



STANFORD ANDERSON

(1934 - 2016)

EXCERPTS
THOUGHTS
POSITIONS

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Man rarely, if ever, builds without also seeking to extend his understanding beyond knowledge of things to the knowledge of self.¹

How can we move toward a society that uses its resources for the betterment of human condition rather than for destruction and waste? How can we move toward a society in which intellectually inventive devotion to one's task, rather than appearing an almost anachronistic example, is common because it is fruitful? Only then can we pass beyond mere appreciation of good efforts to serious consideration and comparison of the proliferating alternatives set forth by contributors in many fields.²

We need an inquiry into "What is architecture?" This is not a barren and repetitive task. Such a task raises epistemological questions as to how the entire inquiry will be conducted. It opens vast areas of study concerning the plasticity, the suggestiveness, and yet the limits of the relationship of man with his environment. These studies must include both analytic investigations and speculative experiments in the sense of the invention of new environmental conditions.³

My argument may now be reformulated to say: There is no imperative that we must use any given technique. There is an imperative that we attempt to better understand the activity of the architect, the problem situation within which he works, and the reasons for his often rather bad performance. At any rate, it is only through such an understanding of the architects in relation to his problems that we could come to know when and where to use which new techniques.⁴

One can design instruments and one can receive and manipulate artifacts; but can one design environments that meet, but are not constrained by, initial purpose? The answer is surely yes. Contributive, perhaps necessary, factors are complexity and articulation that allow for multiple and changing uses and meanings while also having the specificity to encourage and sustain them. Such environments can support the multiple and overlapping patterns of ecological sympathy.⁵

If we have any ground for browbeating the architects of the twentieth century, that ground would not be the universal circumstance that they were influenced by the traditions in which they found themselves. The charge against these architects would rather be the frequency of their self-righteous belief in their independence from tradition. This supposed independence often led them into a blind submission to traditions which they might otherwise have critically observed and overthrown. The conclusion to be drawn from the tradition-bound character of our most famous contemporary architects is not that we must be rid of tradition, but rather that we may use those traditions more eloquently or free ourselves from them, as we see fit.⁶

Reason is imperative, but reason that is guided by our affections.⁷

The rich texture of activities and significances associated with streets reinforces the difficulty but also the potential of a sociophysical examination of them. Streets are integral parts of our movement and communication networks; they are the places where many of our conflicts or resolutions between public and private claims are accused or actually played out; they are the arenas where the boundaries of conventional and aberrant behavior are frequently redrawn...⁸

[On the design of Savannah]

The plan of Savannah - is selected and commended on the basis that this plan convention, with its unusual combination of intricate articulation and replication, has been able to lend environmental support to a series of quite different patterns of habitation. It has supported synchronic patterns of use, sometimes resisting and testing, channeling but not inhibiting diachronic patterns of changing use. And for this very reason - that is, its openness to reinterpretation and positive support of different uses - wholesale change of the physical fabric has not been necessary. Indeed, for an American city, Savannah has shown a remarkable durability with concomitant benefits both in the efficient use of resources and in the cumulative reinforcement of certain increasingly valued environmental qualities.⁹

“Possibilism” has developed as a critique of environmentalism in both human geography and in ecology. I have been describing a special case of the same argument. I am advancing a possibilist urban ecology. By “urban ecology” I don’t mean to emphasize the relation of the entire city to its region or, quite generally, to nature, though this too is both present and important. Rather I would emphasize the relation of individuals, groups, populations, and societies to their physical urban environment - the relation of social space to physical environment. Even in nature these relations of organism and environment are dynamic and reciprocal. It is not only the case that the environment is a quasi autonomous, possibilist setting for the inhabiting organisms; the organisms also change the environment, sometimes markedly or even self destructively. The reciprocity of people with their urban environment is at least as marked as that found in nature.¹⁰

It is important to look to history in order to learn about the extent of the discipline of architecture. Admittedly it is possible to conduct historical inquiry that incorporates information about architecture without touching on what is integral to that discipline. That is, what may be included under the general umbrella of the history of architecture does not necessarily engage architecture or architectural research. Yet even such historical inquiry may serve to define or criticize the perceived boundaries of the discipline. More importantly, there is a range of widely accepted historical inquiry about architecture that also constitutes architectural research. I make this general comment as a preamble to recognizing that, under a Lakatos model, one is encouraged to push beyond conventional history to what he termed “rational reconstruction.”¹¹

