements in the pre-modern world, decadence has been rooted in the material processes of the natural world, connoting both the cosmological cycles of agrarian life and the corrupting forces of nature as impersonal fate. Associations of decadence with material decay inform an array of material practices: the decorum of materials in the classical tradition, logics of preservation and display, and the technocratic systematization of resources with increasing distance and obscuration of the material reality. The materiality of the body as well as a threatening nature that cannot be domesticated are major themes within the decadent literary movement. We see this, for example, in poems by Baudelaire that contrast tatty physical realities with poetic vision[94] and in Huysmans's prose poem about the Bièvre River, a polluted industrial waterway that marked one edge of pre-Haussmann Paris.[95] The latter has been taken up for ecocritical analysis in literary scholarship.[96] But even as discourses around the Anthropocene bring scholars from English departments (such as Timothy Morton) into architecture schools, the specific thread of decadence remains obscure within design.

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[94] Charles Baudelaire, "The Double Room" in *The Poems and Prose Poems of Charles Baudelaire* (New York: Brentano's, 1919): 106-109; for discussion of this poem see Charles Rice, *The Emergence of the Interior: Architecture, Modernity, Domesticity* (London: Routledge, 2007). Also, Baudelaire, "The Corpse," in *The Poems and Prose Poems of Charles Baudelaire*, 59-61; for discussion of this poem see David Weir, *Decadence and the Making of Modernism*.

[95] J. -K. Huysmans, "The Bièvre" in *Parisian Sketches* (Sawtry: Daedalus, 2004): 94-96.

[96] See: Claire Nettleton, "A Lost Paradise on the Left Bank: An Ecocritical Analysis of J.-K. Huysmans' 'La Rive Gauche' and 'La Bièvre'" *Dix-Neuf* 19, no. 3 (2015): 260-73.

Lateness avers historical self-consciousness as the modern conceptual foundations of decadence. Moreover, it highlights the moralizing and formalizing overtones, occasioned within conceptualizations of historical process as teleological. In narratives of progress, lateness functions dually as a moment of crisis and new growth. Decadent literature arrests that process such that lateness is no longer a phase but a condition. We see this, for example, in the opening of Huysmans's *À rebours,* where the beginning overture establishes the protagonist Des Esseintes as the end of an aristocratic line:

> Now, of this family which had once been so large that it occupied nearly every domain in the Île de France and La Brie, only one descendant was still living: the Duc Jean des Esseintes, a frail young man of thirty who was anemic and highly strung, with hollow cheeks, cold eyes of steel blue, a nose which was turned up but straight, and thin, papery hands. By some freak of heredity, this last scion of the family bore a striking resemblance to his distant ancestor…at once weary and wily.[97]

This temporal arrestment plays out through the novel, in that the narrative is structured not by plot but by interior scenographic tableaus. The difference between a late phase and a cultural condition of lateness was at stake in the debate between Jencks and Jameson. Lateness, for Jameson, replaces the periodization of decadence such that "what seems to persist… is the historiographic stage set of all those 'ends of the world' that lent the decadent moment its peculiar resonance and, as it were, its silver note."[98] Nevertheless, in the literary, rather than aesthetic, guise of decadence, we already find periodization giving over to scenography. More recently, Peter Eisenman has taken up the motif of lateness by reading architecture through the lens of Edward Said's idea of Late Style.[99] Eisenman identifies lateness as a concept that provides strategies for a critical project beyond opposition and dialectics:

[97] J. -K. Huysmans, *À rebours* [1884], trans. as *Against Nature* by Robert Baldick (London: Penguin, 1959): 17-18.
[98] Jameson, *Postmodernism*, 383.
[99] Peter Eisenman, "Lateness: A Critique of the Metaphysics of Presence," *Thresholds*, no. 33 (2008): 10-15.

> Despite the prevalent discourses of crisis in architecture, it is argued here that today presents a condition not of crisis but of lateness. Lateness in this sense is neither dialectical, nor oppositional, nor crisis-provoking in relationship to what has preceded it or what may come after it. Lateness is clearly not a project of the new. It is a moment of time that is conducive to strategies that are not oppositional. In this condition that is neither a new paradigm nor an opposition to an old paradigm, lateness provides a unique opportunity to examine the interiority of the architectural discipline and one of its major unthought conditions which is its metaphysics of presence. Today's period of lateness is the first to recognize that the metaphysical project is no longer necessarily a condition of certainty. This non-transgressive aspect of lateness does not need to engage or transgress the metaphysical project, that is, to repeat the cycles of history. If lateness offers a moment when the metaphysics of presence is not a central concern, this moment is one in which a possible strategy may emerge outside of the dialectical project.[100]

Once again, the interdisciplinary exchange between architecture and literary scholarship is ripe with provocation, but the conceptual links between decadence and lateness are not articulated.

Of these three themes, style marks an important disciplinary intersection in the different conceptual territories of decadence. The rise and fall of style as a theory that shaped Modernist architectural discourse adds to the knottiness of bringing decadence into the field of architecture. Style is a term that carries disciplinary specificity within the fields of comparative literature, art history, and architecture. Furthermore, style is not a third category distinct from material and lateness but, rather, used at times in conjunction. For example, Gottfried Semper theorized style in part through material performance,[101] and Heinrich Wölfflin conceptualized late-style as part of a larger system of stylistic analysis, not as a term of derision.[102] In literary studies, the erosion of the part-to-whole relationship persists as the primary stylistic characteristic of decadence. Moreover, this stylistic quality continues to inform critical scholarly engagements with the

[100] Ibid., 15.

[101] *Der Stil in der technischen und tektonischen Künsten* (1860-62); Harry Francis Mallgrave, "The Idea of Style: Gottfried Semper In London (Germany, England)" (Dissertation, UPenn, 1983).

[102] Heinrich Wölfflin, *Kunstgeschichtliche Grundbegriffe* (1915), he posits a two-step progression from Renaissance to Baroque style and offers a system for analyzing works of art from any period through the use of five formal categories based on oppositional poles, the first term in each pair being the 'Renaissance' moment and the second the 'Baroque': 1) Linear versus Painterly, 2) Forms Parallel to the Picture Plane versus Receding into Distance, 3) Closed versus Open, 4) Multiplicity versus Unity, and 5) Clarity versus Unclarity.

Decadent Movement, from Schor's feminist reading to more contemporary scholarship such as Regenia Gagnier's Global Circulation Project.[103] And while styling prose has a different tradition than notions of period style, it is not altogether divorced from architectural theory. Indeed, it is in the context of decadence itself that Viel begins to articulate one of the first theorizations of style.

Delineating the conceptual territories of decadence and decoupling it from entrenched disciplinary companions, by identifying recursive themes, affords the potential to engage with decadence as an operative concept rather than as a label. In other words, this work decompresses the specialized theories and ideological positions that decadence as a disciplinary term comes to stand in for and opens new avenues of engagement. Making a *subject* of decadence occasions the question of being *within* decadence that Jameson did not grant to the concept but that, nevertheless, constitutes a significant part of its intellectual history and that remains the pressing question for any meaningful engagement with the concept. Furthermore, unpacking and reshuffling the conceptual layers of the term reveals the transhistorical dimensions of decadence, its status as an iterative concept, as distinct from its contrary associations with period specificity and ahistorical formalism. Thus where the Art Nouveau might be labeled as decadent – as desperately trying to express itself through exaggerated ornamentation at the brink of exhaustion, as informed by contemporaneous biological theories, and as afforded through industrial wealth – it does not make a subject of its decadence. By contrast, Denise Scott Brown and Robert Venturi's Art Nouveau Chair in the Grandmother pattern [Figure 1.14] is arguably more decadent than the Art Nouveau itself, or at least offers the beginnings of what we might call a decadent poetic.

This chair might well be symptomatic of a larger cultural decadence of late capital, but it also knowingly stages the decadent thematics of material, lateness, and style. It neither fully

[103] Regenia Gagnier, "The Global Circulation of the Literatures of Decadence," *Literature Compass* 10/1 (2013): 70-81.

hides its material expression nor celebrates it. Like Baudelaire's "Double Chambre," this twofold chair oscillates between its status as two-dimensional image, when viewed from the front, and its material construction, here revealed only in profile. Furthermore, it traffics in multiple dimensions of style. Its stake in period style is overtly presented through its Art Nouveau title and cutout shape. But it also suggests the idea of lifestyle and Oscar Wilde's seminal quip that "Life imitates art far more than art imitates life," taken from the opening lines of his essay "The Decay of Lying" (1889/91). And it even implicates the roots of style in rhetorical decorum by applying a tablecloth pattern to the surface, the dining table being one of the last hold-out sites of social etiquette. However, the decorum of the table is breached by the indiscriminate migration of the pattern now used to drape numerous surfaces, including multiple "styles" of chairs, other furniture pieces (including a table), dishware, and even Denise Scott Brown [Figure 1.15]. Ultimately, its unseemliness is layered, migratory, and revealed at the seams – giving it a mark of lateness.

Contributions of the Work

This dissertation makes contributions to the academic fields of comparative literature and architectural history, and also offers potential import for design discourse. Recent work on decadent literature has expanded from the feminist and queer theory studies of the nineteen-eighties and -nineties to questions of environment, urbanism, and geography.[104] This suggests that literary scholars are becoming invested in understanding decadent literature as emerging in

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[104] Feminist and queer theory studies include: Naomi Schor, *Reading in Detail: Aesthetics and the Feminine* (New York: Methuen, 1987); Emily Apter, *Feminizing the Fetish: Psychoanalysis and Narrative Obsession in Turn-of-the-century France* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1991); and Ellis Hanson, *Decadence and Catholicism* (Cambridge, MA.: Harvard University Press, 1997). Recent scholarship includes Gagnier on global context of decline of economic, social, religious, political, ethnic, and gendered traditions under modernization (n.103); Nettleton's ecocritical analysis of Huysmans (n.96); Robert Stilling, *Beginning at the End: Decadence, Modernism, and Postcolonial Poetry* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2018); and David Weir, *Decadence: A Very Short Introduction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018), which structures its chapters around various cities as sites of decadence.

relation to a context of decadence, so no longer bracketing off the art of decadence from the cultures of decadence. It also contributes more broadly to studies on the relationship between architecture and literature appearing in both disciplines. David Spurr's *Architecture and Modern Literature* as a study on the topic from the field of comparative literature and Adrian Forty's *Words and Buildings* from architectural history being notable works.[105] And while this project is interdisciplinary, it primarily speaks to the field of architectural history and theory. There it contributes to the growing historical discourse on postmodern design. Some of the first books to tackle this period were Michael Hays's *Architecture's Desire*, Reinhold Martin's *Utopia's Ghost*, Jorge Otero-Pailos's *Architecture's Historical Turn,* and Emmanuel Petit's *Irony*.[106] These works share an interest in revisiting the theoretical lines of postmodernism, more than filling gaps in the historical record. This dissertation places the postmodern within a larger genealogy and offers an alternative theoretical framing to the work. As such it extends questions of architecture's capacity to generate and communicate cultural meaning. Some works, such as Anthony Alofsin's *When Buildings Speak*, study the symbolic role of the built environment within a specific location and historical period.[107] This dissertation contributes something to the issue of architectural signification at the turn of the nineteenth-century in Europe, but, again, by setting that question within a transhistorical narrative it also builds on accounts of architecture's

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[105] See: Adrian Forty, *Words and Buildings: A Vocabulary of Modern Architecture* (New York: Thames & Hudson, 2000); and, David Spurr, *Architecture and Modern Literature* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2012).

[106] K. Michael Hays, *Architecture's Desire: Reading the Late Avant-garde* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2010); Reinhold Martin, *Utopia's Ghost: Architecture and Postmodernism, Again* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2010); Jorge Otero-Pailos, *Architecture's Historical Turn: Phenomenology and the Rise of the Postmodern* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2010); Emmanuel Petit, *Irony; or, The Self-Critical Opacity of Postmodern Architecture* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2013).

[107] See: Anthony Alofsin, *When Buildings Speak: Architecture as Language in the Habsburg Empire and its Aftermath, 1867-1933* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2006).

extended theoretical engagements across a protracted period of modernization reaching back to the Enlightenment era.[108]

This study does not cover contemporary design projects in depth, but its historical and theoretical exigency is driven by the ongoing rhetoric of decadence. Accordingly it aims to offer a historical account with significance for design discourse. In *Collage City,* Colin Rowe posited "that a collage technique…might be a means of permitting us the enjoyment of utopian poetics without our being obliged to suffer the embarrassment of utopian politics."[109] By exploring what other techniques emerge under the aegis of decadence within design, we may well be permitted the development of decadent poetics rather than be obliged to suffer the embarrassment of decadent politics.

Dissertation Organization

This chapter has traced a range of engagements between decadence and architectural discourse and has shown that the concept haunts the field through oblique inflections. It has also argued that material, lateness, and style are primary thematics running across the conceptual territories of decadence and, as such, could allow for a more operative engagement. The following chapters examine sites where the conceptual territories of decadence overlap. These proceed chronologically, beginning with works of decadent literature in nineteenth-century Paris and ending with a late-twentieth-century televangelical church in Los Angeles. In each installment of this transhistorical collection of case studies, I analyze how decadence is

[108] See: Dalibor Vesely, *Architecture in the Age of Divided Representation: The Question of Creativity in the Shadow of Production* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2004); and as the most recent work in a set of ongoing questions, see: Alberto Pérez-Gómez, *Attunement: Architectural Meaning After the Crisis of Modern Science* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2016).

[109] Rowe, *Collage City*, 149.

conceptually staged, rhetorically leveraged, and made operative within the built environment through the thematic framings of material, lateness, and style.

The first chapter following this discursive introduction investigates the architectural dimensions of *fin-de-siècle* decadent literature as a lens to analyze the development of the genre and its relationship to a larger intellectual tradition of decadence. It begins with a cursory overview of theories linking literature, design, and decadence in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries; it analyzes literary works by Gustave Flaubert, Émile Zola, and Joris-Karl Huysmans; and it concludes with a closer look at the correlations between decadent themes and architectural space in texts by Edmond de Goncourt. This chapter argues that, through the study of the architectural aspects of these works, the built environment is as involved in the staging of decadent design as much as it is a register of decadent conditions.

The next chapter looks at how the polemical tilt of decadence in the nineteenth century both shaped the Sacré-Coeur and belied the tactical modernization of the church. Sitting on top of Montmartre, the basilica is one of the most popular tourist sites in Paris, but it is altogether left out of Modernist architectural accounts of design history. This chapter focuses on the material aspects of the structure, including the formulation of new funding strategies, the bifurcation of the image of the church above the hill of Montmartre and the material histories subsumed below, and, ultimately, the ways in which the finished edifice shifted away from the church tradition of material iconography and towards a mythos of phenomenological material presence.

The ensuing chapters shift from *fin-de-siècle* France to postmodern America, in order to trace the transhistorical reach of decadence. There I examine how the polemical and theoretical evocations of decadence in the debates around postmodernism and late capital are thought through design, rather than discourse, as well as the ties that bind decadence as an aesthetic movement to this later generation of architects. The first of these chapters analyzes Charles

Moore's domestic interiors as increasingly engaged with multiple dimensions of decadence, from nested intraspatial interiors prefigured in decadent literary experiments to graphics loaded with decadent connotations of empire and economic excess. Homes designed by and for the architect during the 1960s are examined. These include his first home in Orinda, CA (1962), his New Haven house (1966), and his Centerbrook home (1969). Across these works, there is a shift from the formal problem of a house within a house to the social problem of worlds within worlds and with it a growing interest in restructuring the grand narratives of both the nation and the discipline within which Moore practiced.

The final chapter examines Philip Johnson's Crystal Cathedral (1980) as an architectural environment intersecting with the televisual entertainment industry. The Crystal Cathedral has been read as a reflective glass building that, in the context of late capital, abandoned the mysticism of transparency to assert its object status. I offer a counter reading by framing Johnson's use of glass as an extended engagement with Camp sensibilities that grows out of decadent aesthetics. This chapter argues that Johnson's Late Modern style is a mode of "disciplinary drag" that operates concurrently with the ministry's more tawdry decadence.

A brief conclusion points towards potential engagements with contemporary decadence. It poses questions about the state of its conceptual territories today and the possibilities for its legacy. Key among these is the critical lens of historical awareness that decadence occasions. In an increasingly "presentist" world of digitized immediacy, historical perspective is shrinking. Decadence at its best, as a creative practice, both pushes against the grain of a singular historical narrative and maintains a situated subjectivity that is neither obedient to the structures of history nor un-moored from it.

Figure 1.1 Trump International Hotel & Tower at 1 Central Park West, façade by Philip Johnson. The architect did not remove the old façade but instead overlaid a bronze-colored glass set in a grid of dark anodized aluminum. (Vivian Marino, “$33 Million Penthouse on Central Park West,” *New York Times*, February 1, 2015.)

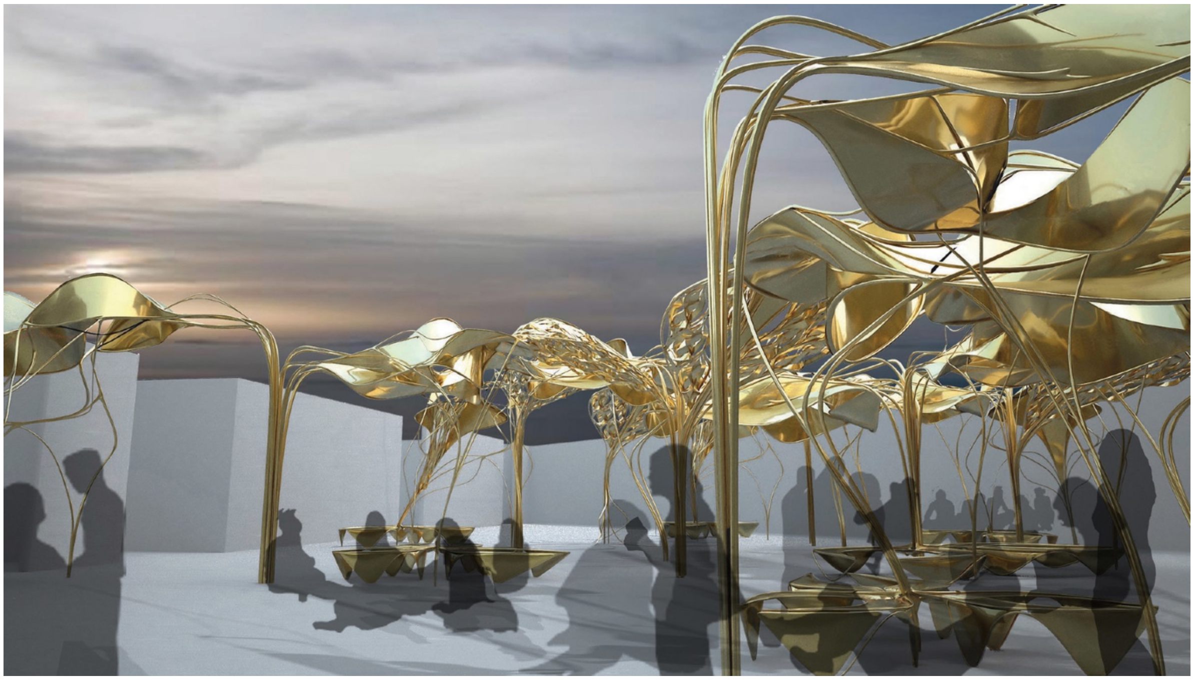

Figure 1.2 Gage / Clemenceau Architects, “Aurum,” 2007, New York, NY. Young Architects Project finalist. Project is encrusted in gold. (The Museum of Modern Art)

Figure 1.3 Hernan Diaz Alonso / Xefirotarch, “Still Flesh,” 2011.

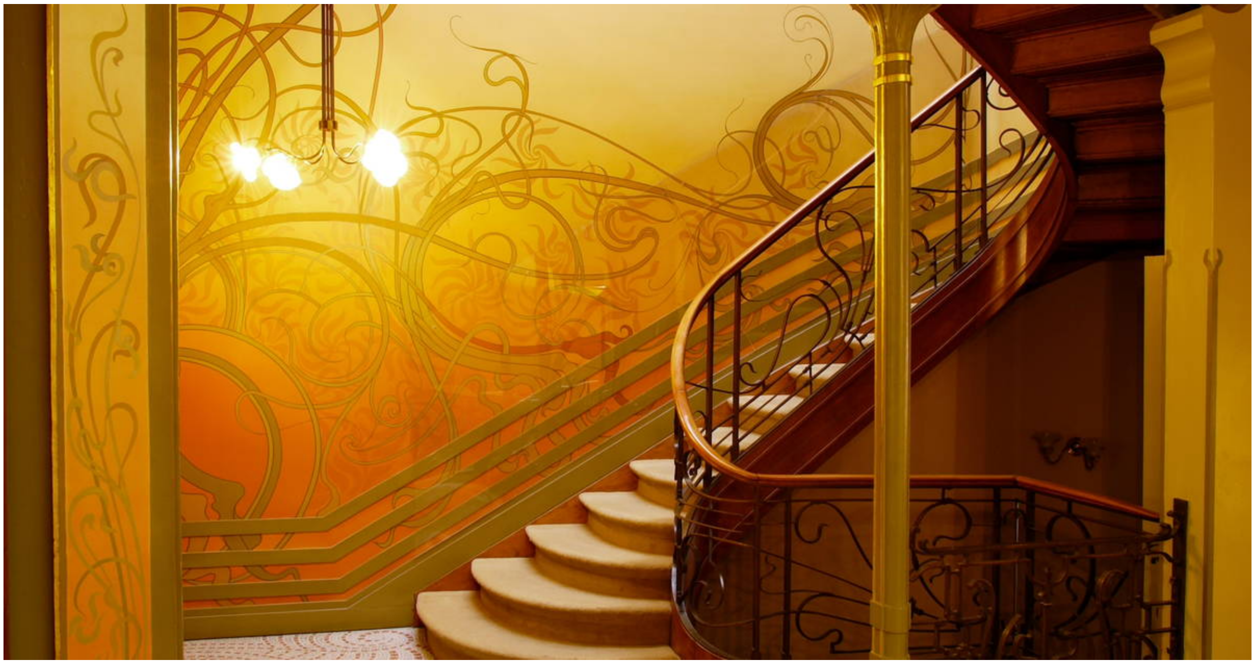

Figure 1.4 Interior staircase of the Hôtel Tassel, Victor Horta, 1893, Brussels.

Figure 1.5 Arch of Constantine, 312-315 C.E., Rome.

Figure 1.6 Thomas Couture, *Romains de la décadence*, 1847. Oil on canvas, 472 x 772 cm. (Musée d'Orsay, Paris.)

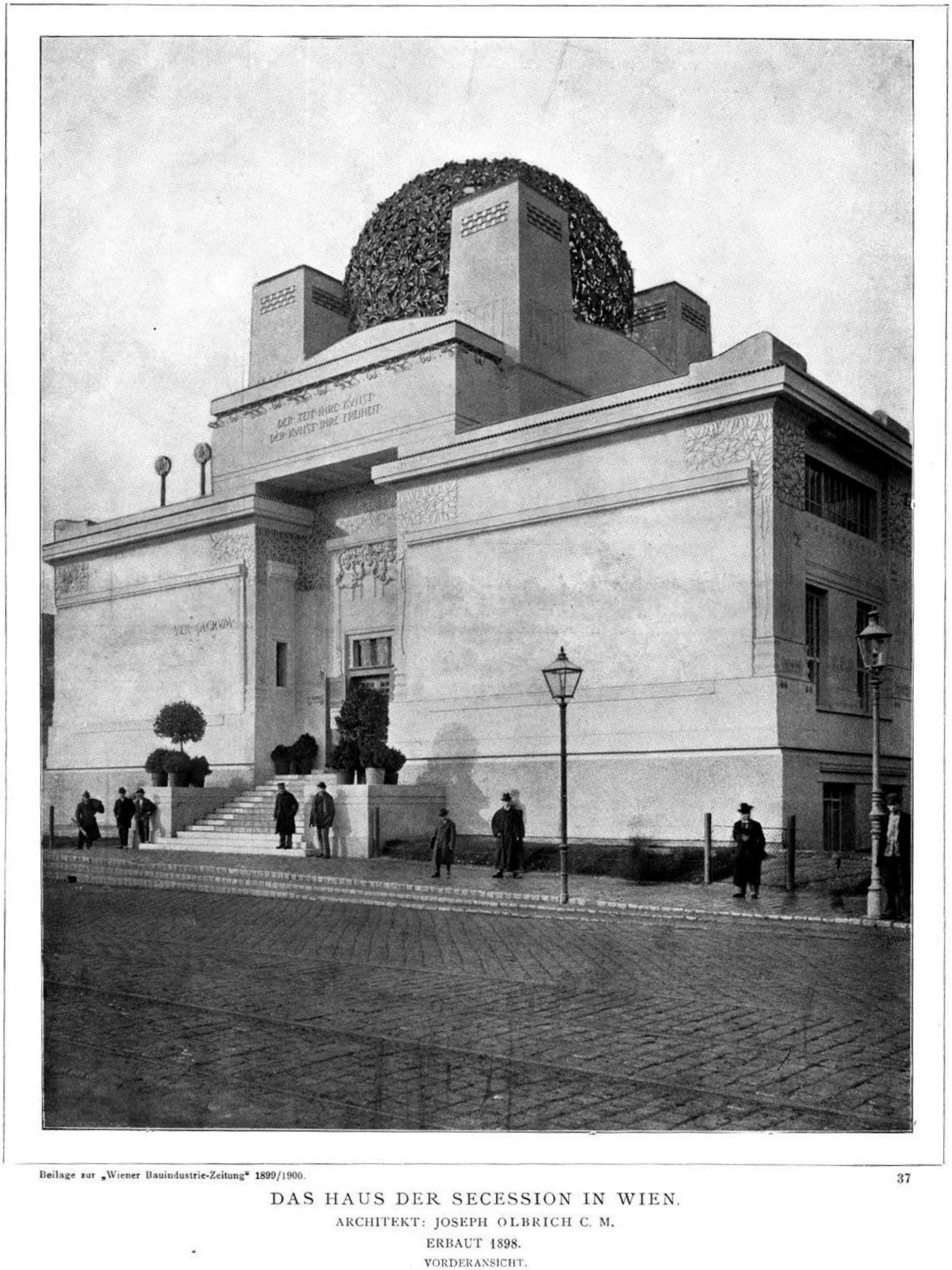

Figure 1.7 Secession Building, Joseph Maria Olbrich, 1898, Vienna.

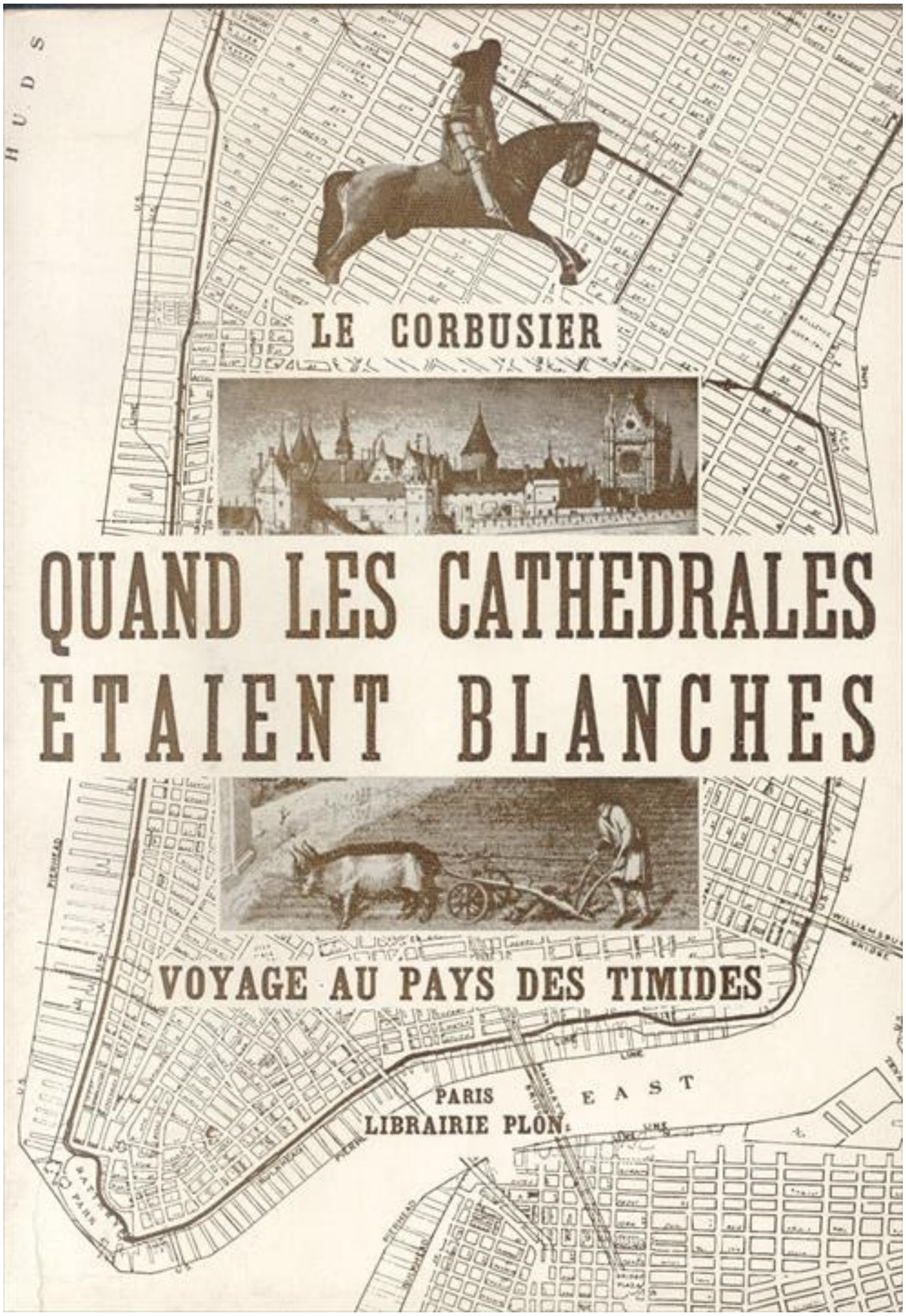

Figure 1.8 Book cover for *Quand Les Cathedrales Etaient Blanches*, Le Corbusier, 1937. Published by Éditions Plon, Paris. (Fondation Le Corbusier.)

Figure 1.9 Interior, library of the Glasgow School of Art, Charles Rennie Mackintosh, 1897-1909.

Figure 1.10 Illustration from *The Decadent*, Ralph Adams Cram, 1893. (The Digital Library at Villanova University.)

Figure 1.11 Wall painting on black ground: Aedicula with small landscape, from the imperial villa at Boscotrecase, last decade of the 1st century B.C. Roman fresco: 233.1 x 114.3 cm. (Metropolitan Museum of Art.)

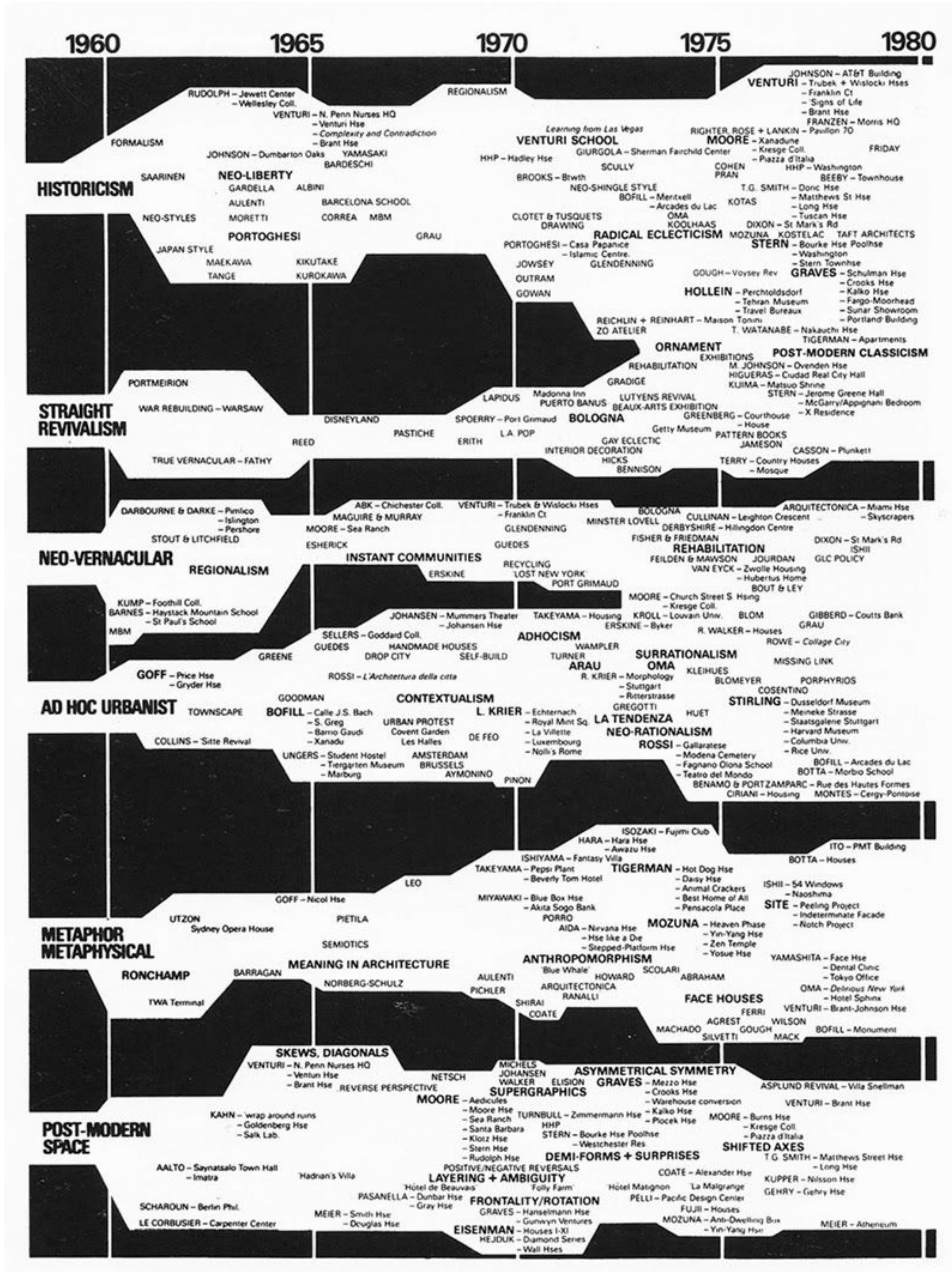

Figure 1.12 Charles Jencks, Evolutionary tree 1960-1980. (Charles Jencks, *The Language of Post-Modern Architecture*, 1977.)

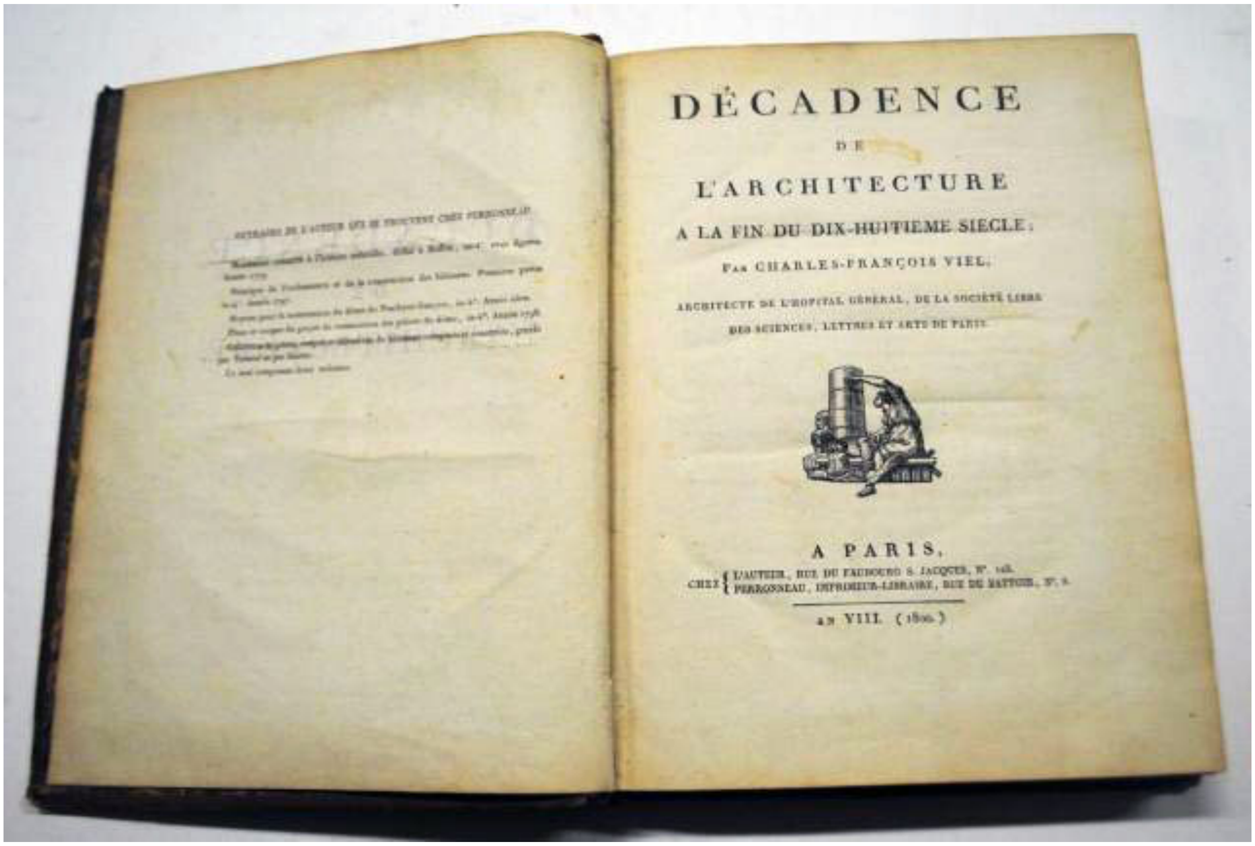

Figure 1.13 Title page of *Décadence de l'architecture: à la fin du dix-huitième siècle*, Charles-François Viel, 1800. (The Getty Research Institute.)

Figure 1.14 Robert Venturi, Art Nouveau Chair, featured in the Grandmother pattern designed by Denise Scott Brown, 1984. Laminate over plywood: 94.6 x 53.3 x 45.7 cm.

Figure 1.15 Denise Scott Brown (wearing her Grandmother dress design) and Robert Venturi between Queen Anne chair (*left*), 1979, and Empire chair (*right*), 1979. Robert Adelman, photographer. (The Fabric Workshop and Museum.)

Chapter 2
Architectural Ploys in Decadent Literature

The fact that decadent authors had an interest in the built environment is well known, but the ways in which they made their decadence operative is more often argued through a comparison to painterly techniques. It is my contention that the architectural dimension is as involved in staging decadent literature as much as it is a register of design born of decadence. This chapter considers how the literary works of Gustave Flaubert, Émile Zola, and Joris-Karl Huysmans engage with disparate modes of decadence as it relates to architecture and design; and it concludes with a more in-depth examination of the role of architecture in works by Edmond de Goncourt.

One important hinge between decadence as a derisive label and a creative practice is a divergent conception of style that sits between classical literary theory and the modern discipline of art history. To better understand the ways in which this shift affects the field of architecture and informs the decadent literary movement, we can first return to the end of the eighteenth-century when the architect Charles-François Viel wrote his polemic against modern technology and engineering titled, *Décadence de l'architecture à la fin du dix-huitieme siècle*.[1] Viel's thirty-page fulmination pits architecture as a liberal art against design as a mechanical art and frames the latter as decadent. He opens:

> Never has the general and specific causes of architectural decadence advanced with more activity than today; it has never been more necessary to disseminate architecture's true principles, to oppose them to a spirit of fashion, which for

[1] Charles-François Viel, *Décadence de l'architecture à la fin du dix-huitieme siècle* (Paris, 1800).

> some years has dominated the practice and inflicted a powerful and harmful influence on the art of architecture...[2]

The essay is an early use of the term decadence, predating its meteoric rise in the mid- to late-nineteenth century. Here there is no connection between decadence and literature, in fact the exact opposite is the case. For Viel, the decadence of mechanized architectural production, heralded by the opening of the École Polytechnique in France, marked the deterioration of a classical architectural relationship to literature. The architect was writing in a French tradition that theorized the long-standing concern about the relationship of a building's parts to its whole through literary terms. For example, Germain Boffrand argued in his *Livre d'Architecture* (1745) that "the sections of moldings and the other parts which make up a building, are, in architecture, what words are in discourse."[3] Jacques François Blondel, in his seminal *Cours d'Architecture* (1771-77), relies on similar analogies linking architecture to literature and poetry, stating that "architecture is like poetry; all ornament which is only ornament is excessive. Architecture, by the beauty of its proportions and the choice of its arrangement is sufficient unto itself."[4] Viel argues along a related line in his 1797 tract, *Principes de l'ordonnance et de composition des batiments*:

> However the word style is used in literature, one makes equal use of it in our present subject. It consists, in relation to literature, in that arrangement of words, that disposition of phrases which render diction pure and elegant… this word and its different qualities are applied with as much truth to the other arts and singularly architecture.[5]

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[2] Ibid., 5. Viel writes: "Jamais les causes générales et particulières de décadence de l'architecture n'agirent avec plus d'activité qu'aujourd'hui; jamais ses véritables principes ne furent plus nécessaires à propager, pour les opposer à un esprit de mode qui, depuis quelques années, domine la plupart de ceux qui l'exercent; esprit dont l'influence puissante porte à cet art, les atteintes les plus nuisibles. Selon les architectes qui abondent dans ce sens de nouveauté, c'est un système d'école de ne s'attacher qu'à la manière de l'ordonnance d'un petit nombre de monumens des anciens et des modernes, que les plus brillantes époques des arts ont produits."

[3] Adrain Forty, *Words and Buildings: A Vocabulary of Modern Architecture* (London: Thames and Hudson, 2000): 18.

[4] Peter Collins, *Changing Ideals in Modern Architecture, 1750-1950* (London: Faber and Faber, 1965): 180.

[5] Forty, 96.

When Viel goes on to write his polemic, framed through the concept of decadence, it is yet another articulation of his commitment to an architectural design approach that is aligned with classical literary theory. Decadence in this context is the displacement of communicative capacity, a theme that decadent authors will explore at the close of the following century. For architecture, Viel's decadence marks the loss of a long-standing literary metaphor.

While decadence was first used in architecture as a polemic against the introduction of the Polytechnique, in the revolutionary context of late-eighteenth-century France, its strongest disciplinary import comes through art historical discourse. It is in this setting that we find a significant tension between decadence as an "academic" term born of ostensibly detached historical observation and a term of judgment, often politically loaded.[6] In his attack on the Rococo Wincklemann directly references the Vitruvian passage that will become associated with decadence. He states that the ornateness of the Rococo has "no more of Nature about it than Vitruvius's candelabra, which supported little castles and palaces."[7] Winckelmann's evocation of nature indicates an important shift in his conceptualization of style. Here style is formulated through metaphors drawn from natural science rather than literary theory. Indeed, Winckelmann's landmark art historical text *Geschichte der Kunst Alterhums* (1763) drew inspiration from Georges Buffon's *Histoire Naturelle* (1749). From this connection Amy Kulper reveals that Winckelmann acquired "a meticulously historicised sense of nature and natural species, which he developed into an equally historicised sense of style."[8] For Winckelmann,

[6] Though the aspirations of this begin in the Enlightenment, the point is made most directly in the twentieth century by E. H. Gombrich, who asserts that while stylistic designations such as the Gothic, baroque, and grotesque were often coined as terms of derision, the modern scholar can be "proud of having stripped these terms of their derogatory overtones. We believe we can now use them in a purely neutral, purely descriptive sense to denote certain styles or periods we neither wish to condemn nor to praise." E. H. Gombrich, *Norm and Form: Studies in the Art of the Renaissance* (London: Phaidon, 1966): 81.

[7] Quoted in Geoffrey Harpham, *On the Grotesque: Strategies of Contradiction in Art and Literature* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1982): 27.

[8] Amy Kulper, "Of Stylised Species and Specious Styles," *The Journal of Architecture* 11, no. 4 Winter (2006): 392.

decadence is both a biological phenomenon and a value judgment that it is now conceptualized as part of a cyclical process of origin, flowering and decay, and a basis for criticism, such that the full bloom of classical antiquity is preferred over later styles theorized as being in a state of decline. The demise of style as an operating literary metaphor for architects and the birth of style as a biological metaphor arguably comes with Viollet-le-Duc's adaptation of Georges Cuvier's theory of the fragment: as a scientist might reconstruct the whole animal from a single bone, so might an architect reconstruct an entire building from a few fragments of masonry. Its corollary in art history is the proper classificatory period designation based on fragments of visual evidence. Here the part-to-whole relationships of classical literary style, based on employing the appropriate affect suitable for a given rhetorical context, gives way to a universalizing project of period reconstruction.

This cursory examination of the oscillations of decadence, between polemical assault and as period designation, within the production and translation of architectural texts offers some background for understanding the ways in which the term was applied as a label in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Scholars studying decadent literature are careful to distinguish between the appearance of decadent themes, such as exoticism, perversity, or degeneration, and decadent style. For example, Matei Calinescu separates what he terms decadent "rhetoric" from decadent style, which in effect privileges the textual innovations of decadent literature over the polemical punch of the concept.[9] John R. Reed extended the distinction by differentiating between "novels of decadence" and "decadent novels," whereby literary works that signal decadence thematically, but do not embody a decadent literary style, remain novels of decadence and do not rise to the occasion of the decadent novel.[10]

[9] Matei Calinescu, *Five Faces of Modernity: Modernism, Avant-Garde, Decadence, Kitsch, Postmodernism* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1987): 157.

[10] John R. Reed, *Decadent Style* (Athens: Ohio University Press, 1985): 20-21.

Architectural works, from the heavy symbolism of Sacré-Coeur to the bombast of C.-F. Viel, and the ultimate evacuation of literary based conceptions of style would seem to fall squarely into the "rhetoric" of decadence category. Nevertheless, literary authors who engaged with decadence both thematically and stylistically frequently utilized an architectural dimension in their works. This came in the form of representing glass and wrought iron modern architecture, as well as recalling the Rococo, which suggests that decadent authors were as aware of a historicized sense of style that came along with the biological metaphors of the nineteenth century as much as they were engaged with styling prose. Examining the ways in which these authors employed the built environment textually is another step towards reading architecture as participating in decadence as a creative practice. Doing so nuances the landscape of decadent literature. For example, under a literary definition of decadence Zola's naturalism is distinct from Huysmans's decadent aesthetic. However, through an architectural lens Zola is engaged with the systematization of design that Viel theorized as the source of contemporary decadence.

Decadent authors had a pronounced interest in the visual arts: Baudelaire wrote art criticism and Huysmans studied painting in his youth and also wrote art criticism. This attention to art, coupled with the movement's ties to *l'art pour l'art*, have prompted expanding Reed's distinction between novels of decadence and decadent novels to drawing a division between the art of decadence and decadent art. Through an exploration of the architectural engagements of decadent novels, we might widen the metaphor one step further, so we may talk about *decadent design* versus *design of decadence*. Here, as in the novelistic equivalent, the distinction is between works that operatively utilize decadence and works that passively belong to a social-historical *milieu* of decadence. The difference in framing has implications in the two conceptions of style discussed, whereby one is closely aligned to artistic production and the other a taxonomic categorization afforded through historical distance. Such an expansion might take us out of the trap of aligning decadence with isolated aestheticism and open up the kinds of comparisons we draw within decadent texts beyond painting. Furthermore, the terminology of decadent design, as opposed to decadent novels, exposes the operative agency afforded, via the creative practice of designing decadence, over the production of a distinguished type of novel. While built works have in large part been read as either products of decadence or as oppositional to decadence, the promissory note of decadent literature is that creative practice can produce decadent designs that exceed their decadent times. The remainder of this chapter will examine a range of literary works from the nineteenth century, beginning with Flaubert, Zola, and Huysmans, and then turn to a more in-depth examination of Goncourt, in order to further query into the distinctions between designs of decadence and decadent design.

Flaubert's Surface Expression

The exoticism of Gustave Flaubert's second novel *Salammbô* (1862) stands in stark contrast to the realism of his more well-known first novel *Madame Bovary* (1856). Where the interior emotions of Emma Bovary color every aspect of the first novel's representations of reality, the landscape of 3rd century BCE Carthage is described with an objective detachment in the second. We see this, for example, in accounts of the palace:

> Far in the background stood the palace, built of yellow mottled Numidian marble, broad courses supporting its four terraced stories. With its large, straight, ebony staircase, bearing a prow of a vanquished galley at the corners of every step, its red doors quartered with black crosses, its brass gratings protecting it from scorpions below, and its trellises of gilded rods closing the apertures above, it seemed to the soldiers in its haughty opulence as solid and impenetrable as the face of Hamilcar.[11]

[11] Gustave Flaubert, *Salammbô: A Romance of Ancient Carthage*, 2 vols. (New York: M. Walter Dunne, 1904): 1-2.

Both the categories of decadent design and design of decadence are at play in this passage as well as throughout the novel. Anne Green has argued that "*Salammbô* contains this same sense of the inevitability of Carthage's collapse, describing a civilization which has passed its peak and is moving into the period of religious fanaticism, excessive luxury, immorality and decadence which Gobineau believed to be symptomatic of the last stages of national decline."[12] The opulence of the building in this sense belongs to a larger decadence [Figure 2.1], but the sumptuous details of the building are also the vehicle for Flaubert's own decadent design, namely his stylization of elaborate and extended descriptions.

The degree to which the objects being described accord with their setting or environment becomes another line for distinguishing between design of, or belonging to, decadence and decadent design. Georg Lukács characterizes Flaubert's ancient Carthage as a "frozen, lunar landscape of archeological precision." The critic continues by giving a reading of the novel that carefully stages this issue of accordance, which is relevant to the discussion of stylistic accounts of decadence:

> He [Flaubert] chooses an historical subject whose inner social-historical nature is of no concern to him and to which he can only lend the appearance of reality in an external, decorative, picturesque manner by means of the conscientious application of archeology… Naturally it is a ghostly illusion of life. And an illusion which dissolves the hyper-objective reality of the objects. In describing the individual objects of an historical *milieu* Flaubert is much more exact and plastic than any other writer before him. But these objects have nothing to do with the inner life of the characters. When Scott describes a medieval town or the habitat of a Scottish clan, these material things are part and parcel of the lives and fortunes of people whose psychology belongs to the same level of historical development and is a product of the same social-historical ensemble as these material things. This is how the older epic writers produced their "totality of objects." In Flaubert there is no such connection between the outside world and the psychology of the principle characters.[13]

[12] Anne Green, "Salammbô and Nineteenth-Century French Society," in *Critical Essays on Gustave Flaubert*, ed. L. Porter (Boston: G. K. Hall, 1986): 115.

