A DESIGNER PREPARES:
EXPERIMENTS IN METHOD DESIGN

BY

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An alternative or supplementary design method is explored whereby the designer seeks to use a "literary" rendition or hypothesis of the client's needs to provide the basis for his design.

Part One outlines the problems the author sees in current design practice and suggests what types of steps could be taken to overcome them. An experience with the making of a biographical film documentary is described as one source of the author's inspiration for the present experiments.

Part Two tries to experiment with the "literary" method on one category of design problem: the evaluation and modification of a set of design drawings as yet unbuilt. Two fictional characters are invented and their movements and impressions to their hypothetical environment are described so that some design response can be made to them. Visual and written ideas and comments are found in the margins.

The conclusion evaluates the experiment and projects other possible uses and variations of the technique. Further, the author's own problems in attempting the technique are described.

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Introduction

This thesis consists of a number of different parts. The general theme running through them is stated explicitly by the title, "A Designer Prepares". The thesis intends to tell how I prepared and still am preparing myself to design physical environments as a professional career. As this introduction is being written well after most of the body of the text, I can see how well this intention has been carried out. And now, two themes, instead of one, seemed to have emerged. First, much has come out expressing the original idea: how I got to where I am as a designer and how what got me here can get me elsewhere. This topic is very important to me as a summary or statement of what I got out of four years of design school. Although not meant to be a sequence of course descriptions, this thesis has come to represent a sort of diary about how I related my school learning to an on-going real-life situation. In this somewhat parochial concern, there may be value to others for I have seen few accounts of how a designer evolved step-by-step in his or her personal design philosophy, especially accounts which actually get down to nuts and bolts kinds of descriptions. And this saga of the real-life encounter between learning and the application of it has had an interesting effect on me. For I have come to feel that this learning from experience consists mainly in learning to have confidence in the relevance and value of one's own observations whether or not they appear to have some specific relevance the time they are made. Freeing up an ability to hazard a guess at the reasons that underlie the quality or feeling of a once seen place or lifestyle and then perhaps to reject or modify that hypothesis - it is this ability which can make innovation in design meaningful and not arbitrary or whimsical.

Some of these thoughts may have a ring to them of anti-intellec-
tualistic rebuke at the rational or scholarly communication of design technique. The academic side has its place, I believe, but really good design in the sense of "good fit" or "right feel" springs mainly from inner transmutation of personal experience and insight. Which, as I hope to outline, is not such a difficult method or practice to cultivate. A general perception these days is that it rarely pays to accept someone else's version of what one's life should be like, at least not openly. In the same way, one should not accept for himself a substitute generated from another's life experience or hangups for a personal design philosophy. About seventy pages from here into the thesis, I describe at some length a dream. It is not a dream which I, myself, had, but one of a ficticious character invented by me to unearth some information previously hidden from me. More on the hidden information later. The dream describes in great detail a musical instrument invented by our technology. The instrument is so easy and convenient to use for the imitation of pop music that it has become useless as any sort of vehicle for personal expression. Whatever makes Muzak easy to listen to or easy to ignore also renders it a shadow of any serious music of any style or of any age. For Muzak neither satisfies, elucidates, nor excites; it is but a filler of void - not silence - but void. In a similar manner, I think that many young designers tend to see their education, formal or otherwise, as a filler of a void of ignorance. To an extent, that may be true if one is speaking of an ignorance of specific techniques, or of standard operating procedures, or of shortcuts to get from the start of a project quickly to the finish. But that kind of ignorance further implies to many that they must also lay in a whole new stock of ideals or values regarding what should or should not be the attributes of a well designed space. I will contend in this thesis that most of us really start out with a reasonably complete set of criteria and opinions about what is good or bad about a designed place or physical situation. To unearth this knowledge, within a context of practicality and a client's propensities, however, may require some imagination and effort.
Thus, I am reminded that I mentioned above that another theme besides the history of my personal involvement also emerged during the writing of this thesis. That theme revolves around the need to develop some technique or series of techniques to bring out these great funds of stored knowledge most of us bring with us into our professional years. Unearthing and using this hidden knowledge, and perhaps generating further insights or combinations - this procedure when it begins to inform physical design I have chosen to label as, "Method Design". In another way, then, is generated the title of the thesis.

Roughly, this is the planned itinerary of the thesis, the order of some of the points it will stop at and ponder. It will open with a semi-formal discussion of the kinds of problems existing between designer and client which I feel I can deal with using "method design". Then, the technique, itself, is suggested and described to the extent to which it will be used in this thesis.

