often with changes of level due to hillside sites, invite public use and create ensembles of functions, even in relatively small commissions.

The highlights of the book are Tilman’s extended discussions of San Francisco City Hall and the Federal Triangle. The former is a study in design development. In it he establishes Brown’s ability to settle on a parti—in this case a grand, domed space to distribute the functional spaces within—and to locate the city hall as the focal point of the new multiblock civic center. Then through meticulous analysis of sketches and preliminary drawings, he traces Brown’s tenacious pursuit of an ordered relation among the elements, suggesting a metonymy between classical order, social coherence, and institutional transparency.

Tilman credits Brown with the general plan for the Federal Triangle, which he reworked for Edward Bennett, introducing the distinctive apsidal courtyard backed by a circular plaza. In his telling of the design history of the Federal Triangle, Tilman demonstrates how hard it was for architects, even those who worked with the classical language, to agree on its appropriate deployment. Brown, who loved an architectural flourish, found himself at odds with—and more often outvoted by—architects associated with the Commission of Fine Arts who shared the more decorous approach among the elements, suggesting a metaphoric between classical order, social coherence, and institutional transparency.

Given the achievements of this relatively short book, it may be churlish to ask for more. Brown’s adaptation of classicism to concrete construction invites more specific discussion. Additional attention to the actual links between Brown’s “progressive” classicism and progressive politics would have helped to define precisely Brown’s conception of an American civic realm.

In all these books, although much less so in Tilman’s, phrases like “Beaux-Arts,” “City Beautiful,” and “American Renaissance” and words like “modern” and “progressive” are sometimes deployed as if they are self-evident in meaning. However, the fine grain of a monograph on individual architects’ oeuvres should have afforded the opportunity to explore and redefine familiar terminology. Doing so would have helped to erode the now-exhausted polemical dichotomy between classicists and modernists. The authors take as a given that the classically ordered civic realm, as an incontrovertible public good as well as an appropriate response to the conditions of American cities and society at the turn of the century, was challenged by a rising interest in European modernism. Because the authors do not adequately engage the substantive reasons for modernism’s appeal, they are not able to explain as well as they might the declining reputations of the American architects who subscribed to classical tenets. If the authors had more directly located the work within the architectural debates of the time, they would have advanced their efforts to delineate the ongoing significance of the architects considered in these books.

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Notes
1. For studies on modern living in hotels and apartment houses, see Robert A. M. Stern, Gregory Gilmartin, and John M. Massengale, Metropolitan Architecture and Urbanism 1890–1915 (New York, 1983), 252–306; Elizabeth Collins Cromley, Alone Together: A History of New York’s Early Apartments (Ithaca, 1990); Elizabeth Hawes, New York, New York: How the Apartment House Transformed the City (New York, 1993); and Marianne Lamonaca and Jonathan Mogul, eds., Grand Hotels of the Jazz Age (New York, 2005). This last study has particular relevance because of Schultz’s role in the firm of Warren & Wetmore. Weaver also was associated with the firm on several apartment buildings; see in particular Keith D. Revell, “The Skyscraper and the City: Schultz & Weaver’s New York Hotels,” in Lamonaca and Mogul, Grand Hotels, 66–85.

Abigail A. Van Slyck
A Manufactured Wilderness: Summer Camps and the Shaping of American Youth, 1890–1960

Susan G. Solomon
American Playgrounds: Revitalizing Community Space

One of the central tenets of modernity has been the belief in the critical role of childhood to the formation of the self and the destiny of the nation. Nowadays, the defining discourse of life is concerned with the moment of procreation, in the legal status and genetic inheritance of the unborn child. Yet, the waning of the political and cultural importance of childhood also provides the historical distance necessary to contemplate what was promised to be “the century of the child.” If there is any advantage in studying the architecture of childhood as a distinct academic field, it resides in the prospect of exploring the utopian premises and internal contradictions of this incomplete project.

The two books under review are part of a broader movement that became visible with the 2002 conference “Designing Modern Childhoods,” organized by Marta Gutman and Ning de Coninck-Smith at the University of California, Berkeley. Both writers participated in that event: Solomon organized the playground exhibition accompanying the conference, while Van Slyck presented a paper on the summer camp. These publications represent two of the field’s principal perspectives: the designer-oriented approach, which positions the architecture of childhood as monuments of the modern movement, and the childhood-studies approach, which interprets these environments as documents for deconstructing the beliefs, practices, and policies that constitute modern childhood.
Solomon’s book exemplifies the design-oriented perspective, in which child-centered buildings are studied for their unique historical role in the emergence of modernism. Andrew Saint’s Towards a Social Architecture (1987) positioned the postwar English school building program as “the biggest and most radical adventure ever undertaken in the history of British architecture” to redeem the reputation of the modern movement by rekindling its mission of “making buildings of real benefit to society.” In a more contentious context, Stefano de Martino and Alex Wall’s Cities of Childhood (1988) presented the case of the Italian children colonies of the 1930s (a state-sponsored equivalent of the American summer camp) as part of the debate regarding fascism’s patronage of modern architecture. Play-ground design, previously the dry subject of professional manuals, has come to the attention of architectural historians with Liane Lefaivre and Ingeborg de Roode’s Aldo van Eyck: The Playground and the City (2002), which attempted to add Van Eyck’s Amsterdam playground to the modernist canon as “one of the most original contributions to architecture, urbanism and the art of the postwar period, and one whose potential has still to be tapped.”