From my first ever lecture, at the Architectural Association in 1963, I have been interested in the implications of the thought of Karl Popper and, later, the criticism and nuanced reconstructions of that thought offered by Imre Lakatos. The consequences of the political attack on science and on liberal thought [“liberal” as in “liberal arts,” and as in American, not European, political thought] is too great and proximate to be ignored. We must fight for a more adequate understanding of science and secular rationalism. We cannot allow the political right to push science (and especially the politically charged popular understanding of science) to an absolutism that the Postmodernists falsely attribute to science. We might begin a resistance to such pressure by turning again to the central claim of Popperian epistemology. All claims to knowledge must be understood to be fallible. Under that condition, how do we understand the operations of science, and why should we grant it standing?¹²

Exaggeration of the significance of one's own field is one of the dangers of the specialization of disciplines. There have been so-called environmentalists (Naive geographical determinists), naive economic determinists, and naive cultural determinists. As one finds such unilateral explanations inadequate, so one should also deplore architectural determinism. Still, in their ardor to connect architects on this point, social scientists may discourage inquiries into more subtle concepts of the interaction of people with the physical environment. The denunciation of such efforts as nonsense traces less to a study of environment than to a destructive categorization of professional activities which grossly separates architects from social scientists. Robert Gutman, for example, perceives "the social role of the architect as practitioner and decision maker" as opposed to the scholarly, academic and scientific role of the behavioral scientist." This failure to conceive of an architect

reflecting critically on his activities or of a behavioral scientist playing a social role obscures the fact that both disciplines engage broad, intersecting ranges of human experience, thought, and production. Still more than the disciplines themselves, the environments within which they work and to which they refer are resistant to such antisystemic claims of the independence of elements. Ruling out a search for the interaction of physical with social, cultural, and cognitive factors as nonsense is dogmatic, encouraging the very professional chauvinism, it purports to attack.¹³

[Regarding Peter Eisenman, Charles Moore, Cedric Price, Maurice Smith and the Venturis]

We need rigorous comparative studies of these proliferating interpretations of architecture. Finally, the comparison of these approaches to emerging theories and methods in the sciences may reveal that the defeat of architectural determinism was part of the defeat of determinism, not the defeat of architecture or of the possibility of the unity of knowledge.¹⁴

[On Lawrence Anderson, architect and Dean at MIT, who taught at MIT from 1947-1972]

Anderson was the main figure to introduce architectural modernism to MIT. As a student at the University of Minnesota, a young professor at the University of Virginia, a masters' student at MIT, and then a Paris prize fellow in the early thirties, Anderson knew the lessons of classical training well. When he began his long teaching and administrative career at MIT in 1933, the school was still strongly marked by that classical tradition, even as it was being transformed under the then-current approaches often referred to as "stripped classicism" and "art deco." In his teaching and design, Anderson worked through such transformations to be the architect, in 1939, of one of the first modern buildings on an American campus, the Alumni Swimming Pool at MIT.¹⁵

[On the early modernist, German architect, Peter Behrens]

Behren's search for architectural form ranged from a program for ideal form to melancholic expression induced by the failure of that idealist program. He never accepted an alternative range of approaches the definitions of form through the interaction of the form with its environment. The alternative is also beautifully evoked by Dürer, in the carpenter's plane, a tool whose very purpose is to whittle and gouge recalcitrant material into an approximation of a mathematical abstraction. Yet its form could hardly be more lovingly expressive of the materials from which it is made, of the way in which it is made, of its interaction with both the material to be shaped and the hand that shapes. Together, the Werkbund and the Dürerbund exhibited many everyday objects that participate in such a process and such a sensibility. To recognize the absence of this attitude in Behrens contributes to an understanding of his work; to trace the tradition of this attitude of "form through use" would be the beginning of another study.¹⁶

[On the early modernist, German architect, Peter Behrens]

In summary, a common theme runs through Behren's work and writing of these years. While he maintains his mistrust of an analytic, positivistic science and technology and the kind of civilization that he conceived such a base would yield, he nevertheless accommodates himself and his work to modern industry, partially through his intimations of a new synthesis but much more through his notion of artistic will as an agent of forces shaped by historical determinism. Industrial production and its intricate fusing with political power were the realities that had to be served in the face of material and social constraints.¹⁷

[On Eladio Dieste, a noted Uruguayan engineer and architect]

This book must aspire to be inclusive, not as an account of Dieste's numerous works, or even as an exhaustive account of individual works. Nor should it be an intimate biography that would have to rest in the hands of those who were close to this remarkable man. Rather, it must seek to be inclusive in an ambition to recognize the wholeness of the man and the integral quality of his life and work. Dieste was an engineer--in Spanish, ingeniero. During the last century, the engineering profession allowed that term to lose its sense of the "ingenious." It is to some exemplary individuals that we turn to renew our enthusiasm for inventions that are complex yet, once realized, possess a simplicity and seeming inevitability for inventions that are not mere novelties.¹⁸