[13] Georg Lukács, *The Historical Novel*, trans. H. and S. Mitchel (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1983): 188-89.

Where Lukács contrasts the decorative flatness of Carthage with a modern psychological depth attributed to the protagonist, literary scholar David Weir argues that "the same exterior, objective technique prevails throughout *Salammbô*," ultimately suggesting that, "Salammbô's 'despair' is a label imposed on her from without."[14] In this radical flattening of the novel to surface quality, the labeling that is part of the operations of decadent "rhetoric," as well as art historical stylistic designation, is taken up in the service of poetically stylized decadent prose. The social-historical rift of decadence, the occasion of not belonging that periods of decadence afford, opens the door to decadent design. In other words, the crisis of stylistic cohesion that occurs in moments of decadence here paves the way for decadent stylization [Figure 2.2].

Decadent Systematization

Émile Zola's massive Rougon-Macquart series maintains the epic form that Flaubert abandons [Figure 2.3]. To better understand how architecture participated in Zola's naturalist novels, we can look to the eleventh book in the series, *Au Bonheur des dames* (1883). The text is set in the world of a department store, for which the novel is named. The narrative follows Denise, an orphaned shop girl who moves from the country to Paris and works in the department store [Figure 2.4]. Mouret, the owner, in an attempt to attract the women of Paris, employs modern techniques to build what is consistently described as his "machine." The machine metaphor serves to unify the architectural, decorative, and social aspects of the department store as a whole commercial apparatus [Figure 2.5]. We see this early in the narrative:

> Denise began to feel as if she were watching a machine working at full pressure, communicating its movement even as far as the windows. They were no longer the cold windows she had seen in the early morning; they seemed to be warm and vibrating from the activity within. There was a crowd before them, groups of women pushing and squeezing, devouring the finery with longing, covetous

[14] David Weir, *Decadence and the Making of Modernism* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1995): 40.

> eyes… quite a nation of women passing through the force and logic of this wonderful commercial machine.[15]

In this opening description, Zola presents a totalizing image such that the built environment is but one aspect of the larger operation of the store [Figure 2.6].

Later in the text, he describes the edifice as an infinite landscape [Figure 2.7]: "His gaze did not even turn towards the triumphal façade of The Ladies' Paradise, *whose architectural lines ran as far as the eye could see…*"[16] The implications of the passage continue as this new totalizing commercial perspective and its representation in advertising obviate older structures that previously ordered the cosmological landscape:

> As it was now represented in the engraving of the advertisements, it had grown bigger and bigger…spread out immoderately, as if to make room for the customers of the whole world. Then came a bird's eye view of the buildings themselves, of an exaggerated immensity, with their roofings which described the covered galleries, the glazed courtyards in which could be recognized the halls, the endless detail of this lake of glass and zinc shining in the sun. Beyond, stretched forth Paris, but Paris diminished, eaten up by the monster: the houses, of a cottage-like humility in the neighborhood of the building, then dying away in a cloud of indistinct chimneys; the monuments seemed to melt into nothing, to the left two dashes for Notre-Dame, to the right a circumflex accent for the Invalides, in the background the Panthéon, ashamed and lost, no larger than a lentil. The horizon, crumbled into powder, became no more than a contemptible framework.[17]

The description of the monuments of Paris as accent marks on a page diminishes them to the level of a single syllable [Figure 2.8]. If decadent style reduces compositional logic from the page to the phrase, or even the word, Zola affords even less syntactical play. Despite this poetic vision of decadence that links monuments to textual notation, Zola's engagement with decadence never affects the style of his narrative prose, which is fully invested in realism. Thus the author remains resolutely in the domain of depicting designs born of decadence rather than creating

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[15] Émile Zola, *The Ladies' Paradise*, trans. E. Vizetelly (London: Hutchinson, 1895): 16.
[16] Zola, 344, my emphasis.
[17] Ibid., 348.

decadent design. He gives us the "contemptible framework" of a fading regime and its systematic replacement by a new order. As A. E. Carter suggests, the link between literature and the scientific view that contemporary society was decadent was deeply embedded:

> Most of the doctors accepted without question (as Nordau says) the idea that nineteenth-century man was decadent. Zola did not simply find a theory of heredity in the medical works he read to plot the Rougon-Macquart family tree: he found a theory of decadent heredity. Literature and medicine were in agreement on contemporary decadence, and they borrowed from each other.[18]

Indeed, the decadence of the Rougon-Macquart characters belongs to the same social-historical ensemble as the material structures and things described in Zola's portrayal.

Decadent Style

Neither set in ancient Carthage, nor in the urban context of Paris, J.-K. Huysmans's seminal decadent novel *À rebours* (1884) is staged entirely in the suburban home of its protagonist Des Esseintes. There is little question that this work falls into the category of decadent design, as it is the specimen that defines the species. We can easily find evidence of Huysmans's deployment of decadent rhetoric as well as his decadent style, but it is the well-honed craft of his stylization that makes him a central figure for the decadent literary movement. As with Flaubert's *Salammbô* and Zola's *Au Bonheur des dames*, the architectural dimension plays a significant role in Huysmans's decadent engagements. Also, a contrast between surface affect and psychological depth is maintained. In Flaubert, the built environment occasions a surface display of ornate stylistic passages. It achieves this through the academic conceit of archeology. As such, decadence remained a historicized stylistic label, and the textual styling operated via a similar labeling affect throughout. By contrast, Zola presented the psychological

[18] A. E. Carter, *The Idea of Decadence in French Literature* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1958): 69.

depth of his characters as products of a decadent environment with none of the surface stylization of Flaubert. Huysmans's *À rebours* is neither as fully arrested as Flaubert, nor as fully instrumentalized as Zola. The plot, which is evacuated in Flaubert and mechanized in Zola, is here positioned to bracket what is an otherwise atemporal and encyclopedic account. The action of the story, now pushed to the edges, consists of explaining Des Esseintes's relocation to and retreat from his Fontenay home in the southwestern suburbs of Paris. Between the carefully framed edges, we might expect to find an account as flat as Flaubert's. Indeed, like in Flaubert's *Salammbô,* there is no psychological depth and no plot, and the exquisite prose is on proud display. But unlike the exacting distance of Carthage, Des Esseintes *occupies* his home, and the building in turn structures the work, in the absence of both dramatic arc and character development. The architectural framework as well as the disposition of the interior are a part of Huysmans's decadent design, rather than an occasioning of decadent style or an apparatus for national decline. We see this most clearly in the Fontenay dining room, where Des Esseintes constructs a ship's cabin within the existing room: "Like those Japanese boxes that fit one inside the other, this room had been inserted into a larger one, which was the real dining-room planned by the architect."[19] Huysmans took many of his cues from his close friend Edmond de Goncourt. Within Goncourt's writings, we can trace many of the same issues: diverging conceptions of style, decadent themes versus decadent design, and, ultimately, within the enterprise of decadent design, the creation of compositional depth as an alternative to the mimetic psychological depth of naturalism, constructed through an architectural dimension within the text.

Brothers Jules and Edmond de Goncourt worked in dialogue with Flaubert and Zola, and are a possible model for Huysmans's Des Esseintes.[20] Thus it is perhaps not surprising that they

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[19] J. -K. Huysmans, *À rebours* [Against Nature], trans. Robert Baldick (London: Penguin, 1959): 33.

[20] Katherine Ashley, *Edmond De Goncourt and the Novel: Naturalism and Decadence* (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2005).There is no singular model for Des Esseintes. The character has been argued to be a thinly veiled self-portrait

too engaged with historically based texts, as well as naturalism, before turning to what might be more properly described as a decadent novel, though this work would be executed by Edmond alone following the death of his younger brother in June of 1870. The Goncourts' history books were among their most popular published works and included histories of France, such as *Histoire de la société pendant la Révolution française* (1854) and *Histoire de la société française pendant le Directoire* (1855), and biographical portraits, such as *Sophie Arnould* (1857) and *Portraits intimes du dix-huitième siècle* (1857), which were based on personal letters and other historical documents that the brothers were able to collect. But their most influential historical work was their series of essays on eighteenth-century artists. These were first published in periodicals such as the *Gazette de Beaux Arts* between 1857 and 1870, before being gathered by Edmond in two volumes under the title *L'Art de dix-huitième siècle* (1873-74). The work reflects the Goncourts' works of art for their own collections, draws from the same research that they employ in their art criticism, and, eventually, informs the elder Goncourt's fiction [Figure 2.9]. Unlike the alien historical and geographical distance of Flaubert's Carthage, the Goncourts' focus on eighteenth-century France was a much closer subject. The questions of history writing and the novel were discussed between the Goncourts and Flaubert. The brothers asked their colleague, while he was working on *Salammbô*, "Why do you tell us in your letter that you are working on nothingness?" And they go on to suggest that "history… is perhaps the real nothingness because it is death."[21] Flaubert responds that "*reality* is an almost impossible thing in such a [historical] subject… In order to be real, one would have to be obscure, talk about gibberish and stuff the book with notes; and if one sticks to literary and properly French tone, one becomes banal."[22] From this exchange, Charles Bernheimer concludes that Flaubert's

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of Huysmans himself or modeled on Robert de Montesquiou; more recent scholarship has begun to consider the Goncourts.

[21] Gustave Flaubert, *Correspondance*, vol. 3 (Paris: Gallimard, Bibliothèque de la Pleiade, 1991): 1093.

[22] Flaubert, *Correspondance,* 94-95.

stylistic perfectionism and the notorious difficulty of his writing are in fact minor aspects of the author's work, arguing instead that "more importantly, Flaubert's torment arises from the fact that his sensibility as a writer and thinker fractures the aesthetic, cultural, and epistemological paradigms of his age."[23] The Goncourts' history work did not yet manifest the fracture of Flaubert. Their historical texts were more novelistic in that they rendered their subjects as emotive. Moreover, they highlight literary stylization in their historical accounts; however, these works do not yet take up any decadent themes. Instead, they highlight a resolutely non-historicized sense of period-style and attest to a practice of intertextuality that works across genres, including history, art criticism, and fiction.

The Goncourts' novel *Germinie Lacerteux* (1865) arguably extends the historical methodology of detached observation from period documents to a contemporary investigation. The story of the novel has its origins in their servant Rose Malingre who maintained a secret life of sexual and alcoholic debauchery – parts of her character that were only revealed to the brothers after her death. The novel takes up decadent themes by following the degeneration of an individual based on Rose's secret vices, and, as such, serves as a model for Zola's naturalism [Figure 2.10]. But critics identify the heightened aesthetic nature of the Goncourts' *Germinie Lacerteux* as complicating its classification as a naturalistic novel.[24] In addition, the morality of Zola's decadent depictions stands in opposition to the aesthetic pleasure that the Goncourts derive from exoticizing working-class life. Furthering the distinction is the brothers' self-identification as "artists" of fiction, or *écriture artiste*. David Weir argues that the Goncourts composed their artistic prose style "to demonstrate the same sensitivity to light, color, and form

[23] Charles Bernheimer, *Decadent Subjects* (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 2002): 37.

[24] Erich Auerbach, *Mimesis: Dargstellte Wirklichkeit in Der Abendländischen Literatur* (Bern: A. Francke, 1946); Carter, *The Idea of Decadence in French Literature*; Weir, *Decadence and the Making of Modernism;* Ashley, *Edmond de Goncourt and the Novel.*

as achieved by the fine art of painting."[25] Passages where the environment is described with terms like *masses, lignes,* and *solidities denses* and depicted with attention to color, such as, "The sky was grey below, pink in the middle and blue above. The horizons were darkening, the greens were getting deeper and less distinct, the zinc roofs of the pubs shone as with moonlight, lights came on in the darkness, the crowd looked grey, white skirts became blue"[26] – suggest an attention to painterly techniques. *Germinie Lacerteux* presents decadence thematically and advances the brother's stylistic approach, but it is arguably in Edmond's later works that a true decadence by design appears.

Katherine Ashley contrasts these later works with the earlier novel arguing that, "Although *Germinie Lacerteux* does elevate a base subject to the status of art, and does treat literature in a painterly fashion, it is with the advent of new, more aristocratic subjects that the elder Goncourt truly consecrates his works, both stylistically and thematically, to the cult of art."[27] However, her review of the later solo novels does not include Edmond de Goncourt's two-volume text *Maison d'un artiste* (1881). Perhaps this is because, as Pamela Warner points out in her study of the Goncourts' interiors, that the six-hundred pages of *Maison d'un artiste* "are an odd hybrid that belongs to no established literary genre – part interior design manual, part art history catalogue, part autobiography."[28] Coming from the field of art history, Warner makes a thorough visual analysis of the photographs that Edmond de Goncourt commissioned to record his home. She argues for reading the photographed interiors as visual compositions that reflect the design principles of framing, symmetry, and contrast, rather than as period reconstructions [Figure 2.11]. The remainder of this chapter examines both the investigation into Edmond de

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[25] Weir, 54.
[26] Ibid., 61.
[27] Ashley, 30.
[28] Pamela J. Warner, "Framing, Symmetry, and Contrast in Edmond De Goncourt's Aesthetic Interior," *Studies in Decorative Arts*, no. 15 (2008): 37.

Goncourt's later texts and the questions of compositional approach, but it does so by reading the physical layout and setting of Goncourt's Villa Montmorency alongside its textual representation. Rather than focusing on a relationship between visual and literary composition, this lens aims to set the work in a broader history of decadence and design.

Maison d'un artiste

In 1868, Jules and Edmond relocated from their shared apartment in the center of Paris to a house just outside of the city walls in the suburb of Auteuil [Figure 2.12]. Their home sat in a private garden community, laid out in the 1850s as part of a development growing along a new commuter light railway [Figure 2.13]. However, what promised to be an aesthetic retreat came to be marked by significant personal and political crisis.[29] The brothers only lived together in their new home for two years before the younger sibling died of syphilis [Figure 2.14], and, within less than a year of his brother's passing, Edmond had to relocate all of their collections in advance of the Paris Commune (1871). The Auteuil station was severely damaged during the violence of the Commune [Figure 2.15].

Within this decidedly decadent and personal context, Edmond began the process of reassembling and rearranging his collections of Rococo and Japanese art. Indeed, there is no representational stability between the literary and photographic depictions of his home – the pages of the text do not always depict the same objects nor the same interior arrangements as the photographs. Nevertheless, the architectural dimension does remain as a structuring device across both modalities. The work is structured by the floors and rooms of the house, with volume one comprising the ground floor and volume two the upper floors. Additionally, each chapter is

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[29] Diana Periton, "The Interior as Aesthetic Refuge: Edmond de Goncourt's La Maison d'un artiste," in *Tracing Modernity: Manifestations of the Modern in Architecture and the City*, ed. C. Hermansen and M. Hvattum (New York: Routledge, 2004).

titled as a room. Furthermore, these same room labels are used to identify the photographs in Goncourt's personal folios [Figure 2.16]. The question of period rooms suggests the labeling aspect of decadence that grows out of a historicized sense of style, and the presentation of rooms as textual compartments is not too far from reading them as categorical containers that collect and organize historical evidence based on type. This of course is disrupted by the intermingling of both the Rococo and Japanese objects in the decorative scape of the rooms [Figure 2.17]. Moreover, there is a symmetry that reads in the plan of the second floor of the house between the Cabinet de l'Extrême-Orient and the Cabinet de Toilette, as well as between the Chambre à Coucher and the Boudoir [Figure 2.18]. Textually the chapter versions of these rooms take up the majority of volume two and are presented in succession. Spatially they group together into two contrasting suites: the Cabinet de Toilette and the Chambre à Coucher make up a unit, while the Cabinet de l'Extrême-Orient and the Boudoir together create a mirrored component. This cluster of rooms, and their paralleled relationship to one another, suggests both correlation and contrast. A spatial and textual relationship is drawn between the dressing of the house and the dressing of the self. However, there is also a juxtaposition of spatial organization from the miniature cosmology composed in Goncourt's Rococo bedroom and the organizational logics of display in his miniature museum of Asian artifacts [Figure 2.19].

If we examine the written text, we find competing articulations of architecture, with Goncourt privileging the previously polemical views of the architect C.-F. Viel, whose own Rococo interest would later be labeled decadent. The first chapter of the second volume is devoted to the Cabinet de Travail [Figure 2.20], and it opens with the line, "After the chimney, the wall resumes with literature, with poetry."[30] There is an emphasis in the original French on a

[30] Edmond de Goncourt, *La Maison d'un artiste* (Paris: Charpentier, 1881): 1. "Après la cheminée, le mur reprend avec la littérature, avec la poésie. Avouons-le franchement, la poésie du temps ne vaut quelque chose que par les estampes des dessinateurs qui l'ont illustrée. Parlons donc des poètes à images."

sense of interruption, whereby the utility of the fireplace is but a disruption in a larger poetic project comprised of the literary and visual arts. However, the wall, unlike the hearth, is afforded a pride of place in the poetic environment. The next chapter, Cabinet de Toilette, stages a similar contrast between function and aesthetic delight [Figure 2.21]. Goncourt describes how when performing the boring operations of brushing his teeth or combing his hair, he likes to be distracted by colorful drawings and porcelain plates hung on the wall. He describes these with decadent inflections, such that the art works are merely bits and pieces of rubble or shards of broken glass. This contrast of the art works with their material status is striking. The decadent theme is extended by juxtaposing the terms of light, used to describe the art objects, with the clarifying term *éclairé,* bracketed by the more reflective and dynamic phrases of *chatoie* and *reflète de la lumière*.[31]

In the spatially connected room and following chapter, Chambre à Coucher, Goncourt gives a more cohesive poetic vision [Figure 2.22]. There he describes his bed, which occupies most of the space of the room, as an eighteenth-century space. This passage is central in the debates about the degree to which Goncourt is engaged in a practice of reconstructing period style. In her analysis of Goncourt, Debora Silverman uses the textual description of this room to argue for the author's commitment to the Rococo, while Warner reads it as a space of nineteenth-century fantasy and, moreover, convincingly argues against reading Goncourt as invested in the scientific reconstruction of period style more broadly. Goncourt's focus on the bed as a kind of miniature architecture casts a slightly different lens on the debate. The text describes the bed as filling the room, "A bed, a huge bed, a bed taking up the whole room…" and then goes on to ascribe it as a cosmological function beyond both the utility of rest and the pleasure of fantasy,

[31] Goncourt, 189. "…un morceau de papier colorié ou un tesson de poterie, qui chatoie, qui éclaire, qui reflète de la lumière dans des couleurs de fleurs."

"…one of those monumental beds in which the eighteenth century was put at ease and situated the birth and death of man."[32] The word choice is again significant; the bed is monumental not just relative to the scale of the room, but also suggests the decorum and stylistic hierarchy ascribed to monumental buildings in the classical tradition. This is underscored by Goncourt's use of the verb *mettre*, which means to place or arrange, as in setting a table, as well as to put on clothes – both actions that were once embedded in richly symbolic systems of decorum that in the modern era are flattened to decoration, whereby the rhetorical function of literary style as the deployment of a genre appropriate to its situation is reduced to style as bourgeois fashion. The bed is also figured as resisting the flattening and abstraction of style by mediating between ground and sky, or at least the representation of it in the form and décor of the bed's canopy. Goncourt says that his bed "makes the happiest miniature room on the retreating design of the bed's canopy."[33] The author then characterizes this miniature cosmology of the bed as the taste for the collective architecture of furniture,[34] which is in turn described in compositional terms as a combination of shapes, a play of decorative moldings, and the contrast of straight and curved lines. He concludes by likening this furniture architecture to an engraving, with the double sense of carving, material cut out from the plate, and printing, the flatness of the image produced by the plate.[35] In short, architectural composition is part of his poetic spatial construction, though its utilitarian aspects interrupt this. Indeed, Goncourt's bed serves as a diminutive model of Viel's theory of style, while also playing on a historicized sense of style linked with a disciplinary modernization that arguably undermined it.

[32] Ibid., 197. "Un lit, un immense lit, un lit prenant toute la chamber… un de ces lits monumentaux dans lesquels le dix-huitième siècle mettait à l'aise et la naissance et la mort de l'homme."
[33] Ibid. "faisant les plus heureux compartiments sur les plans en retraite du ciel de lit"
[34] "*le goût de l'architecture générale du meuble*"
[35] Ibid., 198.

Thus in Goncourt's *La Maison d'un artiste* we find a refraction of the forms of decadence. This takes it beyond both the presentation of decadent themes and the execution of a decadent prose style. And it is only through the architectural form of the house that this refraction is captured. The pictorial analogies drawn from Goncourt's work largely focus on Impressionism and as such are kept on the level of the surface, be it the page or the canvas, with words having an impastic quality. Explorations of spatial and temporal fracture in painting, such as in cubist and collage representational practices, were not yet developed. Therefore, the picture plane, like Zola's advertisement image of the Ladies' Paradise, still coheres the "social-historical ensemble" – to harken back to Lukács. It is through literary representations of architectural dimensions that decadent authors such as the elder Goncourt explore a complex layering of decadence and, ultimately, construct their decadent designs.

To conclude, the self-conscious engagement with decadence that occurs in literature in the last half of nineteenth-century Paris is not wholly removed from architectural design, which suggests that the role of architecture in decadent discourse and the role of decadence in architectural practice need not be relegated to a passive register of varying conceptions of decadence. While literary scholars have increasingly seen links between decadent texts and both the modernist and postmodernist novel, architecture remains relatively unaware of its decadent genealogy.[36] Decadence as a literary style does not fit a constant type, and reading the genre through the lens of architectural conceptions of decadence adds further gradations. The works of Flaubert are different from those of Goncourt, whose works are distinct from those of Huysmans. Arguably this speaks to the operative agency afforded through the creative practice of designing decadence. Ultimately, the lesson of decadent literature for architecture is that creative practice

[36] Calinescu, *Five Faces of Modernity;* Naomi Schor, *Reading in Detail: Aesthetics and the Feminine* (New York: Methuen, 1987); Weir, *Decadence and the Making of Modernism.*

can produce decadent designs, rather than perfected forms or utopian correctives, that exceed both their decadent times and their decadent labels.

Figure 2.1 Joseph Mallord William Turner, *The Decline of the Carthaginian Empire*, 1817. Oil on canvas, 170.2 x 238.8 cm. (The Tate Gallery, London.)

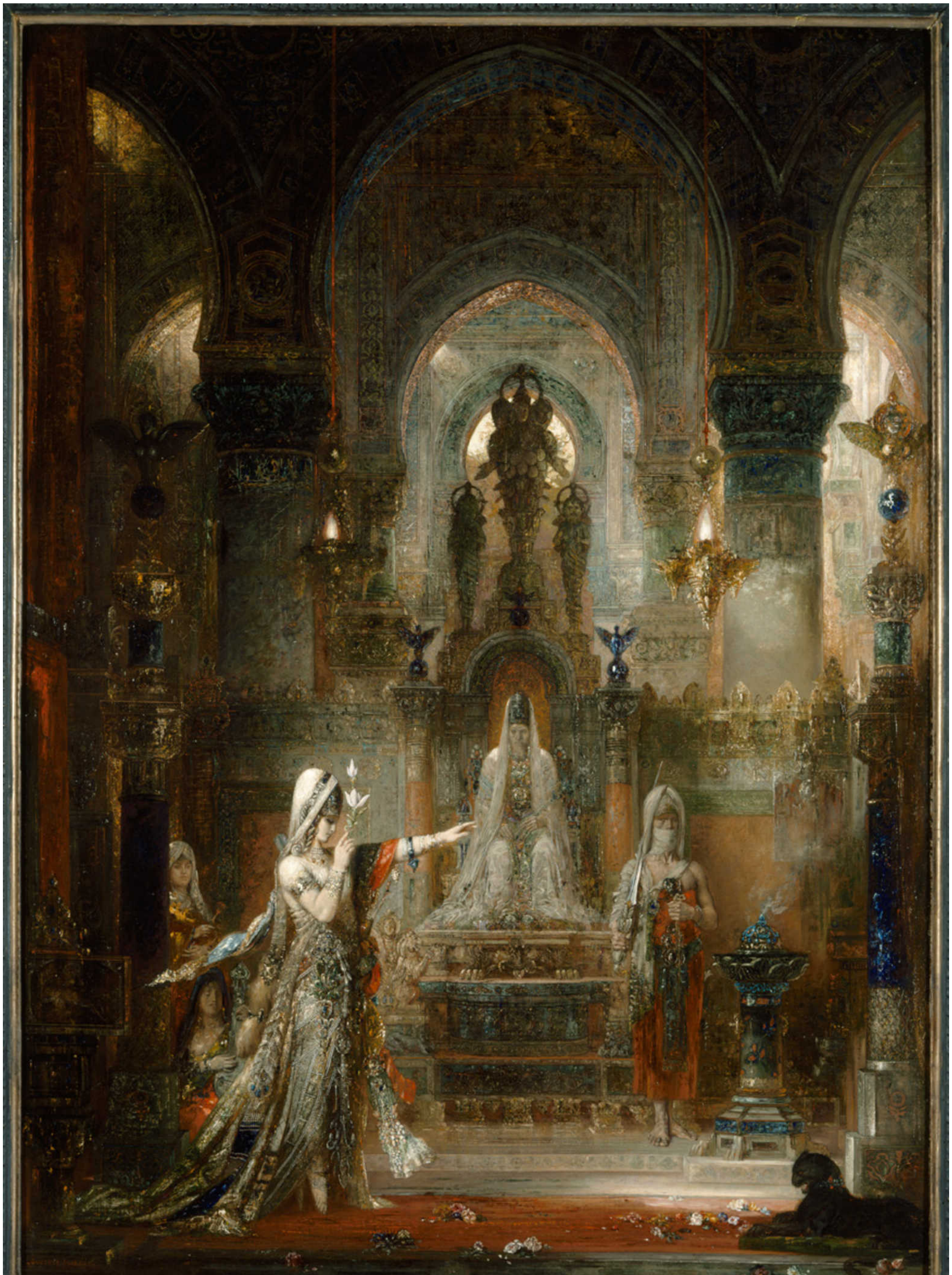


Figure 2.2 Gustave Moreau, *Salome Dancing before Herod*, 1874-76. Oil on canvas, 143.5 x 104.3 cm. (The Armand Hammer Collection. Hammer Museum, Los Angeles.)

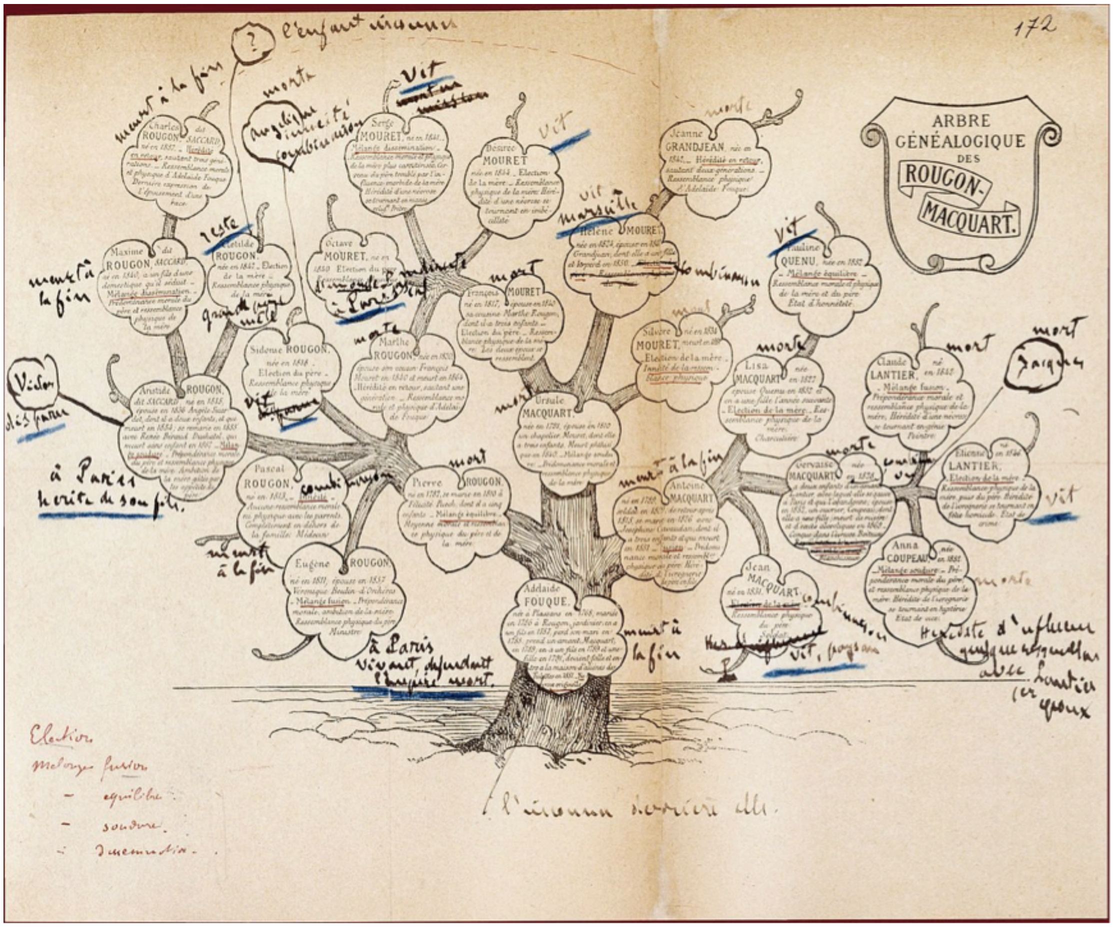


Figure 2.3 Annotated family tree of Rougon-Macquart by Émile Zola, 1892. Made in preparation for the novel *Le Docteur Pascal*. (Bibliothèque nationale de France.)

Figure 2.4 Postcard of Le Bon Marché à Paris, ca. late nineteenth century.

Figure 2.5 *Les Nouveaux Agrandissements des magasins du Bon Marché: Le rayon de la faïences japonaises*, from *L'Illustration*, 1880. (Bibliothèque nationale de France.)

Figure 2.6 *Grand magasin du Bon Marché. Le hall et le grand escalier*, 1872. (Bibliothèque nationale de France.)

Figure 2.7 Photograph of *Le Bon Marché Rive Gauche* in Paris. (LVMH.)

Figure 2.8 Early advertisement for the Bon Marché, ca. nineteenth century. (Michael B. Miller, *The Bon Marché: Bourgeois Culture and the Department Store, 1869-1920.*)

Figure 2.9 Grand Salon de la maison des Goncourt, 1883. Fernand Lochard, photographer. (Bibliothèque nationale de France.)

Figure 2.10 Edgar Degas, *Dans un café*, 1875-76. Oil on canvas, 92 x 68.5 cm. (Musée d'Orsay, Paris.)

Figure 2.11 Vestibule de la maison des Goncourt, 1886. (Bibliothèque nationale de France.)

Figure 2.12 La Maison des Goncourt à Autueil (Paris), 1886. Fernand Lochard, photographer. (Bibliothèque nationale de France.)

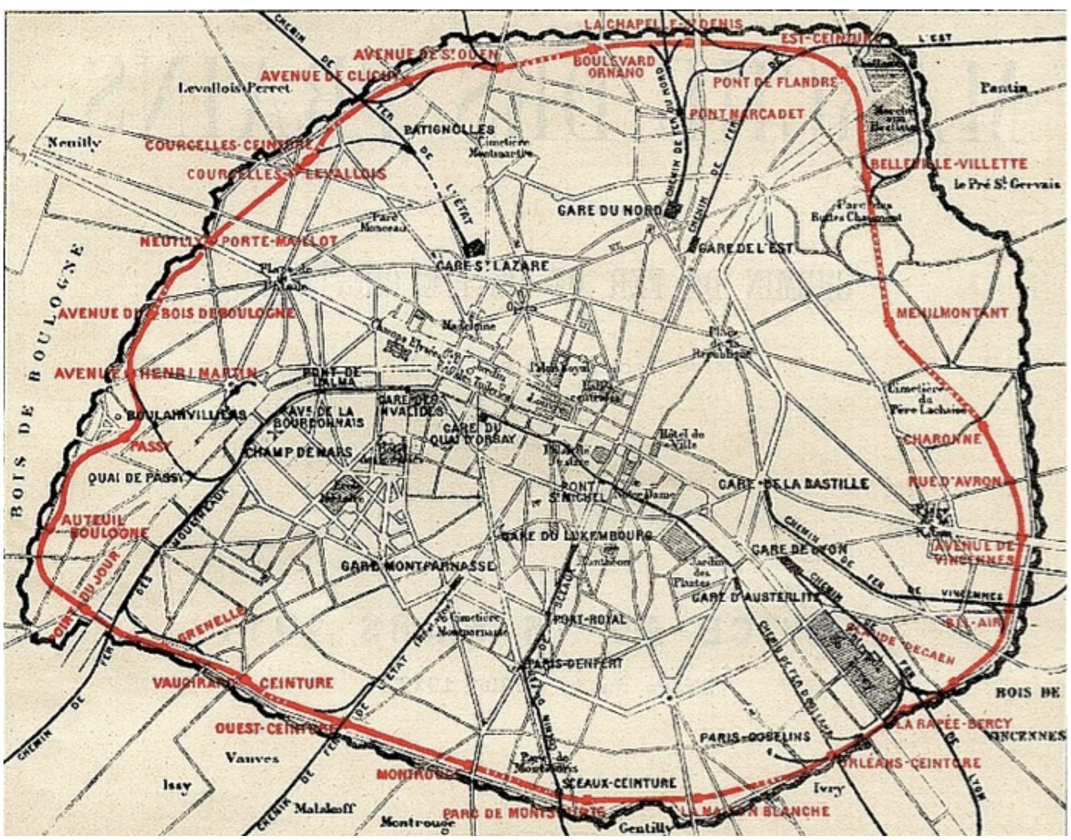
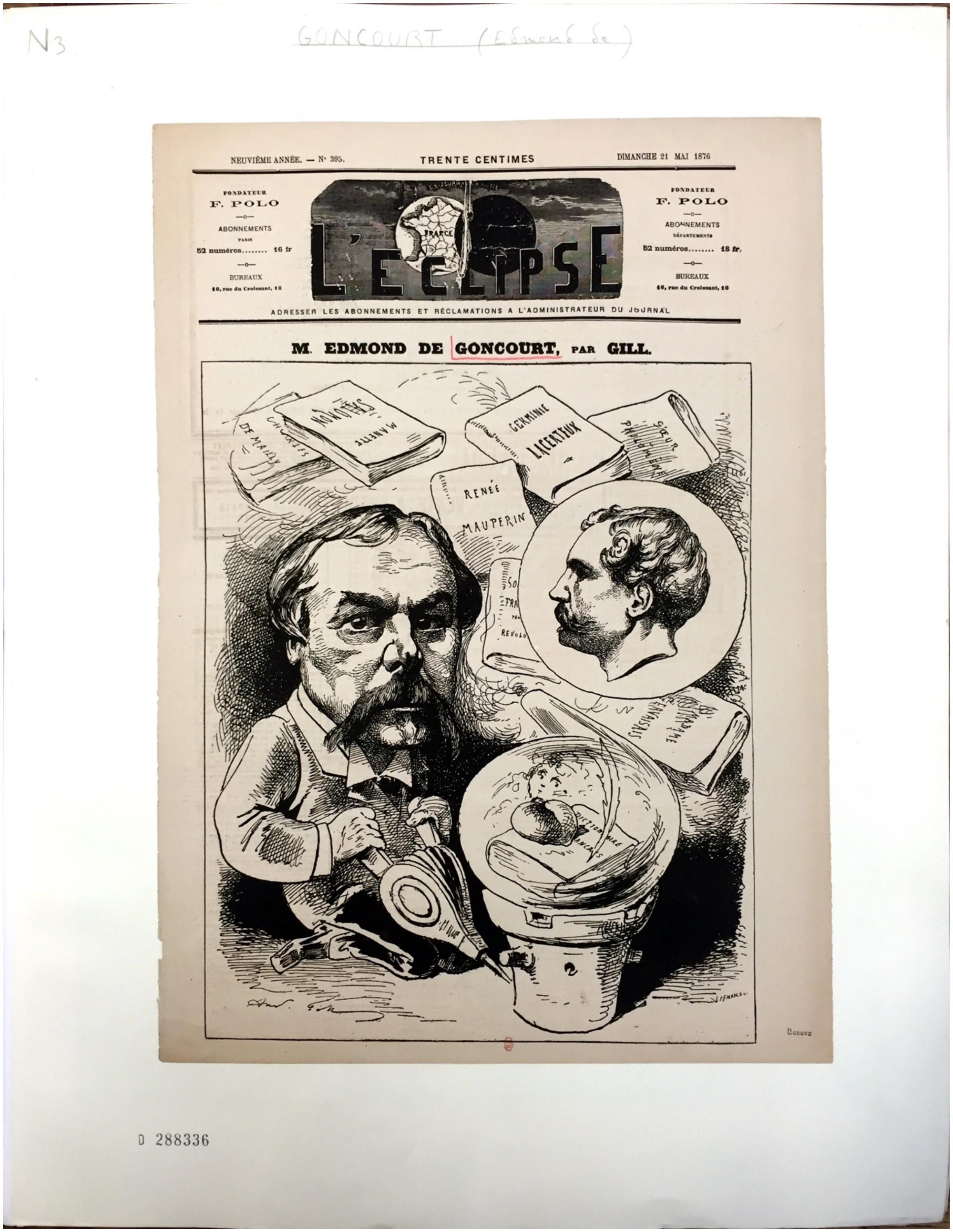


Figure 2.13 Railway map of the Paris Petite Ceinture train line.



N3 GONCOURT (Edmond de)

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Figure 2.14 Caricature of Edmond de Goncourt in *Journal l'Eclipse*, 1876. André Gill, illustrator. (Bibliothèque nationale de France.)

Figure 2.15 Photograph of the Auteuil station in ruins, Paris under Commune, ca. 1871.

Figure 2.16 "Salle à manger de ma maison d'Auteuil / Panneau de la Cheminée," 1883. Fernand Lochard, photographer. (Bibliothèque nationale de France.)

Figure 2.17 “Le Grenier / La petite pièce du fond située au dessus de ma chambre à coucher,” 1886. Fernand Lochard, photographer. (Bibliothèque nationale de France.)

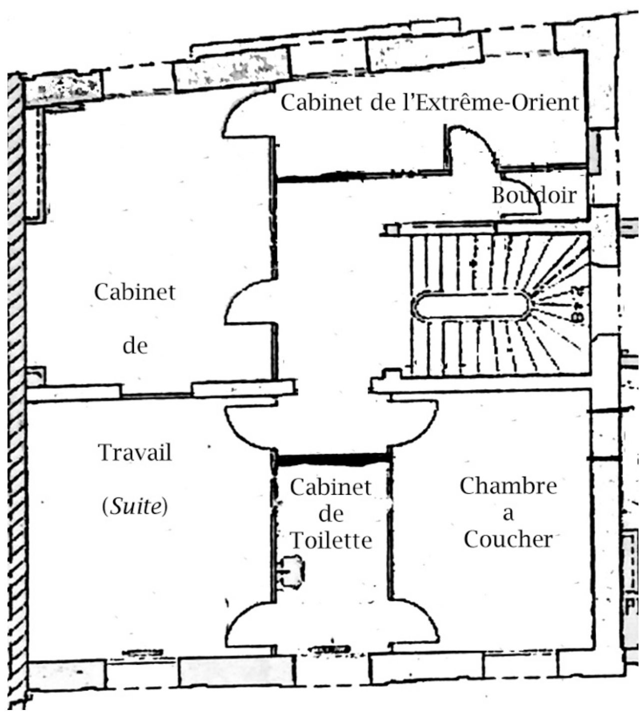

Figure 2.18 Floorplan of the Goncourt House.

Figure 2.19 “Cabinet de l’Extrême-Orient. / Panneau du fond de la grande vitrines des porcelains,” 1886. Fernand Lochard, photographer. (Bibliothèque nationale de France.)

Figure 2.20 Cabinet de travail de la maison des Goncourt, 1886. Fernand Lochard, photographer. (Bibliothèque nationale de France.)

Figure 2.21 "Cabinet de travail / Panneau contre le cabinet de toilette / dont la porte est ouverte," 1886. Fernand Lochard, photographer. (Bibliothèque nationale de France.)

Figure 2.22 "Chambre à coucher de ma maison d'Auteuil," 1883. Fernand Lochard, photographer. (Bibliothèque nationale de France.)

Chapter 3
The Sacré-Coeur: From Material Iconography to Material Ideology

At the close of the nineteenth century the Sacré-Coeur basilica was a divisive image leveraged by two oppositional political factions: Catholic counter-revolutionaries and radical socialists. Presenting the church as an ex-voto was a talismanic safeguard against the foreign invasion and civil war that had pushed France to the brink of catastrophe that, in the 1870s, characterized Catholic fears following the 1871 Paris Commune [Figure 3.1]. By contrast, placarding an image of the church as shrouded by a demonic apparition signaled that the Catholic Church was itself the source of decadence [Figure 3.2].

Completed in the twentieth century, the Sacré-Coeur basilica embodies the ongoing confrontation, since the French Revolution, between Catholic-Monarchists and Secular-Republicans. Its devotional source is the image of the Sacred Heart of Jesus [Figures 3.3 & 3.4]. In the seventeenth century, visionaries such as Marguerite-Marie Alacoque claimed that Jesus displayed his heart to them as a fount of grace.[1] The emblem endured through the eighteenth century and was credited with ending the plague of 1720 in Marseille. Then in 1789, Catholics wore the emblem seeking protection during the Revolution.[2] Thus the image of the Sacred Heart of Jesus became politicized as an oppositional symbol that challenged a revolution hostile to Catholic belief. Its devotional history, as well as its status as a political insignia that represented an alternative to the idealized Republic, is on full display at the top of the lithograph by Achille

[1] For more on the devotional history of the Sacred Heart, see Raymond Jonas, *France and the Cult of the Sacred Heart: An Epic Tale for Modern Times* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000).

[2] Emblems of the Sacred Heart were strongly associated with the Vendée where it was worn as a symbol of counter-revolution in the western regions during the popular revolt.

Sirouy of the ex-voto church [Figure 3.1]. With the construction of the basilica on Montmartre, the cult of the Sacred Heart would transition from a protective emblem sewn into the inside of a jacket to an actor on the monumental landscape of Paris.

The project to build a church committed to the Sacred Heart of Jesus as a national vow predated the Terrible Year of 1871. Nevertheless, the Commune is central to the polemical imagery of the structure. Beginning in the early Third Republic, the church became a political mark as it represented an anti-Communard monument for the radical Left [Figure 3.5]. That legacy informs David Harvey's reading of the basilica, which serves as a coda to his seminal text *Paris, Capital of Modernity*; it appeared earlier as an article titled "Monument and Myth."[3] The fault line, from this side of the debate, ran along the issues of representation and visibility in the urban setting of Paris. Harvey begins his essay narrating numerous locations from which Parisians might witness the church during their daily routines. He then provocatively describes its visibility from the tomb of Adolphe Thiers in the Père Lachaise cemetery and the visual disconnect within that same graveyard from the Mur des Fédérés, a site where some of the last Communards were executed: "You cannot see Sacré-Coeur from that ivy-covered wall now shaded by an aging chestnut. That place of pilgrimage for socialists, workers, and their leaders is hidden from a place of pilgrimage for the Catholic faithful by the brow of the hill on which stands the grim tomb of Adolphe Thiers."[4] However, the visibility of the basilica and its veil over the events of the Commune hides another aspect of the church – its own modernization.

Like the writings of Charles-François Viel, the Sacré-Coeur has been largely left out of Modernist accounts of architectural history, if not explicitly for its conservative politics, then for its lack of engagement with new industrial materials and constructional techniques. More recent

[3] David Harvey, "Monument and Myth," *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 69 (1979): 362-81; and "The Building of the Basilica of Sacré-Cœur" in *Paris, Capital of Modernity* (New York: Routledge, 2003): 311-340.

[4] Harvey, *Paris*, 311.

studies from the fields of architecture and history have sought to fill the historical gap by examining the church's history in its fuller spiritual, philosophical, political, social, and economic contexts.[5] This chapter intervenes within that opening by identifying a suite of visual, financial, and material strategies deployed in the design of the Sacré-Coeur basilica. In so doing, my analysis identifies the Montmartre church as an early and important participant in a shift of material address that underpins a larger trend of modernization within church architecture. The oppositional oscillation within the decadent polemics of the church, wherein the church and the Left also share a common enemy under the label of decadence – the bourgeois culture of the Second Empire, both shapes the church and conceals this transition. Expanding the frame of decadence through the thematic lens of materiality reveals a church architecture moving away from a situated iconography and towards a more modern material ideology.

Formulating the Vow: From Lay to Clerical Visions

The founding figures of the Sacré-Coeur basilica in Paris include both lay and clerical characters. The layman Alexandre Legentil first made the vow and found support, and, ultimately, sponsorship, through clergymen, including François Désiré Edouard Pie, bishop in Poitiers, and Joseph Hippolyte Guibert, archbishop of Paris following the Commune. Legentil moved his family from Paris to Poitiers, when French defeats on the frontiers in the Franco-Prussian war left the capital open to attack. It was in this context of fear and panic that Legentil resolved to devote himself to a church dedicated to the Sacred Heart of Jesus. He made his

[5] In addition to the historical work of Jonas cited above, Claude Laroche has contributed the most in-depth architectural account of the building and sought to put it in relation to other Catholic building projects during the second half of the nineteenth century. Raymond Jonas has said of Harvey's reading of the basilica, "This ahistorical discourse…still thriving in some circles today, made of the Sacré-Cœur a handy political target, but as historical analysis it misses the point" (241).

pledge to God on the condition that he would pursue this work of reparation if the city of Paris were spared from occupation.[6]

Legentil's promise to build a church in Paris dedicated to the Sacred Heart ties into the folk tradition of the Sacré-Coeur as a protective talisman. His vow was not unique at the time. Indeed, multiple cities in France made consecrations amid the national calamity, including Nantes, Angers, and Lyon. Most notable among these was Lyon [Figure 3.6]. There, just before Legentil's vow and also during the winter months of 1870-71, a devout group of women proposed their archbishop make a pledge of replacing the aging chapel of Notre-Dame de Fourvière if Lyon was spared from invasion. The archbishop granted the cause, and the diocese added its name to the list of places making pious contracts in the face of a national crisis. Lyon finished its own structure dedicated to the Sacré-Coeur before Paris completed its church. Built between 1872 and 1884, and designed by Pierre Bossan in Romanesque and Byzantine style,[7] the structure sets the Sacré-Coeur of Montmartre into a larger, national, spiritual, and political landscape beyond the urban geography of Paris.

While Legentil's vow was part of a national fervor for consecrations, his commitment to the city of Paris occurred amidst a peculiar set of circumstances, namely that Paris and its bishop remained cut off from the rest of France by the occupation of the German army. The murder of the archbishop of Paris during the subsequent Commune further complicated matters. Whereas other vows, like the one in Lyon, could be supported by the local bishop, Legentil had to find other avenues of promotion: through a well-connected friend, another layman, Hubert Rohault de Fleury, and through the local bishop of Poitiers, François Désiré Edouard Pie. Legentil's time in

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[6] M. Bony, *Vie et oeuvres de Monsieur Alexandre Legentil* (Paris, 1893): 223.

[7] Louis Hautecoeur, *Histoire de l'architecture classique en France*, vol. 7, *La Fin de l'architecture classique, 1848-1900* (Paris: Picard, 1957): 956. Bossan was a student of Henri Labrouste.

Poitiers, where he was waiting out the war, would prove to have a critical influence on the shaping of the vow, especially the honing of its rhetorical potential.

The bishop of Poitiers, Monsignor Pie, was pivotal in raising the stakes of the Sacré-Coeur from a lay tradition of invoking the Sacred Heart of Jesus at times of crisis, such as plague and war, to a potent symbol of historical narrative. Unlike other bishops who were supporting vows and consecrations to the Sacré-Coeur during the war, Pie resisted such calls by acknowledging that the diocese was already, in 1815, dedicated to the Sacred Heart. Instead, he focused on reshaping Legentil's Parisian vow. Pie was a powerful person in the church hierarchy as he was a close adviser to Henri, the comte de Chambord and Bourbon claimant to the throne. Pie was also an industrious campaigner for French military protection of the pope and the pope's temporal authority. For him, the Sacré-Coeur had to be leveraged within a narrative of national decline argued as stemming from the historical rupture of the Revolution, beginning with the symbolic regicide of the king of France and recapitulating in the 1860s with the failure to defend the pope.[8] By linking Legentil's vow to historical narrative and the potent rhetoric of national decline, the bishop of Poitiers brought the polemical hilt of decadence front and center. Indeed, through the influence of Pie, "The proposed church to the Sacré-Coeur would take its place within a grand salvation story as the heroic turning point in the epic saga of French decadence and renewal."[9]

With Pie's influence, Legentil's vow was recast as a national project and was thus distinguished from the vows of other dioceses, which remained localized and largely conditional, aimed at being saved from invasion and occupation. The situation in Paris was different in that

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[8] For more on Pie see: Louis Baunard, *Histoire du cardinal Pie, évêque de Poitiers*, 2 vols. (Poitiers: H. Oudin, 1886); and for more on the historical and political context see: Robert R. Locke, *French Legitimists and the Politics of the Moral Order in the Early Third Republic* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1974); and, Herman Lebovics, *True France: The Wars over Cultural Identity, 1900-1945* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1992).

[9] Jonas, 157.

regard as well, given that the German army already surrounded the city when the vow was formulated and would soon lay siege. The capital could not be spared from the ravages of war. Distinguished by a new sense of historical and political purpose, but cut off from access to the archbishop of Paris, the project would be supported and promoted from afar through an array of actors. Pie could not officially back a project in another diocese, but he could publicize it. He did this by printing the vow in his bulletin, *La Semaine liturgique du diocèse de Poitiers*.[10] Legentil gained other powerful supporters as well, such as the Jesuit Henry Ramière, who, as director of the devotional periodical *Messager du Sacré-Coeur de Jésus* and as founder of the international prayer network *Apostolat de la prière*, helped to publicize the vow. But perhaps most important among these was Legentil's friend Hubert Rohault de Fleury. This fellow layman and early supporter of the vow wrote about the idea to the director of the Dominican order in Rome, Alexandre Jandel, who, in turn, brought the idea to the pope. The pope gave his benediction to the vow on the 25th of February 1871.[11]

During the months following the layman Legentil's initial resolution to pledge a church to the Sacred Heart of Jesus in Paris, the political positioning of the project would be shaped through the advice of clergy. Pie introduced the polemically powerful perspective to interpret the defeats of 1870-71 as a historical consequence of a nation that had turned away from its monarchical institutions and its identity as defender of the church. However, the physical disposition of the church could not be negotiated until the connection to Paris and its archbishop was restored. That would come about in late 1871 when Joseph Hippolyte Guibert took up the position, following the martyred Georges Darboy.[12] Like other clergymen before him, Guibert

[10] *La Semaine liturgique du diocèse de Poitiers*, 29 January 1871, 72-73; Jacques Benoist, *Le Sacré-Cœur de Montmartre de 1870 à nos jours*, 2 vols. (Paris: Ed. Ouvrières, 1992) I:1032-33.