In the next section, I seek to look at myself as a "method designer". Not one by choice, however, as circumstance left me in a unique position of building a home for myself without benefit of pre-drawn plans or any particular concept of design. But I do not plan to exhume all the painful artifacts of growing up which may or may not have led to the hammering in of this nail here or two inches over, although some of the ideas or happenings leading to the structures built in the house will be aired for several reasons. One is to make a record for myself of that time in my life, still ongoing, but without its earlier urgency. Another reason is to indicate to the reader that some physical things which seem so simple on the surface may if fact have a lot of background to them; there may have been changes and mistakes, as many steps backwards as forwards. And from these perturbations we can extract much knowledge of the designer's motives. A third purpose to the description or at least parts of it is to entertain, to lighten a sometimes heavy load of descriptive detail and dimensions. For this reason, much written matter peripheral to the actual putting together of the house has
been included but in a reduced single-spaced format. The most important purpose to this section is to set the stage for the next one. By this point, the reader may be convinced that if he or she is a designer, then they have a readily available source from which to draw much information of real relevance: their own experience. In my case, much of that experience has come from the building of a house, a rather obvious sort experience for a would-be architect. It leaves me less distance to travel to find relevant design experience to rely upon when attempting to interpret design needs for persons other than myself. There are other sources, however, and it is these for which we will eventually be reaching.

Following the description of the house I built for myself, there will be a discussion of a film. It is a half-hour piece which I helped to make during my first year in the design school. It describes with her own words and movements one person's reactions to living in an environment totally different from the one in which she grew up. In the film, she speaks about what parts of her emotional self she brought with her from a small town in South Dakota in her pilgrimage to New York City. Some of these parts she found she could not leave behind and they made life hard for her in the big city. And some new emotional facets were added by life in the city which made it impossible for her to return to the small town. So, from the sensitivities exposed through this dichotomy between the two environments, much emerged for me to learn. More importantly, from the point of view of this thesis, much also came out about the style or method of this type of learning and the communication of it as well as the content. I am speaking of a kind of story one can tell about oneself in order to illuminate certain points. If one cannot do it for some reason, then someone else, in this case the designer, can tell the story instead. Or invent a reasonable facsimile thereof. More on this later in the thesis.

Following a brief description and discussion of the film, I begin a new section of the thesis. It will be cast in a new format, although it is one which was tried briefly during the descriptive segment on
the building of the house. An experiment will be made here on a new
way to dig out whatever design information which I am hypothesizing
most of us have. The method need not involve the building of houses
or the shooting of sound and color films. It is cheaper, quicker, and,
now that I have tried it out, I think it may be more efficient. And
it gets to the point fast. What I have tried here is to project
through fictional writing those manifestations of another person's
lifestyle which would be directly germane to my attempts to design
for that person. The fictional aspect of my writing is only one possible
variant of the technique. If there were a real-life client involved,
the writing could constitute a more educated scenario as it sought
to project for the designer the relevant parts of his client's
lifestyle. The point is that trying to explicitly articulate some-
thing about this other person's routine, be it daily or otherwise,
ends up forcing me, the designer, to recognize and hopefully get
over some preconceptions about that person's life I might have had.
Further, it enables me to get a better handle on what I will have
designed for him, and how it should be modified to better fit him
rather than fit my own stereotypes or preferences.

It will be noted that these excursions into fictional narra-
tive tend to meander all over the place as far as to which comments
and observations belong to the hypothetical client and which to the
author. Whatever, the comments et al attempt to center about a set
of plans which I drew up several months ago. I am using this tech-
nique of "inhabiting" these plans with fictional beings as an exper-
mental technique with which to unearth some new ideas about how to
change the plans. I want to make them more fitting and responsive
to any real persons who might come to inhabit the three-dimensional
constructed version. As I could not know who, specifically, would
come to live in this place, it might seem as though some of the con-
cclusions or changes I have reached are arbitrary ones at best. This
I do not believe. A fundamental tenet of this thesis is that most of
us have a general knowledge of relevant design, but merely lack the
techniques or the discipline to draw it out of ourselves. If, in fact,
we do enjoy such a fund of knowledge, in each person similar in 
its content though not necessarily in its origin, then most of us 
would benefit from an appropriate application of this knowledge. 
How, then, can I prove the assertion that there actually is such 
deeply and generally held knowledge, and that this knowledge can 
even go so far as to inform the activities and thoughts of properly 
drawn fictional characters? I think I can prove the point by asking 
of my experiment whether through it I have really been able to 
uncover new insights. And have these insights been valuable and sub-
stantial enough to make important alterations in the original set 
of plans? If the insights emerge, they either they or their pre-
cursors must have been there in the first place.