[On Eladio Dieste, a noted Uruguayan engineer and architect]

Beyond this integration of conception and making, there is also Dieste's cultural and, indeed, philosophical understanding, not only of his work but also of his *métier* and of the contributions of engineers, architects, and artists. If one is not attuned to starting with devoted inquiry into the potentials of a particular material or technique, one can do well to consider the higher opportunities and responsibilities advanced by Dieste, and then cycle back to the means for making such contributions. There are ample reasons to come to know Eladio Dieste.¹⁹

[On August Pugin, an English architect, designer, artist and critic from the mid-19th century]

Pugin hoped that this all-of-a-piece revivalism would lift one right out of any compromise with contemporary traditions. What this escapist attitude actually means was that Pugin was not at all in a position to deal with the evils of the contemporary tradition; his anachronistic endeavours would not challenge the most pressing problems directly and could not provide the innovation necessary to transform the condition of architecture. The reverse happened; the condition of architecture in nineteenth century England transformed Pugin's anachronisms into another variation on its own theme.²⁰

[On Loos, Le Corbusier, Aalto, and Kahn]

They sought to “put modernism in its place,” or perhaps better, to give modernism its place. Loos spoke of “creating buildings in which a modern way of living could naturally develop.” I like that formulation, for it opens a space between the place provided and the life lived. Thus it breaks any sense of determinism from architecture to modern life or vice versa. In his buildings, Le Corbusier, relative to Loos, projected a more radical change both in architecture and in modern life - still, I believe, without determinism. His machine à habiter is a provocative play on a recurrent French construction: the “machine to live in” poses new conditions but no more determines how life will be lived than the machine à écrire determines what will be written....In their works, the architects just evoked sought to make places that support modern fictions. Similarly, we can assume a position for the historian or critic: the necessity of providing an adequate story about modern architecture if we are to criticize it and grow from it.²¹

In architecture, in the twentieth century, we have not lacked for conjectures, nor for criticism. But I would suggest that we have failed to establish a rational attitude toward our conjectures and criticism. What are only conjectures have been put forward as utopian panaceas and supported with absolutist fervour. Corroboration is always sought; never falsification. There are frequent manifestos of what is manifestly unmanifest... Only when we take a more critical attitude towards our conjectures shall we be able rationally to support, or reject, some of those ideas which currently operate according to the dictates of taste and fashion.²²

In general terms, events and criticisms of recent years have shaken our confidence in man's ability to exert a socially beneficial control over his environment by "design" by the schematic direction of actions calculated to achieve a pre-visualized goal. Such a proposition goes far beyond the architecture, challenging our reliance on human rationality and rational action. The criticism of specific incongruities and injustices yields a revolutionary challenge of the most general form. But a challenge to our incomplete and imperfect rationality need not be an invitation to irrationality; it can equally well be the welcome occasion for a critique, reformation and growth of knowledge, attended by more reasonable structuring of society and the environment.²³

A realist architecture mistrusts universal claims, such as those voiced by the Darmstadt Artists' Colony, in which art and the great artist magnanimously were to impose forms that would dictate to life. A realist architecture rejects a necessary, organic relation of cultural production to blood and soil (even if this claim is clearer in the thought of Loos than in that of Muthesius). Realist architecture respects but subsumes the pure *Sachlichkeit* of the calculation of mechanical needs. It establishes a condition of knowing and association that cannot maintain its balance without speculative innovation; but this too will ordinarily appear within a framework that is the fruit of earlier speculations. Within a realist architecture there is an impetus to understand and use our received condition as much as to criticise and change it.²⁴

Programmatically, all proposals must at least potentially account for both individual, willed, often rational action and the existence of unforeseen communitarian results. Present diversity and future indeterminacy are central to the problem situation. Very different environmental proposals meet these minimal conditions. Cedric Price, for example shares Archigram's belief that physical construction is constraining and should therefore be minimized. But he differs from Archigram in that he sees this as a rationally achieved policy, not a historically and technologically imposed necessity. Consequently he also retains a design control that does not exclude built form and that considers all technologies, old and new, for their possible contribution to an indeterminate environment (railroads, for example, as well as electronics).²⁵

The making or the interpretation of contemporary architecture involves not only current conventions and empirical knowledge but also an attempt to recall and reexamine the intellectual and formal conventions internal to architecture throughout history. Such an attempt directed toward the problems of modern architecture would be at once more open and more demanding than the complacent inversions and revivals of too much of current historiography and practice. This approach also avoids the formalism and mere taxonomies of much of the current interest in typology.²⁶

