placement of at least ten major buildings, and conceiving the campus landscaping. The main body of Woodbridge’s book comprises discussion of each phase of design and building for an amphitheater, several academic buildings, a central library, an entrance gate, and a memorial tower, and these phases are easily interwoven with aspects of Howard’s personal life: his permanent move to California, his family life, and his residential designs for the two houses in which he lived. Especially successful is her discussion of Howard’s first structure on campus, the Hearst Memorial Mining Building. Because of its importance to the Berkeley campus (with 20 percent of the university’s total enrollment, it was the largest mining college in the world), it was most carefully sited. Howard also used an innovative design solution to make the interior plan as “elastic” as possible and independent of the exterior skin of the building.

Woodbridge also includes telling details about Howard as a writer, both as a commentator and defender of his own work—he wrote an extensive article about his University of California plans and the changes he made to Bénard’s ideas—and in his lesser-known attempts as a poet. His passionately expressive epic works about the artistic contributions of Filippo Brunelleschi and Phidias did not receive the same critical acclaim that his architecture did.

Howard’s involvement in exposition planning (San Diego, Seattle, and San Francisco) is also addressed, although without a wider discussion of the extent and scope of municipal improvement influenced by the City Beautiful movement, of which the expositions were an important part. Certainly Woodbridge’s chapter about Howard’s role in the design of the San Francisco Civic Center (itself an outgrowth of the Panama-Pacific International Exposition) and the trial that ensued because of political jockeying over that design illuminates as much about the profession as about Howard’s artistic abilities. As in Truettner’s discussion of the schism that arose between local Michigan builders and highly trained architects from the East, the reader is offered a glimpse of the shortcomings of human nature and interaction: pride, envy, resentment, infighting, and other difficult social aspects of building and design.

To understand the purported importance of Howard’s ability to address the topography of the Berkeley site, as opposed to Bénard’s misstep in orienting his visionary master plan to the street grid, one would like to see any surviving photography or other visual documentation of the site as the competitors first saw it. Woodbridge does examine what is known about the site through textual materials and reads Howard’s plans and building designs closely. Truettner, by contrast, does not address in any depth the specific site and the complex connections between landscape and campus building groups, nor does he consider the role—educational or otherwise—of the botanic garden in Davis’s master plan of 1838. Another question that goes unanswered in both volumes is how, each in its own century, the physical plans and designs for the two institutions in Michigan and California might embody shifts in university curriculum and American educational philosophy.

These shortcomings aside, both Truettner and Woodbridge offer valuable documentation of two talented designers in campus planning. Although their architectural work is separated by several decades, Davis and Howard both designed for budding institutions wanting to establish themselves in a grand manner. In Davis, Truettner presents an extraordinary talent whose spare master plan and designs influenced others’ later work. In Howard, Woodbridge presents an equally gifted designer and his long-term involvement in a highly developed systematic plan. Both publications contribute to a better understanding of the design process of two public universities, and they suggest areas for further inquiry in the study of campus histories.

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Corporate Architecture

Iñaki Ábalos and Juan Herreros
Tower and Office: From Modernist Theory to Contemporary Practice

Reinhold Martin
The Organizational Complex: Architecture, Media, and Corporate Space

Katherine Solomonson
The Chicago Tribune Tower Competition: Skyscraper Design and Cultural Change in the 1920s

Katherine Solomonson, author of The Chicago Tribune Tower Competition: Skyscraper Design and Cultural Change in the 1920s, quotes the Tribune’s editorial assertion that “the great skyscraper theme’ . . . would be ‘the theme that is to make architectural history for generations to come’” (72). Indeed, tall buildings have provided historians with substantial aesthetic, social, and technical factors to research and critique. This particular trio of books provides contrasting studies of urban and exurban office buildings, not all of them skyscrapers, spanning diverse topics including advertising, computer networking, film, electrical illumination, and neoprene gaskets. Solomonson’s excellent study of the Chicago Tribune Tower competition, which won the 2004 Alice Davis Hitchcock Book Award from the Society of Architectural Historians, overlaps somewhat with Reinhold Martin’s consideration of architecture, media, and corporate space. In turn, Martin’s assessment of developments in
curtain-wall treatments intersects with the theoretical and technical analyses of Íñaki Ábalos and Juan Herreros. Solomonson's book is a pleasure to read and is categorically different from the other two volumes, both of which are laden with theories that sometimes obscure rather than support the architectural discussions. All three, however, are rich with new insights that merit attention.