[11] Auguste Hamon, *Histoire de la dévotion au Sacré-Cœur de Jésus*, 5 vols. (Paris: Gabriel Beauchesne, 1923-1939) 5: 44; Benoist, *Le Sacré-Cœur*, I: 90-91; M. Bony, *Legentil*, 234-35.

[12] The position of archbishop of Paris was at this point something of a dangerous posting as all three of Guibert's immediate predecessors had faced violent deaths.

had his owns concerns for shaping the vow before any discussion of a specific building project could move forward. The primary reservation for Guibert was the conditional framing of the vow, that a sanctuary would be built in Paris *if* the city was saved and the pope's independence was restored.[13] With yet another revision, Legentil continued to seek Guibert's backing. The archbishop finally, although somewhat equivocally, conceded, "I'll think about it. Complete your committee. There should be twelve, like the apostles. And come back and see me in a few days."[14] Ultimately, Guibert took up the project and loaded it with much of the same historical narrative as Pie. In a letter written to Legentil's completed committee in January of 1872, which the archbishop symbolically dated on the feast day of Saint Peter to reaffirm the authority of the pope, Guibert invokes the historical crisis of the Revolution stating, "It was from France that the evil which torments us expanded across Europe," but affirms, "France, birthplace of the devotion of the Sacré-Coeur, will also be the origin of the prayers that will lift us and save us."[15]

Despite Guibert's initial reservations about the conditionality of the vow, the archbishop of Paris was a proponent, like Pie, of casting post-revolutionary France as morally decadent. Moreover, Guibert had already begun to leverage that campaign through building projects during his time as archbishop of Tours, from 1857-71. Before coming to Paris, Guibert staged the rebuilding of the basilica of Saint Martin in Tours as a project of moral and religious repair during the Franco-Prussian War when the city briefly served as the effective capital of France. Its medieval basilica of St. Martin had been damaged during the Revolution and the church sought to charge the site as a symbol of the decline resulting from the loss of its political stability. Guibert undertook building a temporary chapel over the tomb as a metaphor for the restoration of

[13] This proved to be a valid concern as the status of the pope was not fulfilled by the vow's terms until 1929 by the Lateran Accords, a time by which those instrumental in formulating the vow, Legentil, Rohault de Fleury, Pie, and Guibert, were all deceased.

[14] J. Paguelle de Follenay, *Vie du cardinal Guibert, archevêque de Paris*, 2 vols. (Paris, 1896), 2: 593-94; quoted in Jonas, 181.

[15] Bony, *Legentil*, 255-57; Jonas, 182

the church's order. Similar objectives later directed his ultimate backing of the Sacré-Coeur in Paris. The links between the two sites in Tours and Paris would continue to grow. In 1870, the night before going into battle, soldiers placed the protective emblem of the Sacred Heart of Jesus over the tomb of St. Martin in Tours. The victory of France in that particular battle increased the popular charge of the site. In 1886 construction of a new basilica began.[16] Like the Sacré-Coeur de Montmartre, it was built of white stone in a neo-Byzantine style [Figure 3.7]. Along with the Notre-Dame de Fourvière in Lyon and the new basilica of Saint Martin in Tours, the church in Paris would be part of a growing coterie of ecclesiastical structures positioned across the national landscape and aimed at correcting the historical rupture of the Revolution and subsequent national decline through the talismanic symbol of the Sacred Heart, transposed from popular personal charm to monumental built form. Guibert, though requiring his own revisions of Legentil's vow, was keenly sensitive to the larger potential of the project and would continue to be a central actor throughout the building's development.

During this period of conceptualization we find a popular cult symbol being strategically deployed by institutional figures. Even though the clerical formulations of the vow fully leveraged the historical rhetoric of decadence that carried so much cultural currency in the latter part of the nineteenth century, it is the power of the emerging populism that will see this church through as a structure that persists within a culture of consumer capital rather than as an oppositional catalyst for its demise. The architectural strategies of the Parisian basilica are as informed by the political and rhetorical tactics of the church as they are by the architectural theories of style and structure that the discipline elevated. The following section examines those crossroads of architectural formulation.

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[16] The architect was Victor Laloux; he is well known for his design of train stations, including the Gare d'Orsay in Paris (1900).

Addressing the Periphery: Reconstruction and "Stylistic Geography" as Politicized Concepts for the Building

The church of the Sacré-Coeur in Paris would be designed by Paul Abadie (1812-1884), and the commission came as the result of a widely publicized open architectural competition [Figures 3.8 – 3.10]. There was a public exhibition of the design entries at the Palais de l'Industrie that ran from February to June of 1874. In addition to the public debates about the schemes, there was a committee of judges. This jury consisted of twelve members, six of whom were voted in by the competing architects and six selected by Guibert. Despite the public display of an open competition and the appointment of a design jury, Archbishop Guibert was the final arbiter, having the authority to accept or deny the committee's recommendation. Abadie may not have been a front-runner in the public eye, but as a diocesan architect in the southwest of France, he was known to the Church's institutional hierarchy. The architect was strategic in his approach to the competition, both in his design choices and by gathering support behind the scenes. His scheme blended Romanesque and Byzantine styles, and, while many of the competition entries featured Italianate domes [Figure 3.11] rather than Gothic towers, his design had a uniquely, and to Parisian eyes alien, eastern inflection. Abadie's stylistic approach to the building was advantageously aligned with the church's political strategy. Furthermore, he successfully urged bishops from Tours, Périgueux, and Bordeaux to write letters in his favor to Guibert.[17] Ultimately, the jury recommended Abadie, and Guibert accepted the selection. It was not entirely a union of shared client and architectural vision, but rather a professional alignment in which the architect was well versed in a regional stylistic anomaly that served the client's representational aims. Nevertheless, both parties were invested in projects of reconstruction – Abadie guided by his training under Viollet-le-Duc and Guibert directed by the church's claims to temporal power.

[17] Archives historiques du diocèse de Paris: Basilique du Sacré-Cœur, carton 2: Letters from Tours (September 3, 1873), Périgueux (September 28, 1873), and Bordeaux (October 2, 1873).

Thus, this association between archbishop and architect constituted an intersection of reigning architectural theory and an ecclesiastical political agenda. Moreover, their interaction at once highlights the ways in which architectural styles were laden with social meaning in the second half of the nineteenth century and also reveals a shared modernization of economies under the cover of those stylistic charges.

By the time Paul Abadie won the Paris Sacré-Coeur commission in 1874, he was already an established diocesan architect in the southwest of France, where he worked on over forty building projects, in addition to numerous restorations. His career crisscrossed back and forth between the southwest region and the capitol. Born in 1812 in Paris, he was the son of a prominent Bordeaux architect, who was based in Angoulême. Abadie studied in the region where his father worked, before attending the École des beaux-arts in Paris from 1835 to 1839. He was, in 1844, assigned to the newly established Commission des monuments historiques, through which he made tours dedicated to the rediscovery of the Middle Ages, and was then appointed second inspector for the Notre-Dame de Paris project led by Jean-Baptiste Lassus and Eugene Viollet-le-Duc. With the creation of a new bureaucratic branch within the French architectural system, the Edifices diocésains, Abadie was, in 1849, reassigned as diocesan architect in the southwest region to Angoulême, Cahors, Périgueux, and La Rochelle.[18] By the 1860s, he was inspector-general of diocesan buildings. While working in the Commission des monuments historiques, he was influenced directly by Viollet-le-Duc. Abadie developed the controversial historical approach of his mentor – namely, that the work of architectural restoration is to reestablish an ideal state rather than preserve the historical artifact. Viollet-le-Duc's theoretical methodology focused on the structural rationality of Gothic architecture, but Abadie spent the

[18] On the unique structure of the government administration of architecture in Paris, see: David Van Zanten, "Nineteenth-Century French Government Architectural Services and the Design of the Monuments of Paris," *Art Journal* 48, 1 (Spring 1989): 16-22.

bulk of his career restoring in a region of France with a different stylistic idiom. In the southwest, there were many Romanesque structures, some with Byzantine influence; there were also crude medieval structures compared to the superior Gothic specimens in the north of France.

Abadie's regional restoration projects foreshadow his design for the Sacré-Coeur at Montmartre. In his façade renovation for the Cathédrale Saint Pierre Angoulême, the architect largely retained the existing medieval design by lightly retouching its sculpture but altered its unusual square-form by adding a central gable and two conical domes over the bell-towers on either side [Figure 3.12]. The elongated shape of the domes and their scale-like stone cladding would be redeployed in his Sacré-Coeur design. That seemingly exotic stylistic feature looked strange to Parisian eyes, which were more accustomed to either the pure geometries of Classicism or the pointed forms of the Gothic. Its design, however, was rooted in the region of Abadie's diocesan work. The Romanesque Église Notre-Dame la Grande in Poitiers has similar elongated domes sheathed in stone tiles over its towers [Figure 3.13]. Abadie's experience in the region allowed him to make architectural reference to a structure in the diocese where Legentil first formulated his vow and gained clerical promotion. It was a situated regional reference that carried as much symbolic meaning for the project of the vow than other more overtly representational schemes submitted in the open competition, such as the entry by Constant Moyaux, who topped his building with a dome reminiscent of the papal tiara [Figure 3.14]. The use of stretched domes was a Gallo-Byzantine stylistic feature that Abadie was well versed in. They are a prominent feature in his renovation of the Cathédrale Saint-Front in Périgueux. This project was a major restoration work that the architect began before designing the church of the Sacred Heart. Unlike the elemental additions to the façade in Angoulême, Saint-Front de Périgueux constituted a comprehensive reconstruction.

The cathedral in Périgueux, like most religious sites, has a long history of building iterations across centuries. Its twelfth-century Romanesque structure was a rare example in France of a Greek-cross plan. Like other Byzantine structures, such as San Marco in Venice and the Hagia Sophia in Constantinople, it featured domes held up by pendentives on a square base of piers. By the eighteenth century, its five domes were in poor condition and covered over by a singular cruciform roof structure to prevent further water damage [Figure 3.16]. Abadie came to the project in 1852 and continued to work on it until the year before his death in 1884. The nineteenth-century architectural restoration of this site included the destruction of sixteenth-century additions and two chapels, as well as the removal of the cruciform roof covering. The crypt was the only part of the structure not completely rebuilt. Abadie retained the layout of the plan and the volumetric proportions of the twelfth-century Romanesque building but entirely replaced its architectural construction. In addition to the complete physical renewal of the structure, the architect embellished the roofline with seventeen lanterns that elongated the profiles of the squat domes and dramatized the gabled cross-arms [Figure 3.17]. The renovation of the Saint-Front Cathedral in Sacré-Coeur was one of the most significant projects of Abadie's career. He had been working on it for over twenty years at the time of the Sacré-Coeur competition in Paris. His design for that monumental basilica echoed the Périgueux structure with its five-dome scheme topped by numerous lanterns, all clad in a rough texture of stone tiles. But the Sacré-Coeur was a new build in Paris, and as such it raises questions about the politics of style and about the broader implications of restoration.

In his article on the design of monuments in nineteenth-century Paris, David Van Zanten distinguishes between what he describes as the "representational" work of politically symbolic structures, such as the Panthéon, Hôtel de Ville, Tuileries, and Opéra, and the preservation work led by Viollet-le-Duc. Van Zanten argues that representational structures were by nature more conservative, obedient to the reigning power structures, and "alive" in the sense that they sought to act on the urban stage of contemporary politics. Conversely, reconstructions under the newer and separate branch of the Monuments historiques are read as asserting an architectural agenda by restoring a history of construction rather than by participating in present politics, and, as such, were "deadening" museum pieces more than animated actors.[19] The Sacré-Coeur complicates the division between representational and restoration work. There can be no doubt that it was a symbolic structure; yet it was also a type extracted from a regional aberration and transplanted to Paris with a desire to restore the church's temporal order rather than to animate itself as an extension of history.

Before the design competition could be announced, a site had to be chosen. During the selection process, we see the first glimpse of how Guibert and the committee for the national vow envisioned their potential church as an actor on the monumental landscape of Paris. Legentil, creator of the vow and an influential member of the committee, advocated strongly that the votive church supplant Charles Garnier's then-unfinished Opéra [Figure 3.18]. In an effort to atone for the decadence of the Second Empire, it made rhetorical logic to dethrone the crown jewel of Haussmann's Paris. Garnier's Opéra and Abadie's Sacré-Coeur will long be associated as competing monuments of decadence. Later critics of the basilica will propose its radical conversion into a theater for the people [Figure 3.19],[20] and neo-decadent author Michel Houellebecq will link them in a single image in his twenty-first-century novel *Submission*: "A giant, anvil-shaped cumulonimbus cloud hovered over the north of Paris, all the way from the Sacré-Coeur to the Opéra, its sides a dark, sooty gray."[21] But for the archbishop Guibert, overtaking Garnier's site was more complicated. Tearing down a nearly finished structure was

[19] Van Zanten, 21.
[20] See: Gustave Téry, *Les Cordicoles* (Paris: E. Cornély, 1902).
[21] Houellebecq, 95.

itself a kind of decadence. And not only would he need approval from the government, he would risk upsetting his friendship with Garnier.[22] Guibert set his sights on Montmartre instead, and the reasons for doing so were likely numerous given his wide range of concerns.

Of course the visibility of the church and the politics of acquiring real-estate were driving factors in selecting the site of the future basilica, but those considerations were also tempered by the Church's pastoral efforts to respond to the urban and social reconfiguration of Paris under Louis-Napoleon and Haussmann. The remodel of Paris during the Second Empire not only cut through the city's medieval core it also displaced the working classes. Before he was killed during the Commune, Guibert's predecessor had sought to reevaluate the distribution of churches in the suburbs of Paris. Guibert carried forward those concerns to address the displacement of popular Paris to the edges, for example, by overseeing a new parish church in the underserved neighborhood of la Villette [Figure 3.20]. Indeed, while the Commission de monuments historiques was preserving centuries-old religious monuments, the diocesan architects were busy repairing war-damaged parish churches as well as designing new ones. Both the geography and typology of church building was changing in the nineteenth century. While cathedrals were no longer expanding, parish churches along the outskirts of the capital were growing in numbers and new types of structures were appearing across the nation – including votive churches, like the Sacré-Coeur, and basilicas marking new sites of pilgrimage, such as Lourdes [Figures 3.21 & 3.22].[23]

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[22] The rhetorical opposition between the Opéra and the Sacré-Coeur, though powerful, is nuanced by the relationship between Garnier and Guibert. Garnier was a judge for the national vow design competition but, more importantly, remained thoughout his life a confidant of Guibert. The numerous letters between them are archived at the Archive historique du diocèse de Paris and warrant further study.

[23] Claude Laroche points to this change, see: "Les enjeux multiples de l'architecture religieuse du second XIX^{e} siècle en France: un essai de litanies" *In Situ* 11 (2009): 1-32. Historical studies have also traced this trend, most notably: Suzanne K. Kaufman, *Consuming Visions: Mass Culture and the Lourdes Shrine* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2005). For a study within architectural history, see, for example, the recent dissertation: Jessica Basciano, "Architecture and Popular Religion: French Pilgrimage Churches of the Nineteenth Century" (PhD diss., Columbia University, 2012).

The site on Montmartre offered a prime location for symbolic potential and established a new kind of ecclesiastical anchor at the periphery.[24] When it came to the question of what style this new typology of church would be expressed in, Byzantine-Romanesque would not have been the obvious answer given the contemporaneous architectural debates around classical form and neo-Gothic structural rationalism. But the enthusiasm for archeology had led to explorations of other regional stylistic idioms such as in Normandy and the Dordogne. At the time, the Gothic style had become laden with numerous claims that crisscrossed political, social, and religious allegiances.[25] Key among these were the assertion of architectural constructional principles, the desire amongst some Catholics to record and analyze the iconographic program of medieval structures, and the quest to establish the origins of the style to promote nationalist identity. It is in the context of the last claim that the curiosity of the Romano-Byzantine style, as it appeared in southwest France, was first explored. In 1851, the year before Abadie began his restoration project of Saint-Front in Périgueux, Félix de Verneilh published his major work *L'Architecture Byzantine en France*.[26] The first part of the text provides a detailed study of Saint-Front. It is followed by a second part that analyzes other domed churches. Verneilh, an archeological scholar, had connections to Jean-Baptiste Lassus and Adolphe-Napoléon Didron, both of whom were strong proponents of studying iconography.[27] Verneilh published much of his work in Didron's *Annales Archéologiques*, but the scholar and the editor-in-chief had a falling out over

[24] The site was also significant in religious history as the location of Saint Denis's martyrdom; the location was a key munitions hold during the Commune, as Harvey focuses on (n.4), which, though not the only factor in the site selection, was part of the Church's claims of historical decadence unfolding since the Revolution; and the land obtained was designated a "public utility," Guibert having taken timely advantage of the monarchist majority (though divided) in the National Assembly following the Commune.

[25] See: Elizabeth Emery, *Romancing the Cathedral: Gothic Architecture in Fin-de-Siecle French Culture* (Albany: State University of New York, 2001).

[26] Félix de Verneilh, *L'architecture byzantine en France: Saint-Front de Périgueux et les églises à coupoles de l'Aquitaine* (Paris: V. Didron, 1851). Verneilh was working on the project as early as 1840 and publishing his early studies as papers.

[27] This is evidenced in Didron's seminal *Monographie de la cathédrale de Chartres*, which was an epic undertaking, consisting of nine volumes that came out between 1842 and 1865.

Vernheil's willingness to incorporate secular interpretations of medieval sculpture; the editor preferred he adhere solely to the symbolic meanings of religious iconography.[28] Nevertheless, Verneilh was instrumental in the debates that identified France as the birthplace of the Gothic.[29] He extended his reading to the churches he studied in the southwest, establishing them as a kind of "Gallo-Byzantine" style.

All of these stylistic debates were fraught with many claims of decadence in the middle of the nineteenth century. Where the Gothic had been regarded in the previous century as a decadent falling away from Classical forms, it was now the emblem of both national identity and rationality. Thus the intrusion of foreign influences and excessive ornament could be new symptoms of cultural decadence. Conversely, Ludovic Vitet regarded the Gothic style as dead and thus decadent.[30] He too argued for studying Byzantine art in France, not because he theorized it as a model specimen, but because it offered an example of organic stylistic admixture. For his part, Verneilh was careful to counter any possible claims of decadence in his text on Byzantine architecture in France.[31] Nevertheless, he was alarmed by Abadie's restoration at Saint-Front.[32] Despite Verneilh's claims for a unique Gallo-Byzantine style, Abadie's projects, especially at Saint-Front and its later reiteration on Montmartre, added architectural flourishes that exceeded the archeological scope of reconstruction. This is most notable in the copious lanterns that sit atop Saint-Front and that only increase in number at the Sacré-Coeur. In the midst of the reconstruction of the church in Perigueux, the English architect George Gilbert Scott

[28] See: Henry Kraus, *The Living Theater of Medieval Art*, (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1967): 3-5.

[29] His influential articles on this include, for example: "Ogive. L'ancienne signification de ce mot," *Annales archéologiques*, (1844, t. I): 209-210; and, "Origine française de l'architecture ogivale," *Annales archéologiques*, (1845, t. III): 1-7.

[30] See for example: Ludovic Vitet, "Des etudes archéologiques," *Revue archéologique* 4 (1847): 385-93.

[31] Verneilh, *L'architecture byzantine en France*, 76, 102, 120, and especially 307.

[32] See: Marcel Durliat, "Abadie et la restauration monumentale au XIX^{e} siècle," in *Paul Abadie, architecte, 1812-1884*, (Paris: Editions de la Réunion des musées nationaux, 1988): 14-19.

visited the site and noted the various embellishments appearing above the renovation of the domes:

> This is covered by a dome finished externally with the curious round topped protuberances which cover the spires here & at Poitiers & Angouleme, & out of this dome grows a little circular temple itself similarly domed. Each [spire pier?] has a pyramidal covering finished with a similar little temple.[33]

Ten years after Scott's observation about Abadie's "curious protuberances" in Perigueux, critics ranging from trade journals to the Catholic press would be similarly mystified.[34] The conservative newspaper *l'Univers* mocked, "It's not a dome that crowns the edifice but six ovoid cupolas, which are accosted by yet another eighteen smaller ones, which brings the total to twenty-four. That's a lot for a single church."[35] One of the leading denigrators of Abadie's work was the Abbé Carle, who cited critics labeling the architect's design in Paris as "pastiche" to support his claims that the style of the church was foreign and derivative.[36]

For all of the stylistic charges of decadence, the archbishop Guibert, like his fellow clergymen backing the vow to build a votive church in Paris dedicated to the Sacred Heart of Jesus, had their sights on addressing not stylistic propriety but temporal order. In his work on Abadie, Carle Laroche pointed to the claim of pastiche as the major bias to overcome in contemporary scholarship on the nineteenth-century architect and suggested understanding Abadie's embellished neo-Byzantine work as situated within a larger "stylistic geography."[37]

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[33] Quoted in Gavin Stamp, "In Search of the Byzantine: George Gilbert Scott's Diary of an Architectural Tour in France in 1862," *Architectural History* 46 (2003): 204.

[34] See, for example: "Concours d'architecture pour la construction de l'eglise du Sacré-Coeur à Paris-Montmartre," in the trade journal, *Le Bâtiment: Journal des travaux publics et particuliers* (July 26, 1874), which notes the numerous domes, "The main dome is supported by four smaller domes and by a multitude of others arrayed all around."

[35] Quoted in Jonas, 192.

[36] Abbé Carle, "Un comité d'archéologues," *L'Église du Sacré-Coeur à Montmartre sera-t-elle de notre style national ou sera-t-elle d'un style étranger?* (Paris, 1875): 12. Carle, like Lassus and Didron, was in favor of advancing the iconographic program of the Gothic style. Thus, the implications of Abadie's "pastiche" arguably go beyond the charges of being alien, pagan, or blind-copy and also suggest an illegibility.

[37] Laroche, "Les enjeux multiples de l'architecture religieuse," 5. He writes, "Donc, en résumé, c'est une vision géographique, voire cartographique de l'architecture religieuse qu'il serait intéressant d'avoir pour cette

Indeed, the politics of that geography were infused within Abadie's design for the Sacré-Coeur, which made an emblem drawn from a regional idiom rather than the Île-de-France. The Church was leveraging its strength within areas of France that had a history of dissenting against the political claims of the capital. The first moves in its larger campaign included restoring ecclesiastical sites from Tours to Perigueux. Then they took that message directly to Paris. Claims that the structure of the Sacré-Coeur was a provocation for civil war were not entirely exaggerated. Ultimately, the church toggled between the politics of power (heretofore a representational game) and staging transcendental claims. We see this, for example, in the various ways in which Abadie frames the work. Sometimes he describes his design as "the *style* of the Sacred Heart,"[38] and sometimes he aspires that it become a *type*.[39] The oscillation between the contingencies of style and the ahistorical purity informing the, indeed transcendental, nature of type shapes both the church itself and the modernized fundraising needed to build it.

Funding Structures of the Sacré-Coeur

While the formation of the vow to build a votive church dedicated to the Sacred Heart of Jesus in Paris was formulated by an exchange between lay and clerical voices, building the church would require a massive mobilization of funds that far exceeded the standard financing strategy of soliciting large donations from the wealthiest church members. It was Guibert's chosen site on top of Montmartre that fundamentally altered the capital and time needed to complete the basilica [Figures 3.23 & 3.24]. The enthusiasm for a votive church following the devastation of the Franco-Prussian War and the Commune drove funds to the Church. It was

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époque, mettant en évidence des foyers, des linéaments, des filières, des voies de propagation. Bref, une géographie stylistique, mais qui dépasserait la seule question du style."

[38] *Bulletin de l'oeuvre du voeu national au Sacré-Coeur de Jésus* 10 (1886): 155; also quoted in Jonas, 195. My emphasis.

[39] See: *Correspondance du cardinal Pie évêque de Poitiers et de Mgr Cousseau évêque d'Angoulême; 1849-1873* (Saint-Amand: imprimerie Saint-Joseph, 1894): 640.

expected that the structure would be completed within two years. However, when construction began following the competition, it was quickly revealed that the effects of centuries of mining the hill of Montmartre for plaster meant that there was no solid ground for the foundations of the church [Figures 3.25 & 3.26]. The solution would be to sink pilings, through the layers of softer minerals and through the mining tunnels, down to the bedrock of gypsum [Figures 3.27 – 3.29]. This unique engineering feat meant that it would be impossible to complete the basilica quickly. In fact, the church would not be consecrated until after the First World War. It also necessitated the Catholic Church to raise much more money than anticipated.

Completing the subterranean structure consumed most of the funds raised following the Terrible Year. The first response for raising more capital was to tap into the growing popularity of pilgrimage. The Sacré-Coeur was already envisioned as participating in this type of worship: the design competition stipulated side aisles and Abadie's design provided a wide ambulatory. But in order to generate income as a pilgrimage site, the church needed a structure. The solution was to build a temporary chapel. With a place to receive a steady stream of pilgrims, the site could generate donations and thus sustain, through popular support, what would be a drawn-out and expensive construction project. The Church's ongoing funding strategies for the basilica on Montmartre included an array of tactics that kept the project visible, leveraged the construction process for contributions, and drew in support from Catholic workers and peasants.

One of these strategies entailed graphic comparison of the Sacré-Coeur with other monuments in Paris. In the monthly bulletin dedicated to keeping supporters informed of the basilica's progress, there appeared scaled side-by-side sections of Soufflot's Panthéon and Abadie's Sacré-Coeur [Figure 3.33]. The comparison was somewhat unflattering, as the Panthéon is better proportioned and on a grander scale. Nevertheless, it staged the Sacré-Coeur as in conversation with the monumental landscape of Paris. Asserting its symbolic status, the caption to the image declares that the top of the Panthéon's dome is at the same level as the ground of the Sacré-Coeur.[40] This description of the relationship between the two structures sets up a clear rhetorical strategy of standing not only outside of, but also above, an urban setting in which a church might be reconsecrated as a secular temple.[41]

Additional illustration-based strategies were utilized in the ongoing funding campaign for the building. In another issue of the bulletin, about a year after the Panthéon comparison, readers found a partially rendered drawing of the church. In this instance, the building is shown in a longitudinal section. The profile is outlined with a continuous thin line, and the interior elevation is illustrated to about the height of the central vault [Figure 3.34]. The contrast between the rendering of completed construction and the ghostly remaining shell incentivized donations. The image was periodically updated in the bulletin to keep supporters engaged and the money coming in. Such graphic strategies may have played a part in the decision to elongate the central dome [Figures 3.35 & 3.36]. In the two sections illustrated in the bulletin, the comparison to the Panthéon in 1887 and the partially rendered profile from 1888, we can see that the height of the central dome has grown. This process happened over the course of time between Abadie's death in 1884 and the building's completion in 1914. A series of architects took on the project after Abadie, but the scheme was largely maintained, other than the elongation of the domes. The representational funding strategies, and its extension to the symbolic function of the building itself, were primarily concerns for the wealthy, the educated, and thus the powerful. These were innovative techniques for a modernized funding campaign but they still spoke mainly to the representational concerns of older models of financial patronage. Methods of appealing to working class Parisians and provincial pilgrims took on a different range of visual strategies.

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[40] *Bulletin de l'oeuvre du voeu national au Sacré-Coeur de Jésus* 12 (1887): 245.

[41] On the Panthéon, see: Mona Ozouf, "Le Panthéon: L'École Normale des morts," in Pierre Nora, ed., *Les Lieux de mémoire*, vol. I, La République (Paris: Gallimard, 1984): 139-66; and, *Le Panthéon, symbole des révolutions: de l'église de la nation au temple des grands hommes* (Montréal: Centre canadien d'architecture, 1989).

One site of overlap between these two demographics of donations was the stonework of the church. Wealthier contributors could purchase building elements; with structural columns being the most expensive and even more costly if it included an inscription at eye level or displayed a coat of arms. The stones of the church also offered funding strategies for the lower classes, but these tactics were at turns more personal and more abstract. The most image-based strategy directed towards the demographics contributing smaller sums of money was the production of prints and photographs that showed the physical labor of the construction [Figure 3.32].[42] Indeed, the building of this monument created jobs at a time of economic depression following the initial boom of the Belle Époque. In these photographs, it is the representation of the work itself, the jobs provided, rather than the completion of a political symbol that motivated continued donation. Other funding strategies involving the construction process took a more sentimental approach. In this instance, donors could have their "prayers wrapped in stone."[43] This practice took advantage of the notches made in the stone coursing for mechanical equipment such as pulleys. Once the tools were removed, a small corked glass tube containing an individual prayer inscribed on a slip of paper was placed into the hole and covered over by the stones as they were set into place [Figure 3.30]. In order to have your prayer placed in a stone, you first had to buy the stone itself. Related to this strategy was the *carte du Sacré-Coeur*. This was the most abstract fundraising tactic, and it was designed to encourage incremental small investments [Figure 3.31]. Each card was simply a large empty grid composed of forty-one vertical by thirty-one horizontal cells. The bottom states that each card is a stone and that each square on the card represents two sous.[44] The card allowed less-wealthy individuals to set aside

[42] On the role of photographic representations during the building of the Sacré-Coeur, see: Claude Baillargeon, "Construction Photogrpahy and the Rhetoric of Fundraising: The Maison Durandelle Sacré-Coeur Commission," *Visual Resources* 27, 2 (2011): 113-128.

[43] *Bulletin de l'oeuvre du voeu national au Sacré-Coeur de Jésus* 10 (1879): 150.

[44] *Bulletin de l'oeuvre du voeu national au Sacré-Coeur de Jésus* 9 (1884): 126.

small savings and to keep track of their progress. It also meant that groups of people could collectively contribute to the completion of a *carte du Sacré-Coeur* and thus the funding of a stone. Once the card was complete, the names of the individuals that filled in its cells would be listed and placed in a glass tube to be set in the donated stone.

Although the church was not designed in a Gothic style, many of the fundraising strategies were modern adaptations of medieval practices. Patrons donating chapels, representations of workers' guilds, and even prayers entombed within the stones of the church were all methods of generating the capital needed to build a monumental structure during the Middle Ages. But with the modern building campaign of the Sacré-Coeur, these tactics were deployed through new kinds of images that could be more widely distributed. The use of photography and print media afforded different modes of visualization. In particular, the calculation of the building, stone by stone and sous by sous, in the ghostly profile and the blank grid of the carte du Sacré-Coeur linked worshippers to the material dimensions of the building absent any of the stylistic rhetoric of the design. This disconnect, between the iconography of the building and its material practices, is central to the distinction between the Church's position relative to decadence and that of decadent authors working contemporaneously.

Revealing Decadence

Novelists, like many other critics, were not particularly enamored with the basilica going up on Montmartre. Zola's character Guillaume Froment in the novel *Paris* hated the structure so much he attempts to set a bomb in its crypt to destroy the structure and its faithful pilgrims. The idea first comes to him in a vivid encounter with the structure:

> Pierre and Guillaume paused in the Rue St. Eleuthere, and gazed at the vaporous, tremulous city spread out below them. And as they turned they perceived the basilica of the Sacred Heart, still domeless but already looking huge indeed in the moonbeams, whose clear white light accentuated its outlines and brought them

> into sharp relief against a mass of shadows. Under the pale nocturnal sky, the edifice showed like a colossal monster, symbolical of provocation and sovereign dominion. Never before had Guillaume found it so huge, never had it appeared to him to dominate Paris, even in the latter's hours of slumber, with such stubborn and overwhelming might. This wounded him so keenly in the state of mind in which he found himself, that he could not help exclaiming: "Ah! they chose a good site for it, and how stupid it was to let them do so! I know of nothing more nonsensical; Paris crowned and dominated by that temple of idolatry! How impudent it is, what a buffet for the cause of reason after so many centuries of science, labour, and battle! And to think of it being reared over Paris, the one city in the world which ought never to have been soiled in this fashion! One can understand it at Lourdes and Rome; but not in Paris, in the very field of intelligence which has been so deeply ploughed, and whence the future is sprouting. It is a declaration of war, an insolent proclamation that they hope to conquer Paris also![45]

For the decadent novelist Huysmans, the reaction to the Sacré-Coeur was colored by his involvement with the Catholic Church. The author, like Victor Hugo before him, was a literary voice within the scholarly community of archeologists. Hugo had encouraged Didron to study medieval iconography, and Huysmans wrote his own cathedral-based novel, *La Cathédrale* (1898). The latter was a detailed narrative of Chartres cathedral as experienced by the protagonist Durtal.[46] It remains one of the author's most popular and well-respected books. Given his scholarly engagements, Huysmans was well versed in the stylistic geography of the Sacré-Coeur. In *À rebours,* Poitiers receives a special mention because its bishop Fortunatus's hymn *Vexilla regis* appears in des Esseintes's library.[47] Huysmans's protagonist is fond of its decadent language, which he describes as rotting and spiced by the aromatics of the Church.[48] However, later, in *La Cathédrale*, the church in Poitiers is mocked. Its unique towers, with their

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[45] Émile Zola, *Paris* [1894], trans. Ernest A. Vizetelly, The Three Cities (Urbana, IL: Project Gutenberg, 2009).

[46] There are three novels in the Durtal cycle: *Là-bas* (1891), *En Route* (1895), and *La Cathédrale* (1898).

[47] J. -K Huysmans, *Joris-Karl Huysmans: Oeuvres complètes et annexes* (n.p.: Arvensa editions, 2016): 655.

[48] Ibid.: "taillés dans la vieille charogne de la langue latine, épicée par les aromates de l'Église"

conical shape and scaly stone tiling, are described as pineapples, and the church itself is called a toy.[49]

In between these two contrasting portrayals of Poitiers, one in which Byzantine-style writing is celebrated but not its architecture, Huysmans articulates his critique of the Sacré-Coeur. In the novel preceding *La Cathédrale*, Durtal contemplates the motivation and intentions of medieval church building and contrasts his ideas with the modern church going up on Montmartre:

> Instead of straining with all one's strength for this unheard of purpose, to take one's soul, to fashion it in the dove like form of a medieval pyx, instead of making it the custodian where the host rests in the very image of the Holy Spirit, the Catholic now limits himself to hiding his conscience, and strives to trick with judgment, scared of a salutary hell; he acts not out of love but out of fear; it is he who, with the help of his clergy and the help of his idiotic literature and his inept press, has made religion a fetishism of a softened Canaque, a ridiculous cult composed of statuettes and trinkets, candles and chromos; it is this Catholic who materialized the ideal of Love, inventing a physical devotion to the Sacred Heart![50]

In this passage, Huysmans hits many of the familiar lines of criticism, most noticeably the stylistic exoticism of the church. But it is not necessarily the foreignness of the style that Huysmans is critical of, but rather its tamed restraint. Thus, he refers to the structure as a "softened Canaque" or as a kind of domesticated savage. But unlike other critics who feared that the building asserted the Church's presence too strongly, Huysmans was not against religious institutions. For him, the problem of the Sacré-Coeur rested in its evacuation of any spiritual orientation, driven dually by the modern fear of anything untoward and the modern economic measure of the world. Huysmans focuses on the pyx, the container holding the consecrated bread

[49] Ibid., 1648: "à chaque aile, d'une courte tour surmontée d'un cone pesant de pierre, taillé à facettes comme un ananas" and "ce petit joujou d'église"

[50] Ibid., 1526; from *En Route*.

of the Eucharist, because it highlights what became the proclaimed reason for pilgrimage to the Sacré-Coeur.

The basilica was under threat from being reclaimed by the state soon after its construction began. The unexpected need to raise astronomical funds, due to the foundations required for the site, meant that the church had to find new ways of generating a steady stream of income. The fact that it was privately funded in large part saved it from reclamation. The idea of the vow drew early pilgrims to the site, but it was tied to the memory of the Terrible Year and that might not sustain funds through the lengthy construction. Furthermore, while the church was a site of nineteenth-century pilgrimage, it did not in the beginning have a particular phenomenon that motivated pilgrims to come to witness and seek contact. Raymond Jonas notes the Sacré-Coeur was a pilgrimage church by design, but that it had no object of devotion. Jonas argues that history itself might be what the pilgrim travels to witness, as the interior mosaics present a narrative of the church overcoming the country's revolutionary history.[51] But the church was equivocal about positioning itself within the historical fabric of Paris. It wanted to turn the tides of history, not participate in its current unfolding.

In 1885, the church began a program of twenty-four-hour devotion. Pilgrims take prayer shifts throughout the night to ensure continuity. The practice is ongoing today. If so inclined, one can still sign up for a night shift and stay in their dormitory. The purpose of this constant adoration is to maintain the miracle of the un-decaying Host displayed in the monstrance. This is what Huysmans zeroes in on in his critique of the basilica. In his novel about Chartres Cathedral, Huysmans's character Durtal takes pleasure in the range of sensual experiences the structure offers and refers to the physical body of the church as a document of time. The Sacré-Coeur by contrast resists the effects of time. On his visit to Perigueux, George Gilbert Scott noted of

[51] Jonas, 218.

Abadie's partially complete restoration of Saint-Front, "Poor St Front! Partly in some parts spic & span new & as *white as chalk*! The French idea of restoration is beyond question an odd one…"[52] That glaring whiteness was carried over to the Sacré-Coeur de Montmartre [Figure 3.39]. The building, like the miraculous host pilgrims come to witness and sustain with devotion, and like Oscar Wilde's Dorian Gray, does not age.

Unlike the Catholic proponents for iconography, whom Huysmans was most closely associated with, the decadent author argued for a material iconography. By this I mean he privileged physical conditions that made legible their contextual meaning. We find a poetic example of this in his prose-poem "La Bièvre." The Bièvre River was a polluted industrial waterway on the edge of Paris [Figure 3.40]. In the late-nineteenth century, the city began masking over its industrial effluvia by covering and culverting the Bièvre. Counter to municipal sanitation, Huysmans's 1880 prose-poem about the river asserts, "Nature is interesting only when sickly and distressed." He then contrasts a Romantic view of nature with his own decadent sensibility by concluding, "but I confess I don't experience before these sap-induced debaucheries that pitiful charm that a rundown corner of a great city, a ravaged hillside or a ditch of water trickling between two lank trees inspires in me."[53] Huysmans writes against the transformation of the Bièvre River from a waste system for tanneries, dye-makers, and laundries into a hidden part of the Paris sewer system.

While the Sacré-Coeur may have been conceived by some as the antithesis of the modern decadence of the Second Empire, and thus pitted against the Opéra, Huysmans reveals this to be a false divide. In sum, the Sacré-Coeur was fundamentally shaped by decadence, from the fear of it, especially following the Terrible Year, to its own fetishized physical devotion – but it never reveals its own decadence to itself. The same year as the call to continuous adoration was made,

[52] Stamp, 203; my emphasis.
[53] J. -K. Huysmans, "The Bièvre" in *Parisian Sketches* (Sawtry: Dedalus, 2004), 93.

Jules Laforgue cast the cult of the sacred heart with a sensibility that grows out of the decadent literary movement. His poem “Complainte litanies de mon Sacré-Coeur” opens with the lines: “My heart, heartless cancer, gnaws itself.”[54] That invisible self-gnawing arguably continues despite its denial. Rather than contrasting the Opéra and the Sacré-Coeur, contemporary author Houellebecq links them together under the same sooty cloud. Somewhat similarly, recent historical scholarship has sought to identify the modern economic practices underlying nineteenth-century church structures. The decadent lens further reveals the ways in which stylistic decadence, as one of the features ostensibly barring structures like the Sacré-Coeur from the lineage of modern architecture, is actually folded within a larger shared desire to overcome decadence.

[54] Laforgue, Jules, *Poésies complètes* (Paris: L. Vanier, 1894): 133-34.

Figure 3.1 Cardinal Guibert holding basilica as ex-voto. Lithograph by Achille-Louis-Joseph Sirouy, ca. 1880s. (Raymond Jonas, *France and the Cult of the Sacred Heart*, 196.)

Figure 3.2 Eugene Oge, poster for *La Lanterne*, 1902.

Figure 3.3 Sacred Heart emblem. (Bibliothèque Municipale de Nantes. Reproduced in: Raymond Jonas, *France and the Cult of the Sacred Heart*, 85.)

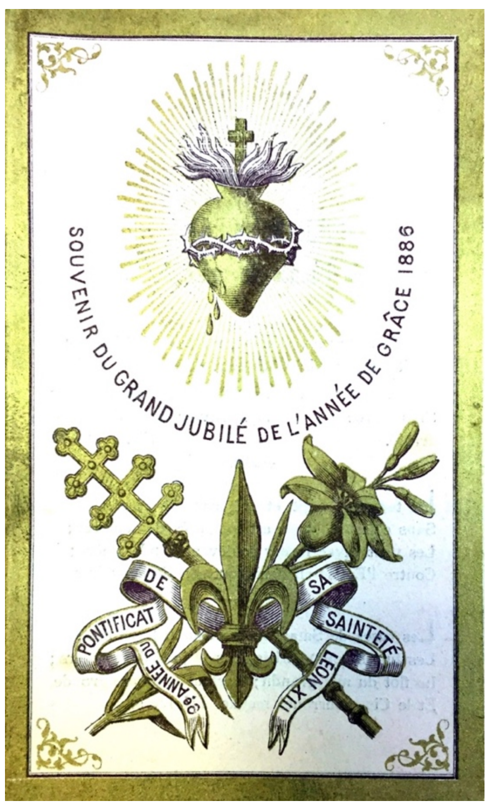

Figure 3.4 Prayer card, 1885. (Archives historiques du diocèse de Paris)

Figure 3.5 Ernest Pignon-Ernest, *La commune de Paris*, 1971.

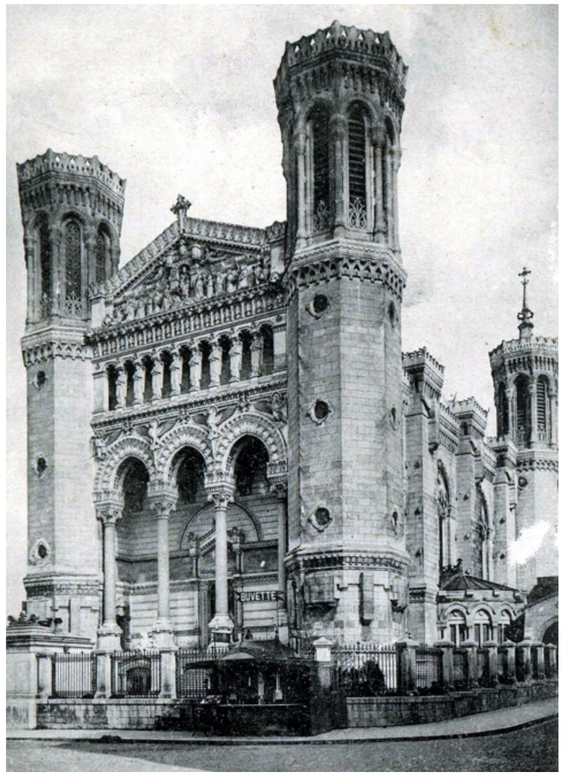

Figure 3.6 Basilica of Notre-Dame de Fourvière, Pierre Bossan, 1872-84, Lyon.

Figure 3.7 Basilica of Saint Martin, Victor Laloux, 1886-1924, Tours.

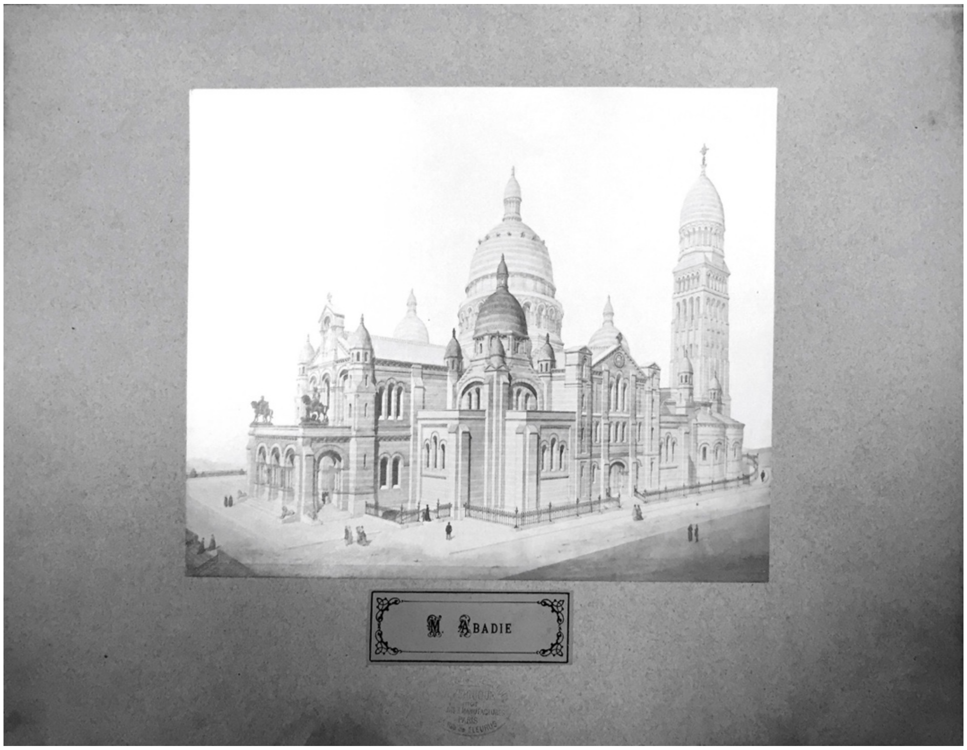

Figure 3.8 Sacré-Coeur competition design, exterior, Paul Abadie, 1874. (*Souvenir du concours de l'église du Sacré-Coeur*)

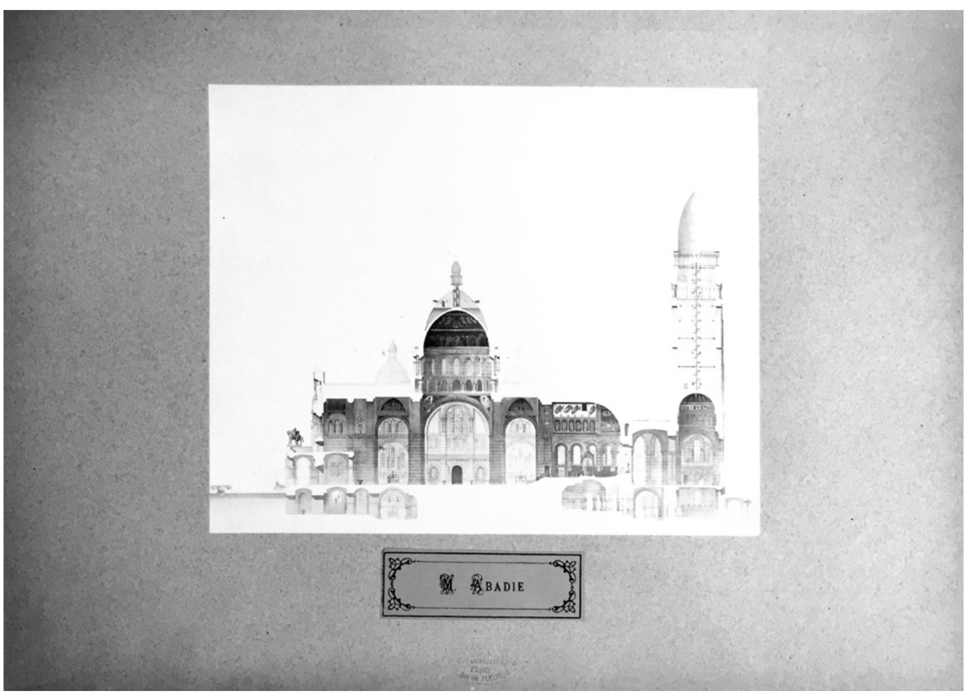

Figure 3.9 Sacré-Coeur competition design, section, Paul Abadie, 1874. (*Souvenir du concours de l'église du Sacré-Coeur*)

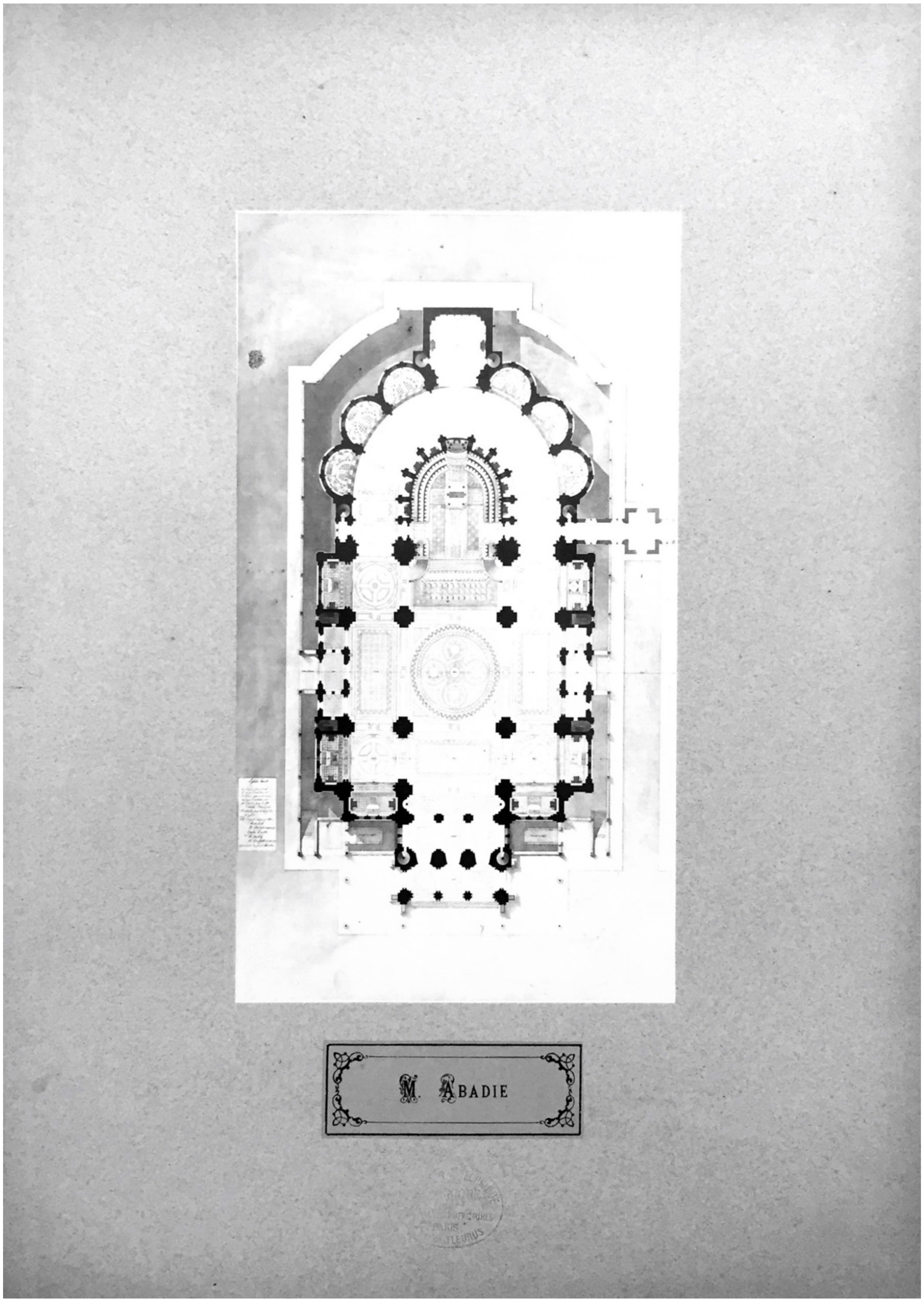

Figure 3.10 Sacré-Coeur competition design, plan, Paul Abadie, 1874. (*Souvenir du concours de l'église du Sacré-Coeur*)

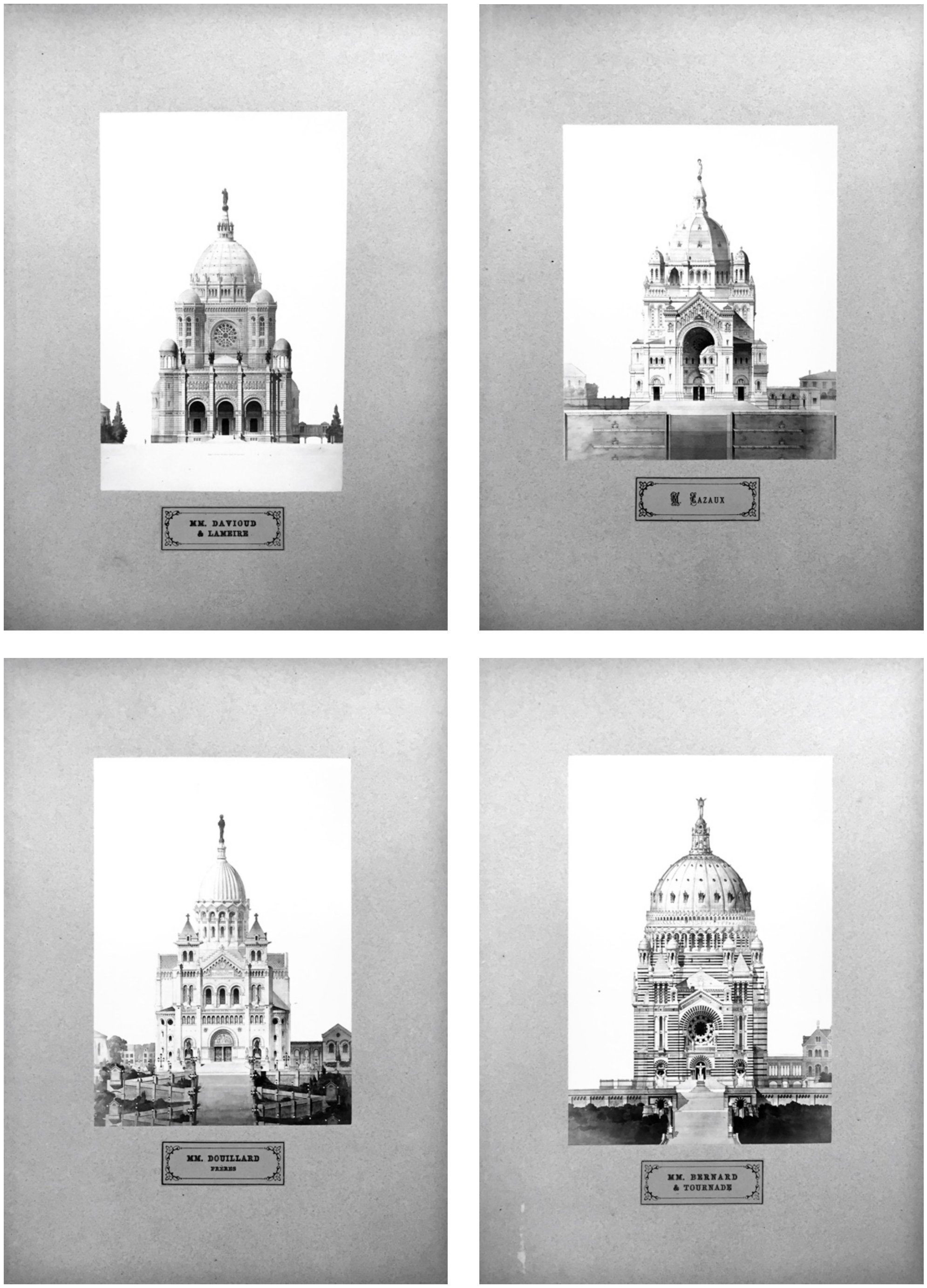

Figure 3.11 Sacré-Coeur competition entries by Davioud & Lameire, Lazaux, Douillard brothers, and Bernard & Tournade. These were the top-ranked entries behind Abadie's winning scheme. All feature domes but none are in the regional idiom of southwest France. (*Souvenir du concours de l'église du Sacré-Coeur*)

Figure 3.12 Saint-Pierre Cathedral, Angoulême, France, before and after the reconstruction by Paul Abadie.
(*left*) building date, 1105-1128; photograph ca. 1856; 43 x 33 cm.
(*right*) Séraphin Médéric Mieusement photographer, 35.4 x 24.7 cm, ca. 1874.
(A.D. White Architectural Photographs, Cornell University Library)

Figure 3.13 Notre Dame la Grande, ca. 12th century, Poitiers.