Many years ago I wrote a paper in which I argued that the field of architecture has as one of its strengths to begin by putting problem statements in questions. I called this “problem-worrying” as against “problem-solving.” The inventive British architect Cedric Price was an exemplary “problem-worrier.” He was prepared to find that the solution was not through building at all. But he could also introduce new criteria, or new resources, or other problems that had not previously been related to the first problem – and thus completely reinvent the problem and how it should be approached. I think most schools of architecture inculcate this skepticism about problems as received. They value reinvention. This is a valuable capacity that architects can bring to collaborative research. It is an encouragement to schools, and as much as possible to practitioners as well, to retain their critical faculties and to entertain new problems and new solutions.²⁷

What the designer wishes to ask of the computer sciences depends on our understanding of architectural design. A possible formulation, emphasizing the open-ended, exploratory character of design, is the following. Architecture structures man's environment to facilitate the achievement of human purposes (intellectual, psychological and utilitarian) where those purposes are incompletely known and cannot be extrapolated from what is given in the situation. Rather, human purposes are altered by the very environment that is created to facilitate them. The structuring of the environment must be accomplished, then, through the exercise of tentative foresight and the critical examination of that foresight and the actions to which it leads. According to this description, neither the human purposes nor the architect's methods are fully known in advance. Consequently, if this interpretation of the architectural problem situation is accepted, any problem solving techniques that relies on explicit problem definition, on distinct goal-orientation,

on data collection, or even on non adaptive algorithms will distort the design process and the human purposes involved.²⁸

In scholarship, or in practice, I assert the importance of attending to systems of memory. But I do this to fend off abuses as to recognize responsibilities and opportunities.²⁹

Claims for authenticity and fulfillment of identity through the invocation of memory are normally the rhetoric of dogmatists who would lead us, individually and collectively, into desperation. Less frightening concepts such as “inventing tradition,” or even “manufacturing heritage,” sound immediately problematic; indeed, they are so, but they also cannot be immediately dismissed. We know that historical reconstruction of most that we value in our societies will reveal just such “invention” and “manufacturing.” In retrospect we will often admire such invention, while being understandably (and correctly) skeptical of such endeavors around us. When Granpré Molière “manufactured” Vreewijk, a sizeable, traditionally based housing complex in the radically modernizing port city of Rotterdam, he was understandably criticised by the modernists around him. But, two things: 1) I suggest that the modernists themselves, at their best, employed what I have called “vernacular usage”; 2) The fact that today, seventy years later, Vreewijk

is a desirable living environment demands sympathetic attention. It will, then demand close attention to discriminate when the Seasides and Celebrations of our world are as worthy as was Vreewijk, or as nostalgic and vacuous as the Main Street or Disney World itself, or as corrupting as appeals to racial or class or national identity prove to be. And then again, why not just aspire to more, including a higher and more critical use of our memory?³⁰

It is curious that the German-educated Krautheimer should have attributed the notion of 'history as it was,' the well-known slogan of the famed German positivist historian of the 19th century, Leopold von Ranke, to the Anglo-Saxons. More curious still that, in 1969, he should have thought this positivist program to be intellectually viable. But what his comments reveal is the degree to which architectural history once did, and more rarely still does, insist on descriptive penetration to a point where the historian is so aware of details that only the uniqueness of the monument emerges. Krautheimer seems willingly to cut off the historian's participation in a disciplinary memory that entertains other questions. Systematic questions about types, or what I have here called disciplinary constituents, become suspect for neglecting some aspects of the building while entertaining hypothetical relations of works across time and space. Yet that is just what engages architects and some other historians. What we may see in the work

of Le Corbusier, Aalto, Kahn, and others is not history, but exercises in memory, and invention in relation to memory. This disciplinary memory can be as interesting for historians as for architects, and it can be examined with full attention to the monument. It is the only way to write a history of the disciplines opposed to a history of the catalogue of monuments. There should be historical reconstruction based on the logic of the situation and thus a history internal to the discipline of architecture; or, Memory in architecture.³¹