Solomonson's *The Chicago Tribune Tower Competition* is more than a monograph on that now-iconic building. Her initial question was: “What was the significance of the fact that the *Chicago Tribune*—which publicly prided itself on its technological advances, its efficient business practices, its role in promoting Chicago, and its ardent patriotism— favors a Gothic tower by New York architects, who based their design on medieval French and Belgian prototypes, over its many other options?” (4). Solomonson moves beyond the building to examine the 1922 architectural competition and media coverage surrounding it, which often blurred “actual” and staged events. As Solomonson noted: “The *Tribune’s* publicity thus involved the construction of an image of the Tribune Company as something more exalted than a profit-making commercial enterprise, the competition as more than a publicity stunt, and the new building as more than an ordinary office building” (41).

Solomonson uses most of the entries to the Chicago Tribune Tower competition to give visual support to cultural history in this well-illustrated book. Her masterful narrative examines, for example, the newspaper's efforts to “Americanize” immigrants both in publications and in the associations evoked by the *Tribune*’s neo-Gothic tower. She ties specific issues to larger theoretical concepts, that of Benedict Anderson’s “imagined community” and the interest in immigrant assimilation by the Chicago school of sociology. This corporate-sponsored community-building, through media, design competition, and construction of a headquarters, resulted from the Tribune's political agenda following World War I. The paper aimed to promote the United States as a world power and Chicago as a cultural leader. The design of the Tribune Tower is also set against the real estate and planning initiatives in Chicago, including the construction of the Michigan Avenue bridge and the loosening of real estate and building limitations by Illinois legislators in the 1910s. The volume concludes with the engineering and construction of the tower and investigation of “how it was shaped into a monument to the freedom of the press, American patriotism, and masculine heroism” (12). An appendix listing all 263 entrants to the competition, and whether their designs were fully considered by the jury or not, would have been a helpful addition. As it is, the reader has to skim the text to find out which designs received attention by the final deadline of 1 December 1922.

Particularly well handled is the material about the international (primarily European) dimensions of the Tribune competition, both in terms of modernism and World War I. Because of the substantial prize money and the Tribune’s own international presence, European architects participated in significant numbers, and their entries and editorial responses provide an illuminating angle from which Solomonson examines American technology, business, and culture. While the competition caused European designers to grapple with the tall building, the European submissions helped the U.S. shape a “new vision of the skyscraper and the city. This involved controversies concerning the relationship between style, surface image, and structural expression, between massing and ornament, between commercialism and monumentality, and between the tall building and its urban context” (9). Solomonson effectively applies historian Akira Iriye’s concept of “cultural internationalism” to the Tribune competition, but also notes that for the Tribune’s patrons the competition reinforced their version of Americanism (68, 74).

Whereas Solomonson uses an architectural competition and the resulting building as focal points for her explorations of larger cultural issues, including modernist architecture and theory, the authors Íñaki Ábalos and Juan Herreros examine relationships among modernist theory, managerial changes, “the positivism associated with technology” (2), and building design in the U.S. between 1920 and 1990. Two other themes they address are the relationships between production methods and building types, and the development of high-tech systems and their representation, both of which emerged from modernist concepts. The book has a number of tables that graphically summarize the comparative analyses in the text. (Some diagrams are useless due to their small size and/or inadequate captioning.)

The limited citations make the historical aspect of the book fairly thin, although the authors stress they are not writing an architectural history. Still, while a few publications were added in this updated English version, much recent literature related to Fazlur Khan, Le Corbusier, Ludwig Mies van der Rohe, and U.S.-based skyscraper architects, and histories of organizations and the architectural profession are not mentioned. For example, Ábalos and Herreros stress that Corb’s Admiralty Building (1938–42) for the Cap de la Marine project was an innovative fusion of the brise soleil with the reinforced-concrete skeleton. According to Peter Serenyi (who is not referenced by the authors), Corb was probably influenced in this design by Albert Kahn’s First National Bank (Fisher) Building in Detroit of 1922, which Corb had illustrated in *L’Esprit Nouveau* (cited by another unmentioned author, Margoles Bacon). Incorporating this sort of information into the text would add specificity to “the subjective nature of the conceptual process” (2), which the authors probe in addition to the technological component they handle so well.