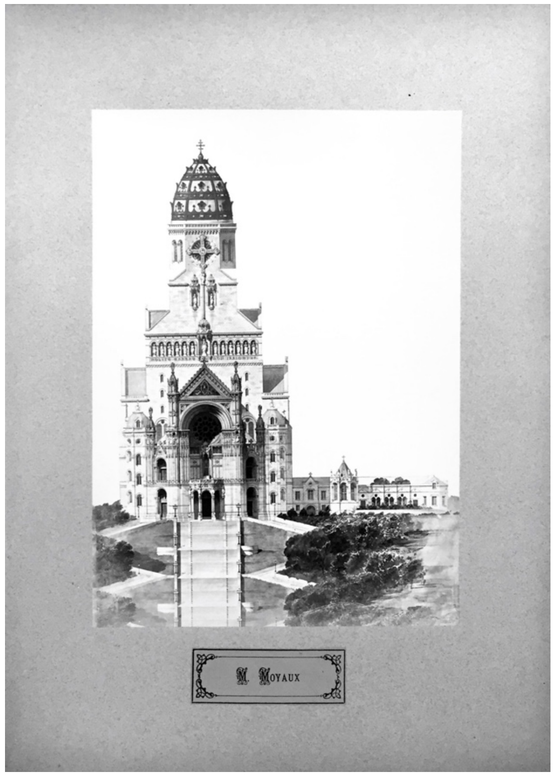

Figure 3.14 Constant Moyaux, winner of seventh prize, competition for Sacré-Coeur. The dome resembles the papal tiara. (*Souvenir du concours de l'église du Sacré-Coeur*)

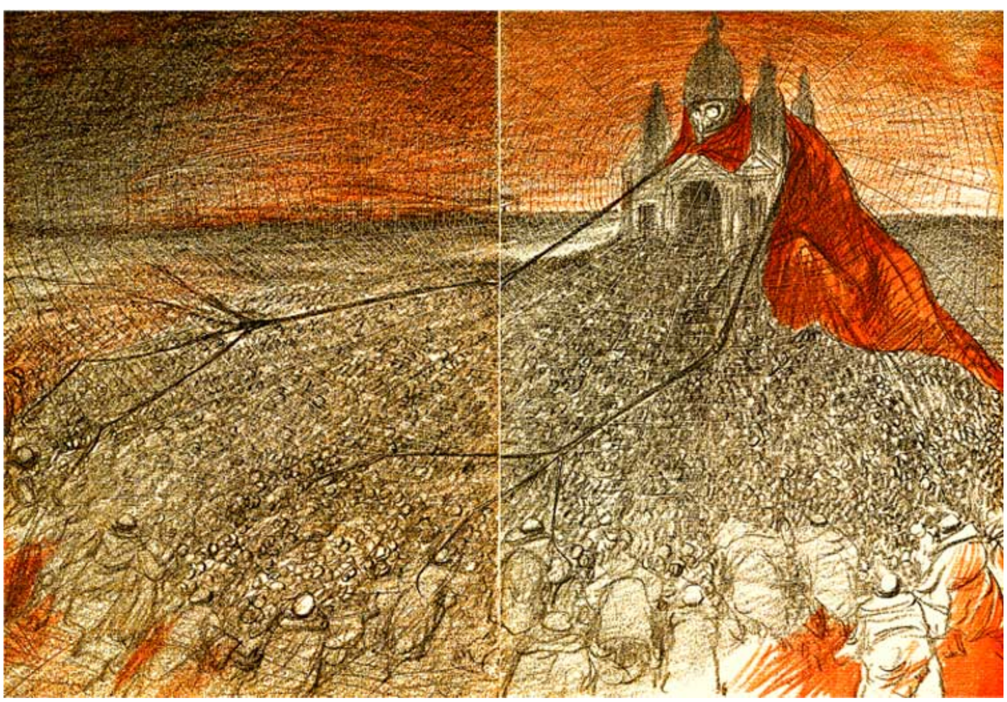

Figure 3.15 Théophile Steinlen, *L'Assiette au Beurre* no. 47 (February 26, 1902).

Figure 3.16 Saint-Front Cathedral, Périgueux; before Abadie's restoration.

Figure 3.17 Saint-Front Cathedral, Périgueux; after Abadie's restoration.

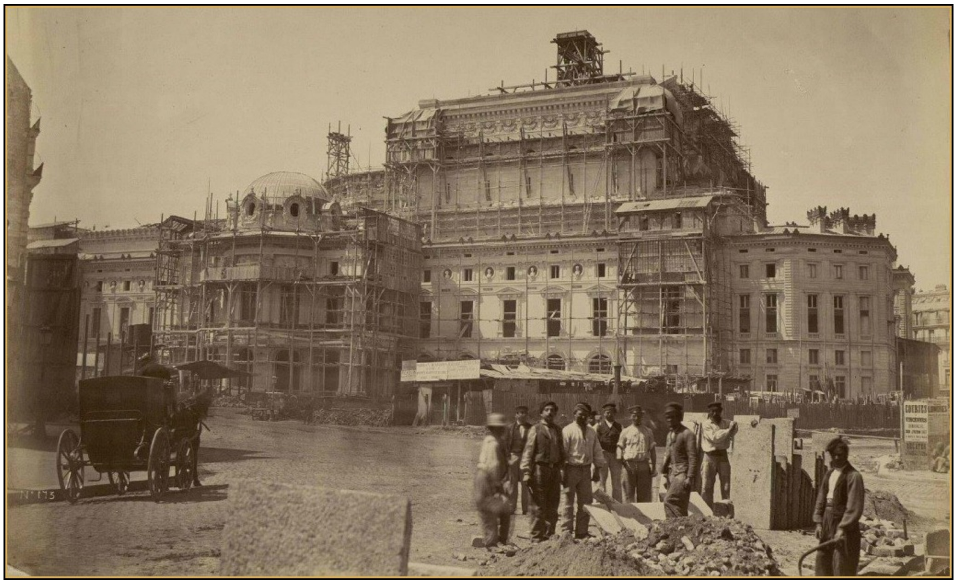

Figure 3.18 Opéra, Charles Garnier, Paris; construction interrupted during 1870-71 due to war.

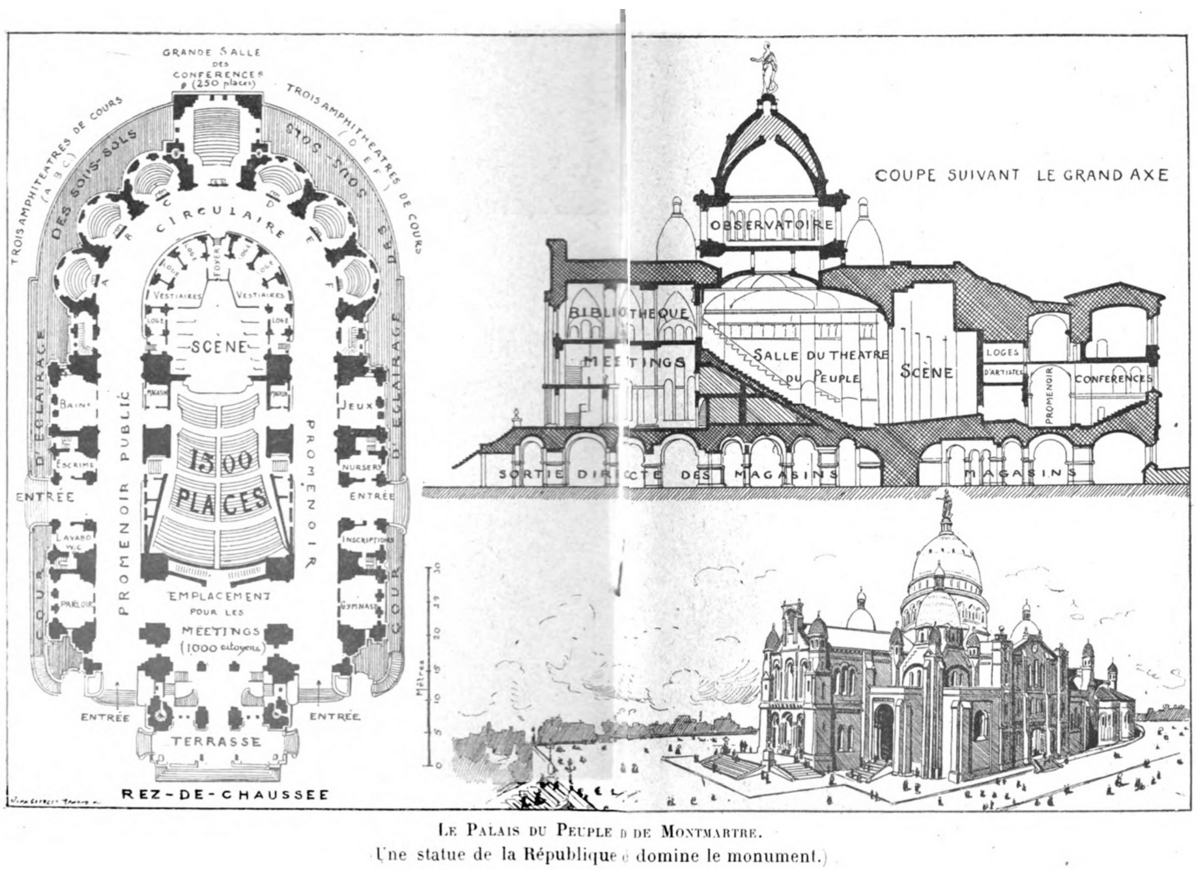

Figure 3.19 Le Palais du Peuple de Montmartre. (Gustave Téry, *Les Cordicoles*, 332-33.)

Figure 3.20 Saint-Georges de la Villette, Louis-Pierre Chauvet, 1873.

Figure 3.21 La basilique Notre-Dame-du-Rosaire, Léopold Hardy, 1883, Lourdes.

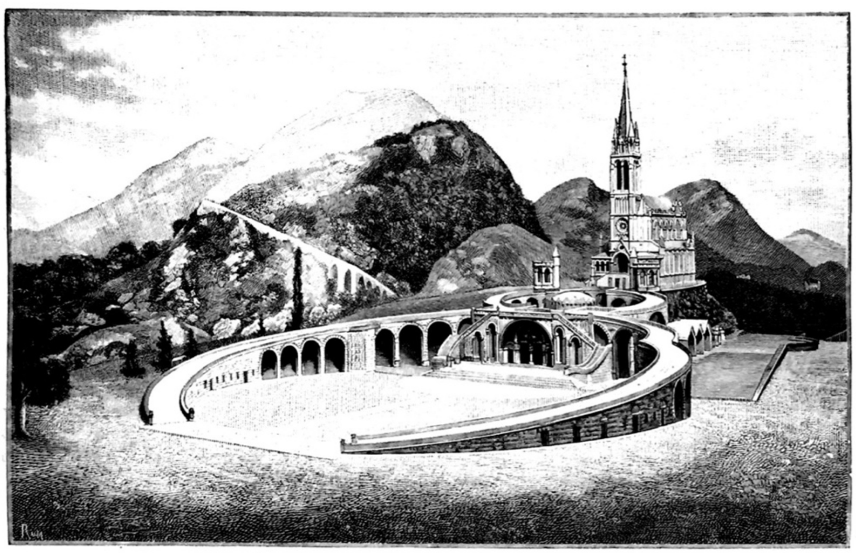

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Figure 3.22 Illustration of Lourdes basilica, included in carton of press articles related to the Sacré-Coeur before 1891. (Archives historiques du diocèse de Paris)

Figure 3.23 Mine openings, Montmartre, 1820. Old postcard. (Jean Claude Bastian, “Carte postale ancienne,” *Les Cahiers de la FNARH* no. 109, (2008): 18.)

Figure 3.24 View of Montmartre, no date. (Archives historiques du diocèse de Paris)

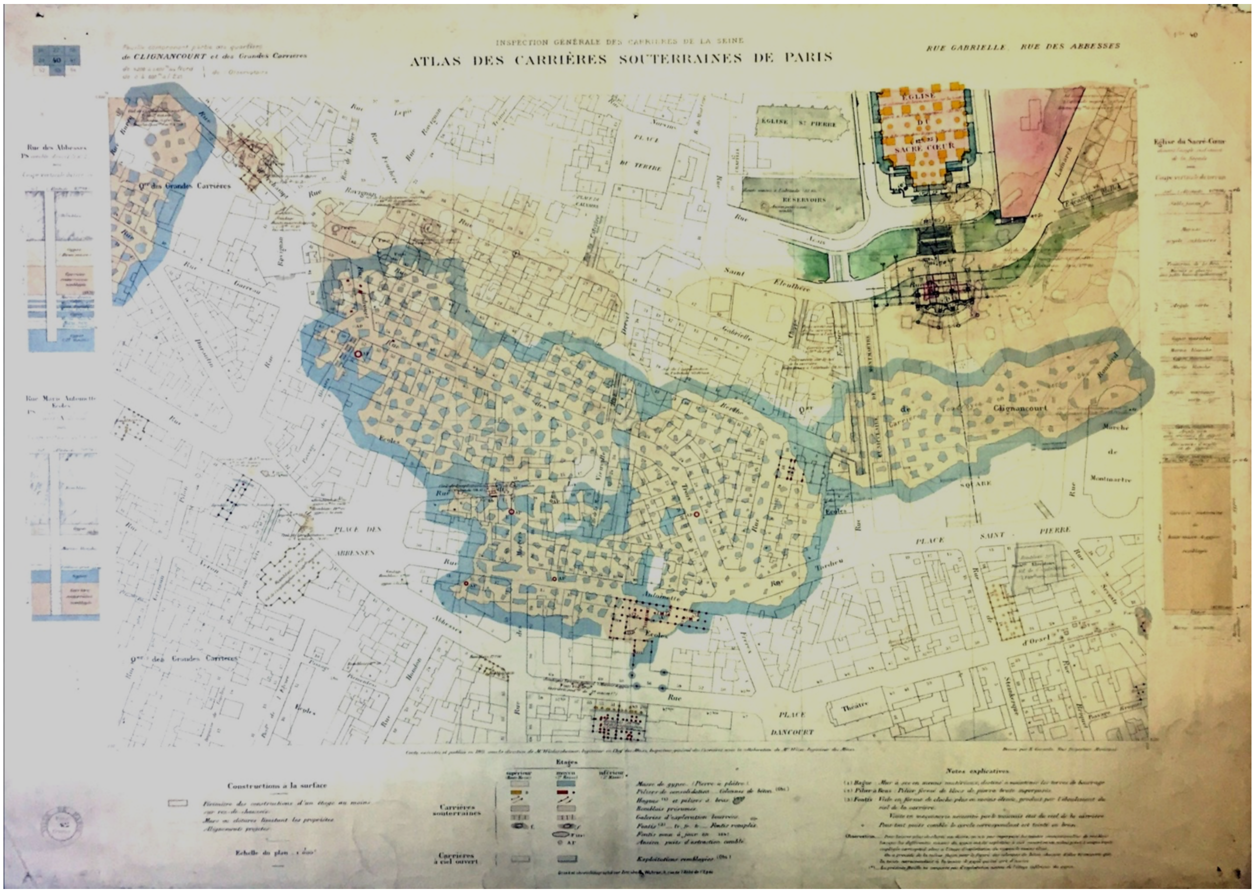


Figure 3.25 Survey of underground quarries, Montmartre. (Archives historiques du diocèse de Paris)

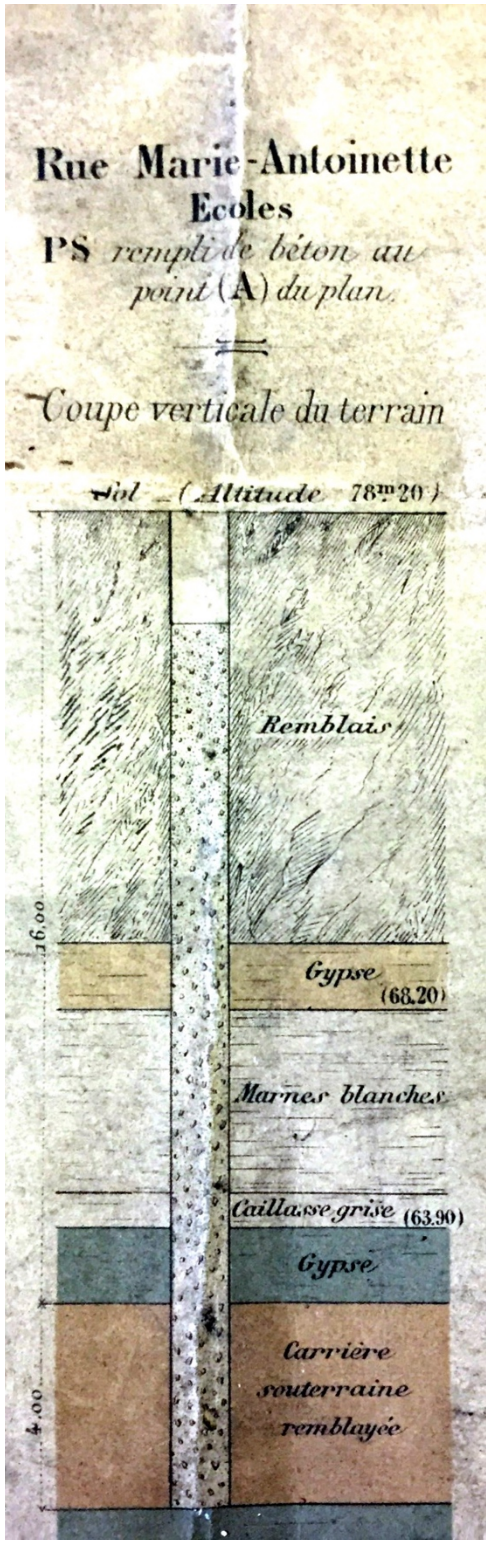


Figure 3.26 Study of subsurface geology and soil types. Detail from Figure 3.25. (Archives historiques du diocèse de Paris)

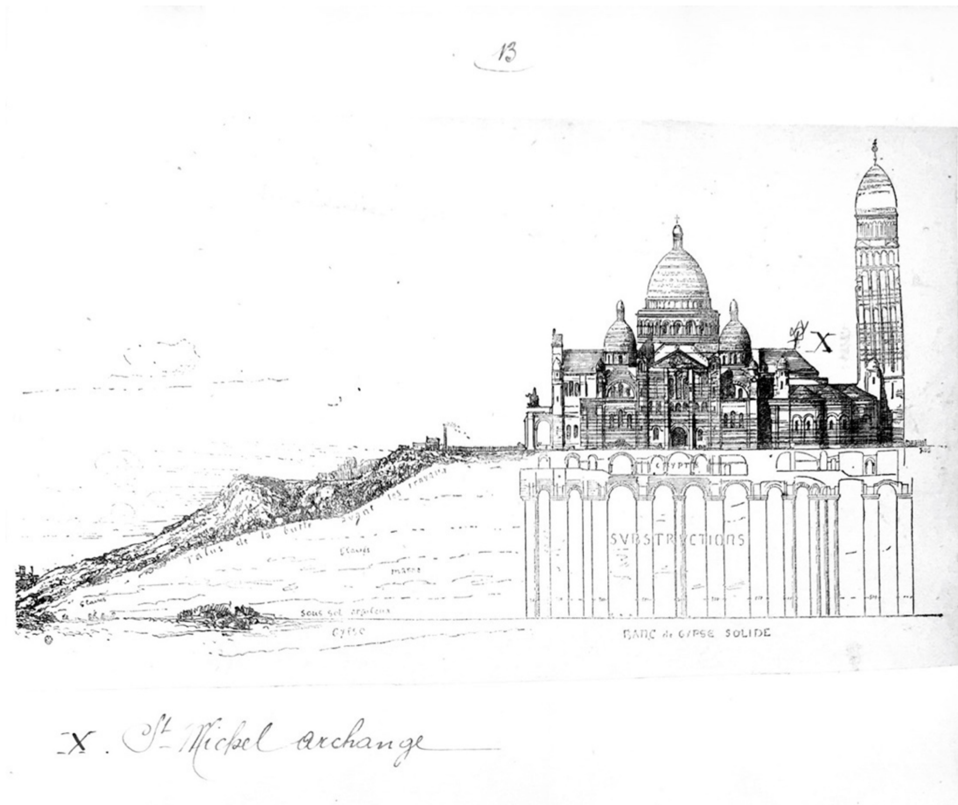


Figure 3.27 Sacré-Coeur, section showing foundations going down to gypsum bedrock. (Archives historiques du diocèse de Paris)

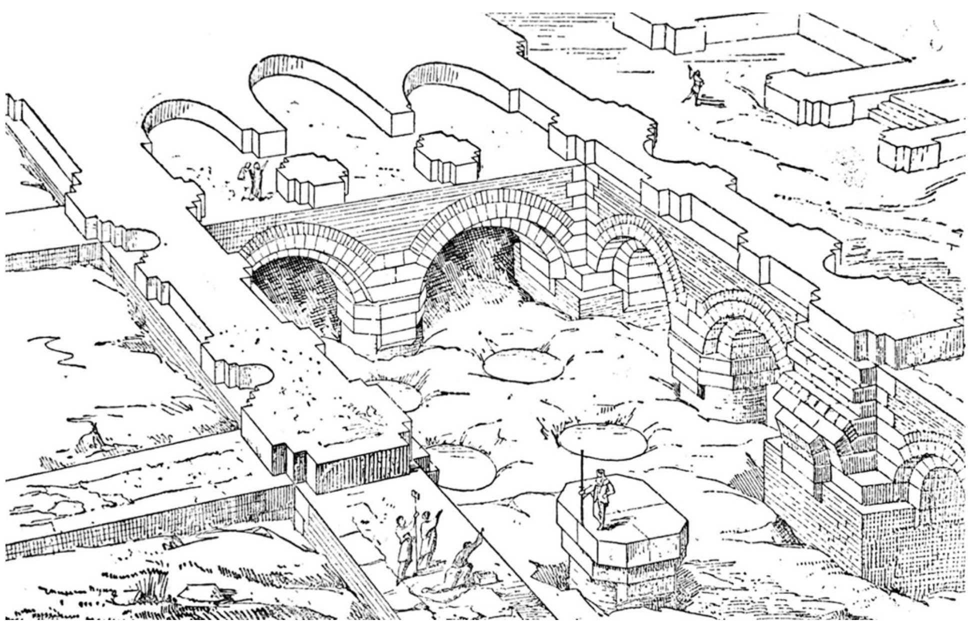


Figure 3.28 Illustration of exposed subterranean piles during construction of the crypt. (Archives historiques du diocèse de Paris)

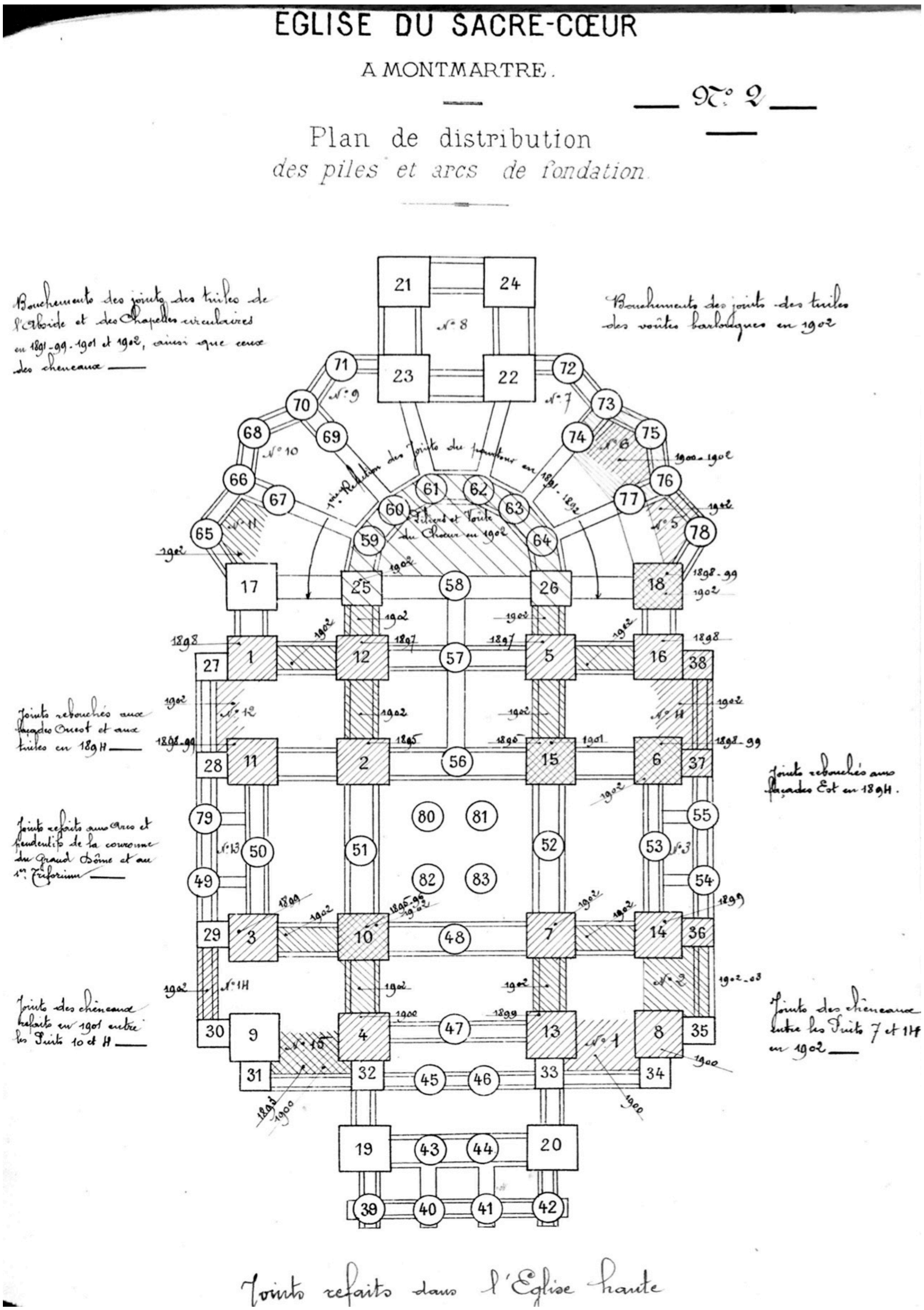


Figure 3.29 Plan of structural piles and foundations. (Archives historiques du diocèse de Paris)

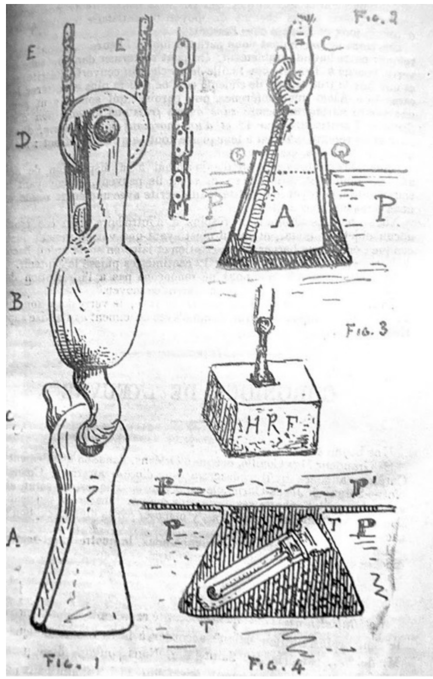


Figure 3.30 Prayers wrapped in stone. (*Bulletin de l'oeuvre du voeu national au Sacré-Coeur de* Jésus 10 (1879): 150. Reproduced in Raymond Jonas, *France and the Cult of the Sacred Heart*, 214.)

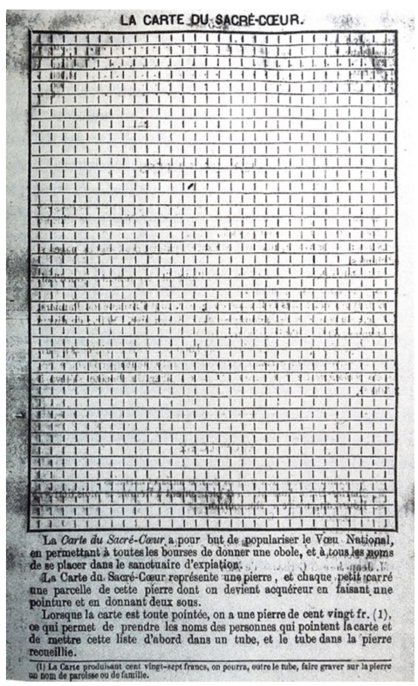


Figure 3.31 Carte du Sacré-Coeur. One of the earliest and most innovative funding strategies developed by the church. Each card represents a stone of the building. (*Bulletin de l'oeuvre du voeu national au Sacré-Coeur de Jésus* 9 (1884): 126. Reproduced in Raymond Jonas, *France and the Cult of the Sacred Heart*, p. 209.)

Figure 3.32 Photographs of workers on the construction site of the church. Bottom image shows photograph being used as a base and enhanced with a color wash, possibly in preparation for use in publication. (Archives historiques du diocèse de Paris)

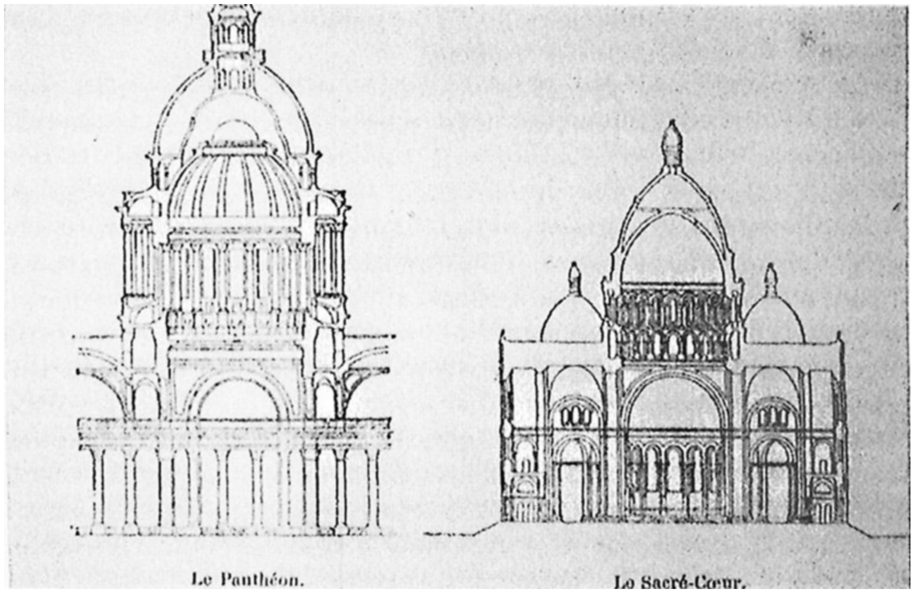


Figure 3.33 Sacré-Coeur comparison to the Panthéon, fundraising campaign, 1887.
(*Bulletin de l'oeuvre du voeu national au Sacré-Coeur de Jésus* 12 (1887): 245. Reproduced in: Raymond Jonas, "Monument as Ex-Voto, Monument as Historiosophy: The Basilica of Sacré-Coeur," *French Historical Studies*, vol. 18, no. 2 (1993): 499.)

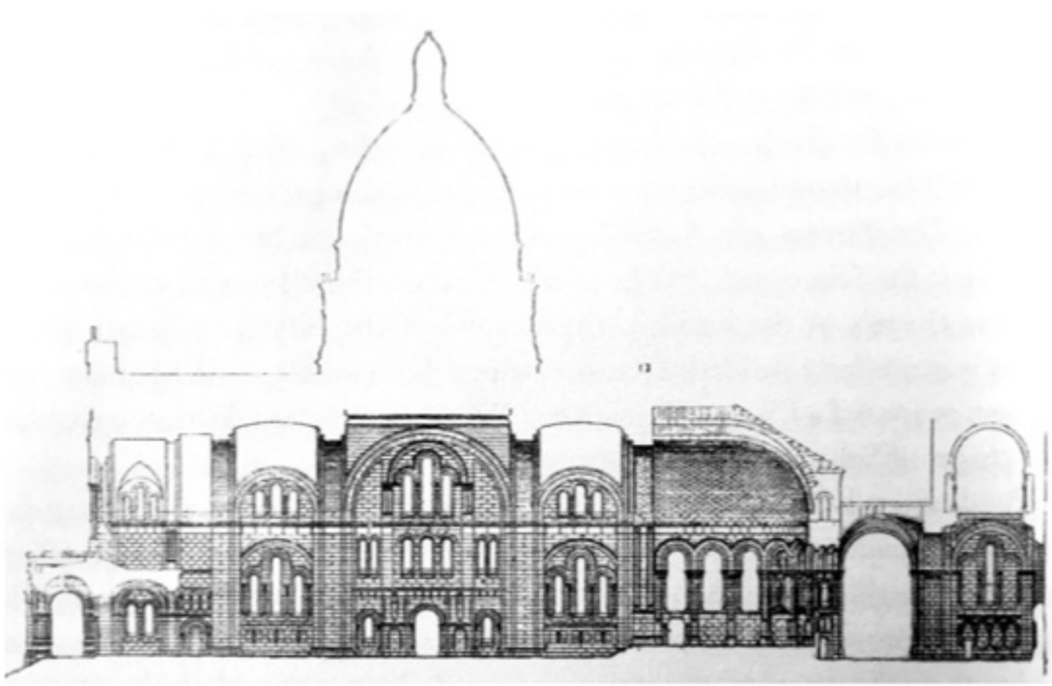


Figure 3.34 Sacré-Coeur, drawing representing donations, fundraising campaign, 1888.
(*Bulletin de l'oeuvre du voeu national au Sacré-Coeur de Jésus* 10 (1888): 391. Reproduced in Raymond Jonas, *France and the Cult of the Sacred Heart*, 212.)

Figure 3.35 Side elevations of the basilica as it underwent changes. From left to right: Abadie, 1874; Daumet, 1886; Goichot, ca. 1910. (Jacques Benoist, *Le Sacré-Coeur de Montmartre: un voeu national*, 131.)

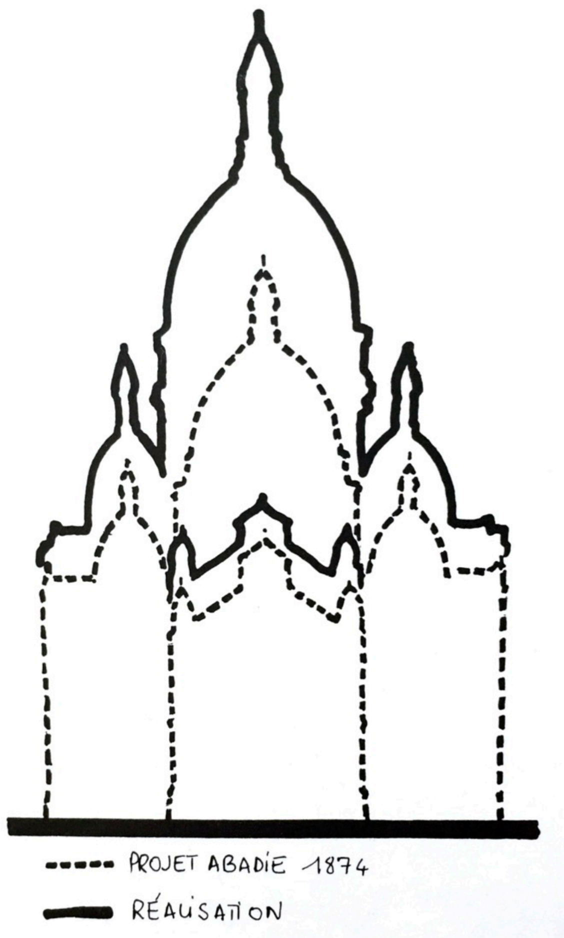
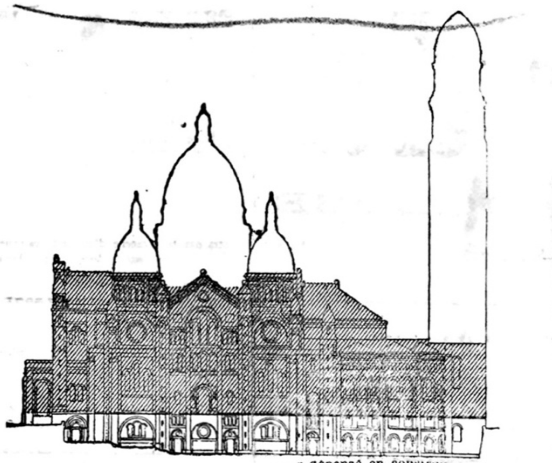


Figure 3.36 Diagram showing the significant height difference from Abadie's original design to the realized church. (Claude Laroche, *Paul Abadie architecte, 1812-1884*)

13 Décembre 1891 140 Courrier du Midi Avignon

L'ŒUVRE DU VŒU NATIONAL



Le Comité institué à Paris pour la construction de l'église votive dédiée au Sacré-Cœur de Jésus sur les hauteurs de Montmartre nous prie de signaler à nos lecteurs catholiques, et en particulier aux souscripteurs dont la générosité inépuisable jusqu'à ce jour a permis de conduire l'œuvre jusqu'au point où elle en est arrivée, une erreur très préjudiciable qui semble vouloir se répandre dans le public. c'est que l'église du Vœu national au Sacré-Cœur, étant maintenant livrée au culte, est terminée.

Malheureusement il n'en n'est rien, et le monument n'est guère construit que jusqu'aux deux tiers ; on peut facilement s'en rendre compte par la simple inspection du dessin qui sert d'en-tête à cet article. (La teinte indique les parties terminées de l'église haute, et les parties à construire ne sont représentées que par une simple silhouette au trait).

Voici du reste la situation telle qu'on nous la donnait à la fin du mois de novembre :

Le Comité a reçu jusqu'ici, en chiffres ronds .... 24.536.000 fr

Il a dépensé en construction, achat de terrains, propagande, culte, bulletin, concours, etc... 24.064.000 fr.

Il en reste en caisse.... 472.000 fr.

D'autre part, il y a pour 462.000 fr. de travaux exécutés ou en cours d'exécution. La modicité de la somme disponible provient de ce que, si, par prudence, on ne commande jamais de travaux sans en avoir le prix en caisse, en revanche, pour hâter autant que possible le résultat final, on en entreprend de nouveau au fur et à mesure que l'argent arrive.

D'après les devis arrêtés par les architectes et les entrepreneurs, il reste encore environ cinq millions à dépenser pour achever le gros œuvre, soit :

Pour le grand dôme, actuellement arrivé aux pendentifs.	2.000.000
Pour les quatre petits dômes, montés aujourd'hui jusqu'aux chéneaux.........	1.000.000
Pour le clocher et la coupole de la chapelle de la Sainte-Vierge	1.500.000
A reporter...	4.500.000

Figure 3.37 Fundraising campaign for the domes of the Sacré-Coeur. The strategy extended those used earlier of rending the completed sections of the building. (Archives historiques du diocèse de Paris)

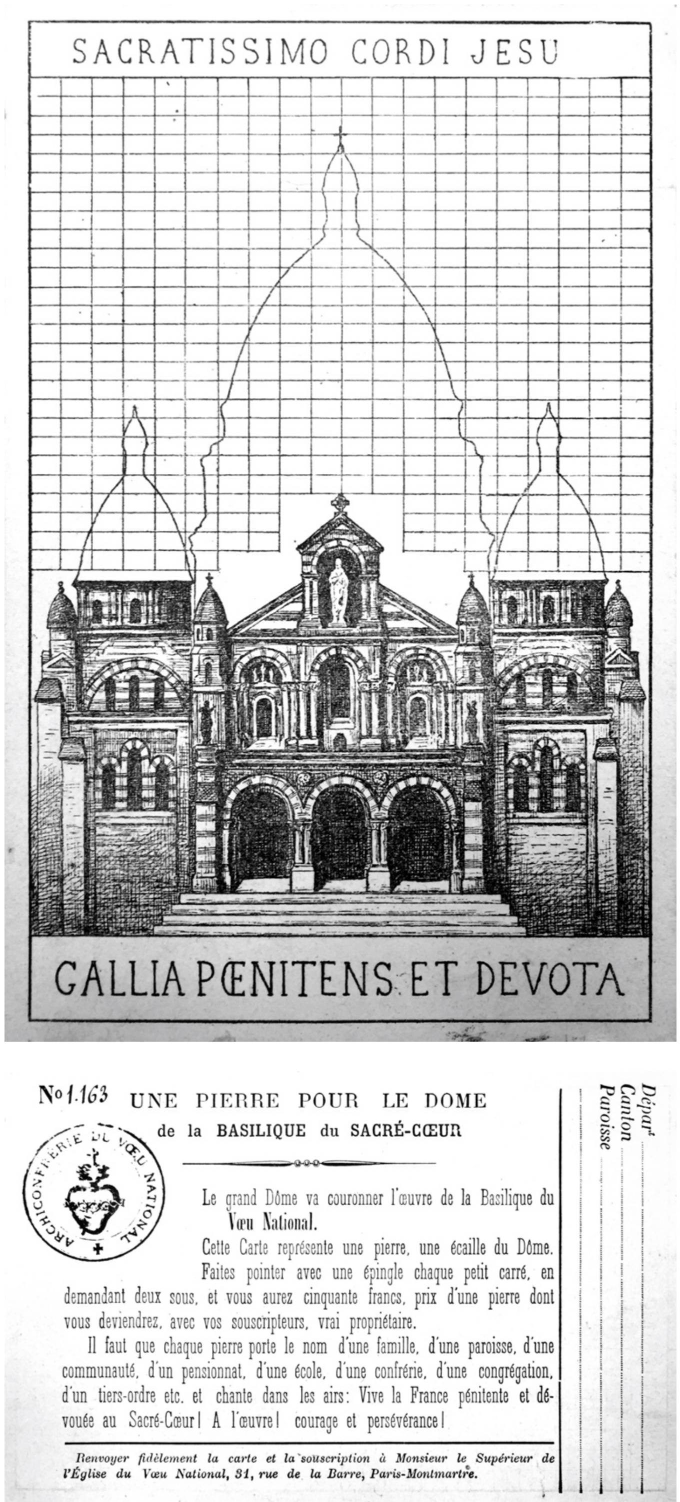


Figure 3.38 A later version of the Carte du Sacré-Coeur that combines the grid of the earlier card with the visual strategy of contrasting the rendering and empty profile. (Archives historiques du diocèse de Paris)

Figure 3.39 Sacré-Coeur as it stands today.

Figure 3.40 Photograph of the Bievre by Charles Marville.

Chapter 4
Charles Moore's Watermelon Pyramid, or America the Late

By the beginning of the 1980s, the crisis of the Modernist project was fully recognized. The limits of stripped-bare functionalism had become evident in social and political life. The televised live-broadcast implosion of one of the Pruitt-Igoe buildings in 1972 made visible a nested set of architectural, political, and social failings. By 1976, the last of the thirty-three towers was demolished [Figure 4.1]. The erasure of these racially and economically segregated blocks, which were not-so-distant cousins of Le Corbusier's Plan Voisin [Figure 4.2], underscored the hubris of the modern movement in architecture and highlighted the decadence of American culture as the post-war glow was rapidly fading. Concomitantly, designers were returning to questions of history and language by playing with both semantics and syntax as codes of meaning. In 1980, Paolo Portoghesi directed the first architectural exhibition at the Venice Biennale under the thematic title, "The Presence of the Past."[1] Within this postmodern turn, history was double-edged; there could no longer be any naïveté about the dangers of nostalgia and singular grand-narratives. Accordingly, references to history were often held at a distance and marked by irony.

When Charles Moore staged the exhibition "The Cabin/The Temple/The Trailer" at the Los Angeles Museum of Contemporary Art in 1983,[2] the historical conceit was not held at an

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[1] For a recent historical account, see: Léa-Catherine Szacka, *Exhibiting the Postmodern: The 1980 Venice Architecture Biennale* (Venice: Marsilio, 2016).