American Playgrounds participates in the project of rediscovering the modernist playground. Yet, unlike the works mentioned above, it also seeks to intervene directly in the contemporary state of playground design, which Solomon typifies as a “disaster,” by bringing to “fruition” or instigating a “retreat, albeit a positive one, to ideas that were prevalent in the 1950s” (182). This program is reflected in the book’s organization in two sections, “The Past” and “The Present.” The first part narrates the rise and decline of the heroic, child-centered modern playground, in part homegrown (for example, Isamu Noguchi’s unrealized New York playgrounds, especially his ill-fated collaboration with Louis Kahn, are given a detailed exposition), and in part influenced by two postwar innovations from Europe: Van Eyck’s site-specific playgrounds and the adventure playground, a type of playground in which children are given discarded materials, tools, and the autonomy to build and play according to their desires. The high point in American playground history, according to Solomon, came in 1966—with Richard Dattner’s Adventure Playground in Central Park and M. Paul Friedberg’s Jacob Riis Houses playground—when radical European ideas on play, together with Noguchi’s landscape approach, were first assimilated on a grand scale.

Parallel to the design of singular, site-specific playground environments, Solomon chronicles the rise and fall of the progressive play-equipment movement. Initiated in the 1950s as a strategic alliance between commercial play-equipment manufacturers, private philanthropic organizations, and the Museum of Modern Art, play-equipment design aligned itself with the latest psychological theories concerning both the developmental benefits of play and contemporary artistic styles. By establishing an opposition between equipment-oriented and landscape-oriented approaches to playground design, Solomon advances the argument that the general decline in playground design since the 1970s resides in the American “culture of fear” and the rise of consumer advocacy, which led to constraining safety standards. Risk aversion and the fear of litigation compelled municipalities to turn to standardized, mass-produced equipment supported with the manufacturer’s limited liability.

“The Present,” the second part of the book, aims at reversing this tendency by drawing “inspiration from the people who are not intimidated by safety guidelines” (91). It contains emphatic, detailed accounts of more than forty playgrounds built in the last decade, many of them commissioned by nongovernmental organizations and designed by prominent landscape architects and artists, among them Vito Acconci, Mary Miss, and Martha Schwartz. This section’s layout, which is more suitable for an exhibition catalog, accumulates evidence to support Solomon’s conviction that we are in the midst of a playground renaissance.

In the foreword to American Playgrounds, Martha Thorne raises the hope that, “just as museums were the commissions of choice for architects at the end of the twentieth century, the coveted assignment of the future could well be the urban playground” (ix). Do Solomon’s case studies signify the revival of this century-old institution (or rather its demise) as the playground is subsumed into the “political economy of design” following the example of designer museums? The waning of the progressive play culture of the 1960s is symptomatic of a broader shift in the status of the child and the function of modern childhood rather than any fault of the design. With the demise of the welfare state and its stress on the public fashioning of an emotionally adjusted, active, and free citizen, the contemporary playground no longer maintains its political and allegorical function. As childhood is privatized as the obligation of parents to prepare their children to succeed in a competitive world, it is unrealistic to expect that the sensitive and imaginative design advocated by Solomon can reverse this process or compete with the hold that mass- and technologically mediated culture has on children (Solomon’s omission of any discussion of the impact of television on childhood, and on the appeal of conventional playgrounds to contemporary children, is telling). The tragedy of the design-centered history of the American playground is that even the best-intentioned design cannot alter the fact that the social conditions that made the playground an important civic institution no longer exist.