As historians, we are involved in at least two research programs: that of the person/group/era under study and that of our own research. These two programs are not strictly separable. The logic of our own program proposes a logic for the subject under inquiry. Thus, as in the writings of the philosopher and historian of science Imre Lakatos, our historical inquiry may be concerned more with the logic of the situations than with the actual train of events. Indeed, the necessity of the historian's point of view calls into question the accessibility of "the actual train of events." Yet we need not be reduced to a thoroughgoing relativism. It is true that the research we conduct about the subject under study is set by our program of inquiry. Furthermore, that program has no absolute basis, but rather a theoretical core that is adopted and held by convention. The rationality of the enterprise consists in improving the relationship between that conventional core and the historical setting. A new theoretical enterprise may yield new insights within a familiar setting. Conversely, it is possible to criticize alternative

theoretical positions—both for fidelity to the archive and for the fruitfulness of the inquiry proposed (conditions which may be, but are even more likely not, coincident). There is a critical conventionalism to the historian's enterprise as much as there is to the architect's... Any social practice, such as architecture or the history of architecture, takes place in a field of overlapping, often competing conventions. Sound practice recognizes the quasi-autonomy of these conventions and thus for their own beauty and order as well as for their possible perpetuation. But sound practice also requires that we recognize the limits and discover the potentials of these conventions within their domain of practice. Conventions and practice criticize one another. They thus can sustain a reasoned and empirically based practice within societies that maintain discourse.³²

Criticism should ask what each work or research program has contributed to the advancement of the discipline of architecture and to the culture more generally. It should ask how these works and programs have served society. The answers may yield reinterpretations of both modernity and postmodernity, quite possibly blurring the distinction between the two. It should also inhibit claims that there was a doctrine of modern architecture. Colin Rowe likes to tell the story of the liberal Anglican dean who espoused some version of free thinking, but was brought up short by the retort: "No doctrine! No Dean!" So what if there was another doctrine of modern architecture? No problem. No doctrine, no Dean, but also no failure of doctrine. There were and are new theories within the architecture of this century. There were research programs of varying degrees of success from which we can learn, there were some splendid buildings. There were also numerous specific failings. But again, no doctrine, no absolute failure. Rather than entirely reject an innovative

period for its problematic aspects and sometime unfortunate progeny, we could encourage the growth of the discipline of architecture through a critical assessment of the past and through a critical practice.³³

Architectural practice is an important part of our “professional” schools of architecture since we are legally accredited to aid in the development of individuals who will take their place in a licensed profession. Yet, for all the importance of this professionalism, it is far from being the full extent of what we understand as architecture. The discipline of architecture reaches outside the profession to the population at large, incorporating amateurs (in the best sense of the word), historians, preservationists, ecologists, environmentalists, and others. The discipline incorporates knowledge that was developed in other times or cultures and which seemingly may be of little interest within the professional activities of the moment. Such knowledge is nonetheless present to us and remains a potential resource. The discipline also offers the opportunity to speculate and push beyond what is likely to be available within the constraints of current practice.³⁴

Without any abandonment of the pursuit of a rational understanding, we can again plunder the history of architecture and the present problem situation in order to construct a position that does justice of both the metaphysical and physical aspects of environment. Restoring the authority of past forms is not the intent of such an inquiry. We are challenged, rather, to make idea and form operative, intellectually and pragmatically, within a metaphysic that denies final authority to any form.³⁵

At the time of my interview with Mies, I was beginning to interpret Behrens' architectural work, not yet engaged by issues of industrial design. A clue offered by Mies now leads me to risk a speculation about Behrens' form-making. I had asked of Behrens' interest in the Early Renaissance. Mies accepted this, but emphasized Early Christian work and then carefully noted Etruscan vases as an interest of Behrens.[bucchero vases and Behrens' arc lamps]. Such a comment not being at the center of my interest at the time, I failed to pursue the matter with Mies and only now have scanned some literature on Etruscan vases. Vases were produced over centuries and in many forms as well as types of ornamentation. It is highly speculative to select any type of Etruscan vase as that which may have interested Behrens. Nonetheless, I do find the bucchero work, and some similar impasto work, of the seventh century BCE so provocative, that I risk simply putting forth a comparison of images — to be explored another day.³⁶

[A footnote reads:]

Art historians often use historicist to denote a reliance on historical precedent. Since everything fulfills this definition in some sense, I prefer to reserve the words historicism and historicist for a quite different use. In accord with the usage of at least some philosophers, I use historicism to refer to attitudes which claim that certain events must take place in satisfaction of the forces of history or destiny. See, for example, Karl Popper, *The Poverty of Historicism* (Boston: Beacon, 1957).³⁷

- The logic of Research programs opposes meta-histories that would make of such phenomena as globalization a historical necessity or an unassailable force.
- The logic of Research programs reveals and values multiple lines of inquiry.
- The logic of Research programs is resistant to periodization and apparent necessities imposed by claims for a Zeitgeist.
- Modernity is not a period, but, as Foucault has said, an attitude.
- Modernity itself might be seen as a broad and extended research program. How do rationalism and the pursuit of liberty and justice, survive, adapt, and thrive under changing external conditions?
- Globalization should not be reified, periodized. It is not new in our time. It is not monolithic. It presents opportunities.
- Earlier positions may be rationally reconstructed to serve well in new circumstances.
- The internal history of architecture, and architectures, is more crucial than the conventional or external history.
- The logic of Research Programs offers internal histories that recognize what architecture can uniquely bring to the table, but nonetheless also recognizes the quasi-autonomy of architecture - that it must engage its social and technical dimensions.³⁸