[2] Moore, Charles and Sally B. Woodbridge, *The Cabin, the Temple, the Trailer* (s. ℓ.): Moore and Woodbridge, 1985. Moore and Woodbridge curated the exhibition; it was first installed at the Los Angeles Museum of Contemporary Art in November 1983, and then travelled to the Laguna Gloria Museum in Austin, Texas, in May 1984, and to the Oakland Museum of Art in May 1985.

ironic distance [Figure 4.3]. With columns on wheels and legs, history was quite literally mobilized [Figures 4.5 – 4.7]. In contrast with the singular direction of an evolutionary perfection of type, argued by Le Corbusier's visual analogy drawn between temples and cars [Figure 4.4], Moore's movement was peripatetic. Thus Moore's work sits uncomfortably in between the presence of history as an invisible but progressive force and its reappearance as a cooled-off specter, at turns ghostly and cartoonish. His collage-study, made in preparation for the 1983 exhibition, captures many of the architect's preoccupations [Figure 4.3]. Its nested forms defy the linear and developmental logic of visual analysis based on side-by-side comparison. Its cut-and-paste format asserts a material presence. Its references combine allusions to American vernacular alongside imperial Rome. It brings the domestic and the monumental into a single field. And it plays with the proprieties of interior and exterior space. Despite the odd collection of parts, the image is unified through a centralized formal order. However, that formal order is in the service of scenography rather than abstract principles.

This chapter analyzes three houses that Charles Moore designed for himself during the 1960s as a series that tests many of the questions eventually posed in the cabin-temple-trailer collage. In this sequence of houses, I trace the shift from the formal and material focus of nested aediculas to the social concerns of nested worlds. This chapter begins with Moore's house in Orinda, CA, and ends with his home in Centerbook, CT, where an interest in temple-like interiors has culminated in an oversized plywood pyramid painted to look like a watermelon.

These houses were constructed at a time when questions about American decadence and the representation of history in architecture were both coming to the fore. It is my contention that Moore sits in a unique position relative to decadence and architecture. He was of a generation for whom the literary tradition of decadence was, at least, familiar. The first novel of Huysmans's Durtal cycle, *Là-bas*, still sits in the architect's personal library [Figure 4.8]. However, decadent literature was not a primary infatuation. Moore's graduate education at Princeton also sets him in a context related to the larger intellectual history of decadence in America. Ralph Adams Cram, a nineteenth-century architect with a deep interest in decadent literature, designed much of the campus. And again, Moore's library stitches some of these decadent threads together as it also contains texts by Cram. Of more importance than a direct through line to decadent literature was the fact that Princeton remained one of the last architectural schools in the US not to adopt the Bauhaus educational model of Harvard.[3] This meant that Moore was trained within an intellectual culture where history figured prominently as part of a liberal-arts-based architectural pedagogy. Finally, Moore's personal itinerary puts him in a range of places that touch on larger questions of American decadence in the twentieth-century. His undergraduate education at the University of Michigan set him in geographical proximity to the Fordism of Detroit. He bore witness to the growing military arm of the US as he served in the Korean War. And, as an educator he taught during a period of unprecedented student activism aimed at the various ills of Western power structures.

Contemporaneously with Moore, the question of style dominated much of the theoretical discourse around postmodernism. More recently, Jorge Otero-Pailos's writing has brought attention to the import of phenomenology in the context of postmodernism in architecture, and in so doing has highlighted the physical dimension of Moore's architecture.[4] I extend this effort to re-examine the work of Charles Moore by analyzing it through the thematic lens of lateness. Tellingly, Le Corbusier's visual argument about the evolution from rudimentary to refined type only appears in two parts, leaving off the decadent phase of the typical tri-part structure: early-middle-late. Nineteenth-century stylistic designations of late-style not only categorized the

[3] For more on the design of the campus and history of the architecture department, see: W. Barksdale Maynard, *Princeton: America's Campus* (University Park: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 2012).

[4] Jorge Otero-Pailos, *Architecture's Historical Turn: Phenomenology and the Rise of the Postmodern* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2010): 100-46.

exuberance or over-expression of a style (such as Rayonnant) [Figure 4.9] it also made a placeholder for works that did not clearly belong to a single classification. The best example of the latter is fourth-style Roman wall painting, which combined features of the other styles [Figure 4.10]. Lateness entails different issues besides stylistic eclecticism. Choosing from a catalogue of historical styles is predicated on the removal of historical distance. It is also an act of application, either for symbolic or aesthetic purposes. Lateness by contrast is always tethered to the historical context in which it is occurring rather than fully distanced from it. In the instance of the late Roman wall painting, the combination of styles involves a composition that accommodates multiple scales, from the full-scale architectural facsimile of the earlier styles to the miniature fantasies of the third-style. Accordingly, it also situates contrasting genres of representation within a single visual space, holding together both realism and reverie. Theodor Adorno celebrated the dynamism of late works. He identifies late style as an end of career moment when the consistencies of an artist in command of his medium break down and become catalytic rather than degenerative. Style is not out of the picture, but contained through the authorial entity of the composer (his example for the argument is Beethoven), but the stability of that authorial identity and its relationship to its social milieu is disrupted in the late career moment, as highlighted by Adorno.[5] A world on the verge of disintegration is a theme that emerges in the nineteenth century and carries forward into post-war critical theory. The faint figure of an author, barely containing the explosive nature of late works, is wholly obliterated in postmodernist cultural theory. Visions of pure lateness via the schizophrenic spectres of free-floating signifiers, detached from all frameworks of meaning, cause this destruction.[6] Charles

[5] Adorno uses the phrase ‘late style’ most notably in the essay fragment “Spätstil Beethovens” dated 1937. The essay was included in the 1964 collection, *Moments musicaux*, and in his posthumously published book on Beethoven in 1993.

[6] Fredric Jameson, “Postmodernism and Consumer Society” in Hal Foster, ed., *The Anti-Aesthetic: Essays in Postmodern Culture* (Port Townsend, WA: Bay Press, 1983): 111-125.

Moore's early houses were built before the debates about defining postmodern architecture in the context of late capital, but they nevertheless forefront questions about American lateness.

The House Within a House

In the early 1960s, Moore purchased a small plot of land a few miles east of Berkeley in the small suburb of Orinda [Figure 4.11]. Moore described his early ideas in a letter to Felix Drury. The architect begins by reflecting on his two-week trip to Mexico as a spark of inspiration and then details his starting points for the project:

> I acquired a rest, a tan, no diseases, and – based on some houses carved out of the ruins of old mining towns – a powerful desire for a house of my own. Disastrously enough, I came right home and implemented this desire with an acre and a quarter in Orinda, just fifteen minutes from the University behind the hills on the side where it's hot in the summer, with the only lot in northern California of that size that has a full-fledged sense of place. It involves a driveway sweeping around a ravine filled with oak trees and up to a hundred-foot grassy circle with the land falling sharply away on almost all sides, again full of oaks, and with long views through them to the Valley and hills behind. A vast rickety financing scheme is expected to net me the lot and $5,000 cash, free from the scrutiny of banks, to build a house, including a swimming pool, so I am presently neglecting all my other work to find out about cheap swimming pools or whatever will produce an underwater whirl for no money at all. I seem to have located some Etruscan columns from a torn-down warehouse for $2 each, and somehow they are going to be the basis for this incredibly cheap and incredibly elegant establishment.[7]

Equipped with a modest budget and some salvaged columns, he set about experimenting with a handful of architectural preoccupations [Figure 4.12]. Primary among his concerns was the question of how to produce symbolic centers within domestic space. Other interests included exploring plays with formal geometries and accommodating unconventional habitations. As the owner-client for the project, Moore was free to adjust the amount spent on the functional equipment of the house to fit his modest budget. For example, the heating system consisted of

[7] Letter dated February 28, 1961; in Keim, *An Architectural Life*, 167.

simply a small industrial unit that blew warm air from the rafters. This savings allowed for more sumptuous features such as a monumental sunken bath.[8] What resulted was a small barn-like structure with a hipped roof, within which stood two aediculas of different heights [Figures 4.13 & 4.14]. It was to be Moore's most muted project. Nevertheless, its formal and programmatic plays were already pushing against the establishments of Modernist architecture and hetero-normative family structures.

Moore's bachelor status both afforded his experiments in Orinda and occasioned his move from Princeton to Berkeley. At the age of twenty-nine, having returned to the US after serving in the Korean War, Moore began his graduate education at Princeton. There he met lasting friends and colleagues such as Donlyn Lyndon and William Turnball Jr., but he was also caught in departmental politics during an era of McCarthyism and general social suppression. Moore's mentor Jean Labatut was at odds with the dean Robert McLaughlin. Labatut was part of the old guard at Princeton, while McLaughlin, a curtain wall expert, sought to make the school more competitive with other Ivy League institutions by aligning it with international style modernism. Moore continued to teach at the university after finishing his PhD in 1957, but was not offered a long-term position by McLaughlin. In a confidential letter to the president of Princeton, the dean of faculty supported the architecture dean's stance against Moore. Using thinly coded allusions to homosexuality, the letter stated:

> The reasons for not holding Moore were sound, I feel, and are related to personality. Single at 35, Moore did not seem stable or mature in respect to his relationships with students, and while brilliant, was an uncertain quantity personally for the long pull. Bob has been anxious to avoid a climate too often associated with art centers.[9]

[8] *The Place of Houses*, 59-61.
[9] Quoted in Otero-Pailos, *Architecture's Historical Turn*, 108.

In 1959, Moore left Princeton for Berkeley, where he took up an associate professor position. After being there for a few years, he was ready to purchase a plot of land and construct the first of many homes he would design for himself. Still single at thirty-eight, his lifestyle was acknowledged as allowing for a different sort of design. In *The Place of Houses* (1974), Moore, Lyndon, and Gerald Allen offer guidance to non-specialist readers on a range of considerations one might entertain if building a home. They rely on many of their own projects as examples, including Moore's Orinda house. Of it they write, "The functional problems were simple enough: provision for a bachelor owner." That provision permitted one to leave off those concerns that were "really only necessary if small children, who were not expected, would be crawling about."[10] While Moore's subsequent work would be more politically coded, exuberant, and gendered, this first house was already tied up in issues of identity that play out across his career.

The primary architectural feature of the Orinda house is the aedicula forms that are nested within its barn-like outer structure. The exterior shell is made of sliding partition walls that allow the house to be opened at the corners. Above sits the large-hipped roof and on top of it runs an extruded central skylight. This linear feature acts as the central spine of the house, but its formality is lifted well above the living spaces of the open room plan. The roof structure and central skylight are made of exposed wood that is stained dark on the interior. Set into it are the two aediculas [Figure 4.15]. Each is composed of polished wooden columns that mark the four corners of their square forms. Atop the columns rests an interior canopy that echoes the form of the hipped roof. These two coverings slant upwards, both topped with an extruded skylight. The miniature light scoops sit within the coverings, and at either end, the larger elongated skylight rests above. But unlike the dark roof structure, these smaller forms were painted white. Thus the

[10] Charles Moore, et al., *The Place of Houses*, 59.

interior is spatially complex while also being a simple box room. The lighting effects, achieved through the contrast of light and dark spaces illuminated from above, further dramatize the spatial dynamics.

Moore was invested in the mythical status of the aedicule. Indeed, the four-columned structures within his Orinda house are reminiscent of a primitive hut. However, Moore alluded to temple structures that were symbolically loaded in the context of rich cultural traditions rather than reductive origin myths. Accordingly, he would make reference to Mayan and Hindu temples as well as Baroque baldacchinos [Figure 4.16] rather than primitive huts theorized by Laugier or Semper [Figure 4.17]. Two important references for Moore were John Summerson's *Heavenly Mansions* (1949) and Louis Kahn's Trenton Bath House (1955).[11] Both hark back to his time at Princeton, where Summerson's book was popular among the students and Moore worked as a teaching assistant for a studio led by Kahn. In his text, Summerson argues that aedicula are a poetic building feature that can either create a doll house-like imaginary world or ground human presence within expansive spaces such as St. Peter's. Kahn's Trenton Bath House was an early example of his modernist use of ancient forms. Its four-cornered scheme was evocative of the aedicula form, but at a fully monumental scale [Figure 4.18].

Not long after Moore's Orinda House was completed in 1962, Robert Venturi would write the gentle manifesto of postmodernism (1965), and later Charles Jencks would theorize postmodernist architecture as a half-breed species or a mélange of Modernist abstract aesthetics

[11] John Summerson, *Heavenly Mansions: And Other Essays on Architecture* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1963). Moore discusses these influences in an unidentified essay reproduced in Keim, *An Architectural Life*, 169. Moore writes: "When I came across the little piece of land just over the hills from Berkeley one afternoon I was immediately smitten. The site consisted of an open, quite pretty grassy meadow, with oak trees all around, where a circular pad, about eighty feet in diameter, had been bulldozed long ago and had since grown soft around the edges. At once I began dreaming about a square house in a round meadow that an ancient Chinese poet, Li Po, had once praised the virtues of. I'd also read of aediculas in Sir John Summerson's *Heavenly Mansions* and for heaven's sake had to do it! (Once Summerson said I couldn't, and so I did two of them because it was my own house.) Louis Kahn's Trenton Bath House was also fresh on my mind and so I designed an open volume, square in plan, with a roof supported by interior aediculas made from salvaged architectural columns. I made a second, less-monumental aedicula to shelter the bathtub and celebrate the act of getting wet, a special temple of the self."

and the vernaculars of popular and historicist forms (1977). In his seminal text, Venturi called attention to the interior and, more specifically, the idea of a room within a room. He articulates this as "intraspatial relationships" in his early theorization of complexity and contradiction. He first reflects on the spatial condition of modernist metal and glass construction:

> This kind of [flowing] space produced an architecture of related planes, horizontal and vertical. The visual independence of these uninterrupted planes was scored by the connecting areas of plate glass: windows disappeared as holes in the wall and became interruptions of wall to be discounted by the eye as a positive element of the building. Such cornerless architecture implied an ultimate continuity of space.[12]

He then contrasts the modernist idiom of an ultimate continuity of space with the intraspatial, which he describes as "the idea of a *room* as a space in space" and attributed it "not only to the spatial relationships of building and site, but to those of interior spaces within interior spaces."[13]

We see aspects of postmodernist theorizations already staged in the evocative photographs of this first house that Moore built for himself. These images show, for example, that the white boxes of the skylights sitting above the miniature monuments, reminiscent of Kahn's bathhouse, result from the formal game of fitting a space within a space. As such these elements appear to float within the house. However, polished wooden columns, more reminiscent of Roman spolia than Modernist pilotis, support these abstract forms. In one of the interior photographs of the Orinda house [Figure 4.19], a Modernist chair brushes up against one such column. The monumental columns brought into the domestic interior contrast with the flat abstract walls separating interior from exterior. This juxtaposition is heightened in the visual contrast between the two-dimensionality of the walls and the imagery hanging on them, all of which is pushed to the background of the photograph, while the materially and spatially dynamic

[12] Robert Venturi, "Complexity and Contradiction in Architecture: Selection from a Forthcoming Book," *Perspecta* 9-10 (1965): 21.

[13] Ibid., 22.

aedilculae of the foreground frame various three-dimensional objects such as a bed, ornamental plant, tub, showerhead, shower curtain, and the aforementioned chair. Staged as it is, and with a glimpse of exterior nature, the image seemingly falls into a, by then, well known genre of architectural photography of the Modernist interior. However, it is a harbinger of things to come. Moore's investments in history, identity, and place coupled with experiments with scale and symbolism.

In New Haven, All Roads Lead to Rome

Certainly Moore built the Orinda House and commissioned its famous set of photographs by Morley Baer to launch his career – indeed the images of the house appeared multiple times in *Progressive Architecture* between 1962 and 1964.[14] There is, of course, a tradition of architects building their own homes, or a house for their parents, as a way of testing ideas and jump-starting one's career. But Moore is unique in that he kept building houses for himself even after his professional identity was established and without explicitly using them for further promotion. Moore left Berkeley for Yale in 1965, and it was in New Haven that he built his most prominently publicized house, which was featured in *Playboy* in October of 1969.[15] Whereas the photographs of the Orinda House followed a visual conceit of presenting architectural space as gender neutral, the *Playboy* spread amplified Moore's bachelor status [Figure 4.20]. Beatriz Colomina characterizes the popular series of "playboy pads" as obsessed with a totalized interior that "[I]n each case, the fantasy is the same: the bachelor and his equipment are able to control every aspect of the interior environment to choreograph the successful conquest and subsequent

[14] "House at Orinda, California," *Progressive Architecture* 43, (01, 1962), 146-149. "Residence, Orinda, California," *Progressive Architecture* 44, (05, 1963), 139, 144, 171-175. "Eleventh Annual Design Awards," *Progressive Architecture* 45, (01, 1964). Also in Hitoshi Misawa, "Charles W. Moore and His Partners," *Japan Architect* no. 112 (1965), 75-86 & "The Architectural League's 63rd Gold Medal Exhibition," *Contract Interiors* 125, no. 5 (12, 1965), 102-105.

[15] "A Playboy Pad: New Haven Haven," in *Playboy*, (October 1969), 126-129, 186.

erasure of all traces in preparation for the next capture."[16] In contrast to this image of a perfected interior as an instrument for conquest, Moore was always experimenting and collaboratively modifying the interior.

In his New Haven home Moore continued his exploration of inserting aediculas as intraspatial elaborations [Figure 4.21]. However, the architect was in this instance working within the interior of an existing nineteenth century structure. Where Orinda had two column-defined aediculas, the house in New Haven had three double-height plywood shafts.[17] These were named, from front to back of house: Howard, Berengaria, and Ethel. The two at the ends of the home were sunk into the basement level and extended to the first-floor level. The middle structure began on the ground floor, rose through the second floor, and continued up to the attic. Stairs wrapped around the shafts, floorboards were cut within them, and geometric shapes cut out of their plywood walls – all to increase the sense of visual play and space within the tightly dimensioned home.

While the evocative salvaged columns at the Orinda house hinted at Moore's fascination with ancient Rome, the cultural references in the New Haven home are exponentially increased. There are, in the same house, neoclassical columns extended by jacks because they are not quite high enough to support the structure above, a cut out of Shirley Temple, wall-sized numbers, portraits of Moore's great-great-grand parents, and a disco-ball [Figure 4.22]. The dizzying array of growing collections, including drawings, toys, and books, would suggest John Soane as a fitting model before classical antiquity.[18] Nevertheless, Moore's interest in the ancient capital was strong. Moore first visited Rome in 1950 and was completely taken by it as he wrote to his

[16] Beatriz Colomina, "L'Obsession De Playboy: L'intérieur Total = the Total Interior: Playboy's Obsession," *L'Architecture d'Aujourd'hui* 398 (2013): 69.

[17] Moore tested similar arrangements at his apartment in Sea Ranch.

[18] Soane was in fact a model for Moore, as well as Schinkel and Jefferson.

sister, "Rome is the place Rome is the place Rome is the place…for me."[19] In 1960, he published the article "Hadrian's Villa" in *Perspecta*. There he compared imperial Rome to American culture, calling Hadrian "nothing short of Texan" and imagining the G.M. Technical Center as becoming a comparable exhausting expanse of ruins.[20] When it came to the New Haven house, the references were many, but, like Moore imagined of Hadrian, the collections were born of his personal travels. Among the dynamic functions of the three aediculas was that they might lead your eyes "along a path of associations with Rome."[21]

The central plywood aedicule, Berengaria reaching up to the attic, contained the third-floor bedroom, bath, and sauna. *Playboy* photographed these spaces; one shot had a nude model posing in the sauna. The magazine quoted Moore, "All I need to do is set out the ice and glasses and the house seems to do the entertaining for me." Indeed, his houses were always known as party places, but the implications of the publication obviously miss the mark. Moore recalled of interacting with the models during the magazine shoot, "the ones who kept their clothes on were more interesting to talk to than the ones who didn't."[22] Above the sauna, the bedroom contained a smaller aedicule [Figure 4.23]. It was essentially a built-in canopy surrounding the bed set within the larger extruded plywood form. This was painted bright red with stars resembling those on the American flag, and a Baroque trompe-l'oeil dome was copied on its ceiling. The effect was to once again bring representations of America and Rome into proximity. There is a curious tension in the mismatch between the *Playboy* depiction of the New Haven house and Moore's motley collection of cultural references. The lifestyle that the magazine purports is unabashedly rife with the hedonism associated with the decadence of late-Rome, while Moore looks to Rome

[19] Letter dated January 27, 1950, reproduced in: Keim, *An Architectural Life*, 40.
[20] Charles W. Moore, "Hadrian's Villa," *Perspecta* 6 (1960): 16-27; esp. 17.
[21] *The Place of Houses*, 62.
[22] Quoted in Littlejohn, 80.

as a place of cultural mixing, though he is not naïve about the networks of wealth and power that afford this privileged status.

Welcome to the Dollhouse

On the opposite end of the question of lateness is that of youth. The two are not unrelated notions. Jean-Jacques Rousseau's Émile was born free but corrupted through society. Oscar Wilde's Dorian Gray retains his youth while his portrait decays. And Barbie brings children into a new economic landscape. But by the close of the nineteen-sixties in America, youth was no longer innocent. We see evidence of childhood as a protracted theme for the architect Charles Moore in numerous places: his coveted collection of pop-up books, two designs for dollhouses, a lecture devoted to the topic of fairy tales, and an exhibition piece for the Architectural League in New York that featured a figurative study of children's clothing [Figures 4.24 – 4.26]. The conceit of childhood is arguably central to Moore's growing efforts to address the social concerns of America in the late sixties and early seventies. Furthermore, one finds a figuring of youth in his work that is distinct from the contemporaneous celebration of hedonistic youth culture in Michelangelo Antonioni's 1970 film *Zabriskie Point*, in Nigel Henderson's mid-century photographs of children playing in the streets of London, exemplifying the post-war romantic ideation of childhood as a font of creativity, and in the Bauhaus Bauspiel designed by Alma Siedhoff-Buscher in 1923, representing the earlier Modernist ideal of elementary forms [Figures 4.27 – 4.29]. Where other conceptualizations of childhood are largely based on a myth of freedom, Moore's remains bound to cultural and social structures, even if only to play fast and loose with and within them.

By the time the *Playboy* article came out, Moore was already starting another move. While he was still dean at Yale, he shifted his home and his office to Essex, CT, where he bought a nineteenth-century compound of mill buildings [Figure 4.30 & 4.31]. He had a social vision for the site that included establishing a more collaborative firm, connections to industrial history, and an ecological agenda. The property was purchased in 1969 and the build out of the house was completed in 1970, but the property was large and in disrepair. During the early 70s, Moore continued with the costly renovations primarily through sweat equity, but the firm, like so many, fell on hard financial times. Weathering the oil crisis and economic recession, the firm only officially opened in 1975 with a mission focusing on craft and place making.

At this point, the architect's collections were substantial and his dreams of displaying them in new ways were fruitful. Moore sometimes identified the aedicule-come-plywood-shaft in New Haven as furniture.[23] In his new Centerbrook home, the lines between miniature temple, furniture, and what constitutes a room would be further pressed [Figure 4.32].

Moore made himself a sort of studio apartment on the second floor of the 18th century clapboard house that sat adjacent to the mill building, which would be converted into the firm's studio space. It was a live-work set up with administrative space below, in the same house, and the design studio in the adjacent building. The stairs in the clapboard home were encased in a similar shaft to the ones in New Haven, and a small partially open bathroom was fitted into it. Thus Moore shared the functional quarters of lavatory and kitchen with the office space below [Figure 4.33]. Accordingly, his bachelor pad on the second floor consisted simply of living room and bedroom. When the house was first complete, there was no spatial distinction between these two functions [Figure 4.34]. On either side of a coffee table sat two large beds with fitted covers, suitable for lounging socially or sleeping. Two floor-to-ceiling shelving units, standing out from the back wall and with a curtain hung between them, made a small private dressing space.

A plywood pyramid that divided the room soon replaced this open expanse. It sat squarely on the ground and awkwardly filled the second-floor space [Figures 4.35 & 4.36].

[23] Keim, 172.

When one first entered, they would immediately encounter Moore's toy collection now displayed within the cut-out spaces of the plywood pyramid, resembling a section sliced through an Egyptian tomb. In her text on narrative and scale, Susan Stewart writes, "[T]he dollhouse has two dominant motifs: wealth and nostalgia. It presents a myriad of perfect objects that are, as signifiers, often affordable, whereas the signified is not."[24] Moore's pyramid plays a similar game, but more overtly coded. Indeed, its exterior is painted a green color similar to that of the American dollar. The monetary symbol is extended as the pyramid is topped with a disco ball encased in a Plexiglas cover and the ceiling above is inscribed with a ring of Latin supergraphic text. Altogether, it clearly references the shield on the backside of a dollar bill. Despite the blatant economic motif, Moore's dollhouse does not participate in the romantic nostalgia Stewart associates with them. This is partially because of its eclectic tableau of toys that retain their own cultural references rather than replicate an idealized period or domestic lifestyle. It is also perhaps because this is not a diminutive house, but a model of a monument.

Such an encounter with Moore's pyramid may prompt the question, what is the difference between a dollhouse and an architectural model? The scaled model has long remained one of the fundamental instruments of architectural design, providing a means of assessing aesthetic compositions as well as testing spatial qualities. As the architectural object and its monumental structures, in particular, were increasingly recognized as being in crisis during the postmodern period, scaled models, for the most part, changed in scope not kind. This is to say that while they may have gathered urban and environmental contexts rather than isolated buildings, they still performed their essential scalar function of rendering complex spatial, social, and ecological relationships visible. In contrast, dollhouses perform a different kind of function. In his entry on "Toys" in the *Mythologies* collection, Roland Barthes writes, "All the toys one commonly sees

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[24] Susan Stewart, *On Longing: Narratives of the Miniature, the Gigantic, the Souvenir, the Collection* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1993), 61.

are essentially a microcosm of the adult world; they are all reduced copies of human objects, as if in the eyes of the public the child was, all told, nothing but a smaller man, a homunculus to whom must be supplied objects of his own size."[25] Thus dollhouses not only replicate domestic environments, they domesticate their users.

What is shared across study models and miniature houses is that the object exists at a singular scale. An architect might make multiple studies at different scales to test different aspects of the design, but these were traditionally discrete entities. A child may have a dollhouse and a play-kitchen, but one cannot put that kitchen in the doll's house. However, Moore's pyramid is not obedient to any single scale. Consequently, it is oddly sized for all of its uses. In its function as a display case for his toy collection or a dollhouse, it is awkward. Some of the cut-out spaces are quite small; additionally, his eclectic toy collection means that there is a range of sizes of toys – some looking too big and others getting lost. As a model of an Egyptian pyramid, it is excessive. The basic cut-out shape looms like a large cartoon figure in the room. It is, as it were, a rather giant miniature. Furthermore, the scale of the dollhouse is not the only measure of the pyramid object – it also functions as a full-scale encasement for his bedroom on the opposite side [Figure 4.37]. For this purpose, it is tight, barely providing a small closet, cubbyhole, and headboard.

This oscillation in scale complicates conceptualizing this structure through theorizations of the dollhouse. Alternatively, we may read this space as a *mise en abyme*, which Mieke Bal describes as "a microstructure that contains a summary of the overall fabula in which it functions."[26] Such nested forms have more to do with narrative structure rather than simply the

[25] Roland Barthes, *Mythologies*, trans. by Annette Lavers (New York: Hill and Wang, 1972), 53.
[26] Mieke Bal, *Lethal Love: Feminist Literary Readings of Biblical Love Stories* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1987), 75.

scale of the object or with the kinds of narrative structures afforded by shifting scales. In her textual analysis, Bal reveals that the *mise en abyme* also operates through proper names:

> The proper names whose intertextual and intratextual interplay… end up as partaking in one of the most knotty figures of contemporary narratology, the *mise en abyme*. Why is this little figure of analogy so fascinating, for critics as well as for writers and readers? Its status as troublemaker, as disturber of chronology, as interrupter of the neat linearity of narrative, makes it especially attractive…[27]

We see this literary corollary play out through Moore's series of homes, from the microstructures inserted within the Orinda house to the naming of the aediculas in New Haven. The *mise en abyme* quality is arguably more knotty in the intercultural and intraspatial domestic interior of Centerbrook than the aediculas in the previous houses. Not only do the dual functions of dollhouse and bedroom coincide within a single encasement, that structure, as playful as it is, is loaded with some infamous terms related to the construction of buildings. The nominal innocence of Howard, Berengaria, and Ethel in New Haven is replaced by capital, labor, and race at Centerbrook.

The Elephant in the Room

In moving from the formal problem of a house within a house at his earlier home to the social and historical problem of worlds within worlds at Centerbrook, we can see pulses of the sociological and ecological currents emerging in architecture in the nineteen-sixties and seventies, yet here played out within the domestic interior rather than the urban stage. In terms of scale and function, the Centerbrook pyramid already confounds the typical role of toys and play to naturalize adult behavior. Where Barthes discovers through close examination of miniatures that "Toys here reveal the list of all the things the adult does not find unusual: war, bureaucracy,

[27] Ibid., 87.

ugliness, Martians, etc.,"[28] Moore makes larger than life some other things the American adult doesn't find unusual, such as racism and the divine status of the dollar. While the exterior of the plywood pyramid was painted the green of US currency, its interior was painted the vibrant rose of watermelon flesh. Stripes of softer pinks and white offer transition between the green exterior and rose interior, completing the melon affect. Moore joked that "if you had something that was cut open and had a chance to paint it like a watermelon you'd better not pass up that opportunity."[29] However, it is hard not to acknowledge that as cultural symbols watermelons were racially loaded, used by white America as a derogatory short hand for African Americans. Moore may have been considered less "serious" than Venturi and often hid his erudition behind a lighthearted veneer, but he was too smart, too invested in cultural symbols, and too involved in the social activism of the era not to be aware of the full scope of symbolic meaning.

In a 1975 lecture at Tulane University, Moore outlined his definition of "the architectural fairy tale" by drawing a line between fairy tale and fantasy.[30] There, Moore defined fantasy as irrational and separate from both the realms of possibility and of lived life. In contrast, he qualified the fairy tale as starting with the familiar but extending to immeasurable dimensions. While the architect made a semantic distinction between fairy tale and fantasy, this chapter has taken a wider view of the ways in which Moore's flights of fancy, implemented through the architectural dimension, serve to tie his architecture to its socio-economic context rather than to simply set it free.

Walter Benjamin emphasized, "After all, a child is no Robinson Crusoe; children do not constitute a community cut off from everything else. They belong to the nation and the class they come from. This means that their toys cannot bear witness to any autonomous separate existence,

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[28] Barthes, 53.
[29] From an unidentified essay reproduced in Keim, *An Architectural Life*, 173.
[30] Charles W. Moore, *Architecture: Architecture and Fairy Tales* (New Orleans: Tulane University, 1975).

but rather are a silent signifying dialogue between them and their nation."[31] Arguably, Moore's Centerbrook house instantiates a comparable signifying dialogue. The symbolism here is overt; it is multilayered, but not ambiguous – it images an Egyptian pyramid, at once part of the architectural canon, a major monument in Western architectural history, a foundation myth born of privileged art historical narratives that rope African history into the western canon, but also a monument of immense material orchestration built from slave labor; as such it represents a monument that is not simply an art historical image but also an artifact of a particular social and political structure that is here transposed into a contemporary American context of money, labor, and social equity. Thus it is open to interpretation, but not endlessly so; it is in short a carefully composed multivalency that operates on a personal and physical scale as much as it does visually.

In 1976, the French journal *L'Architecture d'Aujourd'hui,* one of the few trade publications to showcase Moore's third home, featured a lengthy spread and a whopping five "portraits" of the protean Moore.[32] These included a self-portrait written by Moore followed by professional, professor, activist, and artist portraits, each individually authored by architects including Frank Israel and Diana Agrest, who wrote the portrait of an artist and featured the Centerbrook house, which she describes as a cultural compressor. In his opening self-portrait, Moore writes, "There is an excitement in my mind especially for miniatures, for tiny things that carry the message of much bigger ones." He goes on to describe the aedicular forms at Orinda and Sea Ranch but adds at the end, "Later we have become very much interested in the urgencies of larger housing groups where the need has been not only to make the center of the world for an individual family, but to figure out how at minimum cost and with some density, to put those

[31] Walter Benjamin, "The Cultural History of Toys," trans. by Rodney Livingstone in *Selected Writings, Volume 2: 1927—1934* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press, 1999), 116.

[32] "Charles W. Moore," *L'Architecture d'Aujourd'hui* 184 (1976): 1-62.

centers of the world together."[33] Moore did not shy away from the larger narratives within which the contemporary problems were framed. And he let all of those loaded questions of history and identity that connect the personal to the social land like a bizarre spacecraft in his bachelor bedroom-living room-office [Figure 4.38].

To conclude, Charles Moore's Centerbrook House has all of the visual cues of a late work: it is dynamic, somewhat inscrutable, and a bit garish. But the work in fact stands mid-way through Moore's career. This disruption of the normative linear progression of early, middle, and late – transposed from categories of temporal and geographical styles to categories of personal style – might suggest evidence of having crossed over into a larger cultural lateness, as Jameson would posit, rather than of holding on to the weakening frames of late style. Such theorizations figure lateness as an ineluctable condition that is beyond the designer's capacity to actively engage with it. At stake in Moore's brand of postmodern populism is not a battle between stylistic structure, no matter how ironically or earnestly deployed, and a lateness that erodes it, but rather a sustained exploration of the already-always-lateness of being a human cast into a set of existing but also shifting cultural and social structures.

The following chapter picks up where this one began: the early nineteen-eighties. It turns to a church designed by Moore's contemporary, Philip Johnson. There are some similarities between them; for example, both built mid-century bachelor homes that experimented with transparency, domesticity, and sensual pleasures that subversively, rather than overtly, went against the grain of Modernist tenets. Nevertheless, they are largely regarded as working at opposite poles of the field. Moore contrasted his work from Johnson's as he described his home in New Haven: "those plywood walls, with all kinds of shapes and colors, are not very serious… They are not travertine, they're not pigskin like Philip Johnson's bathroom. They are statements

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[33] *Architecture Ajourd'hui*, no. 184, (1976), xlv.

of pleasure and prejudice… I like to think that this house is, in the best sense, trivial."[34] In contrast to Moore's playful miniaturization of monumental architecture, Johnson's church will fully embrace its monumental scale. Moore himself was interested in the dispersed networks of media culture within which Johnson's church would exist. Moore's essay "Plug It in Ramses, and See If It Lights Up, Because We Aren't Going to Keep It Unless It Works" (1967) was an early reflection on the aspatial nature of electronically networked culture. In it, he writes, "and while the Piazza San Marco has been repeated on urban renewal sites across the United States (complete with everything but inhabitants), the hierarchy of important places from private to monumental has vanished,"[35] portending much of what Johnson would be up against. For his part, Johnson was not one to sing Moore's praises. Yet he still acknowledged Moore's contributions when Moore received the AIA Gold Medal at the end of his life in 1992. Johnson wrote, "to me Charles declared the new era in very simple and moving terms… making this cacophony that we all have now so very, very pleasant."[36] Moore may have been playful in his work, but he and Johnson both took the decadence of America in the twentieth century head on rather than aim to suppress or solve it.

[34] Moore from a 1972 interview, quoted in Littlejohn, 80; original source not specified.

[35] Charles W. Moore, "Plug It In Ramses, and See If It Lights Up, Because We Aren't Going to Keep It Unless It Works" *Perspecta* 11 (1967): 32-43, reprinted in *You Have to Pay for Public Life* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2001): 152.

[36] Letter reproduced in Keim, 270-71.

Figure 4.1 Aerial photograph of Pruitt–Igoe complex, St. Louis, Missouri; demolished from 1972 to 1976.

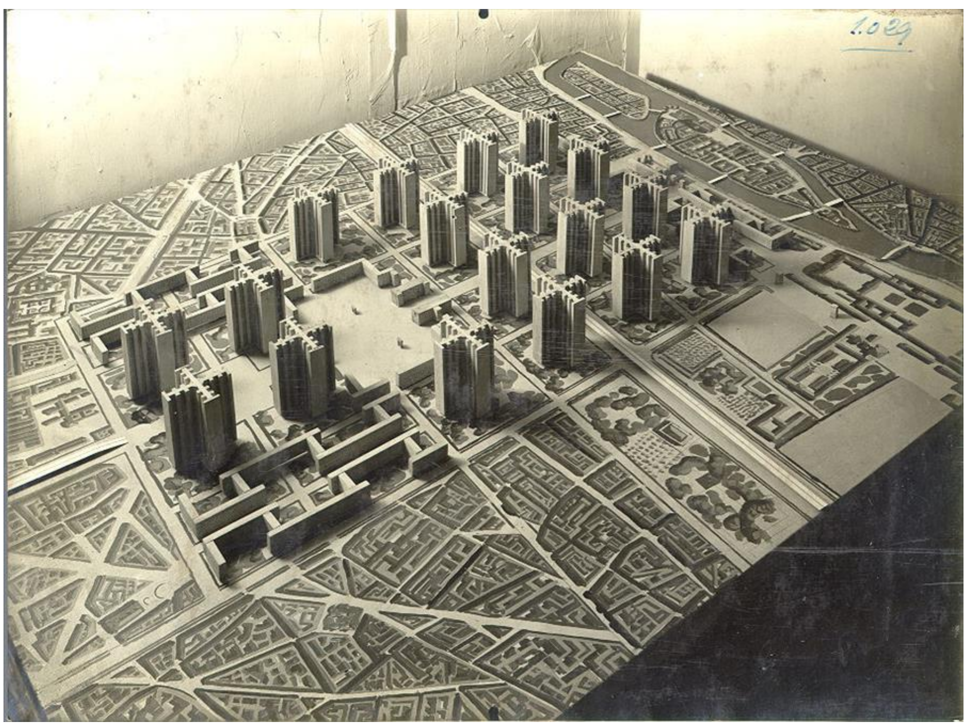
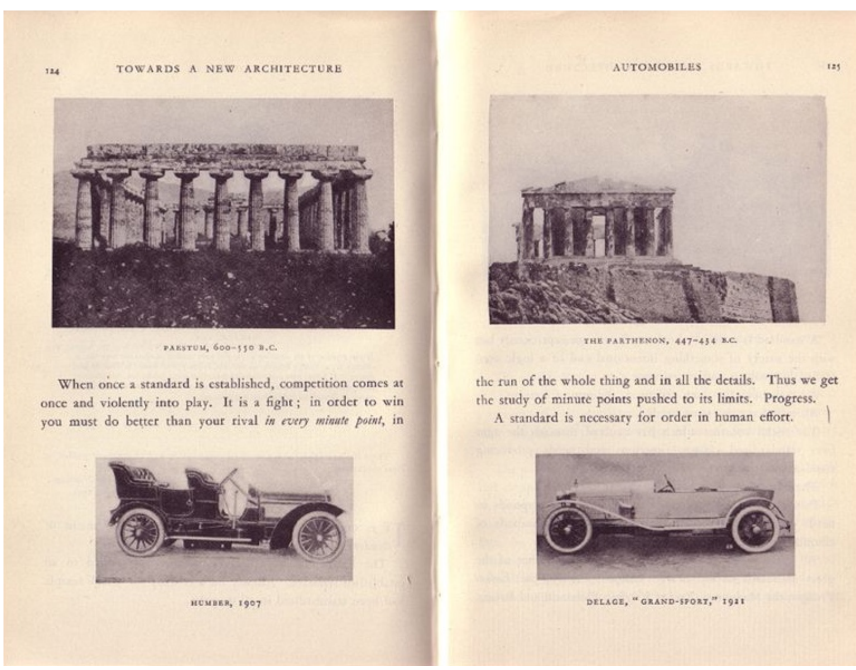


Figure 4.2 Plan Voisin, Le Corbusier, 1925, Paris. (Fondation Le Corbusier)

Figure 4.3 Study collage for *Cabin, Temple, Trailer* exhibition, Charles Moore, 1983. (The Charles W. Moore Archives, Project records, Alexander Architectural Archives, University of Texas Libraries, The University of Texas at Austin)



124 TOWARDS A NEW ARCHITECTURE

PAESTUM, 600–550 B.C.

When once a standard is established, competition comes at once and violently into play. It is a fight; in order to win you must do better than your rival *in every minute point*, in

HUMBER, 1907

AUTOMOBILES 125

THE PARTHENON, 447–434 B.C.

the run of the whole thing and in all the details. Thus we get the study of minute points pushed to its limits. Progress.

A standard is necessary for order in human effort.

DELAGE, "GRAND-SPORT," 1921

Figure 4.4 *Towards an Architecture*, by Le Corbusier, 1927. Originally published in French as *Vers une architecture*, 1923.

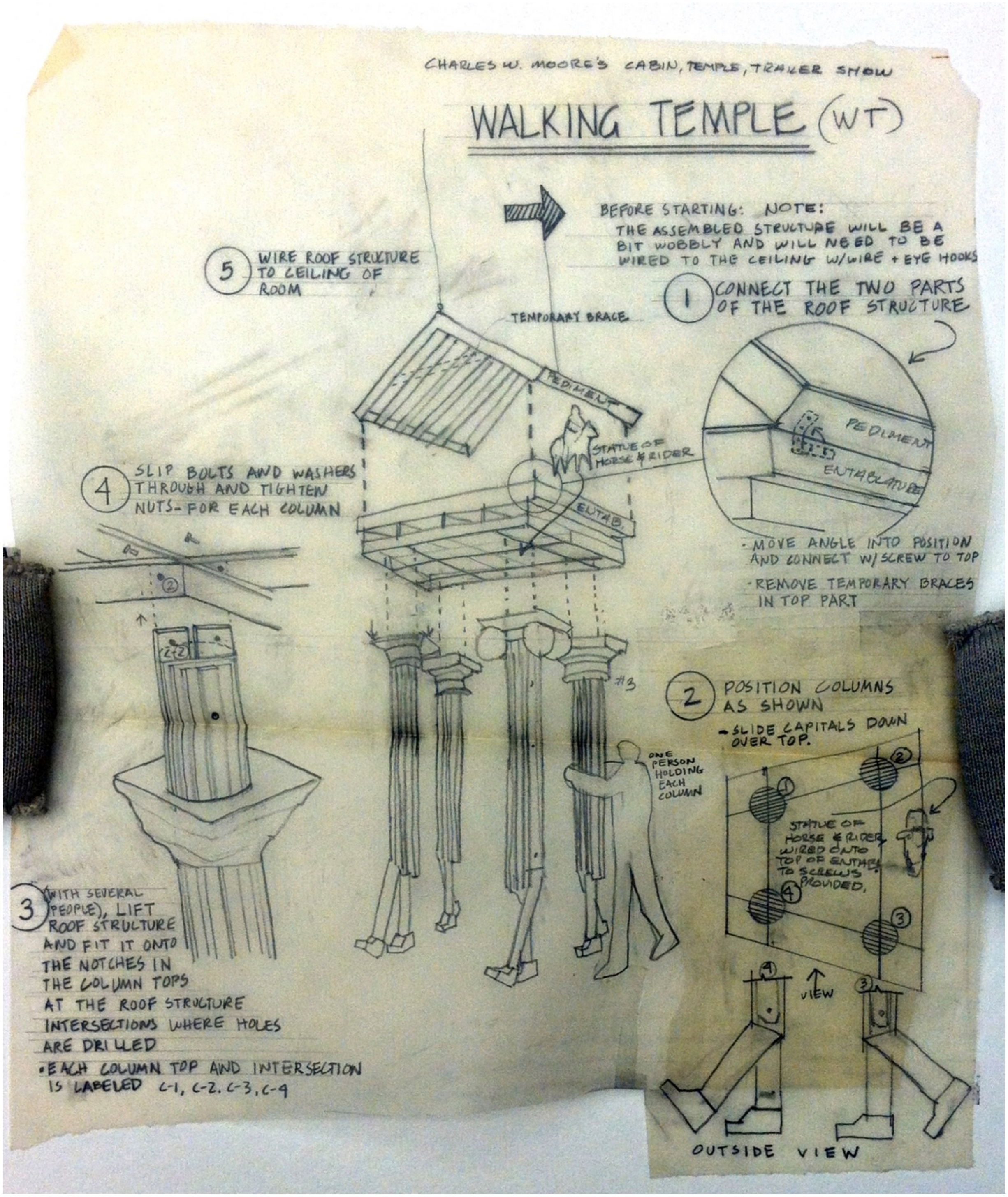


Figure 4.5 "Walking Temple" Charles Moore, *Cabin, Temple, Trailer* exhibition, 1983. (The Charles W. Moore Archives, Project records, Alexander Architectural Archives, University of Texas Libraries, The University of Texas at Austin)

ASSEMBLY OF ROLLING TEMPLE (RT) (4)

Figure 4.6 "Rolling Temple" Charles Moore, for *Cabin, Temple, Trailer* exhibition, 1983. (The Charles W. Moore Archives, Project records, Alexander Architectural Archives, University of Texas Libraries, The University of Texas at Austin.)

Figure 4.7 Photograph of *Cabin, Temple, Trailer* exhibition, 1983. (The Charles W. Moore Archives, Project records, Alexander Architectural Archives, University of Texas Libraries, The University of Texas at Austin)

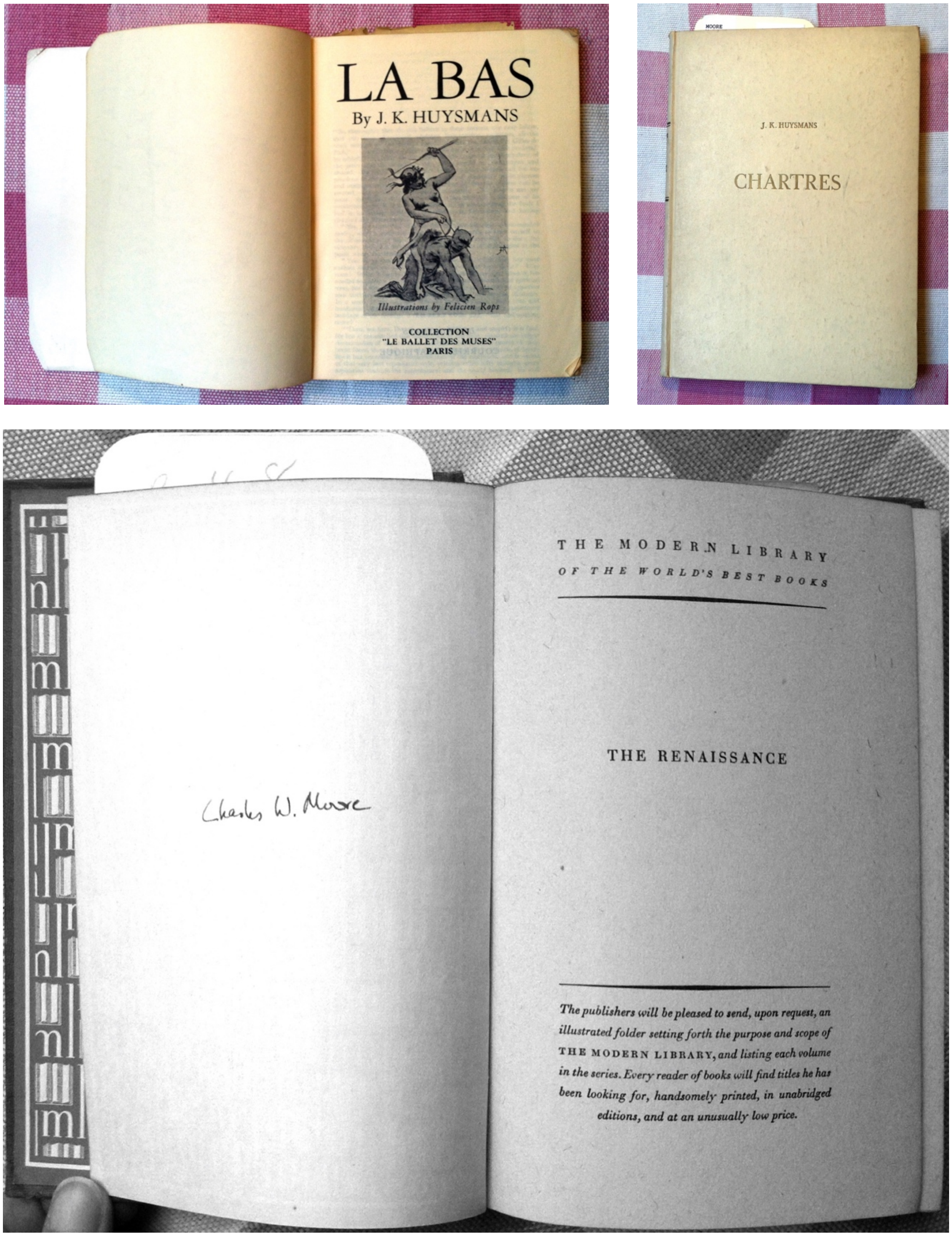


Figure 4.8 Books from Charles Moore's library. The architect had a number of books by decadent authors such as Charles Baudelaire, J.-K. Huysmans, and Walter Pater. Shown here: *Là-bas* and *Chartres* by Huysmans (*top*), and *The Renaissance* by Pater (*bottom*). (Photographs by author)

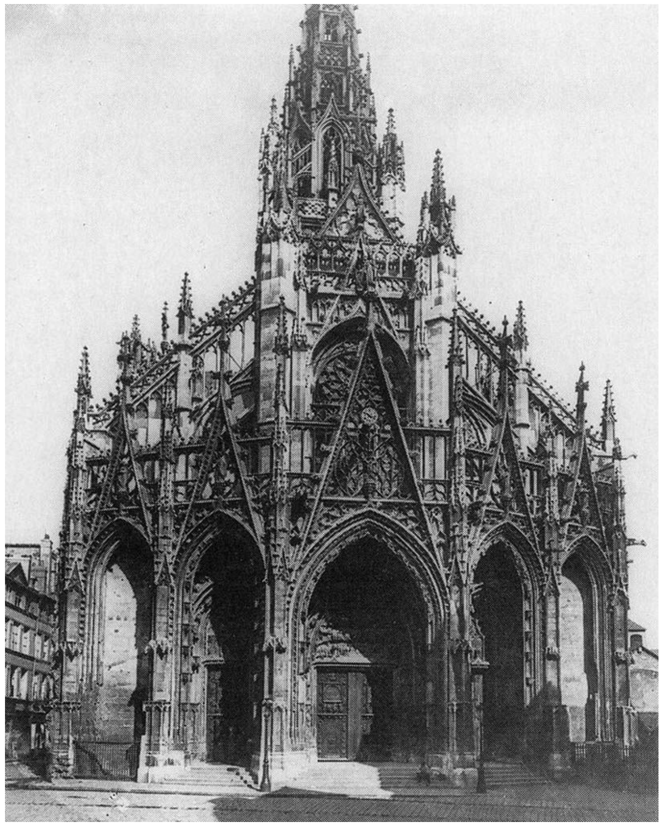


Figure 4.9 Church of Saint-Maclou, Rouen, c.1435, late Gothic period.

Figure 4.10 Fresco wall paintings in the fourth style, House of the Vettii, Pompeii, c. 62-79.