Accordingly, the fictional section is accompanied by sketches, 
notes, and other illustrative memos which I have come up with during 
the course of the experiment. They have not yet been translated into 
the same hard-line format as the plans which were their basis. But 
that next step merely awaits a further expenditure of time. The 
technique will already have proven its use.

Finally, the thesis draws to its conclusion. There I will 
describe in greater detail the method used in the experiment, including 
an evaluation of the results. The conclusion will make further 
comment on how valuable I feel this technique might be in other si-
utuations and for other designers. I hope to suggest some variations 
on the "method" technique which might be useful under some circum-
stances. Probably readers will think of many others.

That will end the thesis. Here I would like to express my 
gratitude to my two faculty advisors of the last eight months for 
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A Designer Prepares: Experiments in Method Design

Part One

Some time ago, I participated in an architectural design review whose panel of critics left me with some important issues to ponder. At this session, my work was criticized for not having indicated real walls or partitions in any of my plans. There were lines drawn on the vellum sheets which, I was convinced, actually did indicate and represent what they were supposed to have. But the persons at this design jury insisted that these lines were, in fact, nothing but that: lines, and more lines. Since then, I have often wondered what set of qualities made the difference to them between putting down mere lines and drawing real walls. Instead of my one single thick line, maybe I should have drafted a double set of thinner ones. This would give any proposed wall or partition a measurable thickness. Would it help to make a further gesture toward realism, and thus toward relevance, by adding door and window openings? How about textures? Shadows? On another, perhaps more abstract scale, would it do very much good to make use of symbols such as arrows, letters, tones, or colors? To what extent would any or all of these techniques reveal whatever "true" design implications were inherent in placing this wall, here, now?

Suppose some of the above techniques could lead a hypothetical client to a better understanding of what the designer had in mind when he drew the plans. Going over them, the designer and his client could try to measure or determine the kind of experience one would
have in the finished structure. A basic issue they would determine is whether the building would continue to stand. Next, following the usual list, would be to judge whether the design would assure sufficient access or ease of circulation. Where and when would sunlight fall in such and such a location? As to furniture, could it be placed in useful, comfortable, or workable configurations? By juggling the various plans and superimposing overlays, the designer and his client could investigate many different problems. They could draw into the plans minature people with corresponding pieces of furniture in an effort to occupy the proposed spaces, thus attempting to illuminate other issues. To flesh-out the unbuilt structure even further, they could make a model of it in cardboard or plastic. The next logical step might be to construct a full-scale mock-up of some part of the scheme. In this way, many new facets could be surveyed in conjunction with one another: how typical furniture placements would conceal or emphasize certain construction details, for instance; how entering a room from a given direction would obscure some important feature of the space, etc., etc.

However, studying a drawn plan, or viewing a model, or walking through a three-dimensional mock-up can deal only with part of the problem. For we would come away from these experiences with only partial information heavily related to the means of representation we had just used. Our experience would not have given us an overall picture or feeling of what it would be like to live in the place. Perhaps, if there were some way we could actually come to inhabit the mock-up, we might get a more realistic idea of the kinds and quality of living conditions our plans have implied.

The notion of "inhabiting" in turn leads to more questions about what we mean by "experience". Are we, for instance, going to be interested in defining our experiences while trying to sleep in the new structure? Will our activities there be ones that repeat themselves routinely, or is each a unique event? Will we be moving through the building as we experience it or standing still? Perhaps very personal concerns may influence our perceptions and should
therefore be taken into account: will we be sleepy or awake? Hungry or satisfied? Happy or sad? Are we to be alone or with others? And, if with others, will they be friends, or family members, or perfect strangers? Money may enter the picture: will we be paying the heat bill or will the landlord? Etc., etc. In sum, how can we possibly predict what the totality of life could be like within an unbuilt building or environment? And we need not limit our questions to those pertaining to being inside. What conditions will prevail outside or surrounding this structure? What effect will be had on persons who merely see it and have no special business inside? To even begin an attempt to investigate these concerns, we might end up "inhabiting" our plan and its environs for a considerable length of time. Perhaps twenty-four hours; perhaps twenty-four years. Even then, we might still be asking: was the chosen period of time the "right" or significant period? Was it a weekend or weekday? A time of employment or unemployment? Winter? Summer? And so on.