Van Slyck frames her study of the summer camp in opposition to the design-centered approach and its modernist apologists: “In contrast, this book defines architecture as a process in which institutional priorities are translated into material form. . . . [It] allows architectural history to engage a broader range of questions about the spaces and places we encounter every day” (xxxi). This perspective has a reputable pedigree: Philippe Ariès’s Centuries of Childhood (1960), which initiated the field of child-
hood history, included a section on the architecture of the home to support his claim that the nuclear, child-centered family is a modern invention. In *Discipline and Punish* (1975), Michel Foucault initiated the conception of architecture as a social technology with the examination of the school, which together with the prison exemplified the disciplinary regime of power. It is not by chance that childhood provides the ultimate site for analyzing relations of power since, in the words of the sociologist Nikolas Rose, “childhood is the most intensively governed sector of personal existence.” Van Slyck’s analysis of the summer camp is embedded in the cultural landscape approach, which historicizes the perception of the natural environment in light of social relations of production, ideology, and hegemony; she employs this approach to demonstrate how class, gender, and racial hierarchies have been communicated and naturalized to American children through the experience of the summer camp. This allows her to maintain a critical distance toward the aims of child-centered education, with which design-centered historians, including Solomon, tend to identify.

*A Manufactured Wilderness* is organized around the contradiction between the camp’s romantic ethos of an unregimented, self-reliant, and pastoral childhood, enacted in untamed nature, and the grounding of the guidance and care of children and the management of the camp in scientific principles and professional expertise. The summer-camp movement originated in the desire to counter what was considered to be the devitalizing influences of urban life, the effeminate home, and summer hotels upon the boys of the American elite. The movement evolved as it expanded to cater to the middle class and to girls, and it also was appropriated by a variety of philanthropic organizations and youth movements for their social and religious projects.

Van Slyck dispels the notion that camps provided an authentic experience of unspoiled nature by demonstrating that they were often established on formerly productive lands that were redesigned to appear pristine. Beyond the theme of the wilderness, what makes the summer camp such a rich and complex object of analysis is that it addresses a broader scope of children’s everyday existence than the school or the playground, and at a place far more removed from their usual environments and parents. Van Slyck treats each dimension of camp life in a separate chapter, exploring the concerns and ideals that informed camp directors in shaping the camp experience and its physical layout.

Here resides the unique achievement of *A Manufactured Wilderness*: it uses apparently insignificant details, which to the uninitiated would appear as commonsensical improvements of the camp as it solidified into permanent structures, to uncover the structures of knowledge and power that inform the staging of the child’s encounter with nature. The switch from tents to cabins demonstrates the tension between modern medical knowledge and the romantic belief in the healthiness of untamed nature, while the emergence of domestic sleeping arrangements in the 1930s is framed in relation to the mental hygiene project in which camp counselors began to observe and assess the behavior of children in psychological terms. The coinciding shift from the military-camp layout to the suburban-unit layout reflects unease over the militarization of childhood; it also mirrors the emerging view of childhood as a series of discrete developmental phases, spontaneously enacted by children yet carefully organized by experts. Changes in the architectural treatment of the shorefront, in which safety concerns came to override older notions of the character-building attributes of risk taking, are interpreted in relation to the broader tendency to formalize and standardize children’s environments to guide them safely (and comfortably) through the perils of childhood. Van Slyck uses the minute variations in the arrangement and design of the dining halls and kitchens to analyze the conflict between the industrialization of food preparation and the camp’s rustic ethos of unrefined self-reliance. Since the same camp infrastructure often hosted both girls’ and boys’ camps, Van Slyck employs the concept of “activity arena” to demonstrate that children’s participation in food making and dining behavior were highly gendered.

Alongside its achievements, *A Manufactured Landscape* displays the methodological limitations of the cultural landscape approach. Intent on interpreting objects and practices as ideological constructions, it reduces them to signifiers without analyzing what they actually do. This is most evident in the chapter that deals with the fascinating theme of playing Indian, which was built into the architecture of the camp in the form of council rings, tipis, and in the choice of Indian names for camps. By contrasting the romantic representation of Indian culture in camp lore with the actual predicament of American Indians, the reader is persuaded to acknowledge “the central role the cultural landscape often plays in allowing people simply not to notice the inequalities that structure their daily lives” (213). This interpretation privileges the play narrative and its literal relation to social reality over the nondiscursive, performative, and self-reflexive dimensions of play as they might be experienced or understood by the child. This problem raises a broader dilemma: how much agency can be attributed to children as historical actors and participants in culture, and to what degree is their world overdetermined by adult’s ideas about them?

The tendency to conceptualize children as a horizontal age group, without attributing to them the agency and autonomy we normally ascribe to groups, is perhaps what makes the architecture of childhood such an emblematic case for deciphering the contradictions of modernity. How is it that the Enlightenment project of liberation, self-mastery, and the creation of a new society based on universal and rational principles ends up finding its most appropriate and self-justifying subjects in children, who by the nature of their immaturity are constituted as subordinate subjects, requiring our guidance and care?