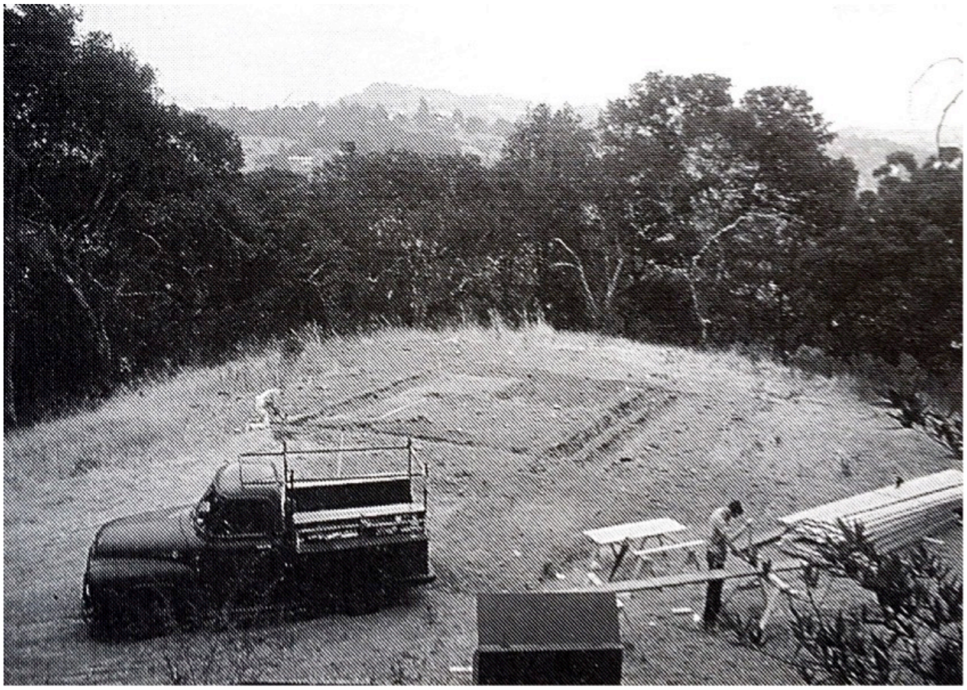


Figure 4.11 Site photograph, Charles Moore House, Orinda, California. (Kevin Keim, *An Architectural Life*, 169.)

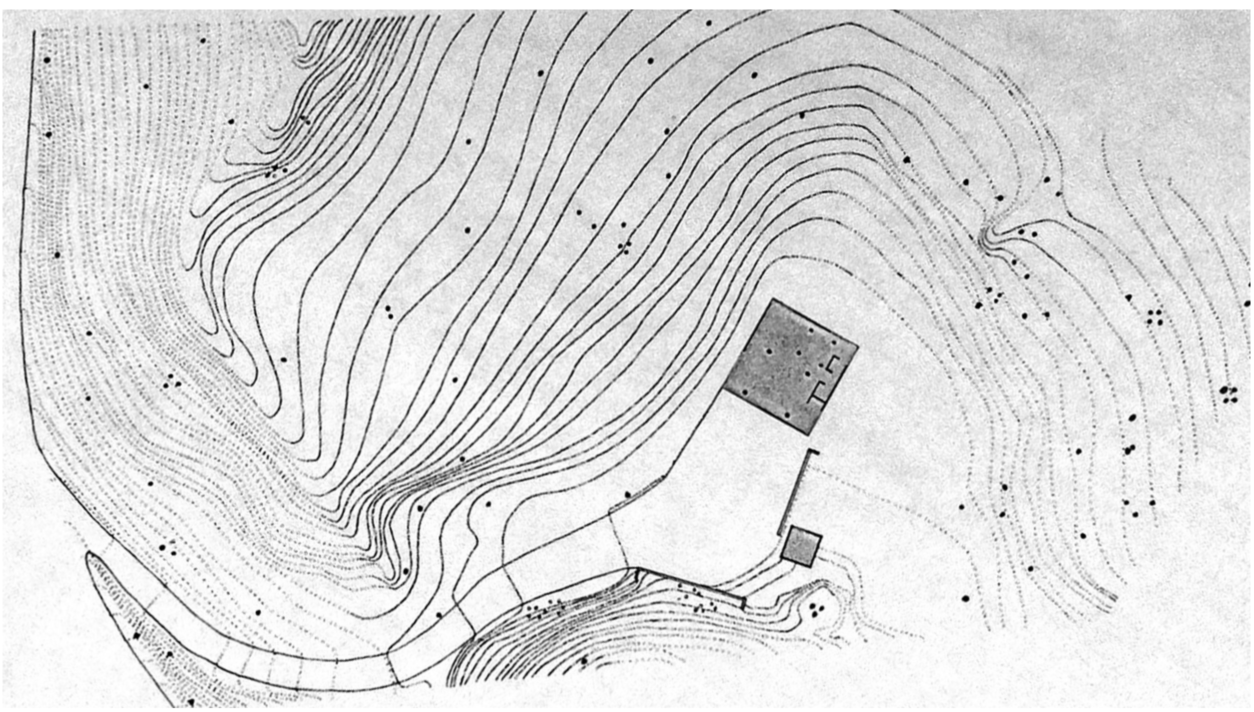


Figure 4.12 Site plan, Charles Moore House, Orinda, California. (The Charles W. Moore Archives, Project records, Alexander Architectural Archives, University of Texas Libraries, The University of Texas at Austin)

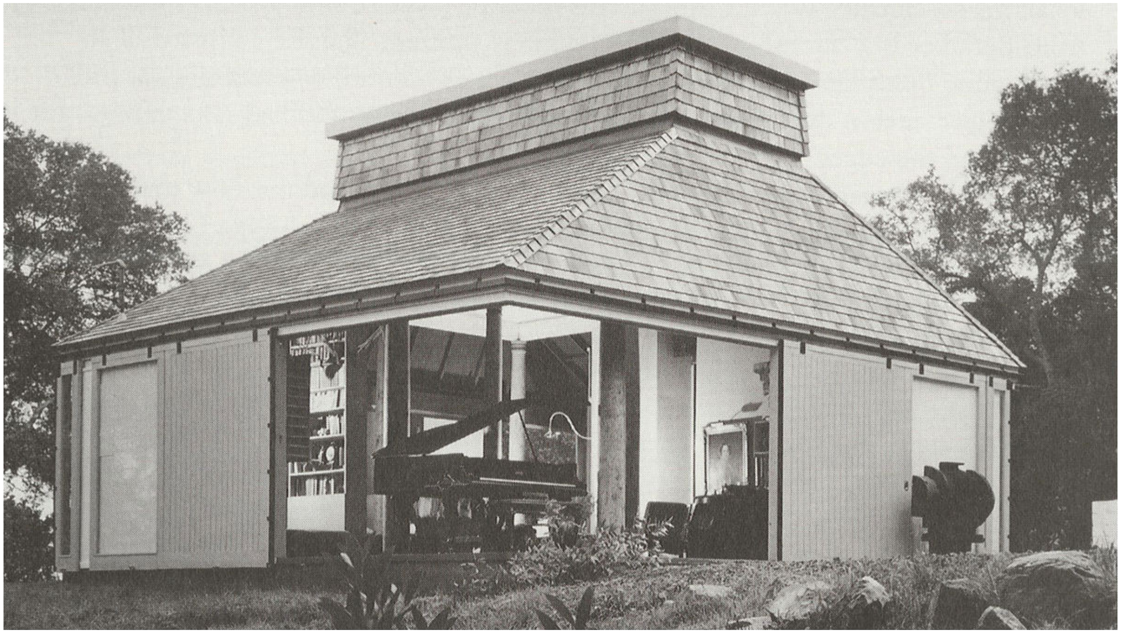


Figure 4.13 Exterior photograph, Charles Moore House, Orinda, California, 1962. Morley Baer, photographer. (Gerald Allen, *Charles Moore*, 26.)

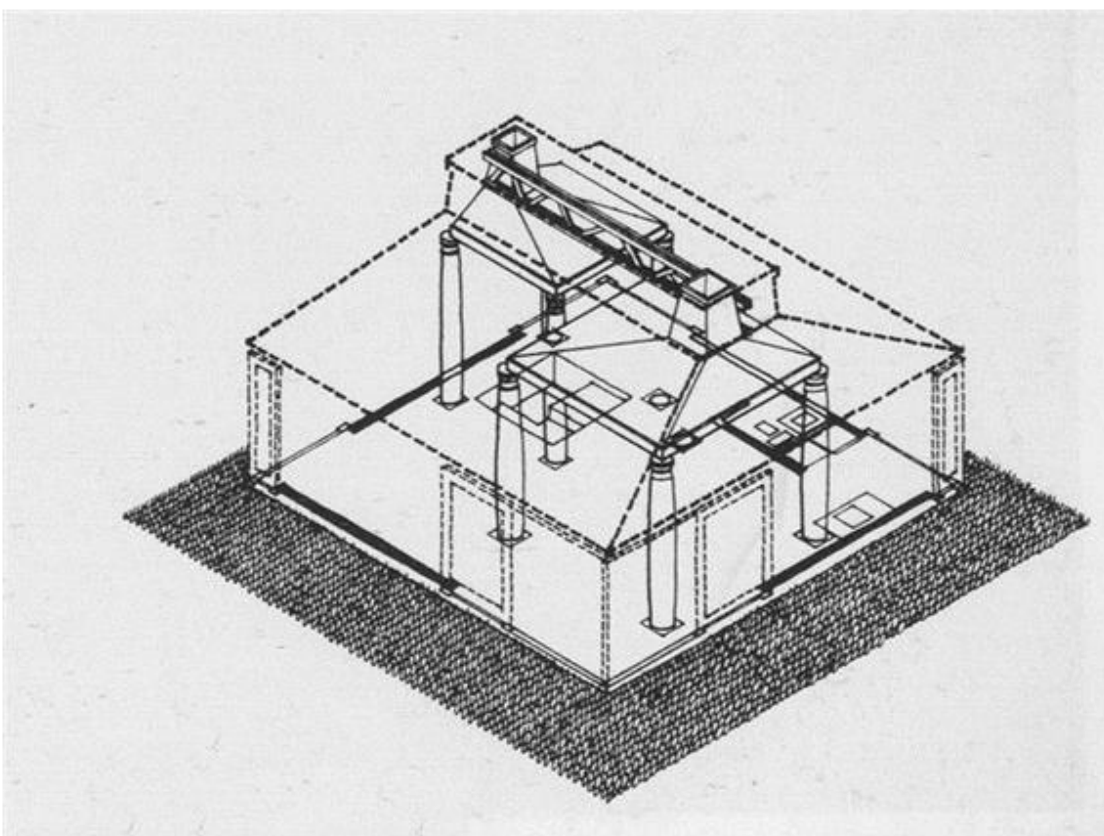


Figure 4.14 Axonometric drawing, Charles Moore House, Orinda, California, 1962.

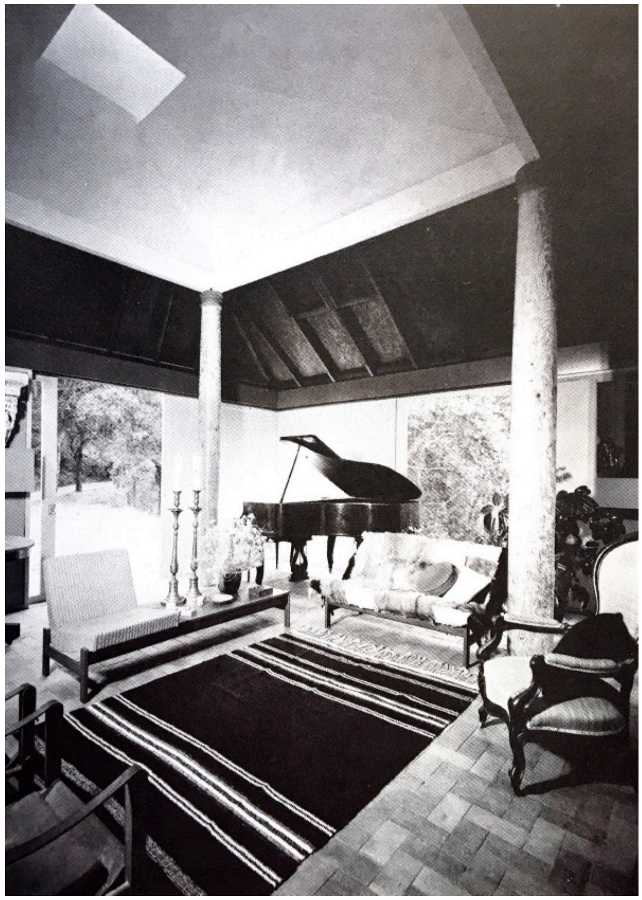


Figure 4.15 Interior photographs, Charles Moore House, Orinda, California, 1962. Morley Baer, photographer. (Gerald Allen, *Charles Moore*, 27-28.)

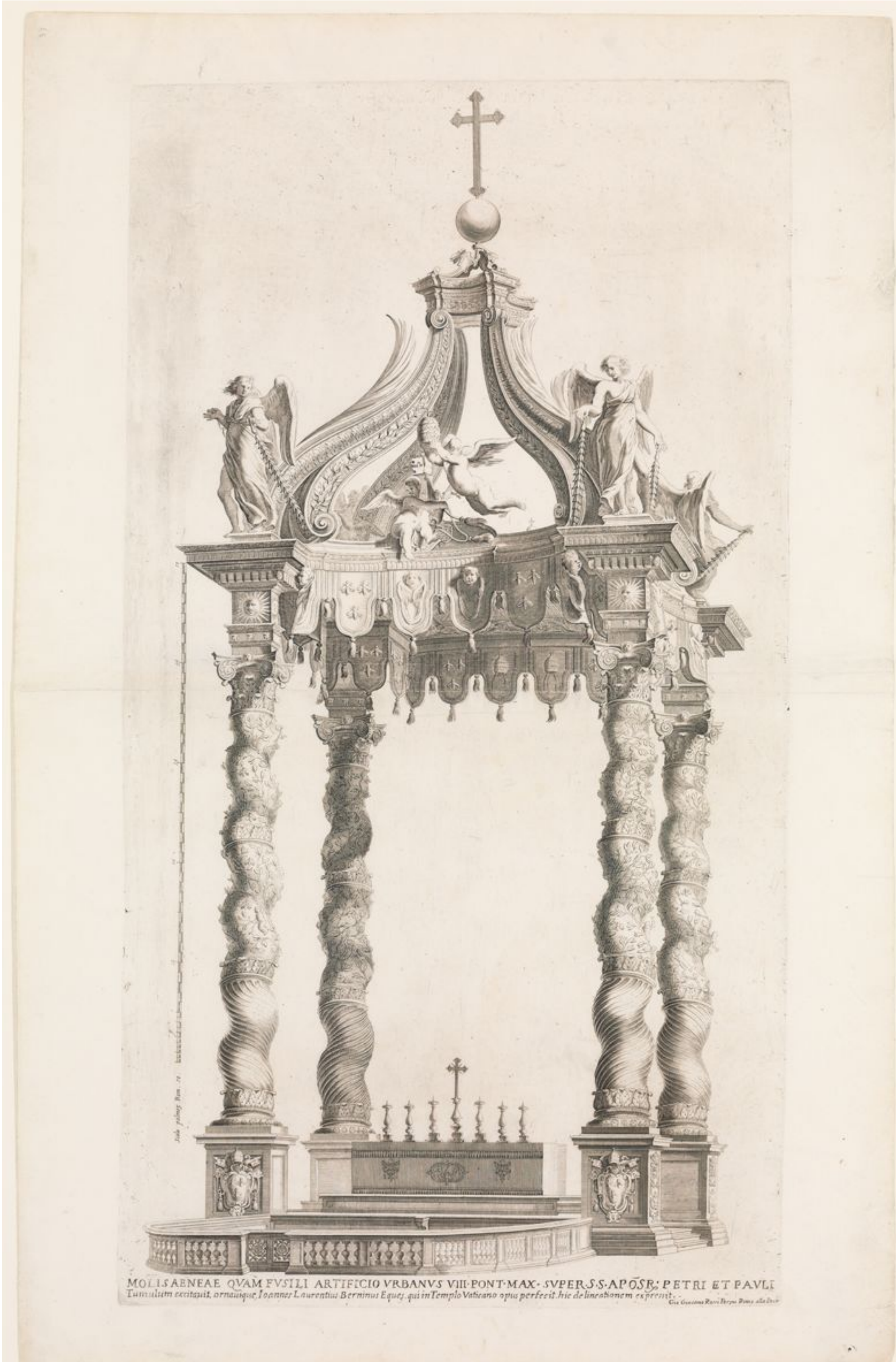


Figure 4.16 Isolated View of Bernini's Baldacchino. Plate 39 from the Album "Basilica di S. Pietro in Vaticano." (Metropolitan Museum of Art)

Figure 4.17 Frontispiece, “Essai sur l’architecture” 1755. (The Miriam and Ira D. Wallach Division of Art, Prints and Photographs: Art & Architecture Collection, The New York Public Library)

Figure 4.18 Trenton Bath House, Louis Kahn, Trenton, New Jersey, 1954-59.

Figure 4.19 Interior photograph of sunken tub and shower, Charles Moore House, Orinda, California, 1962. Morley Baer, photographer. (Gerald Allen, *Charles Moore*, 29.)

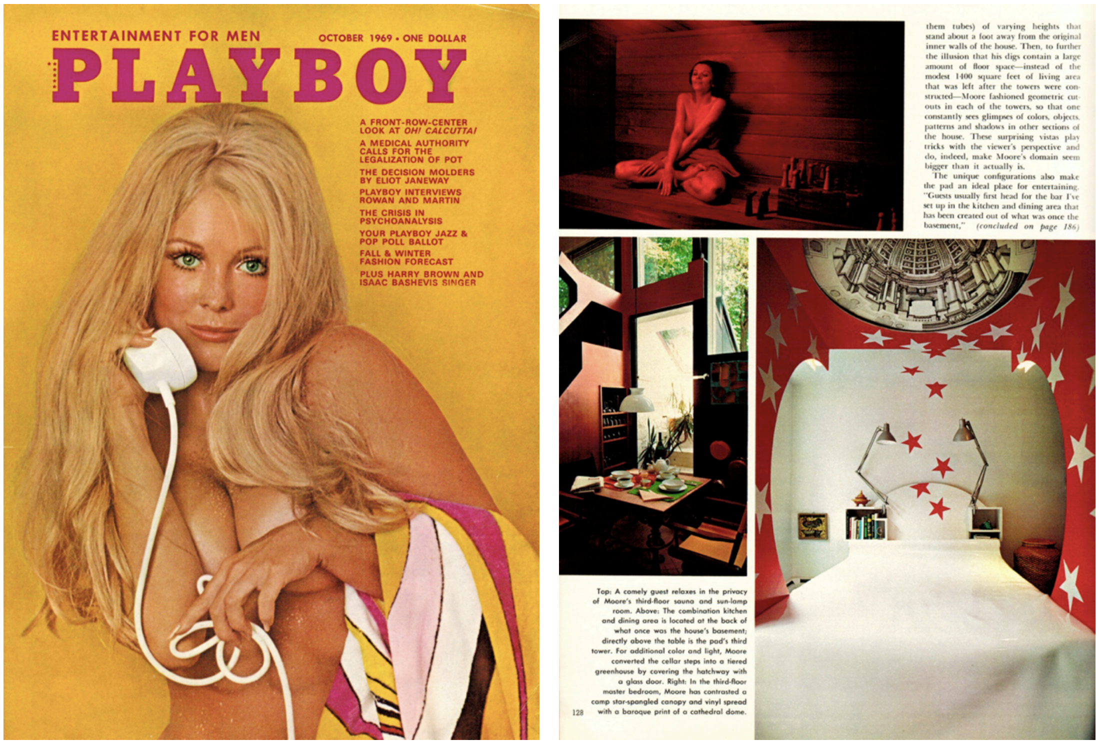


Figure 4.20 Charles Moore House, New Haven, Connecticut, 1965, featured in *Playboy*, October 1969.

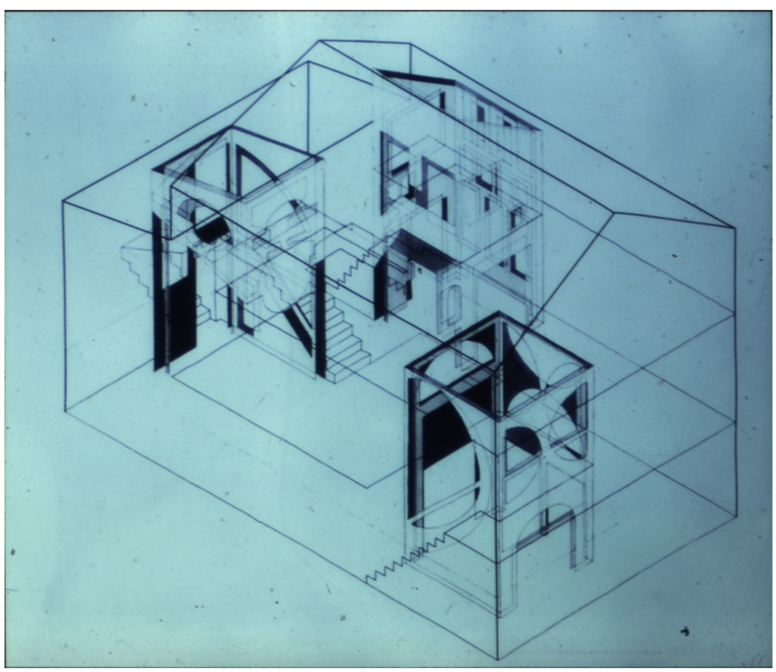


Figure 4.21 Axonometric drawing, Charles Moore House, New Haven, Connecticut, 1965. (Manuscripts and Archives, Yale University Library)

Figure 4.22 Interior photographs, Charles Moore House, New Haven, Connecticut, 1965. (Manuscripts and Archives, Yale University Library)

Figure 4.23 Interior photograph of bedroom aedicule, Charles Moore House, New Haven, Connecticut, 1965. Norman McGrath, photographer. (Jorge Otero-Pailos, *Architecture's Historical Turn*, 132.)

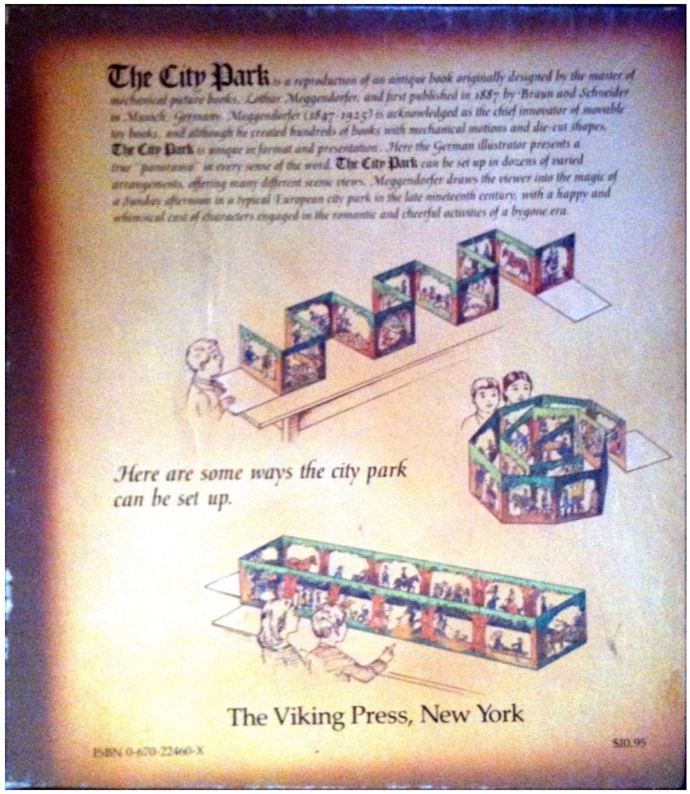


Figure 4.24 *The City Park*, reproduction of an early pop-up book deigned by Lothar Meggendorfer (1847-1925). It recreates panoramic views of a typical European city park in the 19th century. Held in Moore's library. (Photograph by author)

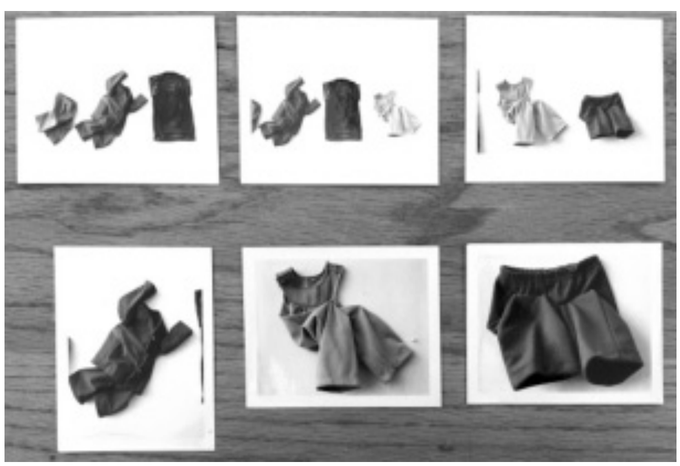


Figure 4.25 Photographic study of children's clothing, Charles Moore, for Architecture League project, 1980. (The Charles W. Moore Archives, Project records, Alexander Architectural Archives, University of Texas Libraries, The University of Texas at Austin)

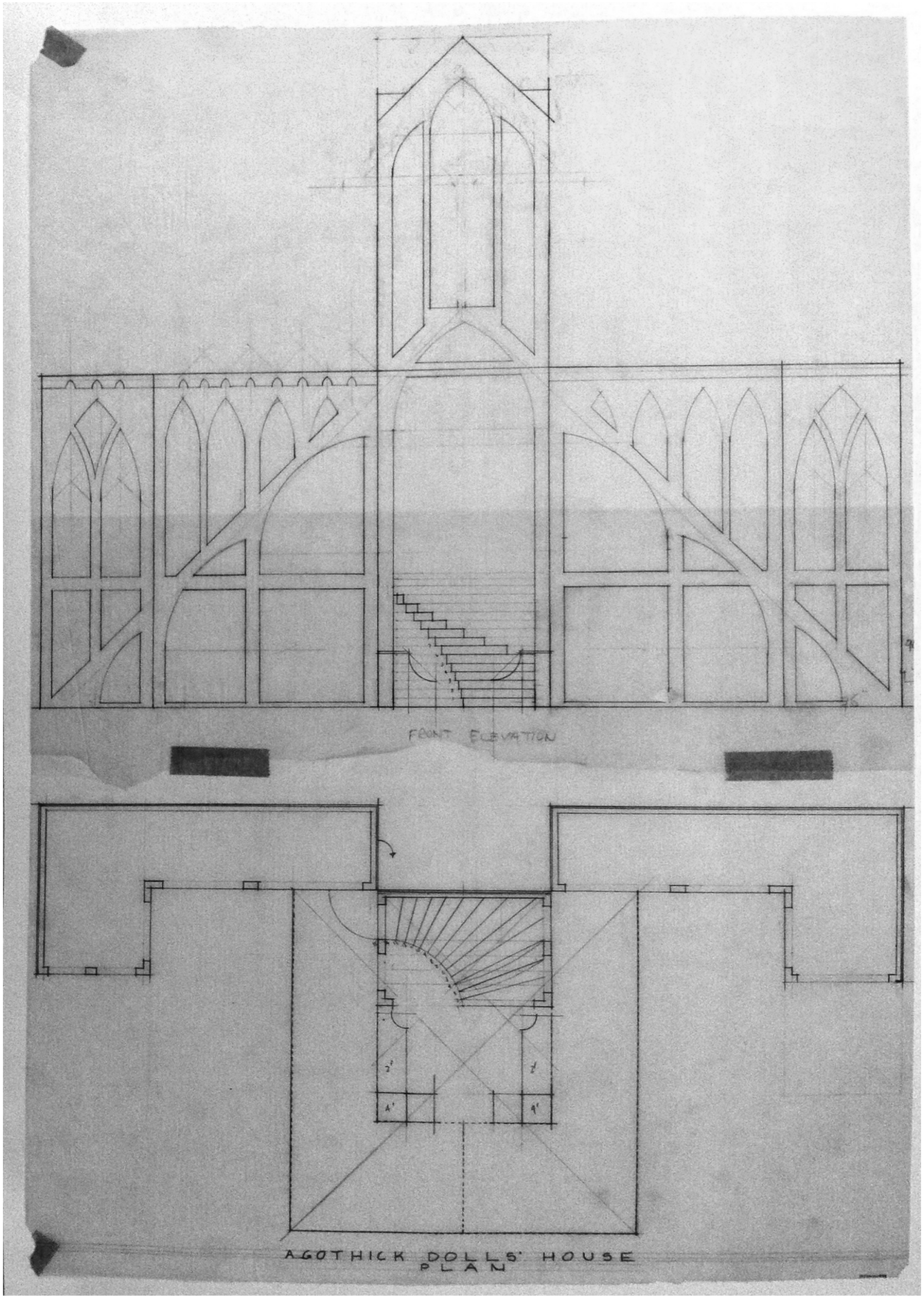


Figure 4.26 Gothic Doll's House, Charles Moore, 1983. (The Charles W. Moore Archives, Project records, Alexander Architectural Archives, University of Texas Libraries, The University of Texas at Austin)

Figure 4.27 Bauhaus Bauspiel, 1923. (Victoria and Albert Museum, London)

Figure 4.28 Nigel Henderson photograph showing children playing on Chisenhale Road, London, ca. 1950. (Tate Archive)

Figure 4.29 *Zabriskie Point*, Antonioni, 1970.

Figure 4.30 Exterior view from the street of the Centerbrook property in Essex, Connecticut. (Eugene Johnson, *Charles Moore Buildings*, 107.)

Figure 4.31 Exterior view from the back of the Centerbrook property in Essex, Connecticut. (Centerbook)

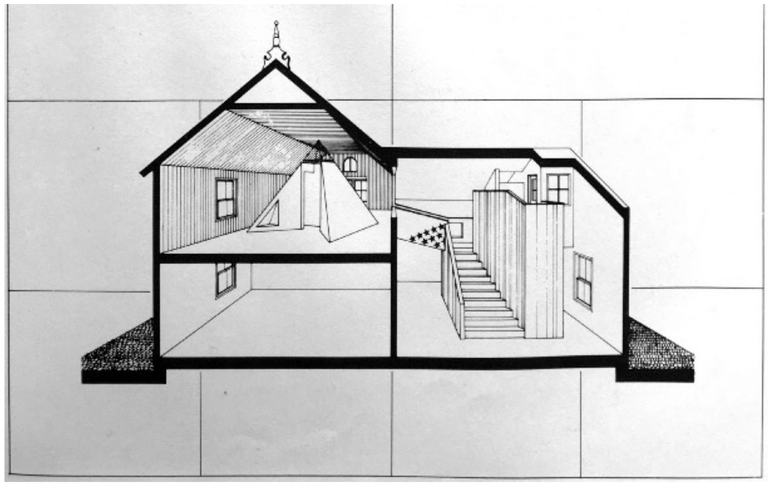


Figure 4.32 Section, Charles Moore House, Essex, Connecticut, 1973. Showing stairs connecting to the bedroom with the partially screened bathroom on the landing. (Gerald Allen, *Charles Moore*, 75.)

Figure 4.33 Interior photograph of dining space below the stairs, Charles Moore House, Essex, Connecticut, 1973. Large stars like those on the American flag are applied to stair railing, similar to the bedroom aedicule at New Haven. (Gerald Allen, *Charles Moore*, 76.)

Figure 4.34 Interior photograph of Moore's bedroom before the installation of the pyramid, Charles Moore House, Essex, Connecticut, ca. 1971. (Gerald Allen, *Charles Moore*, 74.)

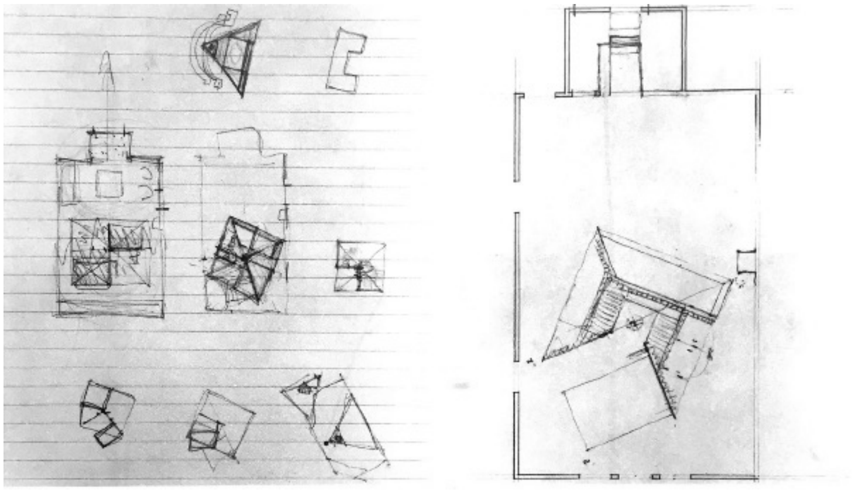


Figure 4.35 Study of pyramid structure, Charles Moore. (Eugene Johnson, *Charles Moore Buildings*, 107.)

Figure 4.36 Interior photograph of pyramid from the living room, Charles Moore House, Essex, Connecticut, 1973.

Figure 4.37 Interior photograph of pyramid from the bedroom, Charles Moore House, Essex, Connecticut, 1973. (Manuscripts and Archives, Yale University Library)

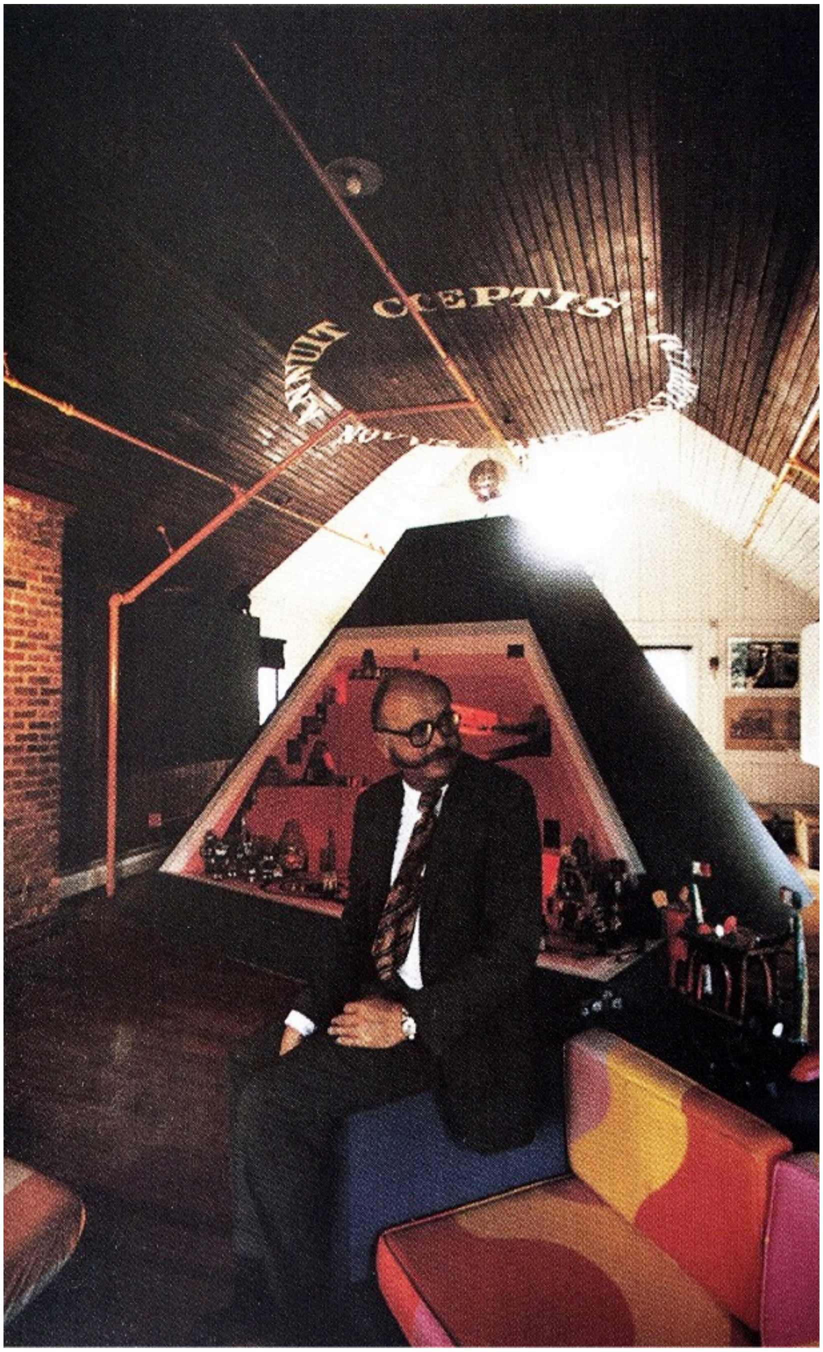


Figure 4.38 Interior photograph of pyramid from the living room with Moore sitting on the couch, Charles Moore House, Essex, Connecticut, 1973. (Kevin Keim, *An Architectural Life*, 174.)

Chapter 5
The Crystal Cathedral, Swimming in Camp Style

No longer stained with narrative function, clear plate glass, according to Walter Benjamin, is a material without aura, and Sigfried Giedion identified it as central to industrial production.[1] Evacuated of its medieval ties to allegory, nineteenth-century glass performed a dual function of display and preservation. This new operation emerged through the use of greenhouses to display exotic plants transported across oceans, from colony to metropole. Transparent glass also became a symbol of self-evidence, a truth-value that underwrote the morality of modernist design and it ultimately unframed perspectival space, favored by those who sought the optical panorama of cornerless space.

In the late 1970s and early 1980s, the reflective glazes that appeared on buildings heralded a new relationship between architecture and glass. This coincided with the expansion of the televisual entertainment industry to include HBO as the first pay service, CNN as the first round-the-clock live broadcast, and an increasing number of cable subscribers—changes that prompted Paul Virilio to announce a migration of screens from the fixed interiors of cinemas to a more general and pervasive wall–screen condition that, for him, marked the end of architectonic space.[2] We now channel surf and surf the Internet because the glass of the window that separated exterior from interior air has given way to a screen through which we dive into our digital environments.

[1] See: Walter Benjamin, "Erfahrung und Armut," in *Gesammelte Schriften* vol. 2 (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1972), 213–19; Sigfried Giedion, *Building in France: Building in Iron, Building in Concrete,* trans. J. Duncan Berry (Santa Monica: The Getty Center for the Study of Art and the Humanities, 1995).

[2] Paul Virilio, *Lost Dimension*, trans. Daniel Moshenberg (New York: Semiotext(e), 1991).

Peter Sloterdijk gave us a sense of this apparent sea change in his discussion of *immersion*:

> *Immersion* and *Immersionkunst* (immersive art or art of immersion) are relatively new terms. They originate from the discourses of contemporary computer art, where immersion into synthetic perceptual worlds has been a lively topic since the late 1980s and early1990s. We are dealing, therefore, with an arts practice that has come to be called *immersion*. *Immersion*, in this context, means to engage with one's immersion in artificial environments, assisted by technical equipment, for instance a virtual reality helmet or an electronic visor. Through these technologies, humans are finally taken seriously as beings for whom it is natural to immerse themselves—and not only in water, the "wet element," but in elements and environments generally.[3]

For Sloterdijk, the aquatic atmosphere of contemporary digital environments is fundamentally an architectural concern: "This necessarily leads us on to architecture, for it is properly considered, together with music, the original form in which the immersion of humans in artificial environments has been developed into a culturally controlled process."[4] And most significantly, Sloterdijk's reading extended from the domestic sphere to global social structures: "that is, an architectonics of grand political forms, in whose construction military, diplomatic, and psycho-semantic (or religious) functions all participate."[5]

Sloterdijk's theorization of immersion allows us to trace a shift from the arid operations of transparent glass to the spirits of reflective glazing. Scholars have begun to consider both the extensive material systems and more immediate materiality of twentieth-century architectural glass,[6] but its religious function (as Sloterdijk parenthetically hinted) has received less attention. It is here that the philosopher teased out the implications between religion, totalitarianism, and immersive environments. Sloterdijk's thoughts about religion centered on an assertion of

[3] Peter Sloterdijk, "Architecture As an Art of Immersion," trans. A.-Chr. Engels Schwarzpaul, *Interstices: Journal of Architecture and Related Arts* 12 (2011): 105.

[4] Ibid.

[5] Ibid.

[6] See: Giuliana Bruno, *Surface: Matters of Aesthetics, Materiality, and Media* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2014); and, Reinhold Martin, "Materiality: Mirrors," in *Utopia's Ghost: Architecture and Postmodernism, Again* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2010), 93–122.

alternative space such that, "…humans…live in God, that is, in an alternative space, a super space which penetrates the profane and physical space."[7] Sketching out a definition of modern totalitarianism, he further contended:

> the twentieth century provided a series of attempts to dissolve the bipolarity or contradiction of European traditions, with the aim of telling one-dimensional power narratives yet again. … The so-called totalitarianisms were attacks against the two-realm ontologies of Ancient Europe, against the freedom of changing contexts, against the ambiguity of double citizenship in the material and ideal realms. The twentieth century's most powerful ideologies were egalitarian and anti-dualist in orientation—they aimed at the construction of a monological context of success and power, which would no longer be vexed by changing perspectives and double existences.[8]

Thus, the religious framing is in fact central to Sloterdijk's theorization for ontological rather than spiritual purposes. At the end of the argument, it is the ethical imperative to maintain a capacity for such shifts in perspective and multiple realities that floods the philosopher's claim: "We may no longer be citizens of two realms, but we still remain commuters between stations."[9] The vital importance of changing perspectives and double existences extends, for Sloterdijk, from twentieth-century European totalitarianism to contemporary synthetic worlds born of dispersed media technologies and amplified in global digital networks.

Perhaps no other building staged different but concurrent oscillations between multiple citizenships and monological power in the context of late-twentieth-century immersive media technologies better than Philip Johnson's Crystal Cathedral (1980) [Figure 5.1]. Standing outside Los Angeles, in Garden Grove, California, this structure was designed for Reverend Dr. Robert H. Schuller (1926–2015), whose congregation had evolved from his early outdoor sermons atop a concession stand at a drive-in movie theater [Figure 5.2] and had subsequently outgrown its

[7] Sloterdijk, "Architecture As an Art of Immersion," 107.
[8] Ibid., 105.
[9] Ibid., 109.

first building designed by Richard Neutra [Figures 5.3 – 5.6].[10] Schuller preached a televised self-help gospel [Figure 5.7] styled on the writings of Norman Vincent Peale and modeled on Billy Graham's long-running radio broadcast, *Hour of Decision*. The airing of Schuller's *Hour of Power* began a new mode of televised ministry that Erica Robles-Anderson has identified as uniting privatized, mobile, and distributed social conditions through televisual media.[11] The church itself consequently performs this unity as an elision of religion, entertainment, and commodity culture. But it is also a work of architecture, meaning that Johnson offered an architectural ministry, as it were—an alternative to the televangelist's ministry that broadcasted from inside the building. Johnson did this through oblique historical references, spatial articulations, and his own architectural advocacy delivered from the church's pulpit. Nevertheless, his Crystal Cathedral design was not an architecture in opposition to Schuller's ministry performed therein; rather, it is itself an immersive environment open to its own dual ontology.

Kings of Camp

The double-citizenship Sloterdijk advocates was already an art practiced in the subculture of Camp, and it too has its carryovers with religion.[12] Susan Sontag tied nineteenth-century decadents such as Oscar Wilde to the twentieth-century culture of camp. She asserts that, "To perceive Camp in objects and persons is to understand Being-as-Playing-a-Role. It is the farthest extension, in sensibility, of the metaphor of life as theater."[13] This chapter examines Johnson's

[10] For more on Neutra's Garden Grove Community Church: Sylvia Lavin, "Richard Neutra and the Psychology of the American Spectator," *Grey Room* 1 (2000): 42–63.
[11] Erica Robles-Anderson, "The Crystal Cathedral: Architecture for Mediated Congregation," *Public Culture* 24, no. 3 (2012): 577–99.
[12] On connections between religion and queer culture through the lens of nineteenth century decadence: Ellis Hanson, *Decadence and Catholicism* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1997).
[13] Susan Sontag, "Notes on 'Camp'" in *Against Interpretation and Other Essays* (New York: Farrar, Straus & Giroux, 1966), 280.

use of glass as an extended engagement with Camp sensibilities. Focusing primarily on the Crystal Cathedral, it argues that Johnson's deployment of material as a mode of "disciplinary drag" distinguishes the architect from his Modernist and later postmodernist peers who tended to differentiate between the purity of materials and tectonics on the one hand and the rhetoric of images on the other. Johnson did not shy away from camp style and its associations with decadence. In his article "The Candid King Midas of New York Camp" Charles Jencks seemed baffled at Philip Johnson's delight in being called a decadent:

> "Look at this," Philip says, pulling out a devastating assault on his work and character from *Architectural Design*, you Englishmen always attack my work with such style. It's absolutely fabulous, only an Englishman could have written this: "One step further along the road to complete architectural decadence has now been taken by Philip Johnson, with yet another addition to his idyllic estate in New Canaan. Although it is passed off by the architect as a 'folly' by virtue of its entirely false scale it is, nonetheless, in its trivial historicism, quite typical of Johnson's recent work…" "Complete architectural decadence"! And Johnson likes this attack because of its style?[14]

While I argue that there is a distinction between Johnson's architectural address of the Crystal Cathedral and Schullers's televisual ministry, the two share key qualities of Camp: they both emphasize stylization over content, display extravagance, and require affluence. However they are differentiated through their ontological frames, one founded on a unified cosmology mapped onto horizontal networks of capital and media technologies, the other founded on a secular belief in disciplinary identity and the limits of material expression. There is a tension held within Sontag's concept of Camp between its taxonomic operations and its performance as an extended sensibility. She characterizes Camp sensibility as disengaged and apolitical, and she contrasts that sensibility with her own discursive exploration of it, stating, "For no one who wholeheartedly shares in a given sensibility can analyze it, he can only, whatever his intention,

[14] Jencks "The Candid King Midas of New York Camp" *Architectural Association Quarterly* 5 October/December (1974): 28.

exhibit it. To name a sensibility, to draw its contours and to recount its history, requires a deep sympathy modified by revulsion."[15] The radically privatized, mobile, and distributive nature of Schuller's theology lent itself to an uncontained, and unchecked, Camp sensibility, a sensibility that aspired to abolish all categorical structures in the name of replicating its ostensibly apolitical message ad infinitum through the extensive reach of media technologies. Johnson's structure in turn embraces the Camp qualities of the ministry, drawing its contours in glass with sympathy and revulsion.

Pageantry is a central feature of Camp, and Schuller's church was little more than an instrument for orchestrating televisual spectacle. The primary elements of the structure's interior – fountain, pipe organ, and ninety-foot mechanical doors – privileged visual display over spatial composition. These visual components were individually color coded and activated sequentially, but their cohesion was organized through the visual chronology of the screen. The sequence would commence with the turning on of the brightly colored aqua blue water feature, which signaled that Reverend Schuller was about to enter the church. Music from the wood-stained pipe organ would then follow. The ninety-foot motorized doors would open, and Schuller would mechanically ascend from below the adjacent pulpit. Each element visually stands out from the sea of glass above and the wave of light blue upholstering on the seats below. An additional component, a jumbotron screen, visually captured and ordered this opening sequence and the sermon. Johnson's structure by contrast engages in the pageantry of material. While the external glare of the glass constitutes his primary contribution, there is also an attention within the interior to clearly distinguish the structural elements. The concrete bays that support the balcony seating and define the entry thresholds are both held apart from one another and from the steel structure that supports the glass.

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[15] Sontag, "Notes on 'Camp,'" 276.

Together Schuller's televangelical church and Johnson's spatial church engage in practices of pageantry, one motivated by a purely visual display and the other by the tension between the visual and the material. A distinction to be made here is one between propaganda and rhetoric, and the function of the glass structure is conceptualized differently depending on which lens you take. Propaganda has its etymological roots in the propagation of the faith. Its concern is not dialogical but unilateral transmission. Under this lens, there is no difference between the windshields arrayed at Schuller's first church, a rented out drive-in movie theater, the glass of the television sets transmitting his message to an international audience, or the individual glass panes of the physical church. In each of these iterations there is an effort to obscure the relationship between glass and frame. The panoramic views afforded through the total glass enclosure of the church embody the apotheosis of this desire, even as vision is meticulously directed and framed through the primacy of the televisual image. The covert loss of the frame underpins the difference between Schuller and Johnson's work. Anne Friedberg's assertion that, "…how the world is framed may be as important as what is contained within that frame"[16] is a useful refrain when considering the difference between these theological and architectural parades.

Liquid Assets

To convey a carefully curated, unidirectional message, Schuller used the seemingly infinite immediacy of glass, which extended beyond the glass walls of his church to the windshields of his drive-in ministry and the television screens that received his broadcasts. This approach served the promotion of a consumerist monoculture with the church at its center. Mike Davis described a typical service in Schuller's building: "The largely affluent congregation of six

[16] Anne Friedberg, *The Virtual Window: From Alberti to Microsoft* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2006), 1.

thousand just has a wholesome good time and then adjourns to the gift shop to purchase Cathedral-logo coffee mugs, 'sun catchers,' refrigerator magnets, and other holy knickknacks for the entire family."[17] In addition to the church's gift shop, Schuller wrote books as his first major means of establishing a global monetary network, and the books often featured the church's image (first Neutra's design, then Johnson's) on the cover [Figure 5.10]. This use of the building as a branded image to extend Schuller's message exemplified Jonathan Crary's commentary on capital effects: "The continuing rationalization of the entertainment commodity involves intensifying the mobility and exchangeability of objects and formats maximizing the modalities through which any given property may be consumed."[18] Schuller's television program, *Hour of Power*, which first aired in February 1970, was thus a further intensification of his brand's mobility and exchangeability. In each episode, Schuller invited the viewers to write to him, and in exchange, he would mail the correspondents his latest book. Viewers could also telephone the ministry's counseling service, both tactics making televisual experience feel more interactive. Moreover, in the ten-year span between the first episode of the *Hour of Power* and the September 1980 episode broadcasting the dedication of the Johnson-designed Crystal Cathedral, Schuller had perfected the imaging of his designer buildings. At first, segments of the program would simply cut away to talking-head parishioners holding and endorsing copies of Schuller's books. But as the program developed, later segments presented copies of the book—with an image of Johnson's church on the cover—floating on the screen, which was itself a shot of the church, while a disembodied voiceover and textual graphics relayed the contact information to purchase Schuller's books.