However, Ábalos and Herreros do make some insightful comparisons across history. The project for the Jussieu Library competition (1992) by Herzog and de Meuron, with its “highly ambiguous skin,” is compared to Henri Labrouste’s Bibliothèque Sainte-Geneviève (1843); both libraries push written information into “an architectural
media, manipulations of Herreros' mission to create new organizational and functional changes in office management. On manipulating glass to minimize the transmission of light and heat in atria, for instance, they note: “These transformations in the building envelope have altered the former modernist concept of an independently constructed, autonomous element; the envelope is now conceived instead as a place where the outdoor environment and a mechanically heated and air-conditioned interior assume interactive and similar positions” (128). Just as spatial relationships between the building envelope and the core were rethought, so, too, were the human relationships within the building (193). The authors summarize early-twentieth-century developments in scientific management, looking at how office layouts began to adapt to new organizational and real estate strategies, utilizing unobstructed, open, flexible spaces. The variety of examples and designers, many of whom are not well known, is also one of this volume's strengths.

To oversimplify, Ábalos and Herreros consider the impact of technology on organizing systems, including architecture, while Reinhold Martin, in *The Organizational Complex: Architecture, Media, and Corporate Space*, analyzes organizational systems as significant determinants of architectural ideas and forms. *The Organizational Complex* argues that research and manufacturing headquarters for companies like General Motors, IBM, and Bell Telephone were enmeshed in a vast network, which the author labels "an 'organizational complex' . . . , the aesthetic and technological extension of what has been known since the early 1960s as the 'military-industrial complex'” (3–4). The cybernetics of Norbert Wiener and the organicist analyses ("pattern seeing") of Gyorgy Kepes have parallels in architectural forms, Martin claims, with the standardized architectural module as "the very image—and the instrument—of the organizational complex" (5). Kepes sought “to unify art and science on the common ground of control and communication, with architecture represented as an agent of homeostatic regulation” (40).

Martin challenges the view of modernism as monolithic, and explains ways in which avant-garde ideals are developed rather than co-opted in American corporate architecture of the mid-twentieth century, particularly in projects by Eero Saarinen and Skidmore, Owings and Merrill (SOM). This revised Princeton dissertation is in some ways an extension and substantial rethinking of Donald Drew Eggert's classic essay “The Idea of Organic Expression and American Architecture.” In Martin's chapter on organic style, which is the centerpiece of this earnest book, he defines organicism as an organizational framework characterized by networks, systems, and feedback. Midcentury architecture was “the logical conclusion of an organicist project written into the very curriculum of modernism” (186). He rather dramatically asserts that this version of organicism emerged “sur-reptitiously. Earth-shattering yet nearly invisible, it was the result of a covert operation carried out under the rubric of ‘modernism,’ with even its agents and its managers caught unawares” (8). Thus Martin creates a web with many intersections of human behavior, management theory, computer operations, visual perception, and built environment, and this is no small task. Martin is an imaginative scholar, but in his fervor to leap among disciplines, he often leaves the reader scrambling in the gaps. Also, his examination of primary material and rereading of midcentury classics, while welcome, are unnecessarily bogged down with polemics and irksome social critiques.

Martin generalizes from the office building to the home and from the interior of a corporate building to its exterior, asserting that there was no “outside” view of the organizational complex. From any vantage point, the individual was controlled by organizations, part of what Gilles Deleuze in 1990 called the "control society" (5). Further, boundaries between humans and machines, between architecture and mass media, and among industry, the military, and the academy were blurred, with a significant role being played by the 1950s context—atomic weapons development, cold-war surveillance, and increasing highway traffic.

While each of these books provides ample thought-provoking material, the ways in which they overlap are also stimulating. For example, Solomonson analyzes Eliel Saarinen's second-place entry to the Tribune Tower competition, noting that the architect believed that "the most important principle of skyscraper design was to carry 'logical construction' through all parts of the building" (175). The corporate projects of Eliel's son, Eero Saarinen, as documented by Martin, carry this idea from a single structure to an entire ensemble, at all scales. Solomonson and Martin are also both interested in ways in which mass media affect architectural imagery and vice versa. Solomonson clearly sums up an important shift—from "a producer's to a consumer's ethic" (47)—that Martin also examines. Of the Inland Steel Building in Chicago (SOM, 1958), which used "materials representative of the industry to which the corporation belonged . . . ," Martin writes, "the message was as direct as the advertisement produced for the same corporations in the national and trade weeklies" (102–3).

Ábalos and Herreros and Martin elucidate how architecture merges into networks of communication and transportation, in effect, disappearing. Ábalos and Herreros note: “The use of reflective rather than transparent surfaces signifies a profound change with respect to formal composition. . . . Minimizing the building, stripping it of its materiality, becomes the increasingly sought-after objective” (116). Martin similarly identifies this tendency for a building to dissolve both materially, via reflective panels, and in its corporate identity, “in a diffuse, integrated network through which circulated affective.
power relations irreducible to the agency of any one individual or group” (184).