There are a number of kinds of architectural research that all have their place and deserve to enter into critical discourse:

- Research conducted through architectural and building practice.
- Research on building and environmental issues conducted by neighboring disciplines, including those in engineering and science.
- Research in architectural institutions that may be more abstract than in practice but is directed to issues currently confronting the profession.
- A broad realm of research within the discipline of architecture that may, or may not yet – or may never – impact practice.
- Research in the intersection of profession and discipline: I have used Le Corbusier's Five Points to illustrate the perhaps rare but important research that emerges from, and engages,

both profession and discipline – and has a lasting effect upon the discipline.

- And finally, a type of inquiry, rational reconstruction, that draws on both historical and architectural resources — starting from historical data but open to new questions that may affect the discipline and/or the profession of architecture.³⁹

*What can we make of this theoretically?*⁴⁰



Stanford Anderson
(photo courtesy of Nancy Royal).

In Memoriam

Stanford Anderson (1934–2016)

Nancy Stieber, University of Massachusetts, Boston

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This is my simple advocacy: the fruitfulness of recognizing the strengths and the claims of, on one side, our theories and conventions, that should not be held dogmatically, and, on the other, the realities, that are in some ways obdurate but often remarkably and fascinatingly malleable. To seek to live only a life of the mind at one pole, or of materiality at the other, or of coercive power from either, is to impoverish one's self, one's discipline, and one's smaller or greater community.⁴¹

Stanford Anderson was an architect, teacher, historian, urbanist, and critic of architecture. From the start of his career he studied the relationships of culture and society with design, seeking to refine a theoretical framework for understanding the architectural discipline, its constraints and potentials for supporting and enhancing life. Through sustained and probing studies of Peter Behrens, Hermann Muthesius, Le Corbusier, Alvar Aalto, Eladio Dieste, and others, Stan examined design with an architect's precision and a scholar's rigor. He identified himself as a member of the generation contending with postwar reactions against modernism; his historical, theoretical, and critical work can be interpreted as an energetic and unrelenting defense

of architecture as a rational endeavor and of modernism as a liberating force.

Born in Minnesota, Stan was raised in South Dakota before returning to Minnesota for an undergraduate degree in architecture. He earned a master's degree in architecture from the University of California, Berkeley, in 1958 and conducted dissertation research on Behrens supported by a Fulbright Fellowship in Munich in 1961–62, receiving a doctorate from Columbia University in 1968. In 1962–63 Stan taught at the Architectural Association in London. He was then invited by Henry Millon to join the architecture faculty at MIT in 1963, and together they created MIT's pioneering doctoral program History, Theory, and Criticism of Architecture and Art (HTC), established in May 1975. Stan directed the program from its inception through 1991, when he became head of the Architecture Department, a position he held through January 2005. During his more than fifty years at MIT, Stan developed fruitful ties with a number of leading institutions, from the Institute for Architecture and Urban Studies in New York, where he was resident fellow 1970–72, to the College of Architecture and Urban Planning at Tongji University in Shanghai, where he was honorary professor at the time of his death. In 2004 the American Institute of Architects

and the Association of Collegiate Schools of Architecture awarded him the Topaz Medallion for Excellence in Architectural Education, the highest distinction honoring an individual who has made outstanding contributions to the teaching of architecture.

In the mid-1960s Stan began articulating a historiographical and epistemological position intended to redress a malaise he identified in architecture practice. He perceived a degeneration of modernism into a relativistic rootlessness that had led to decorative stylism in the work of such architects as Philip Johnson. Stan sought to find a position that would anchor the discipline of architecture in a rational discourse, but one avoiding technological reduction of architecture to problem solving—a point of view that he believed falsely interpreted the history of modernism as that of pure functionalism. From this initial concern with contemporary practice, Stan developed an evolving epistemological approach drawn from the philosophy of science and with implications for reinterpreting the history of architecture. History, then, was to be used as a critical tool within architectural discourse, as a means to promote the growth of knowledge within the discipline, distinguished from the art historical project on the one hand and precedent-seeking historicism on the other.