The commodification of the Crystal Cathedral occurred at the level of the building itself, not just through the proliferation of its image. Part of the mythos of the church design is that

[17] Mike Davis, "L.A.'s Pentecostal Earthquake," *Grand Street* 68 (1999): 100.
[18] Jonathan Crary, "Capital Effects," *October* 56 (1991): 122.

Schuller envisioned a structure that exceeded the parish's resources. The dedication episode was weighted with the message that, despite inflation and the ambitious scale of the building, the church was built through the donations of its international television sanctuary, which included not only North America but also Asia, Australia, and Europe. The capital campaign allowed individual patrons to sponsor one of the 10,664 windows composing the large glass tent that Schuller envisioned [Figure 5.11 & 5.12]. Individual windowpanes identified their patrons with small metal nameplates fitted to the interior mullions located randomly within the structure's 120-foot-high expanse [Figure 5.13]. Outside, parishioners could also purchase stone memorial pavers to be installed along the "Walk of Faith." The granite pavers comprised a central polished stone cut in the shape of a star, representing the building's plan [Figure 5.14], set in an unpolished rectangle. Within the polished star, one could have an inscribed dedication [Figure 5.15]. These stones cost over $2,000 each and were available for purchase until the church's bankruptcy and closure in 2013. Around 1,800 granite pavers were sold. Capital campaigns such as this are now common, and it speaks to the numerous ways the minister commodified the building—from the collection of designer structures on the church campus (including subsequent buildings by Richard Meier and Gin D. Wong) to the branding of the church's image and the commodification of individual building features.

Such activities place the church squarely in an enduring capitalist modernity. Speaking to the experiential and affective consequences of this condition, Crary unpacked the optical effects that occur when monetary clout precedes one's encounter with a work of art. In this context, where the viewer is always first aware of the price tag, "seeing" is only ever "secondarily a perceptual experience."[19] He argued that instead of a visual radiance, one is "to find oneself enveloped in an aura of a different sort (as the word originally means a breeze or atmosphere, a

[19] Ibid., 126.

rustling)."[20] In this framework, the would-be viewer is now dwarfed by the "new libidinal apprehension of the intoxicating economic potency of the mere object."[21] The result is that "one sees the congealed handmade surface in which all the kinetic tactility and desiring production of its origins lie embalmed as strange affronts to the lambent and disincarnate status its inflated reputation betokens in advance. Finally, the mute opacity of such an object becomes the concretization of a collective atrophy of a kind of looking that has long ceased to have any social utility."[22]

To extend the metaphor to Garden Grove, three central features of Neutra's building for Schuller (i.e., glass surfaces, a mechanical door, and jetting fountains) were transposed to Johnson's Crystal Cathedral design, and in their transposition, each had become an embalmed version of its former self. In the first airing of the *Hour of Power*, the televisual congregation was but one of three groups, and Neutra's building mediated the drive-in, walk-in, and televisual congregations [Figures 5.16 – 5.18]. It did this visually, spatially, and aurally through the elements of reflective glass in the lower register of the exterior wall, a sliding door that connected the drive-in and walk-in attendees, as well as running fountains that provided an ambient soundtrack for all [Figure 5.19]. Shots in the first episodes of the televised ministry made use of the lower register of Neutra's glass façade, capturing the overlaid images of the drive-in congregation reflected in the glass and the walk-in congregation seen through the glass. At the beginning of the program, a large glass plane in the façade slid open, connecting the televisual congregation with both the exterior space of drive-in worship and the interior space of walk-in worship. The three types of congregants were identified verbally, with ministers referring to the drive-in, walk-in, and televisual crowds, and the three types were addressed with

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[20] Ibid., 126–27.
[21] Ibid., 127.
[22] Ibid.

the pastor's distinct bodily positions and eye lines. He did not look directly into the camera in these early episodes, except when explicitly speaking to the television viewers. He periodically pivoted his body toward the cars, back to the seated congregation, and then occasionally looking into the camera to welcome the new congregation of home viewers. Throughout the sermon, the rush of the fountains was audible.

Although the reflective glass, mechanical door, and jetting fountains all featured prominently in Johnson's church design, they functioned solely for visual effect in the latter building because the physical and spatial differences between congregations had collapsed within the televisual domain [Figure 5.20]. Johnson's reflective glass was freed from the building's lower register to serve as a blanket motif, redundantly reflecting the blueness of the California sky rather than the drive-in congregation. The parking lot was still arrayed as if drive-in viewing was viable, but this was just a vestige of the ministry's origins and no longer offered any access to the sermon. The 80-foot-tall mechanical doors for Johnson's design were a technical feat, due to the wind load, but they are merely ceremonial as they offered neither visual nor spatial connection to the interior. And while the fountains had grown and remain the only feature to connect the old and new structures, they were never audible during the Crystal Cathedral's staging of the *Hour of Power*. These features, despite their relegation to a purely visual function, mark the kind of atrophied looking that Crary highlighted. And while the process was already begun in Neutra's church for Schuller, Johnson's design extended Crary's logic of atrophied vision further because it reduced even the functional aspects of Neutra's design to mere objects in the ministry's acts of commodification.

Philosopher Karsten Harries constructed a genealogy of sacred architectural signification from Nikolaus Pevsner's aesthetic differentiation between Lincoln Cathedral and the anonymous bicycle shed to Robert Venturi's distinction between the eponymous duck and the decorated shed. In this lineage the aesthetic and decorative are key to the philosopher's reading of sacred architecture for their representational function because, "it invites us to look at what we see as more than just a building large enough to allow a multitude to assemble…"[23] For Harries the gene pool of this genealogy was washed out at the site of the Crystal Cathedral because it operated solely at the level of instrumental thinking. A cultural connection between modernist architectural aesthetics, corporate capital, and the church did not immediately occur to Johnson, as his first proposal was a traditional masonry structure. However, Schuller's material request for glass arguably marked his continuing alignment of church, capital, and media already begun in his commissioning of Neutra's church [Figure 5.21]. This alignment fundamentally qualified the church as profane rather than sacred according to Harries's argumentation: "the Crystal Cathedral certainly presents itself to us as a church, and it does so in a way that speaks of an increasingly important trend in contemporary religion that blurs the boundaries between religion, entertainment, and business."[24] Indeed, such an alignment is the structure's primary claim for scholarly attention, but Harries asserted even more gravely that "the dynamism of religious transcendence, especially when one adds the attribute 'infinite,' carries thus with it the danger of a radicalization of transcendence that threatens to so empty it and God of all definite meaning that mysticism and atheism come to coincide. As [Søren] Kierkegaard knew, the experience of this empty transcendence does mean a new experience of freedom. But this freedom, acknowledging no measure, must degenerate into caprice."[25] The philosopher consequently presented Schuller's ministry as symptomatic of the ascension of the power of capital over the sanctity of the sacred.

[23] Karsten Harries, "Untimely Meditations on the Need for Sacred Architecture," in *Constructing the Ineffable, Contemporary Sacred Architecture*, ed. Karla Cavarra Britton (New Haven: Yale School of Architecture, 2010), 57.
[24] Ibid., 55.
[25] Ibid., 59.

Harries located the sacred in the social practice of religion rather than in the material facts of stone or glass. In this regard, the Crystal Cathedral was a suitable target for criticism. Its architectural glass, echoed through an array of windshields and television sets, ostensibly precipitated the excessive proliferation of consumable content in a late capitalist context. As Robles-Anderson explained while quoting Schuller: "'Television leaped right over into our living rooms crossing whatever boundary … moral, political, theological, anything you can think of' and therefore provided the infrastructure for mediating eternity in a new aesthetic form."[26] When we view the Crystal Cathedral as an artifact of American religious life in the late twentieth century, wherein a religious message was transmitted and consumed across an array of media-saturated glass screens, this is indeed the resulting image [Figure 5.22]. But when we view the Crystal Cathedral as an architectural project, a different picture emerges—one that asserts architecture not as an autonomous but as an alternate realm within an otherwise undifferentiated ground overrun by free-flowing consumable content for which liturgy and economy truly circulate in intimate proximity.

From Pools of Knowledge to Knowledge of Pools

When there is little distinction between an entertainment industry and an aesthetic object (in this case, an architectural object), liquidity is prized. The church generated capital to build itself, to become a televised platform for Schuller's entertaining delivery of a self-help-styled ministry, and to be constantly imaged and merchandized—from the cover of Schuller's books to the gift shop trinkets that Davis described. For Crary, this elision between televisual and commodity culture was not a new phenomenon but a contemporary manifestation of a larger and ongoing capitalist modernity that extends from the nineteenth century. Underlying these critiques

[26] Robles-Anderson, "The Crystal Cathedral," 597.

is the church's status as an object, but Sloterdijk's conception of immersion as Being-in design offers an alternative means of dipping into Johnson's church. In his theorization, one cannot dive into a psycho-semantic (or religious) context without participating in its history because one must be immersed in "foundational narratives to experience it from inside."[27]

The rejection of historical reference and symbolism distinguished International Style modernism and in turn marked postmodern debates. Thus, the question of history, both in terms of iconographic reference and ideologies of progress, has framed discussions of Philip Johnson's glass structures. In 1950 the designer published in *Architectural Review* a list of disciplinary references for his Glass House [Figure 5.23] ranging from Karl Friedrich Schinkel to Étienne-Louis Boullée.[28] The relegation of historic citation to the discursive field spoke to the condition of glass as both an industrial material better suited for display than reference and as a material of architectural composition situated within the bounds of a disciplinary history. In the Glass House, the two threads of material substance and discursive reference were held apart, but in the Crystal Cathedral they intertwine. Here, the use of glass still belies a practice of direct historical reference, but it does not preclude historical allusion. Johnson's Crystal Cathedral, in name and form, calls forth in equal measure Joseph Paxton's Crystal Palace [Figure 5.24] and Bruno Taut's Crystal Chain. Paxton's Crystal Palace categorized, displayed, and ultimately commoditized cultural production. In its encyclopedic plan there is a belief in man's capacity to fully map the world. The function of its glass, unlike medieval stained glass, is to reveal the known world rather than to mediate messages from God. Taut's Crystal Chain held a similar belief in transcending mediated messages figured through mystical unity. In a letter he writes, "A fixed

[27] Sloterdijk, "Architecture as an Art of Immersion," 105.
[28] Philip Johnson, "House at New Canaan, Connecticut," *The Architectural Review* 108 (1950): 152.

chain runs from the stable to the star, and one can exchange one end for the other at will…"[29] Such a message of transferability is echoed within disciplinary debates about the value of distinguishing between bicycle sheds and cathedrals. It also resonates with cultural concerns about proliferating content as heard in Johnathan Crary's commentary on capital effects. Johnson's Crystal Cathedral not only alludes to such works in name, its star-shaped plan creates a prismatic structure. On the exterior, the crystalline form is reminiscent of early-twentieth-century visionary works ranging from Wenzel Hablik's 1914 painting *Crystal Castle in the Sea* to Ludwig Mies van der Rohe's 1921 Friedrichstrasse skyscraper project. From the interior, with its spatial expanse and folds of angular form, the structure offers imaginative entry into Bruno Taut's Crystal House sketched in 1919 [Figures 5.25 & 5.26].

Manfredo Tafuri noted the relationship between historical and environmental consciousness when he traced the Crystal Cathedral back to Johnson's own sculpture gallery (1970) [Figure 5.27]. Tafuri first characterizes the small museum as a perverted geometric reverie and then described it as creating "the climate most suited for the purely vegetative life of different formal 'species' that come to lay and rest in them."[30] His reference to "vegetative life" reminds us of nineteenth-century hothouses, and the ways in which their glass enclosures operated through logics of visual display and climatological preservation. Tafuri, drawing on Johnson's own description of the Crystal Cathedral as having an "Underwater Effect," linked Johnson's collecting practices with the church's structure, adding the damning statement that we are witnessing "museums as aquaria, therefore, and studies drawn out of the most varied areas of the tradition of the new, reduced to stupefied marine fauna."[31] Tafuri identified the strangeness

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[29] Bruno Taut, "Architektur neuer Gemeinschaft," *Die Erhebung: Jahrbuch für neue Dichtung und Wertung* 2 (Berlin: S. Fischer, 1920), 276, quoted in Iain Boyd White, *The Crystal Chain Letters: Architectural Fantasies by Bruno Taut and His Circle* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1985), 6.

[30] Manfredo Tafuri, "Subaqueous Cathedral," *Domus* 608 (1980): 8.

[31] Ibid.

of what he called a nonlinear relationship with Paul Scheerbart's *Glasarchitektur* and, by implication, Taut's Crystal Chain. But Tafuri concluded that with the Crystal Cathedral a game of opacity substituted for the mysticism of transparency. Similarly, the German weekly news magazine *Der Spiegel* suggested a direct connection to Mies van der Rohe's Friedrichstrasse by including images of it and the Crystal Cathedral on the same page.[32]

In his theory of immersion, Sloterdijk construed an altogether different historical engagement: "history itself is nothing but a diving tank shared with cavorting fellow swimmers, and what is commonly called participation is, seen in this light, merely a naïve dipping into a one-dimensional context."[33] Johnson's Crystal Cathedral is steeped in architectural references though it neither displays nor preserves a particular specimen. Sloterdijk's characterization of history extended from history to design, such that "the house is a diving facility, as it were, in which the immersive comportment of humans toward the world is attended to. … To dwell in houses implies the art of substituting the original environment with a designed space."[34] This atmospheric substitution, not Tafuri's aquatic museum, is arguably the "Underwater Effect" that Johnson identified. Fortunately, Sloterdijk gave a parenthetical coda to the problem of naïve dips in one-dimensional pools, reminding us that a "so-called critique can only be learnt through immersive changes, through bathing in alternating pools or contexts."[35]

While Johnson stated no specific historical references for this design, he did suggest that he was interested in contemporaneous glass projects such as the Rainbow Center, a winter garden designed by Cesar Pelli [Figure 5.28]. The allusions to greenhouses indicate that Johnson was not naïve to Tafuri's critique about creating climates for vegetative life arrested from natural weather cycles. In an interview with *GA Document*, Johnson gave an obscure reference to a

[32] "Strahlender Diamant," *Der Spiegel*, April 1980, 239–42.
[33] Sloterdijk, "Architecture as an Art of Immersion," 105.
[34] Ibid., 107.
[35] Ibid., 105.

greenhouse in Japan that housed multiple types of plants zoned for three different sizes and climatological variation [Figure 5.29]. Unlike the mono-climates of most hothouses, such as the IBM Building's glazed-in garden across the street from Johnson's AT&T Building (which curiously replicates the singular climate of Richmond, Virginia), the three-part design of the Japanese greenhouse that Johnson referenced echoed the three congregations of Schuller's church. Of course, as has been argued earlier in this essay, that functional variation was hollowed out by a monological totalitarianism via the reduction of an environment for three congregations to a "mono-climate" of the televisual image as the ministry grew. The only alternative pool for Schuller's parishioners to dip in would be an architectural one.

Open Waters

Johnson was fully aware of the contrast between the architectural space of the Crystal Cathedral and its minister's televisual ambitions. The architect described his relationship with Schuller thus: "he [Schuller] would like one of those enormous screens—what do they call them—that they make now for football games. It would increase his 'twinkle power'—he calls it. You see, he only communicates by the twinkling of his eyes, and if you made a screen 25' × 40'! A screen this big! ... He'll look very small standing in this big, big room."[36] Virilio cited this emergence of screen culture as the end of architectonic form, that the framing of space through windows and doors was eroded by the cathode-ray tube: "The contour of daily living and the framing of viewpoint in an architectonic constructed of doors and doorways, windows and mirrors are replaced by a cathode framework, an indirect opening in which the electronic false-day functions like a camera lens, reversing the order of appearances to the benefit of an *imperceptible transparence*, and submitting the supremacy of certain constructive elements to

[36] Philip Johnson, "Philip Johnson on Philip Johnson," interview by Wayne Fujii, *GA Document* 1 (1980): 17–18.

that cathode window that rejects the portal and the light of day."[37] But the loss of frame (as well as the loss of natural light) arguably preceded the cathode ray.

Sloterdijk located it in the panoramas of the nineteenth century, stating that "the modern problem of hallucination management and immersive change was already anticipated in nineteenth-century panoramas."[38] For architecture, the hallucinatory loss of the corner occurred with modernist planar conceptions of space, and architectural postmodernism was as much about coming to terms with this as it was about coming to terms with symbolism. We encountered this already in the previous chapter, both through the nested forms of Charles Moore and in Venturi's theorization of "intraspatial relationships."[39] Johnson was already playing his own intraspatial games at his Glass House in New Canaan, Connecticut. There he challenged the horizontal and vertical planes of the glass enclosure with a diagonal approach, by introducing the wainscot as an interior datum, and with the insertion of the brick floor and cylindrical hearth [Figure 5.30].

Johnson also gave a nod to the planar problem as it relates to reflective glass, which he felt was too monotonous. When asked about the shape of the Crystal Cathedral, he responded that "mirror buildings are no good unless they're bent."[40] Furthermore, the church's interior plays a very similar game to that of the Glass House. Within the geometric glass tent stand three concrete piers. These piers create a compressed spatial sense of procession [Figure 5.31], and they ground the interior—in short, the concrete piers of the Crystal Cathedral constitute a room, or an intraspatial insertion within and in contrast to Schuller's televisual sensibility. These piers are faintly visible from the exterior through the mirrored glass, but their spatial effect becomes evident when one walks into the building. The structure is oriented such that the entrance and

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[37] Virilio, *Lost Dimension*, 87, quoted in Alice Friedberg, *The Virtual Window: From Alberti to Microsoft* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2006), 186; my emphasis.

[38] Sloterdijk, "Architecture as an Art of Immersion," 105.

[39] Robert Venturi, "Complexity and Contradiction in Architecture: Selection from a Forthcoming Book," *Perspecta* 9/10 (1965): 21.

[40] Johnson, "Philip Johnson on Philip Johnson," 17.

pulpit are aligned along the short axis. Functionally, this served an evangelical ministry not based on liturgical procession, and it allowed for the lighting and film equipment held in the pier above the entrance to be close and on axis to the stage for the taping of the televised sermons [Figures 5.32 – 5.36].

The Crystal Cathedral also appears to be unceremoniously perpendicular to the Neutra building, and one enters it through what looks like an opening for a garage. Upon entry, one is not immediately awash in the interior sea of structural steel; one first passes under the low and massive concrete threshold. In other words, the entry sequence (though not the diagonal approach at New Canaan) plays one mode of spatial expression (and thus of spatial experience) against another: from a low entry to a vast interior. The other two piers stand to either side of the central entry structure. These served as additional balcony seating. In total, the church seats 4,000 people, but it was not always full, so the strategy of lifting a portion of the seating allowed for the appearance of a church that, from the camera's perspective, was never empty. Once physically inside the space, the perimeter of these three concrete piers forms a visual datum that domesticates the space like a futuristic chair-rail on steroids. This intraspatial domain loosely defined by the rising concrete piers is further articulated through the marble that paves the floor and runs up to and over the elevated stage, not unlike the brickwork within the Glass House.

In his accounting of cornerless architecture and continuous space, Venturi drew our attention to the atmospheric conditions of such work: "Its expressive and psychological emphasis on the oneness of interior and exterior space was permitted by the very technology which, for the first time, made the inside thermally independent of the outside by means of mechanical equipment."[41] Amy Kulper argued that the nineteenth century witnessed the emergence of a nascent environmental consciousness that coupled with the historical consciousness that glass

[41] Venturi, "Complexity and Contradiction in Architecture," 21.

enclosures, like those alluded to by Tafuri, occasioned through their logics of display and preservation.[42] Arguably, the immersion within such enclosures (which Venturi noted and that would later be theorized as the world interiorized) occasioned a historical unconsciousness that was also closely tied to an environmental unconsciousness. A curious wrinkle in the connection between historical and environmental (un)consciousness in glass buildings is that neither the Glass House nor the Crystal Cathedral was air conditioned. Reyner Banham included Johnson's home in his history of well-tempered environments, even though "Johnson himself would probably insist that the design is not very original. … And he has also said that it is 'not a controlled environment' (apparently because it has no air-conditioning)."[43] After discussing the seasonal habitability of the house, the critic concluded that "Johnson produced (only once it seems) a masterly re-mixture of mechanical and architectural environmental."[44]

In contrast to Banham's desire to historicize environments, Guy Debord offered no historical account in his theorization of the spectacle.[45] Later he would argue more specifically that the destruction of historical knowledge, especially that of the recent past, is a central feature of spectacle. Debord writes, "History's domain was the memorable, the totality of events whose consequences would be lastingly apparent… In this way history was the *measure* of genuine novelty. It is in the interests of those who sell novelty at any price to eradicate the means of measuring it."[46] Thus in his theorization, immediacy replaces history: "When social significance is attributed only to what is immediate, and to what will be immediate immediately afterwards,

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42 Amy Kulper, "Art Nouveau Gardens of the Mind: Bell Jars, Hot Houses, and Autobiographies—Preserving Immanent Natures," in *Phenomenologies of the City: Studies in the History and Philosophy of Architecture*, ed. Henriette Steiner and Max Sternberg (Surrey: Ashgate, 2015), 101–18.

43 Reyner Banham, *The Architecture of the Well-Tempered Environment* (Sydney: Steensen Varming, 2004), 228–30.

44 Ibid., 233.

45 Guy Debord, *The Society of the Spectacle,* trans. Donald Nicholson-Smith (New York: Zone Books, 1994). For commentary on the notable absence of historical framing, see Jonathan Crary, "Spectacle, Attention, Counter-Memory," *October* 50 (1989): 96–107.

46 Guy Debord, *Comments on The Society of The Spectacle,* trans. Malcolm Imrie (London: Verso, 1998), 15.

always replacing another, identical, immediacy, it can be seen that the uses of the media guarantee a kind of eternity of noisy insignificance."[47] Surely the Crystal Cathedral belongs to both bodies of thought. Nevertheless, it is neither fully captured by a historical account of conditioned environments nor the concept of the spectacle; instead, the church floats in the open waters between them [Figure 5.37].

In his theorization of immersion, Sloterdijk asserted what he identified as a Christian philosophy of space, whereby humans are not just in the world, like rocks: "Humans are in the world ecstatically, they exist in the mode of openness toward the world. And to be open is to be simultaneously here and in another place—there and here at once."[48] Similarly, in the same year as Venturi's "Gentle Manifesto" and Banham's "Great Gizmo," Johnson's "Whence and Whither" appeared.[49] In that essay, Johnson introduced his idea of procession, but like many of his concepts, it remained fluid. When asked about it in relation to his AT&T Building's sky lobby (given his argument that the elevator kills "processionalism"), he gave an expansive reply: "An elevator encloses you in a way an automobile does and destroys any feeling or excitement and experimentation of shifting the point of view. You go in a little box—whether it's a coffin or an elevator, it doesn't make much difference; it's death."[50] Johnson's distaste for the controlled enclosures of elevators and cars suggests that he preferred a more open psycho-semantic and somatic atmosphere, perhaps more akin to Paul Valéry's image of a fish in a wave: "To be in the work of a human being [is] like [being] a fish in the wave, to bathe in it thoroughly, to live in it, to belong to it … Were it not as if you lived in a mobile building, constantly renewed and

[47] Ibid.
[48] Sloterdijk, "Architecture as an Art of Immersion," 107.
[49] Reyner Banham, "The Great Gizmo," *Industrial Design* 12 (1965): 48–59; Philip Johnson, "Whence and Whither," *Perspecta* 9/10 (1965): 167–78; Venturi, "Complexity and Contradiction in Architecture," 17–56.
[50] Johnson, "Philip Johnson on Philip Johnson," 14.

reconstructed, in itself completely dedicated to the metamorphoses of a soul that would be the soul of space?"[51]

Adult Swim

The Crystal Cathedral is one of several projects from Johnson's resurgent late career. Other buildings from this period (during the 1970s and early 1980s) include Penzoil Place in Houston, the AT&T Building in New York, the Dade County Cultural Center in Miami, and PPG Place in Pittsburgh. Together, this constellation of projects constitutes Johnson's ostensible shift from the high priest of the International Style to a seasoned latecomer to the youthful postmodern pool party. However, this chapter has singled out the Crystal Cathedral to read its glass transhistorically. Doing so raises relevant questions about the atmospheric staging of our digital lives, which largely appear to us through glass. In his first televised sermon, Schuller proclaimed that "the biggest environmental problem in America is the environment in a man's head."[52] He subsequently called for a clearing out of mental pollution. Johnson, while recognizing that "the opening of those doors [at the Crystal Cathedral] will look great on TV,"[53] diluted Schuller's monocultural message with his oblique historical references and spatial manipulations that grounded and stretched the church's otherwise flat airiness.

Sloterdijk reminded us that "if the design of dwellings implies the proposition of a welcome surrender to the ambience, then this activity includes both an anthropological and a political function,"[54] and concluded his discussion of immersion with a final call to architects: "it seems obvious that architecture must remain conscious of its responsibility for the shaping of

[51] Paul Valéry, *Eupalinos ou l'Architecte* (Paris: Editions de la Nouvelle Revue Française, 1921), quoted in Sloterdijk, "Architecture as an Art of Immersion," 108.
[52] Hour of Power with Bobby Schuller, "Hour of Power—First Episode," YouTube, published April 2, 2015, www.youtube.com/watch?v=QgErHXQAiig
[53] Johnson, "Philip Johnson on Philip Johnson," 18.
[54] Sloterdijk, "Architecture as an Art of Immersion," 108.

situations. Architecture is, above all, the design of immersions. Part of the ethics of the production of space is the responsibility for the atmosphere. To do the latter justice demands openness, ease of relocation, and appreciation for reversibility. Anthropologists can counsel architects always to take into consideration that humans are beings who oscillate between the desire to be embedded and the desire to break free."[55] Johnson thus shaped a spatial encounter that oscillated between Schuller's vision for a big glass tent to promote his televised ministry and the architect's own commitments to his field [Figures 5.38 & 5.39]. Johnson was, after all, a tireless advocate for design, even from the pulpit of the Crystal Cathedral, where he stood during a segment of its dedication episode. There he told Schuller's congregations that architects may pray differently because "our religion and our secular life is interbound [*sic*]," adding that the architect's prayer is work.[56] These words could be dismissed as Johnson's brand of irreverent wit, but they also speak to the sacred and profane oscillations at play in his work for Schuller.

[55] Ibid., 109.

[56] Greg Griffin, "Hour of Power Episode 467—Dedication of the Crystal Cathedral—1980," YouTube, published April 27, 2016, www.youtube.com/watch?v=IqB39TW4miQ

Figure 5.1 Exterior view, Crystal Cathedral, Philip Johnson and John Burgee, Garden Grove, California, 1980.

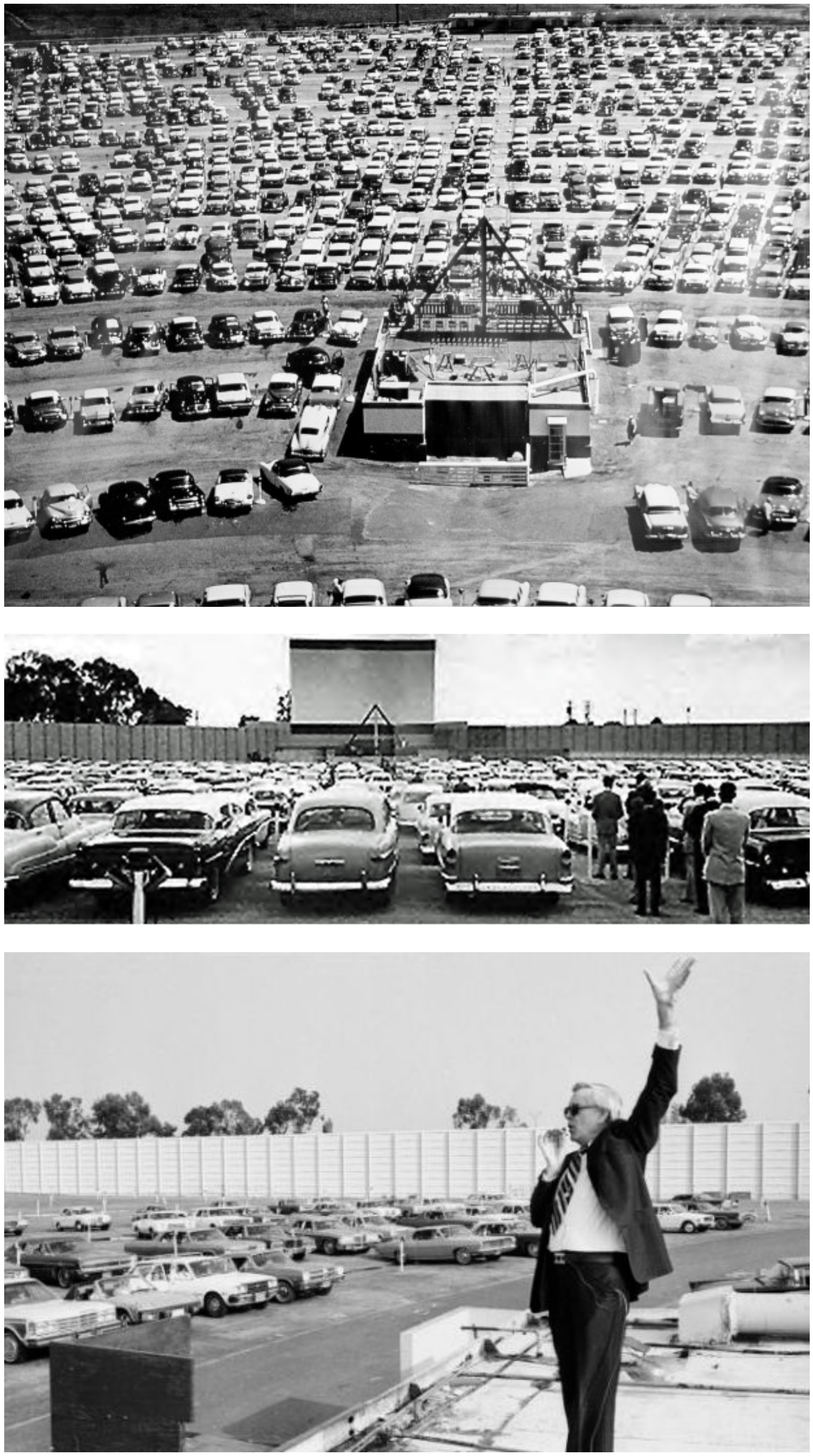


Figure 5.2 Robert Schuller’s ministry at the Orange Drive-In Theater in Orange County, California. He preached from the roof of the concession stand, services ran there from 1955-1960.

Figure 5.3 Aerial photograph, Garden Grove Community Church, Richard Neutra, 1962. Showing amphitheater style parking. (Robert Schuller, *Your Church Has Real Possibilities*, 1975.)

Figure 5.4 Interior of sanctuary, Garden Grove Community Church, Richard Neutra, 1962. Julius Shulman, photographer. (Sylvia Lavin, "Richard Neutra and the Psychology of the American Spectator," 42.)

Figure 5.5 Construction photograph, Crystal Cathedral, Philip Johnson, Garden Grove, California, 1980.

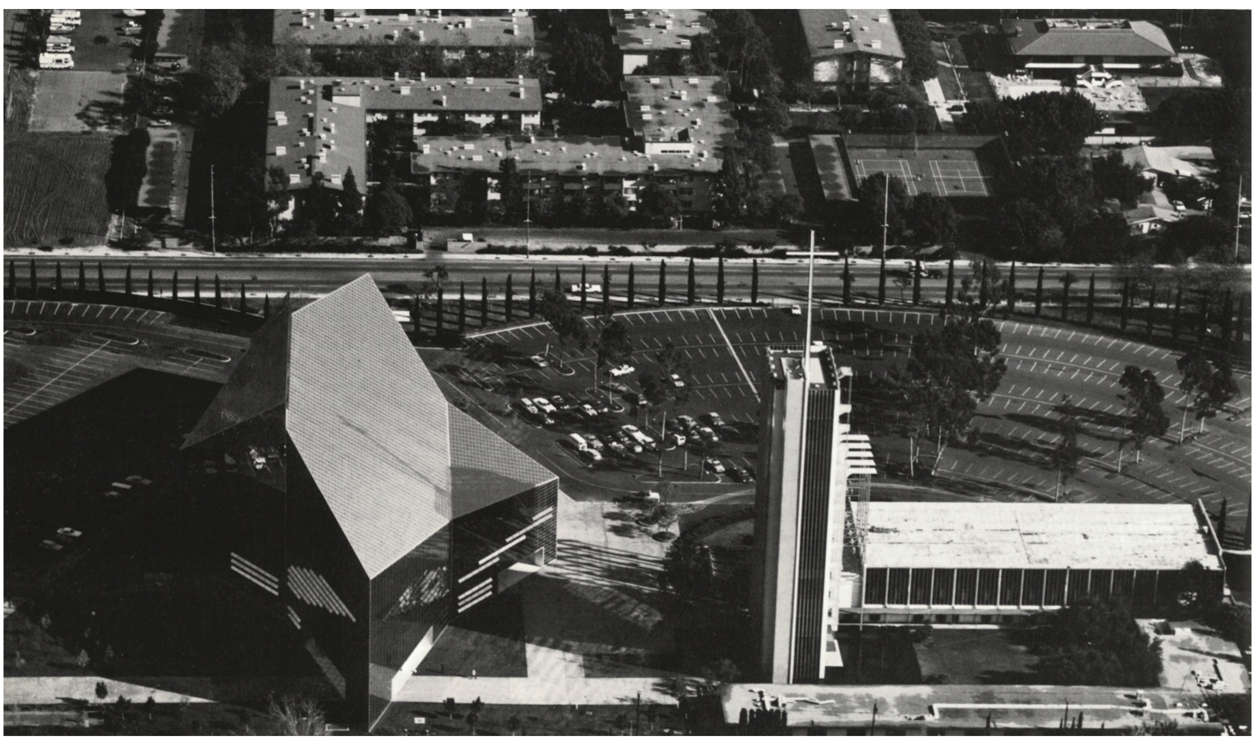


Figure 5.6 Aerial photograph of the church campus. Johnson, Crystal Cathedral, 1980 (*left*); Neutra, Garden Grove Community Church, 1962 (*right*).

Figure 5.7 Robert Schuller utilizing exaggerated gestures at the pulpit. At Garden Grove Community Church, 1972 (*left*), and, Crystal Cathedral, 1996 (*right*).

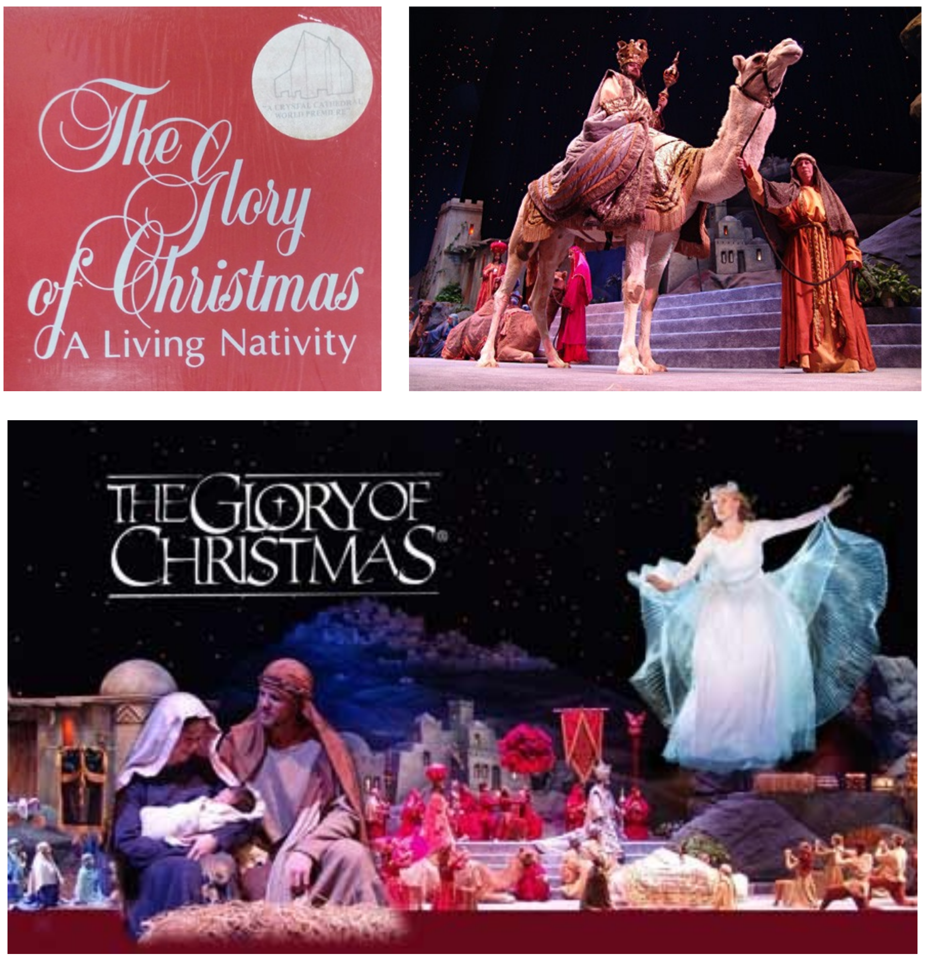


Figure 5.8 "The Glory of Christmas" annual pageant. The spectacle included live animals, rigs for flying angels, and elaborate costumes and set decorations. Top left shows a vinyl recording of the program with a graphic of the building on the cover. The ministry often included representations of the building on its publications.

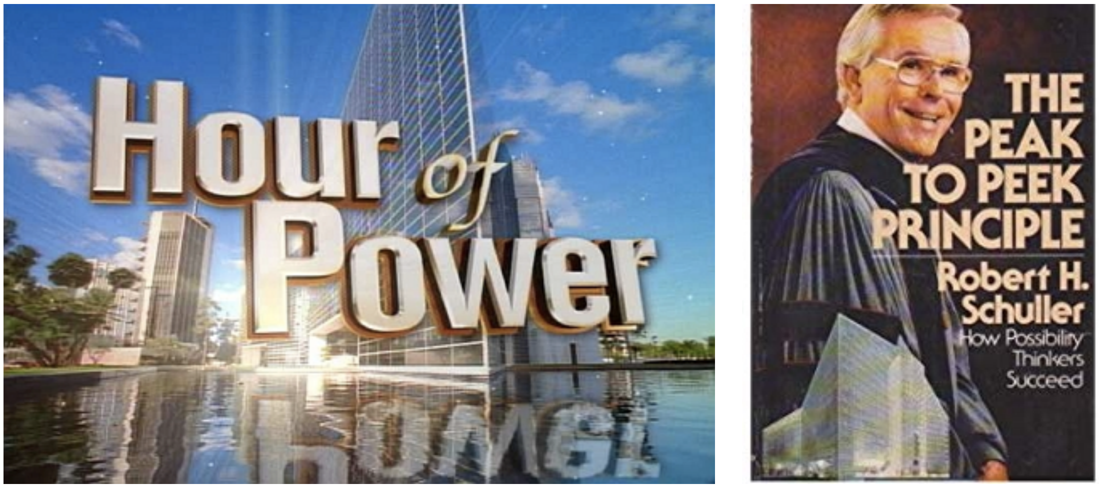


Figure 5.9 *Hour of Power*, television broadcasts of the ministry used the church structure as the base for many of its graphics (*left*). The title sequences changed over the years with the front and background images being updated, this example is from 2007. Robert Schuller, *The Peak to Peek Principle*, 1980 (*right*). Schuller published many self-help style books related to his theme of "possibility thinking." The cover of this volume features the model of the Crystal Cathedral. The minister was already branding the image of the church before the structure was fully complete.

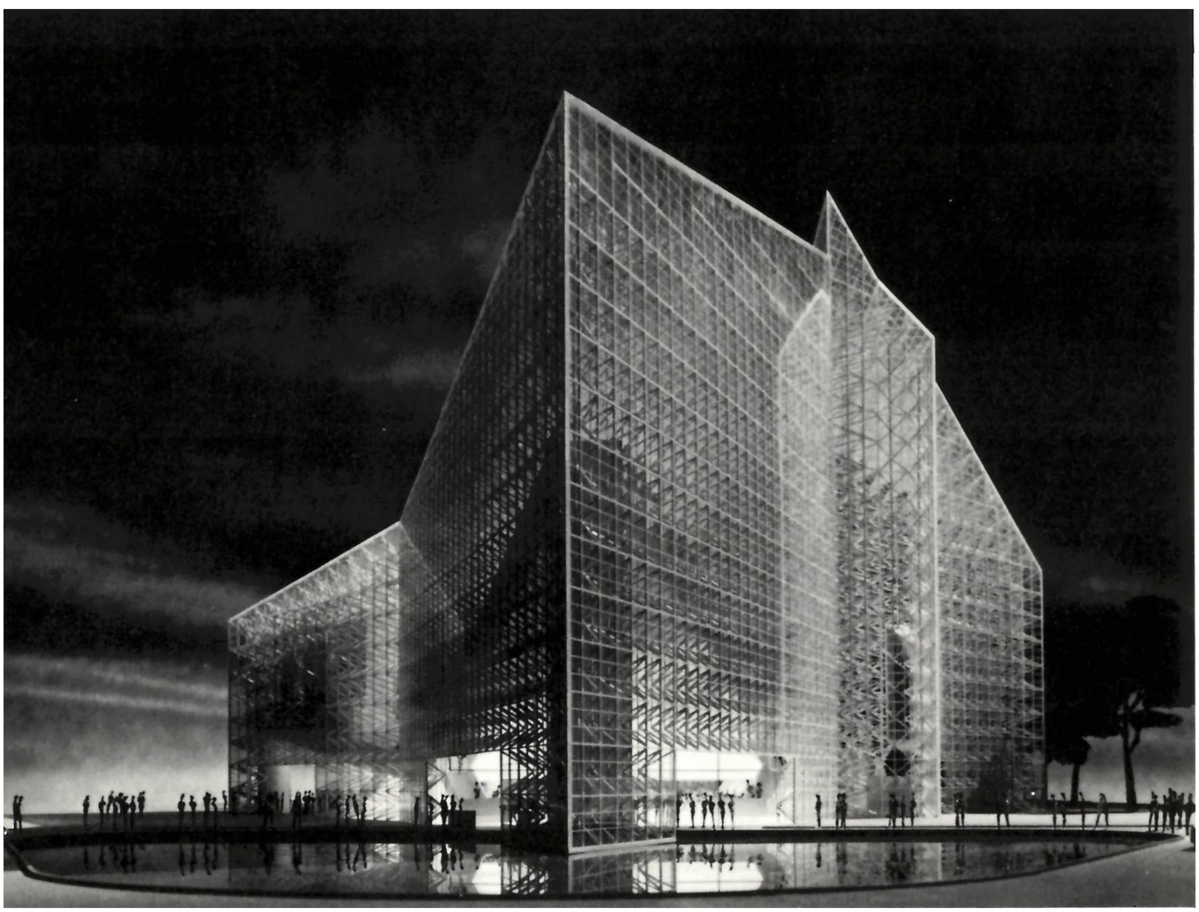


Figure 5.10 Model, Crystal Cathedral, Philip Johnson, Garden Grove, California, 1980.

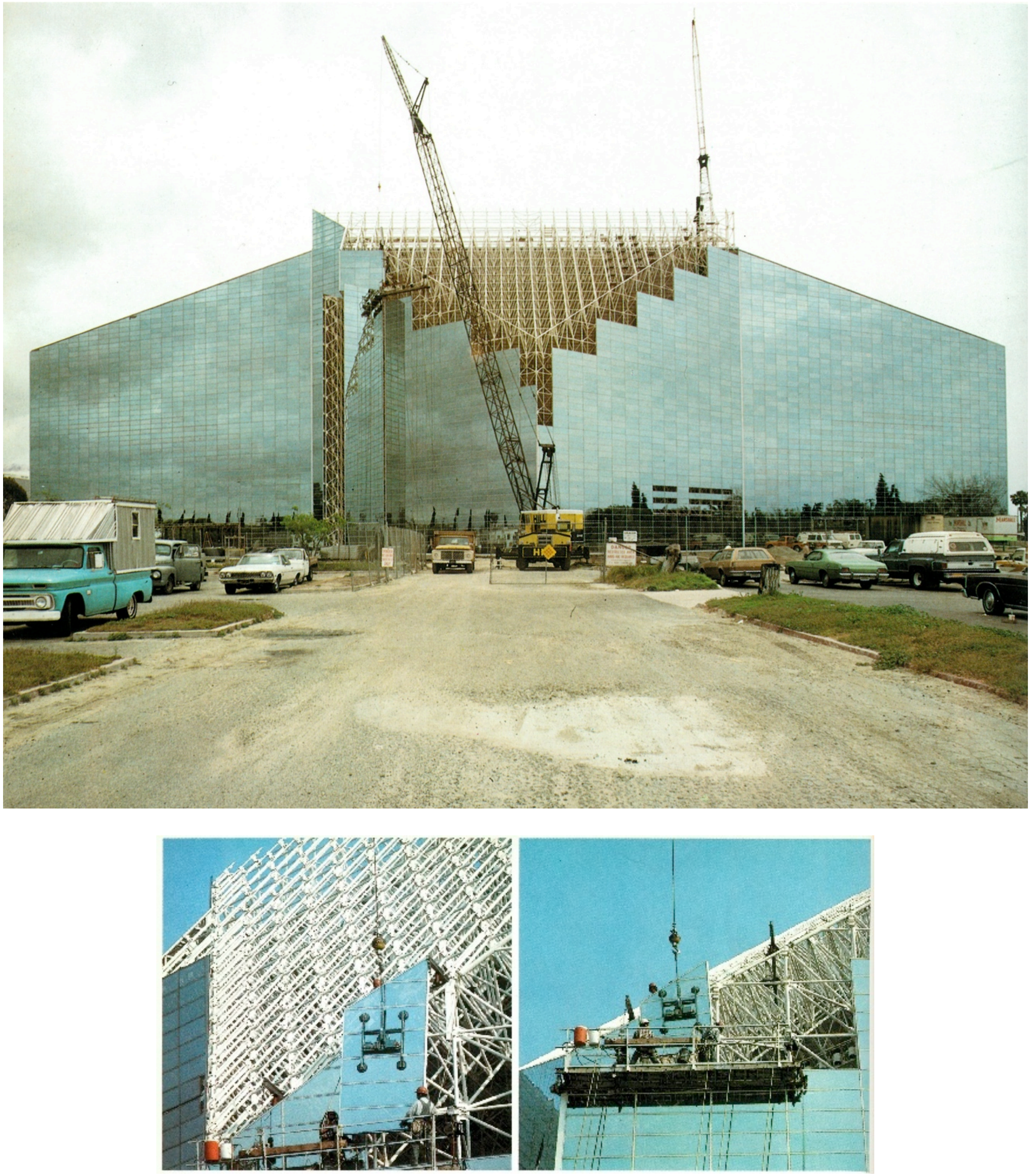


Figure 5.11 Installation of glass panels from the exterior, Crystal Cathedral, Philip Johnson, Garden Grove, California, 1980. (*Domus* 608 (1980), 10.)

Figure 5.12 Nameplates of donors on interior mullions, Crystal Cathedral, Philip Johnson, Garden Grove, California, 1980. (Photograph by author)

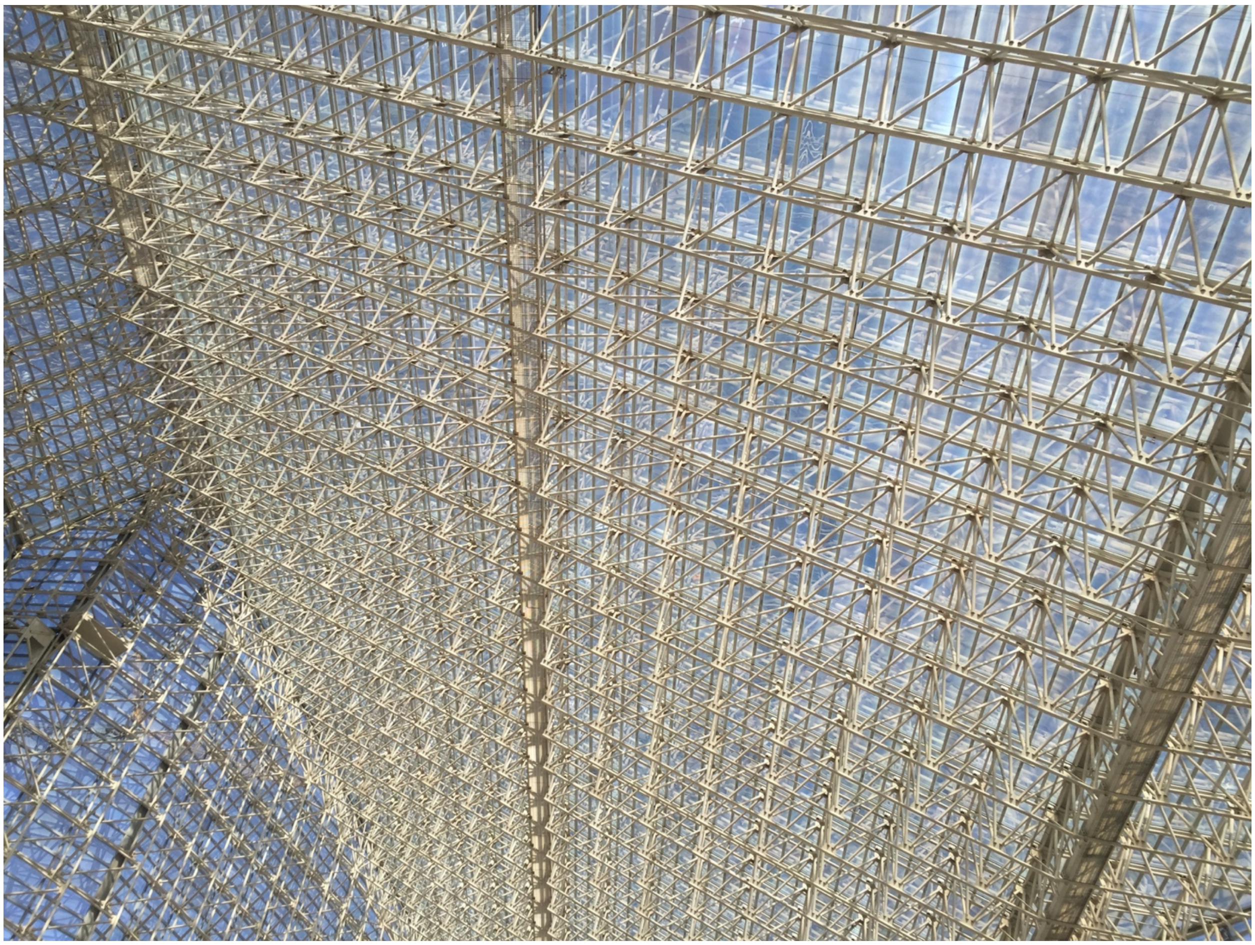


Figure 5.13 Interior view looking up, Crystal Cathedral, Philip Johnson, Garden Grove, California, 1980. The individual panes of glass are difficult to discern behind the white truss structure and would have been further obscured by televisual equipment. (Photograph by author)

Figure 5.14 Aerial view showing profile of the building, Crystal Cathedral, Philip Johnson, Garden Grove, California, 1980.