These three publications together highlight rich areas of investigation that have discipline-stretching promise. First, much recent scholarship has reevaluated twentieth-century modernist architecture, with increasing sophistication, as evident in these works. Second, philosophical debates dating from the eighteenth century about distinguishing machines from living creatures are still being fruitfully explored by looking at architecture’s intersections with natural forces and communications media in their many capacities. As Egbert presciently remarked, “The concepts of mechanism and vitalism . . . have for many now been replaced by a third concept, an ‘organismic’ point of view in which mechanism and vitalism are . . . subsumed under a principle of organization and integration” (338). And finally, while considerations of the role of technology in architecture are hardly new, rapid innovations in materials and their combinations mandate reassessments of design concepts and forms from the vantage point of structure, in contemporary and historical forms. Ken Yeang’s bioclimatic skyscraper, for example, discussed by Ábalos and Herreros, not only challenges “the mechanistic purity of modernism” (251), but also conflates life and nonlife.

I concur with Ábalos and Herreros that the skyscraper remains a viable means for “analyzing whether architecture can still be practiced in a way that revives its reflective and critical dimension” (248). These two authors imply that a key factor in this process is a renewed “emphasis on interaction, on the profound dependence of each decision and component on the mechanical and energetic functioning of the whole” (175). In a more general way, Solomonson and Martin reflect this attitude as well. Martin looks at corporations that viewed themselves as organisms with “centralized management and decentralized operations” that could adapt “styling, research, development, engineering, . . . marketing and finance” through the entire production process, including architectural design (140). Solomonson demonstrates that “the Chicago Tribune Tower competition provides a particularly good case for exploring some of the ways in which architecture was implicated in advertising, consumer culture and the changing image of business during the 1920s” (7). Architectural history that delves into the complex aesthetic, social, economic, and technological factors contributing to our built environment, as these books do, engages the reader in a challenging dialogue with ideas, and buildings, after all, are ideas given material forms.

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Notes

Cities

Jane Jacobs
Dark Age Ahead
$23.95, ISBN 1-4000-6232-2

If we include The Girl on the Hat (Toronto, 1989), a book of children’s stories about an inquisitive and audacious Thumbelina, Dark Age Ahead is Jane Jacobs’s eighth book. As the title suggests, the latter work is as dark as the other is hopeful, presenting nightmarish accounts of some ways in which (North) American culture is devolving into an end-of-empire dark age. If Jacobs’s first and still most influential book, The Death and Life of Great American Cities (New York, 1961), emphasized the regenerative forces of cities, cultures, and of life itself, this one, published as the author turns eighty-eight, is preoccupied with death and decline.

Indeed, based on her most recent volume alone, it could be suggested that four decades after Death and Life, Jacobs’s vision of cities and civilizations has succumbed to the idea of inevitable decline that her near contemporary and sometime nemesis Lewis Mumford adopted from Patrick Geddes—a fundamentally linear and deterministic progress of urban history from polis to nekropolis. Discussion of the decline of five institutions—public and private life, education, science, fiscal policy, and corporate and professional trust—make up five of her eight chapters. The degeneration of these institutions, among others, is also offered by Mumford as a symptom of the tyrannopolis, the nekropolis’s predecessor.

Dark Age Ahead is haunted by the specters of neoconservatism—with its deadening economic idea that public amenities such as schools should generate self-supporting profits—and war, terrorism, imperial American foreign policy, and renewed tensions between the Islamic East and the West. These worrisome topics are the concern of a list of other recent publications. In the wake of the attacks on New York, Jacobs’s most cherished great city, and of corporate frauds such as those perpetrated by Enron executives, both of which she alludes to, it is easy to understand her dark turn. The fates of cities and of urban economies have been the entwined subjects of her thinking since Death and Life. As the title suggests, the premise in Dark Age Ahead is that North American culture shows “signs of rushing headlong into a Dark Age” (4), and the author’s purpose is “to help our culture avoid sliding into a dead end, by understanding how such tragedies come about, and thereby what can be done to ward them off” (4).

The seriousness and earnestness of this task is a courageous, although perhaps overextended, step beyond her earlier projects. With Death and Life, Jacobs sought to reform the Urban Renewal leviathan, along with its architectural, engineering, and highway planning arms, while writing a work intended to be the foundation of a new discipline of urbanism. The Economy of Cities (New