There may yet be another whole realm of questions to add to this growing list: who really constitutes the character so blithely referred to as, "we"? Is it, "we, the designers", "we, the eventual occupants", or, "we, the two of them together"? Further, can or should the two identities of designer and occupant have reasonably similar conceptions of what they value, what the design issues are, and what means there are to cope with them? The two roles might coincide if the designer and the occupant were manifested in the same person: the designer who built and occupied his own design, or, the occupant who designed and built for himself. But the number of times where this is the case is, at best, limited. Assuming that better, more useful, and more relevant structures might result if the designer and the user could try out each other's role for a time, we might do well to explore techniques which make that possible.

The analogy useful to considering the problem of inhabiting a place is how actors seek to put themselves in a completely imaginary situation and then how they react to it. Constantin Stanislavsky, the Russian dramatic director and theorist writes about this in,
"Every movement you make on the stage, every word you speak, is the result of the right life of your imagination.

"If you speak any lines, or do anything, mechanically, without fully realizing who you are, where you came from, why, what you want, where you are going, and what you will do when you get there, you will be acting without imagination. That time, whether it be short or long, will be unreal, and you will be nothing more than a wound up machine, an automaton.

"If I ask you a perfectly simple question now, 'Is it cold out today?' before you answer, even with a 'yes', or 'it's not cold', or 'I didn't notice, you should, in your imagination, go back into the street and remember how you walked or rode. You should test your sensations by remembering how the people you met were wrapped up, how they turned up their collars, how the snow crunched underfoot, and only then can you answer my question."

These paragraphs suggest some of the techniques which the so-called "method" actor uses to create a realistic role on the stage. His purpose is to become for the audience a "real person" other than himself for a short, explicit, period of time. As the audience, we must merely be willing to suspend our disbelief for the moment: the rest of the burden of establishing the fictional identity rests with the actor. To accomplish his task, he must perform movements and utterances which are realistic and consistent with one another. Eventually, a recognizable pattern evolves on the stage, every gesture manifesting and further helping to delineate the character. For only in this way can the audience expand its knowledge of the character's typical reactions to situations to the point where it can make unconscious predictions of his reactions to future circumstances. This is how an exciting performance can build expectancy and foreboding into an intense current of dramatic tension.

An important point for us to note here is an underlying implication in Stanislavsky's thoughts that most persons who become actors have within them sufficient seeds of any given experience to recreate and build from that experience on the stage. Picking and choosing amongst his particular collection of "seeds", the trained actor will eventually develop a complete and convincing, even if
fictitious, dramatic character.

The typical play yields little detailed background information which will help us, the audience to predict with certainty a given character's future behavior. The time of the action, the setting, and perhaps certain important past circumstances might be revealed explicitly in the first scene, but a detailed biographical history of each character is invariably omitted. Playwrights such as Pinter thrust us into an unfamiliar scene at the start, forcing us to reconstruct the past from scant clues in the present. Thus, we are never led to believe that our character will always do thus-or-so in a given situation just because he or she has always done it before. In order to become intensely involved with the dramatic action, we should not be made to labor under a heavy weight of peripheral data. But we must be able to surmise, or expect, or fear that a certain character may prevail or be destroyed at the action's climax. In other words, the actor must feed us enough information about his stage personality so that we can foresee many possibilities but not so much as to bore us with certainties. We, ourselves, of course, must do the rest of the work with our imagination.

One result of making this excursion into dramatic theory is to marvel at the amount and type of information we can gather in so short a time about people previously unknown to us. Now, we can ask, is there a way the physical designer can acquire and use this fund of information about the lifestyle of a perspective client? He may begin by picking up clues and patterns from what relationships he sees existing between the client's current activities and the physical setting of these activities. The designer realizes that the future unfoldings of these relationships will take place in what is as yet an unbuilt physical environment. Perhaps, then, at this early moment in their collaboration, the designer will take aim at a result of some kind he wants the future environment to bring about. He may want to encourage a feeling of oneness between his client and the proposed physical environment. The client would then overcome any feelings of frustration or alienation which some previous setting
may have caused him. On the other hand, it may be that the process of developing a relationship with the new environment is, itself, of great interest to the designer. How can the newly-designed and built surroundings be accommodated through the client's explorations? What will happen on day one in the new place, on the second day, and so on? In this sense, the designer may come to resemble a playwright in attempting to orchestrate the course of future events, liberating along the way elements of his characters which were previously hidden. And, now much like a conscientious actor, he searches through many current roles and activities for data on which to predicate his own on-stage behaviour. To round out this scheme, we may then consider the client as a theater-goer. We would want him, through the offices of the trenchant playwright and sensitive performer to eventually experience in his new and unfolding environment what the astute drama buff would expect from complex works of theater.