Key to this endeavor was a keen awareness of what Stan first called the semiautonomy of architecture and later renamed quasi-autonomy. In a series of essays written in the mid-1960s, he argued repeatedly against any form of historical determinism as an explanation for the generation of architectural form, whether based on social conditions, technology, or an interpretation of the zeitgeist.⁴² Yet he firmly held that history as a source of architectural knowledge should not be jettisoned. Instead, a critical analysis of history could be construed as necessary for structuring an understanding of the world. Tradition and convention are essential to such understanding, he held, but neither should be deterministic or authoritarian. Rather, they should remain open to change, subject to rational challenge through critical historical examination. Drawing first on Karl Popper's social theory of tradition and soon after on Imre Lakatos's theory of research programs, Stan offered architectural history a model based on those theorists' approaches to reconstructing the growth of knowledge in science. Like scientists, architects work from a hard core of assumptions (traditions, conventions) from which they develop hypotheses that are tested through their designs. Forms are not generated as inevitable solutions to clearly stated problems; rather, there is a reciprocity

between problem and form such that solutions may themselves stimulate reformulation of goals. In analyses of Le Corbusier's Carpenter Center at Harvard University, Gerrit Rietveld's Schröder House, and Peter Eisenman's numbered house series, among other examples, and in particular at the 1969 exhibition *Form and Use in Architecture* at MIT, Stan illustrated the quasi-autonomy of architecture by demonstrating the fluidity of the relationship between form and function, where forms may engender unanticipated uses and the same uses may be served by varying forms. He argued that De Stijl and Le Corbusier's Five Points projected new ways of conceiving form, space, and light fundamental to the development of the architectural discipline while they simultaneously implied new uses and meanings for architecture with potentials that could be deployed beyond those they initially served. The historian pays heed, then, not simply to internal disciplinary developments but also to the social constraints and opportunities that limit and enable those developments, to the ways of living that architecture itself permits, and to the reconfigurations, both internal and external to the discipline, that ensue over time. The plan of Savannah became Stan's touchstone for exploring these ideas in urbanism as he convincingly demonstrated how the layout of the city's wards

fostered anticipated and unanticipated use.⁴³ Over the following decades, he expanded on this historiographical approach, rehearsing with increasing conviction and nuance the reciprocity of relations among history, ideas, society, and architectural practice, and calling attention to the tension between architects' commitment to disciplinary autonomy and the inevitable necessity of response to external conditions both enabling and constraining.⁴⁴

In the 1980s, Stan again argued against the reductionist interpretation of modernism as functionalist, now promulgated by apologists for postmodernism, by applying his concept of semi or quasi-autonomy. The Villa Savoye, he proposed, “‘makes a world’ that does not determine, but does allow us to live and think differently than if it did not exist.”⁴⁵ In the work of Adolf Loos, Le Corbusier, Aalto, and Louis Kahn he found architects whose recognition of the “potentials and joys” of architecture belies any determinism from function; instead, their practice of architecture reveals new potentials for living.⁴⁶ He turned to the concept of “critical conventionalism” to indicate “conventions and their systems of authority and self-perpetuation as semiautonomous: neither completely determined by the reality within which they exist, and therefore beyond criticism, nor so completely arbitrary, so

unrestricted by any constraints on their explanations that, once again, criticism has no hold.”⁴⁷ Through a sustained consideration of vernacular architecture as a conceptual model for the relationship between society and its artifacts, he explored tradition and convention once again, this time interrogating architectural practice as it negotiates between social memory and disciplinary memory.⁴⁸ In recent years, he found new ways to express the nature of thinking both in and through architecture, parsing what architecture alone can contribute while nonetheless acknowledging the necessity that architecture engage the social.⁴⁹

The theoretical positions revisited here in brief found consistent application in Stan's historical research. His topics grew from his deep engagement with the early phases of modernism that he had encountered in his groundbreaking research on Peter Behrens. That had disclosed the complexities of Behrens's distrust of positivist technology and science as he found aesthetic expression for the modern condition of industrial society.⁵⁰ A series of studies focusing on figures such as Muthesius, Heinrich Tessenow, Loos, and Ludwig Mies van der Rohe subtly dissected the various meanings of *Sachlichkeit* to reveal the distance between a pure functionalist conception and a *sachliche Kunst* that responded

to the needs of modern life by creating a cultural milieu.⁵¹ More recently, he turned his attention to two architects who exemplified a principled and reasoned approach to architectural research: Alvar Aalto, in whose “methodical accommodation of circumstance” Stan found a rationality misunderstood by the apologists for modernism; and Eladio Dieste, whose continuous quest for tectonic innovations Stan distinguished from the superficial pursuit of novelty.⁵² Shortly before his death, Stan received a copy of the book he co-edited on Jean Krämer, head of Behrens’s atelier during the decade of Behrens’s most significant work, a study that happily returned him to the subject of his initial research.⁵³ He was planning to write a book on the history of CASE, the Conference of Architects for the Study of the Environment, which from 1964 to 1969 had provided Stan and like-minded architects an intellectual platform.⁵⁴ That missing project would have subjected his own history and historiography to the very critical reflection he had so fruitfully practiced throughout his career.