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Notes
3. Stefano de Martino and Alex Wall, eds., Cities of Childhood: Italian Culture of the 1930s (London, 1988).
4. Liane Lefaivre and Ingeborg de Roode, eds., Aldo van Eyck: The Playgrounds and the City (Amsterdam and Rotterdam, 2002), 25.
5. In my opinion, Dattner’s playground has little in common with the original concept of the adventure playground. Moreover, this account overlooks the importance of “The Yard” playground in Minneapolis (1949) to the development of the adventure playground movement in Europe. See Colin Ward, “Adventure Playground: A Parable of Anarchy,” Anarchy 7 (Sept. 1961), 196.
6. The term “political economy of design” was suggested by Hal Foster to analyze the contemporary rise of design culture; see Hal Foster, Design and Crime (New York, 2002), 22.

Adam Sharr
Heidegger’s Hut

In July 1953, the philosopher Hannah Arendt jotted down in her diary the “true story of Heidegger the fox,” a short parable of the life and, presumably, the home of Martin Heidegger (1889–1976), her former professor and sometime lover whom she had visited in Freiburg, Germany, about a year earlier. According to Arendt, the fox had built himself a burrow as a retreat from the “fox world” and as a means to trap other foxes. Yet, after the burrow was completed, “nobody would go into his trap” because the fox “was sitting in it.” This changed only after the fox moved his burrow—his place to be in the world—to the center of his worldview by openly announcing that his home was, indeed, a trap: “From this point on it was clear that no fox could stray into this trap by mistake. Nevertheless, many came. For this trap was our fox’s burrow, and if you wanted to visit him where he was at home, you had to step into this trap. Everyone except our fox could, of course, step out again. It was cut, literally, to his own measurement.”

In Heidegger’s Hut, Adam Sharr presents a portrait of the wooden hut the German philosopher had built for himself in the village of Todtnauberg in 1922. It was one of two homes Heidegger maintained in the Black Forest; the second was erected at the edge of Freiburg after the philosopher received a professorship at the local university in 1928. While Sharr does not refer to Arendt’s parable, the book offers a detailed account of one of the most architecturally unremarkable buildings that has ever been the centerpiece of a monograph. The importance of the hut stems from its occupant, and Sharr grounds it—to use Heideggerian vocabulary—in Heidegger’s inquiry into the possibilities of rootedness of human beings under the conditions of modernity. The hut, as Sharr sees it, was not just a space to think and write but a place for philosophy to be formed in the triangular interaction between the location, the environment, and an inquiring mind.

The book’s narrative progresses from the surrounding landscape to the concrete materiality of the hut and then widens again to discuss the meaning of the tiny structure. Chapter one analyzes the landscape around the home, whereas the next chapter, “The Hut in the Valley,” directs our gaze to the interior and exterior of the building. The following chapter informs the reader about “How the Hut Came to be Built.” Up to this junction, the book is primarily fact oriented; for example, it provides a detailed description of the hut’s construction and an item-by-item account of the interior of its four rooms. The latter is supplemented with measured drawings, photographs of a model built by the author, and a sequence of black-and-white images of hut, inhabitants, and guests taken by the photojournalist Digne Meller-Marcovics in 1966 and 1968. Still, facts about the hut seem to be as rare as the few things that were within it.

In the hut, Heidegger “seemed to feel most at home” and, because it “conditioned a milieu that sustained thinking for him,” Sharr concludes that “it is necessary to engage in detail with his life at Todtnauberg and its conditions” in order “to properly engage with Heidegger’s writings” (57). Accordingly, the remaining chapters focus on the use of the hut, including its appearance in both the philosopher’s writings and those of visitors, as well as possible meanings that became attached to the building.

Initially, Heidegger conceived of the hut as an isolated space to work away from his family. Ironically, after the building was completed, the philosopher had to rent a room on an adjacent farmstead in order to finish Being and Time when his family stayed at the hut in 1926 and 1927. Even Heidegger himself eventually interrupted the perfect isolation of the retreat by assembling small groups of students for summer seminars. These gatherings included occasional summer solstice celebrations where wooden wheels set on fire were rolled down the hillside below the hut as Heidegger proclaimed “strong words” (55).

Once Heidegger became the rector of Freiburg University in April 1933, the hut finally lost its innocence. The new rector invited colleagues and students—fellow members of the Nazi party—to a camp near the hut in order to “discuss university organization under the new regime” (57). When Heidegger resigned a year later, the hut became his refuge from Hitler’s dictatorship as well as the philosopher’s forced retirement and suspension from teaching duties after the war. In 1966, the hut was the location for an interview by the German weekly Der Spiegel, where Heidegger tried to explain his official involvement with Nazism, a political movement from which he never officially distanced himself.

Heidegger continued to use the hut...