Figure 5.15 Example of a granite paver purchased by donors. The polished inset takes the form of the building's profile. (Photograph by author)

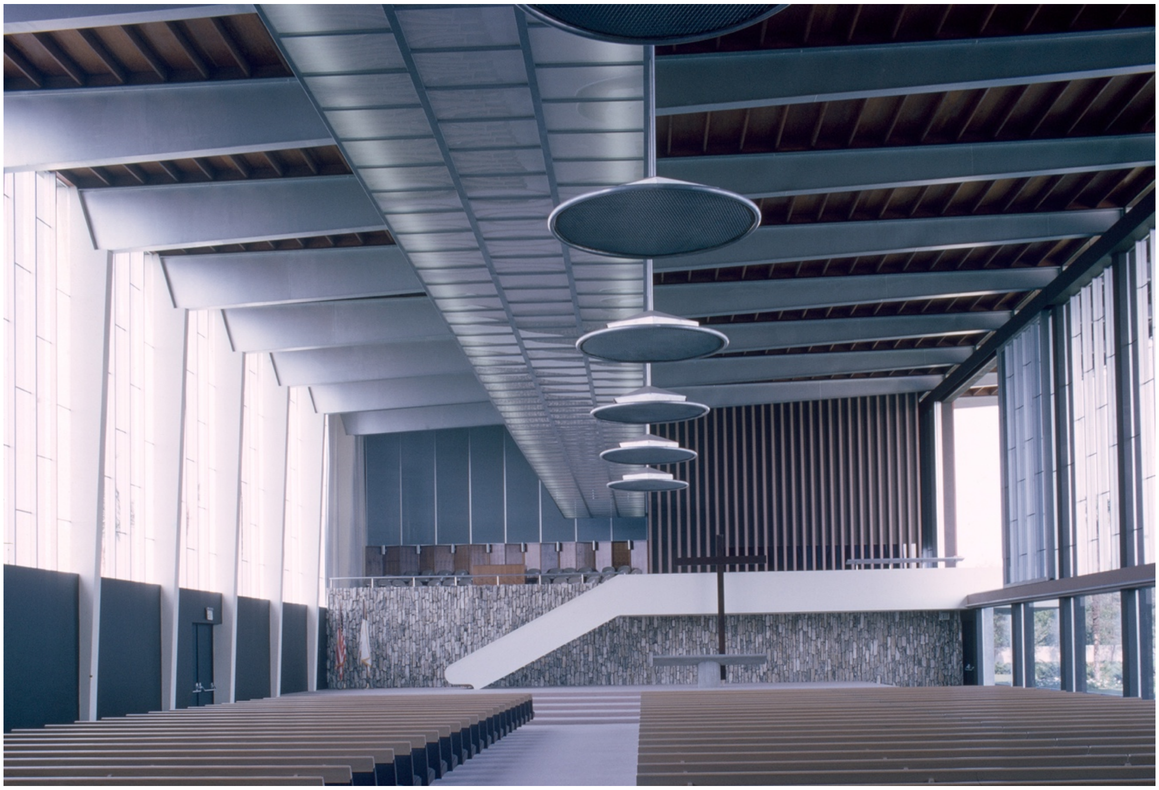


Figure 5.16 Interior of sanctuary, Garden Grove Community Church, Richard Neutra, 1962. Shows windows (*on right side of image*) that separate the walk-in parishioners from the drive-in congregation and the opening that allowed Schuller to preach to both. G. E. Kidder Smith, photographer. (MIT libraries)

Figure 5.17 Exterior view showing drive-in arrangement, Garden Grove Community Church, Richard Neutra, 1962.

Figure 5.18 Interior view looking up to the pulpit, showing both the walk-in and drive-in congregations, Garden Grove Community Church, Richard Neutra, 1962. (Creative Commons)

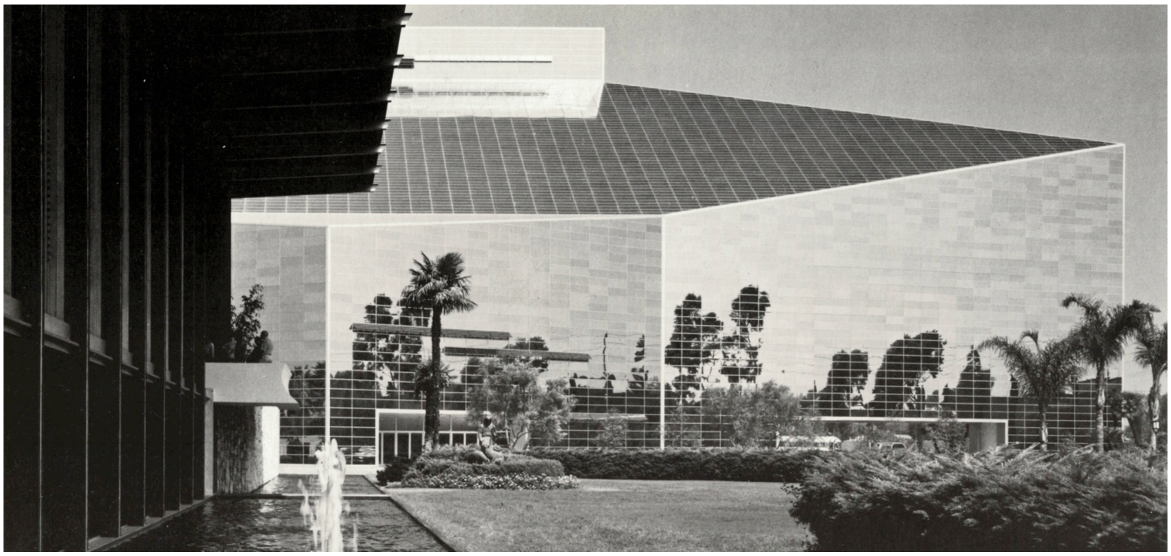


Figure 5.19 Exterior fountains, Garden Grove Community Church, Richard Neutra, 1962.

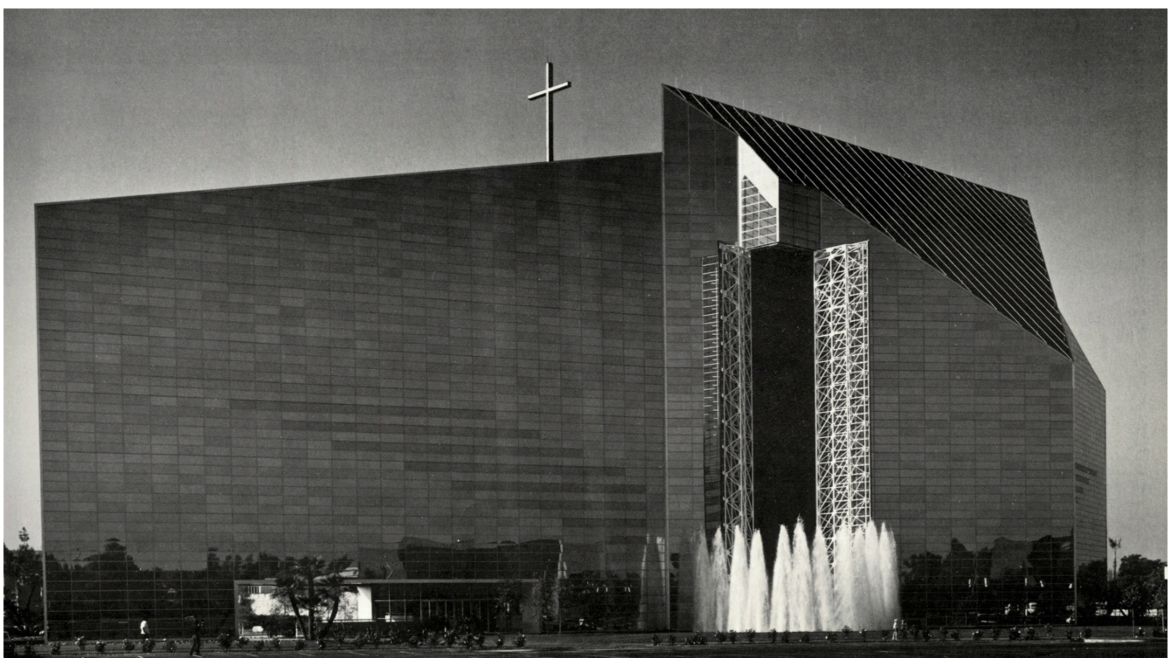
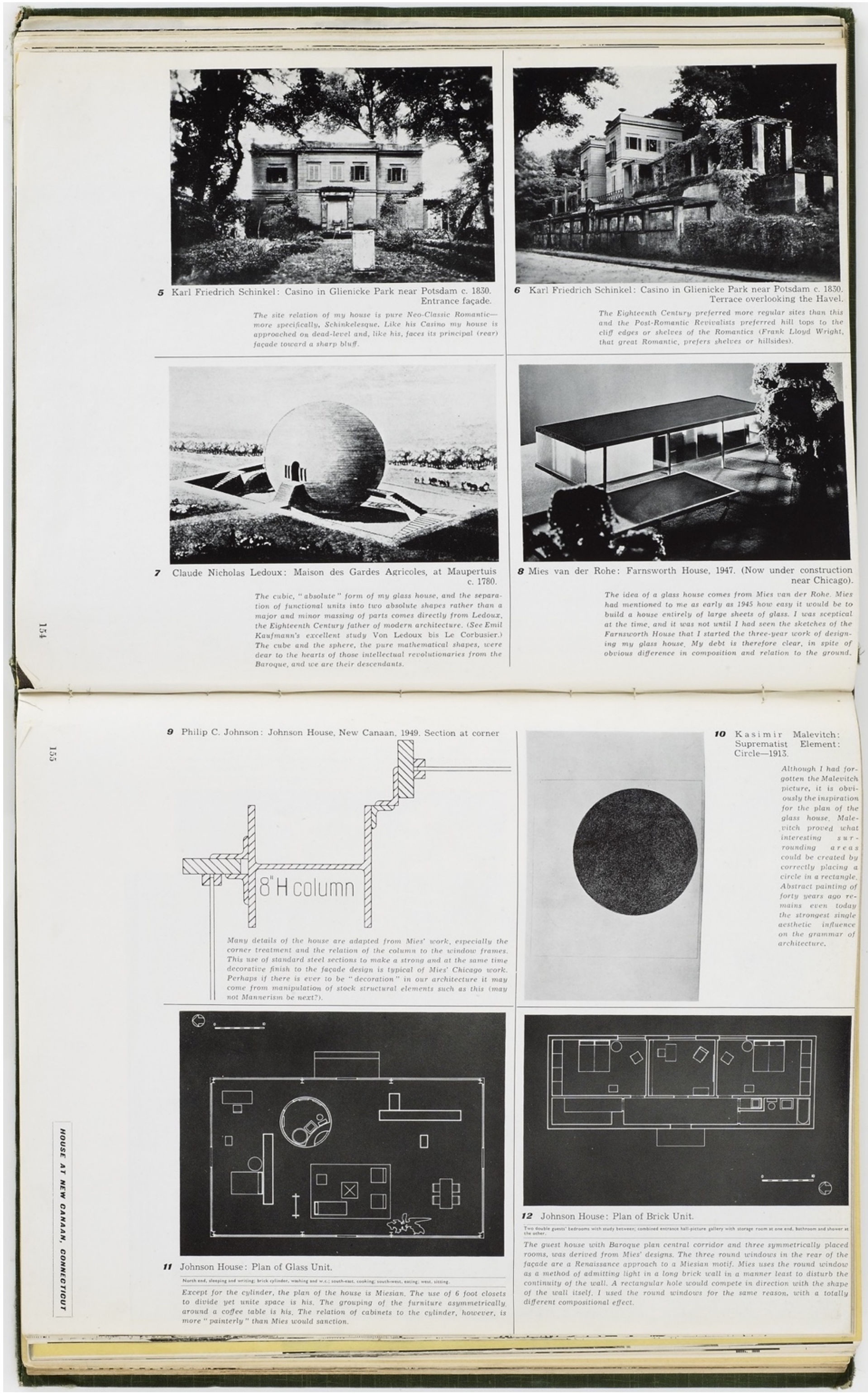


Figure 5.20 Exterior view, Crystal Cathedral, Philip Johnson, Garden Grove, California, 1980. Eighty-foot mechanical doors shown open and fountain jets on. Both features are outsized versions of key design elements from the Garden Grove Community Church but no longer connect walk-in and drive-in worshippers.

Figure 5.21 Robert Schuller holding up an early sketch of the Crystal Cathedral.

Figure 5.22 Robert Schuller during taping of the *Hour of Power* in the Crystal Cathedral. Interior view of the basement of the church where the audio, video and computer technology used to produce the show and web programming was housed.



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5 Karl Friedrich Schinkel: Casino in Glienicke Park near Potsdam c. 1830. Entrance façade.

The site relation of my house is pure Neo-Classic Romantic—more specifically, Schinkelesque. Like his Casino my house is approached on dead-level and, like his, faces its principal (rear) façade toward a sharp bluff.

6 Karl Friedrich Schinkel: Casino in Glienicke Park near Potsdam c. 1830. Terrace overlooking the Havel.

The Eighteenth Century preferred more regular sites than this and the Post-Romantic Revivalists preferred hill tops to the cliff edges or shelves of the Romantics (Frank Lloyd Wright, that great Romantic, prefers shelves or hillsides).

7 Claude Nicholas Ledoux: Maison des Gardes Agricoles, at Maupertuis c. 1780.

The cubic, "absolute" form of my glass house, and the separation of functional units into two absolute shapes rather than a major and minor massing of parts comes directly from Ledoux, the Eighteenth Century father of modern architecture. (See Emil Kaufmann's excellent study Von Ledoux bis Le Corbusier.*) The cube and the sphere, the pure mathematical shapes, were dear to the hearts of those intellectual revolutionaries from the Baroque, and we are their descendants.*

8 Mies van der Rohe: Farnsworth House, 1947. (Now under construction near Chicago).

The idea of a glass house comes from Mies van der Rohe. Mies had mentioned to me as early as 1945 how easy it would be to build a house entirely of large sheets of glass. I was sceptical at the time, and it was not until I had seen the sketches of the Farnsworth House that I started the three-year work of designing my glass house. My debt is therefore clear, in spite of obvious difference in composition and relation to the ground.

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9 Philip C. Johnson: Johnson House, New Canaan, 1949. Section at corner

Many details of the house are adapted from Mies' work, especially the corner treatment and the relation of the column to the window frames. This use of standard steel sections to make a strong and at the same time decorative finish to the façade design is typical of Mies' Chicago work. Perhaps if there is ever to be "decoration" in our architecture it may come from manipulation of stock structural elements such as this (may not Mannerism be next?).

10 Kasimir Malevitch: Suprematist Element: Circle—1913.

Although I had forgotten the Malevitch picture, it is obviously the inspiration for the plan of the glass house. Malevitch proved what interesting surrounding areas could be created by correctly placing a circle in a rectangle. Abstract painting of forty years ago remains even today the strongest single aesthetic influence on the grammar of architecture.

11 Johnson House: Plan of Glass Unit.

North end, sleeping and writing; brick cylinder, washing and w.c.; south-east, cooking; south-west, eating; west, sitting.

Except for the cylinder, the plan of the house is Miesian. The use of 6 foot closets to divide yet unite space is his. The grouping of the furniture asymmetrically around a coffee table is his. The relation of cabinets to the cylinder, however, is more "painterly" than Mies would sanction.

12 Johnson House: Plan of Brick Unit.

Two double guests' bedrooms with study between; combined entrance hall-picture gallery with storage room at one end, bathroom and shower at the other.

The guest house with Baroque plan central corridor and three symmetrically placed rooms, was derived from Mies' designs. The three round windows in the rear of the façade are a Renaissance approach to a Miesian motif. Mies uses the round window as a method of admitting light in a long brick wall in a manner least to disturb the continuity of the wall. A rectangular hole would compete in direction with the shape of the wall itself. I used the round windows for the same reason, with a totally different compositional effect.

HOUSE AT NEW CANAAN, CONNECTICUT

Figure 5.23 Philip Johnson, "House at New Canaan, Connecticut," *Architectural Review* 108 (1950).

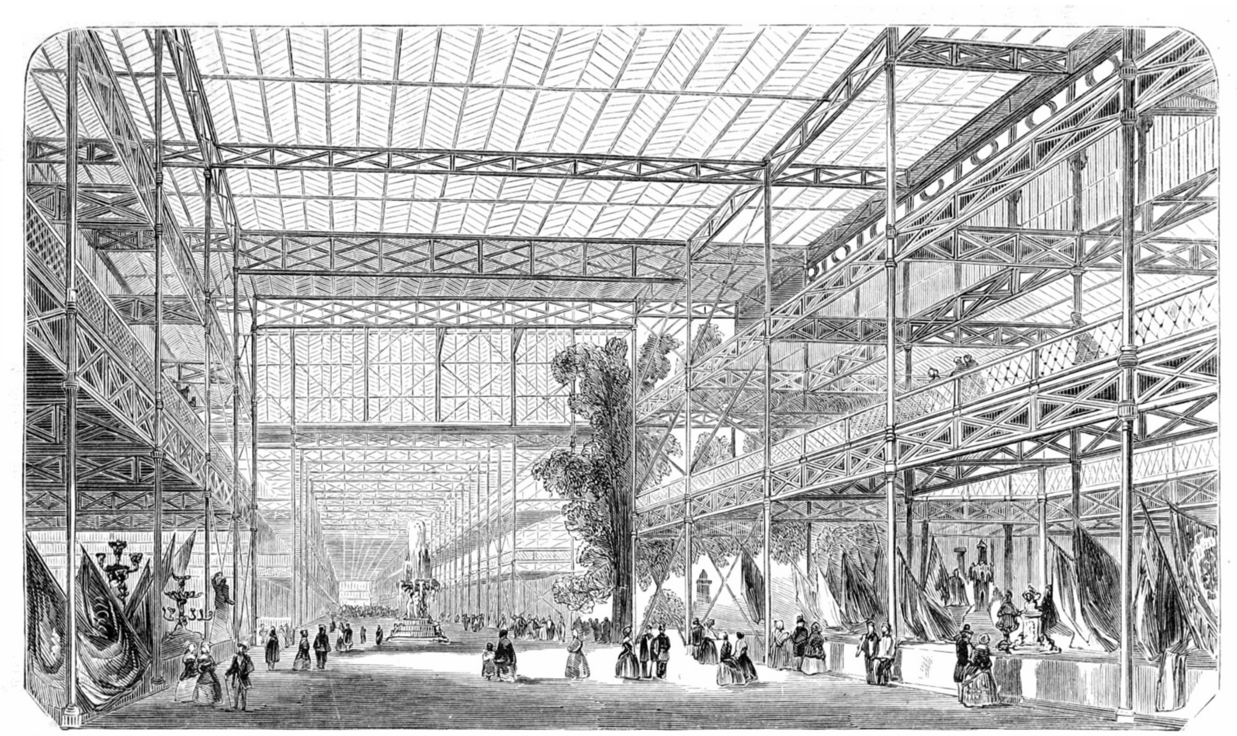


Figure 5.24 Interior of Great Exhibit Hall, Crystal Palace, Joseph Paxton, London, 1851. (Peter Berlyn, Charles Fowler, and James Gilbert, *The Crystal Palace: Its Architectural History and Constructive Marvels*, 1851.)

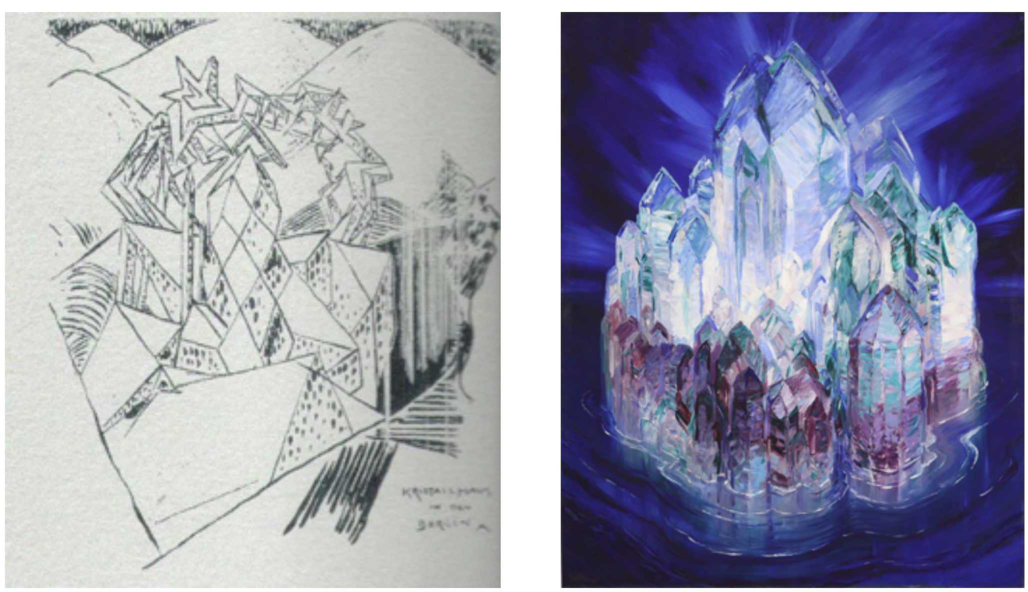
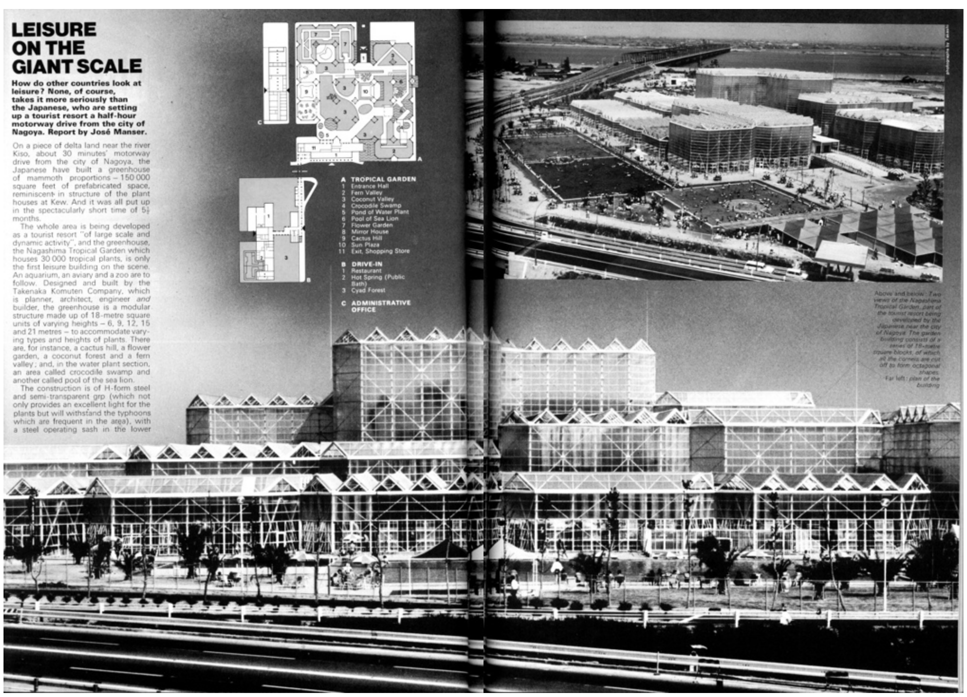


Figure 5.25 Bruno Taut, Crystal House, 1919 (*left*). (Iain Boyd Whyte ed., *The Crystal Chain Letters: Architectural Fantasies by Bruno Taut and His Circle*, 1985.) Wenzel Hablik, *Crystal Castle in the Sea*, 1914 (*right*).

Figure 5.26 Friedrichstrasse Skyscraper Project (exterior perspective from north), Ludwig Mies van der Rohe, Berlin-Mitte, 1921. Charcoal and graphite on paper mounted on board, 68 1/4 x 48 in. (The Museum of Modern Art)

Figure 5.27 The Sculpture Gallery, Philip Johnson, New Canaan, Connecticut, 1970.

Figure 5.28 Rainbow Center Winter Garden, César Pelli, Niagara Falls, New York, 1979.



LEISURE ON THE GIANT SCALE

How do other countries look at leisure? None, of course, takes it more seriously than the Japanese, who are setting up a tourist resort a half-hour motorway drive from the city of Nagoya. Report by José Manser.

On a piece of delta land near the river Kiso, about 30 minutes' motorway drive from the city of Nagoya, the Japanese have built a greenhouse of mammoth proportions – 150 000 square feet of prefabricated space, reminiscent in structure of the plant houses at Kew. And it was all put up in the spectacularly short time of 5½ months.

The whole area is being developed as a tourist resort "of large scale and dynamic activity", and the greenhouse, the Nagashima Tropical Garden which houses 30 000 tropical plants, is only the first leisure building on the scene. An aquarium, an aviary and a zoo are to follow. Designed and built by the Takenaka Komuten Company, which is planner, architect, engineer *and* builder, the greenhouse is a modular structure made up of 18-metre square units of varying heights – 6, 9, 12, 15 and 21 metres – to accommodate varying types and heights of plants. There are, for instance, a cactus hill, a flower garden, a coconut forest and a fern valley; and, in the water plant section, an area called crocodile swamp and another called pool of the sea lion.

The construction is of H-form steel and semi-transparent grp (which not only provides an excellent light for the plants but will withstand the typhoons which are frequent in the area), with a steel operating sash in the lower

A TROPICAL GARDEN
1 Entrance Hall
2 Fern Valley
3 Coconut Valley
4 Crocodile Swamp
5 Pond of Water Plant
6 Pool of Sea Lion
7 Flower Garden
8 Mirror House
9 Cactus Hill
10 Sun Plaza
11 Exit, Shopping Store

B DRIVE-IN
1 Restaurant
2 Hot Spring (Public Bath)
3 Cyad Forest

C ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICE

Above and below: *Two views of the Nagashima Tropical Garden, part of the tourist resort being developed by the Japanese near the city of Nagoya. The garden building consists of a series of 18-metre square blocks, of which all the corners are cut off to form octagonal shapes.*
Far left: *plan of the building*

Figure 5.29 Nagashima Tropical Garden, Takenaka Komuten Company. (*Design Journal* (1967): 62-63.)

Figure 5.30 Interior view, Glass House, Philip Johnson, New Canaan, Connecticut, 1949. Carol M. Highsmith, photographer. (Photographs in the Carol M. Highsmith Archive, Library of Congress, Prints and Photographs Division)

Figure 5.31 Interior view of entry threshold, Crystal Cathedral, Philip Johnson, Garden Grove, California, 1980. (Photograph by author)

Figure 5.32 Interior view looking back at concrete piers, Crystal Cathedral, Philip Johnson, Garden Grove, California, 1980. Showing the horizontal the datum within the main space of the church. (Photograph by author)

Figure 5.33 Interior view, Crystal Cathedral, Philip Johnson, Garden Grove, California, 1980. Looking back from front of stage at the theatrical apparatus of the church. Lighting and sound equipment are held above, at ground level there is an interior fountain, jets are not on in this photograph.

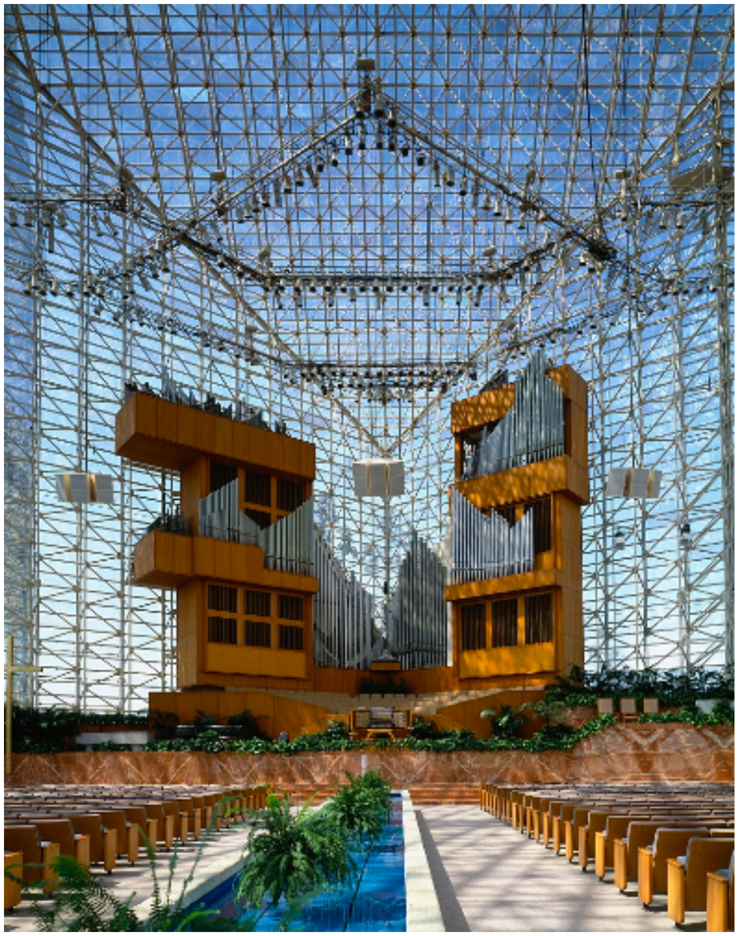


Figure 5.34 Interior view, Crystal Cathedral, Philip Johnson, Garden Grove, California, 1980. Looking at entry fountain, stage, Hazel Wright organ, and lighting equipment hanging above. Carol M. Highsmith, photographer. (Photographs in the Carol M. Highsmith Archive, Library of Congress, Prints and Photographs Division)

Figure 5.35 Interior view of the entry, Crystal Cathedral, Philip Johnson, Garden Grove, California, 1980. Showing contrast with the spatial expression of the concrete piers compared to the free-floating elements in the image above.

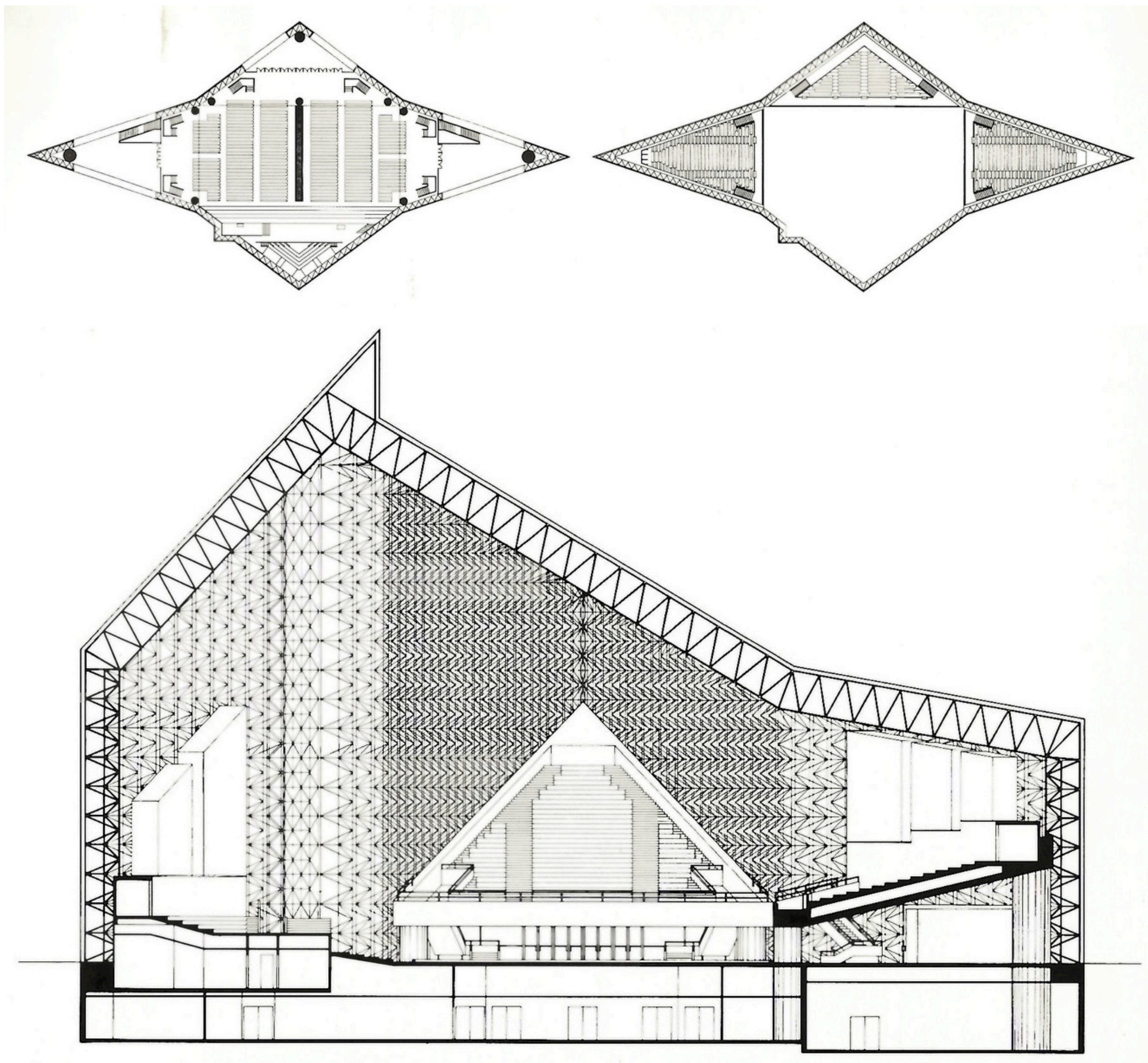


Figure 5.36 Plan and transverse section, Crystal Cathedral, Philip Johnson, Garden Grove, California, 1980.

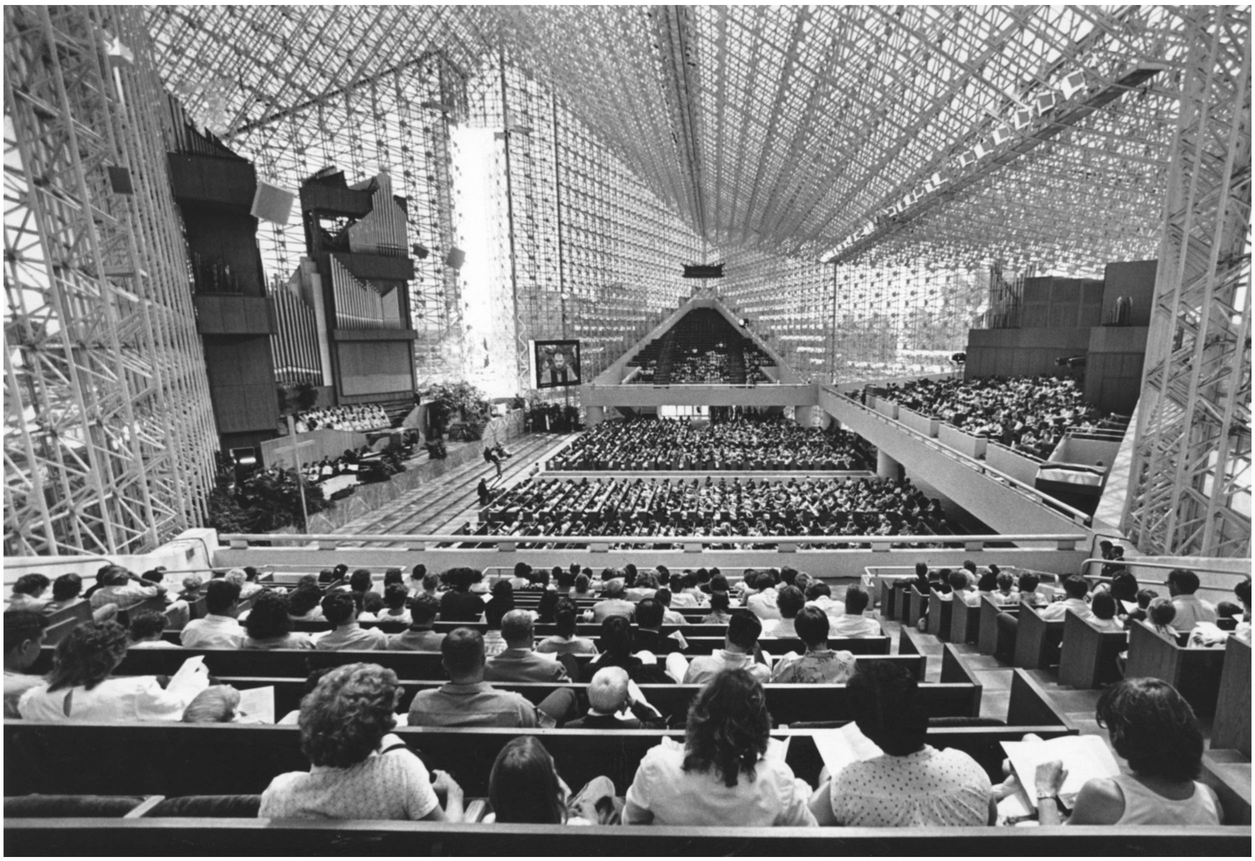


Figure 5.37 Interior view from upper-level seating, Crystal Cathedral, Philip Johnson, Garden Grove, California, 1980. From here all of the elements of the church are visible: enveloping glass structure, concrete piers, entry fountain, stage, organ, televisual equipment, jumbotron, and open eighty-foot doors.

Figure 5.38 Philip Johnson and Robert Schuller inside the Crystal Cathedral.

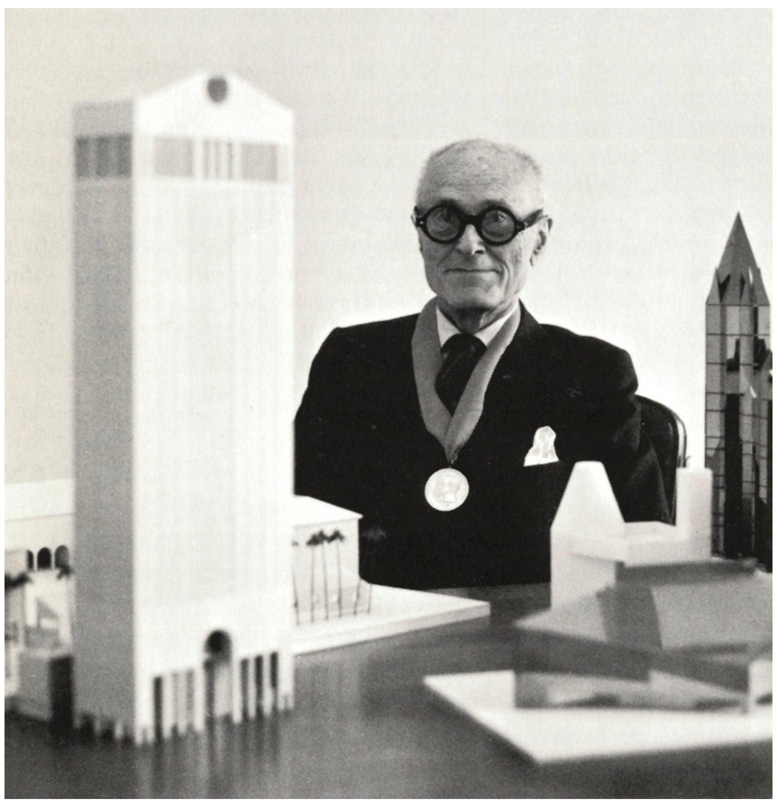


Figure 5.39 Philip Johnson wearing his recently awarded AIA Gold Medal and sitting at a table with models of his recent projects set out in front of him including the Crystal Cathedral (*bottom right*).

Conclusion
Decadent Poetics in the Face of Decadent Politics

This dissertation opened with Philip Johnson's glib promise to fabricate "a fin-de-siècle version of the Seagram" by re-skinning the Gulf and Western Building with metallic-tinted glass for Donald Trump. By the mid-1990s, Trump was contemplating running for president and Johnson had been producing iconic glass structures for nearly fifteen years. Following the commission, architectural critic Herbert Muschamp wrote an article titled, "Trump, His Gilded Taste, and Me." The piece begins with the subtitle "Antiquity Now" and the first lines are "Mr. President," quoted from the cries of people calling out to Donald Trump as he takes his seat on the floor of Madison Square Garden at a Ricky Martin concert. Muschamp quickly jumps from Trump's political aspirations to the purpose of his article, which is to bring together Trump, Johnson, and Andy Warhol's Gold Marilyn, because, as the critic puts it, "The domain of high artifice is a good place to see the peculiar weave of fact and illusion that holds Mr. Trump's world together."[1] For Johnson's part, the Trump commission pushed his architectural agency to its limits, with the architect noting that his disciplinary expertise was relegated to the scale of the detail.[2]

Exemplifying *fin-de-siècle* literary decadence, the detail highlights the poetic singularity of the word taking precedent over the cohesion of the paragraph, the sentence, or the phrase. Studying decadence in relation to architecture offers a lens for examining the ways in which that

[1] Herbert Muschamp, "Trump, His Gilded Taste, and Me" *New York Times* December 19, 1999.
[2] See: David W. Dunlap, "Philip Johnson, the renowned architect, joins the Trump team on the huge Riverside South project" *New York Times*, November 3, 1993.

question of, and fascination with, falling away is negotiated through spatial structures. The overlap with the literary genre reveals the conceptual histories of decadence, through which multiple lines of disciplinary inquiry can be followed. Re-construing the material world as a set of abstract engineering and economic principles that are unmoored from social context occasions a mythos of materiality. Framing one's cultural context as late comes with a tradition of negative aesthetic judgment but also a historical self-awareness that can open onto playful and dynamic combinations of forms and symbols. Seeing style as performative, rather than categorical, expands questions of identity and affords social agency through collectives, rather than political binaries, while also going against the grain of an idealized universality that undercuts both.

The concept of decadence can be viewed through two distinct positions: exterior and interior. From the Enlightenment theories of history that mark the emergence of decadence as an academic concept, it fundamentally consists of external phenomena to be studied. From the modern perspective of the nineteenth century, decadence becomes associated with an aesthetic retreat to the interior, as well as symptomatic of both a social body infected by foreign ills and personal psychological disorders.

At the intersection of historical theorizations of decline and the autonomous aesthete, a more operative form of decadence was being imagined. C.-F. Viel, writing at the opening of the nineteenth century, straddles the line between questions of historical and modern decadence. He framed the problems of contemporary decadence through a loss of material, economic, and social propriety. Extending the themes of modern decadence that characterized the latter half of the nineteenth-century, decadent authors also played with the frames and distance of academic conceptualizations of decadence. Their decadent poetic was ultimately Janus-faced. They looked back to historical moments of decadence and celebrated them as a worthy modern sensibility.

Using the architectural structure of rooms and inserting intraspatial compartments, they created forms of modern interiority and alluded to the structures of knowledge formation.

What makes the double-stance of decadent literature so striking is that it foregrounds the conditions of decadence within the poetics of its aesthetic practice. Consequently, for this study, it is not so much the innovation of literary form that is of interest but the ways in which the construction of a decadent poetic turns between the positions of exteriority and interiority. Re-positioning decadence as neither fully the otherness of exotic phenomenon nor simply the intimate realm of sensual pleasure is a pivotal step towards tapping into the operative capacity of the concept.

By tracing these double currents of decadence, we find lines of connection between architecture and design in *fin-de-siècle* France and postmodern America. The Sacré-Coeur basilica, like the writings of Viel, is excluded from narratives of modern architecture that rely on industrial materials and new technologies to identify a radical break in the modes of architectural production. Nevertheless, the church shared a utopian drive to overcome modern decadence, much the same as its modernist counterparts. Furthermore, its innovative fundraising techniques, efforts to tap into a dispersed network of popular support and move away from a program of situated iconography to one of universalized material presence, link it to a larger genealogy of modernized tactics in the realm of socially conservative institutions. Thus while the Crystal Cathedral may be labeled by some critics as late modern, it has much in common with the Sacré-Coeur, which is not read as modern. The lens of decadence helps to recognize some false-divides or disciplinary blind spots. More importantly, recognizing the conditions of decadence is necessary for an operative engagement to emerge.

The concurrence between a larger decadent setting, however conceptualized, and an active decadent poetic that cuts against its grain occurs architecturally in the postmodern period.

In the houses of Charles Moore, monuments of architectural history are miniaturized, made colorful, and combined with other loaded cultural symbols. This manipulation is not done with ironic detachment but rather vested with personal inquiry. The church by Philip Johnson plays a more oblique referential game by signifying the moment in disciplinary history when stylistic meaning was discarded. Both architects introduce intraspatial elements that insert an intermediate, rather than absolute, architectural dimension. These moves set up a Janus-faced relationship to decadence, one that at turns looked inward and outward.

This dissertation closes by returning to the historical territory of the concept in order to ask, is there any role for an operative decadence in the field of design today as it exists increasingly within globalized digital environments? Jameson posited that decadence was almost a premonition of postmodernism, but ultimately concluded that the two concepts were fundamentally differentiated by their relationship to history. For him, postmodernism, being born of the culture of late capital, was fundamentally cut off from the structures of history as a modern discipline that made possible the exteriority of otherness. Therefore, the perverse pleasure that authors like Flaubert could cultivate through the historical exoticism of late antiquity was no longer available in a culture with no capacity to differentiate among the pastiche of free-floating signifiers.

Decadence has not faded away as Jameson predicted, but its ties to both the modern concept of history and the dissolution of the authority of history have not been fully tackled. Historian François Hartog presents the crisis of historical account in vivid detail when he writes:

> For the last thirty years, the conditions of practicing the historian's craft have changed and they continue to change in front of our very eyes. One often reads the handy formula of crisis as an explanation of this: a "crisis" of history, "disoriented" history, it has been said, while our relationship to time has continued to change. With our future closed off, the past has been engulfed in shadow and the present has become the sole horizon. In a world that now privileges the dimension of the present alone, a world that proclaims itself globalized and sometimes thinks of itself (notably in Germany) as post-national,

> what becomes of the place and function of the person who, in the nineteenth century (when history saw itself as a science and was organized as a discipline), had defined himself as the mediator between past and present through the major if not unique object of the nation or state?[3]

Sylvia Lavin's recent collection of essays, *Flash in the Pan*, frames the question of architecture's contemporaneity through the issue of speed: "If even architecture – the proverbial medium of slowness, stillness and permanence – can be made to move lithely with the present, then contemporaneity in general may be possible."[4] However, the loss of framing structures is equally at stake in the shift to operating in the horizon of the present, as Hartog observes:

> The rapid rise in the 1980s of the contemporary or, the present, as a dominant focus of inquiry was the first characteristic of these new temporal conditions… Forget structures and structuralism, farewell to *Tristes Tropiques*; emphasize the pragmatic. The old evolutionist lunacies are now certainly gone for good, but so are the innumerable variations on alterity, the last avatar of Eurocentrism and colonialism. We are all equally contemporary.[5]

The formal and representational maneuvers of operative decadence refract rather than abandon the framing structures of history. We may all be equally contemporary but we all also carry and construct complex intersectional identities that are historically situated. The rhetoric of crisis incites the sense of urgency, the need to be flexibly reactive, and the willingness to abandon the wider perspectives of past and future. Hartog describes a current situation in which the future's unpredictability, despite our incredible information resources in the digital age, has led to a renouncing of "plans, prospects and futurology" such that, "We are completely concentrated on an immediate response to the immediate."[6] He posits that this has lead "to seeing the future as a threat and, in a sense, to the suppression of history in the name of an emergency and so the need to protect the present at the cost of both past and future."[7] The rhetoric of crisis is the

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[3] François Hartog, "The Present of the Historian," *History of the Present*, vol. 4, no. 2 (Fall 2014): 203-219.
[4] Sylvia Lavin, *Flash in the Pan* (London: AA Publications, 2014): 6.
[5] Hartog, 205.
[6] Ibid., 215.
[7] Ibid., 216.

contemporary rhetoric of decadence. Like Hartog's assessment of history, it is no longer evidenced through the object of the nation. The rhetoric of decadence today is a globalized fear of unstable financial markets, ecological disaster, and terrorist networks.[8]

Hartog asserts that although the modern concept of history may just be beginning to understand the shift he is observing, "History is certainly still here and is still familiar, but it has nonetheless lost its obviousness: called into question, it has lost its strength, its majesty, and, concretely, its signature operational efficacy."[9] Accordingly, history is in a state of decadence, and the very distanciating structures for identifying decline are weakening. Hartog's suggestion is to extend Reinhart Koselleck's conceptual approach to history by focusing on motifs of the present, such as memory, heritage, and identity.[10] Notably, decadence does not appear as a concept in the massive *Geschichtliche Grundbegriffe* (1972-77), which appeared in eight volumes and included over one-hundred-twenty key terms, nor is it proposed by Hartog.[11] Nevertheless, this variously loaded concept in its operative capacity turns between the distance of history and the immediacy of the present.

This dissertation has traced a genealogy of decadence through architectural discourse as it emerged alongside the concept of history in the eighteenth century, was leveraged aesthetically and polemically in the nineteenth century, and extended into debates about postmodern culture. Tracing this itinerary reveals a concept that has two primary identities: one as a derisive label born of the modern discipline of history and another as an operative tool for situating the complexities of a subject within a variegated milieu composed of economic, historical, and social

[8] Both Jameson and Houellebecq link decadence and what they identify as Islamic fundamentalism.

[9] Hartog, 217.

[10] Ibid. Hartog writes, "In forging his historical semantics, Reinhart Koselleck identified the formation of the modern concept of history starting at the end of the eighteenth century. A comparable study bearing on the end of the twentieth century would show a crumbling or an eclipse of this modern concept (or perhaps an even more dramatic change), while a series of terms, signature motifs of the present, have come to preoccupy our societies and our minds."

[11] Reinhart Koselleck, Werner Conze, and Otto Brunner, *Geschichtliche Grundbegriffe: Historisches Lexikon Zur Politisch-sozialen Sprache In Deutschland,* 8 vol. (Stuttgart: Klett-Cotta, 2004).

layers. Providing an initial analysis of what I argue are examples of the latter, the work aims to generate a theoretical engagement with decadence that turns into, rather than away from, the concept. In so doing, I advocate for continued investigations into the decadent territories of the present.

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