Notes

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3. Ibid., 4.
4. Stanford Anderson, “Problem-Solving and Problem-Worrying” (paper presented at the Architectural Association, London, 1966), 7.
5. Stanford Anderson, *On Streets* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1991), 7.
6. Marcus Whiffen, *The History, Theory, And Criticism of Architecture* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1965), 75.
7. Hermann Muthesius and Stanford Anderson, *Style Architecture and Building Art* (Santa Monica: The Getty Center for the History of Art and the Humanities, 1994), 35.
8. Anderson, *On Streets*, 1.
9. Stanford Anderson, “The Plan of Savannah and Changes of Occupancy during its Early Years: City Plan as Resource,” *Harvard Architecture Review* 2 (1981): 67.
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11. Stanford Anderson, “Research in the Profession and Discipline of Architecture,” *Architecture Research Futures* (2005): 13.
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13. Anderson, *On Streets*, 1.
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16. Stanford Anderson, *Peter Behrens and a New Architecture for the Twentieth Century* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2002), 260.
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20. Whiffen, *The History, Theory, and Criticism of Architecture*, 85.
21. Stanford Anderson, "The Fiction of Function," *Assemblage*, no. 2 (1987): 29.
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23. Stanford Anderson, "Environment as Artifact: Methodological Implications," *Casabella*, no. 359-360 (1971): 71.
24. Muthesius and Anderson, *Style Architecture and Building Art*, 35.
25. Anderson, "Environment as Artifact: Methodological Implications," 71.
26. Stanford Anderson, "Types And Conventions in Time: Toward a History for the Duration and Change of Artifacts," *Perspecta*, no. 18 (1982): 117.
27. Anderson, "Research in the Profession and Discipline of Architecture", 7.
28. Stanford Anderson, "Experiments in Computer Aided Design, Report From the Department of Architecture, MIT" *AD*, no. 9 (1969): 514.
29. Stanford Anderson, "Memory without Monuments: Vernacular Architecture," (Presented in St Louis).
30. *Ibid.*
31. Stanford Anderson, "Memory in Architecture," *Daidalos* 58 (December 1995): 36.
32. Stanford Anderson, "Critical Conventionalism: The History of Architecture," *Midgård* 1, no. 1 (1987): 47.
33. Taisto H. Mäkelä and Wallis Miller, *Wars of Classification* (New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 1991), 31.

34. Anderson, "Research in the Profession and Discipline of Architecture," 11-12.
35. Anderson, "Environment as Artifact: Methodological Implications," 71.
36. Stanford Anderson, "Considering Peter Behrens: Interviews with Ludwig Mies van der Rohe and Walter Gropius," in person interviews in Chicago (1961) and Cambridge (1964).
37. Stanford Anderson, "Peter Behrens and The New Architecture of Germany 1900-1917," (PhD diss., Columbia University, 1968), 39.
38. Stanford Anderson, "Rational Reconstructions and Architectural Knowledge," in Kristian Faschingeder, Kari Jormakka, Norbert Korrek, Olaf Pfeifer and Gerd Zimmermann, eds., *Architecture in the Age of Empire / Die Architektur der Neuen Weltordnung, 11th Internationales Bauhaus-Kolloquium, 2010* (Weimar: Universitätsverlag, 2011), 174.
39. Anderson, "Research in the Profession and Discipline of Architecture," 14-15.
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42. Stanford Anderson, "Radical and Relativistic Attitudes towards Architectural Design," *Connection* (December 1964), 7-15; Stanford Anderson, "Architecture and Tradition that Isn't 'Trad, Dad,'" in *The History, Theory and Criticism of Architecture*, ed. Marcus Whiffen (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1966), 71-89; Stanford Anderson, "Problem-Solving and Problem-Worrying" (lecture delivered at the Architectural Association, London, March 1966).
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Peter Behrens and a New Architecture for the Twentieth Century (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2000).

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PRESENTED BY THE AGA KHAN PROGRAM
FOR ISLAMIC ARCHITECTURE (AKPIA@
MIT); HISTORY, THEORY & CRITICISM (HTC);
AND THE SCHOOL OF ARCHITECTURE
AND PLANNING AT THE MASSACHUSETTS
INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY (SA+P MIT).

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