Many designers might argue that the client has a much more positive, perhaps even aggressive, role to play during the generation of a design. Once I wrote a paper suggesting the necessity of the architect to consider himself the client of his client during some phases of the design process. In generating the program, for instance, the architect's single most important source of information is his very own client. For, presumably, it is the client alone who is the final judge of how and whether his needs will be met by the proposed structure. But there are problems: often no eventual users are on the scene while the design is being done; or the paying client may not be the same as those who will use the environment. Even neglecting this, many clients have a limited view of their own capabilities and responsibilities. They may either defer to the architect's status as a professional or they may never have formulated any clear list of needs or priorities. Such a client may end his participation by declaring: "Anyway, the architect knows best; that's what he's paid for."
In situations like this, the architect must make himself a good listener and encourage his clients to become good "talkers". Too often, however, this does not happen. The architect or designer generates the program - whether it be a list of design priorities with square footages or a more generalized, albeit hazy, impression - by consulting surrogate clients, other professionals, or merely his own head. Publications like Sweet's Catalogue, Graphic Standards, professional-society handouts, etc. whose pages seem to grapple with the universal problems of the universal client do not always have the same point of view as the solitary person who originally knocked on the architect's door. No doubt, these sources have much information to give. But it sometimes seems that by the amount and precision of such information, they determine and give emphasis to certain issues, neglecting others where the standards are less firm or totally non-existent.

What has become of the client in all of this? Since the initial contact, he has perhaps been in a quiescent phase, more or less allowing his architect to pick the problems and then determine the solutions. The two meet up again when the architect returns with the first schematics and cost estimates. Unfortunately, much of value may have been lost in the meantime: new insights by either party could easily have led to alternative definitions of issues, hence solutions. The effects of these losses will be compounded as the design process continues.

Thus, the ethical obligation on the part of the designer to determine and deal with his client's real needs as efficiently and elegantly as possible may require some change also in the role of the client. If each party must, in fact, learn from the other, then the architect, as the professional, should have the techniques at hand to help bring the contribution of his partner fully up to his capacity. Unhappily, in too many situations, either the designer does not have such techniques or the client will not or cannot take advantage of them. It may be the designer who has not sufficient expertise or precedent, but, more likely, it will be the client who
balks. Many of them feel too many role "hang-ups" or "put-downs" to participate equally in a team where the primary obligation of each partner is honesty and directness in expressing his needs to the other. To initiate unilateral action may well be the designer's primary answer to this predicament. The burden to generate an honest and responsive design solution lies with him first for it is the designer who has the access, motivation, and is paid to learn any required skills. He is also the one who has the opportunity to experiment and build up a repertoire of techniques to deal with different situations. And, finally, it is the architect who need not be distracted from these tasks by a totally different web of concerns which may constitute the life and business of his client.

II

Several pages ago, we left ourselves lamenting the unlikelihood of the designer and his client ever being one and the same person. Some paragraphs later, it was also suggested that these two different persons, even though perhaps joined verbally or legally, may often be working toward very different ends. Each may have his own agenda of priorities, perhaps not yet even articulated to himself. I would like now to examine two sets of circumstances, both drawn from my own experience, which may illuminate these possibilities from two opposite viewpoints. First, I will describe some insights generated from the designing and building of my own home. This, I hope, will serve as an example of the unlikely situation of the designer coming to inhabit his own designed environment. I will look at the fit, or lack of it, between the predicted environment and the modes of its eventual inhabitation. Second, I will try to apply to the problem some insights gained from a biographical film two others and myself made several years ago in New York City. The film is about a young woman who moved to the big city from a small town.
She then found herself trying to come to grips with an environment very unrelated and unrelating to what she brought with her in the way of emotional expectations. My intention is to examine the inhabitation process from two opposite viewpoints: where the designer and the inhabitant are precisely congruent, and where they are so separate as not to be linked. One theme I hope emerges from this comparison which relates closely to the point of this thesis. Designers have to be able to put themselves in the shoes of their clients as they design for them. Further, and just as important, clients must comprehend what kind of environment the designer thinks he is making for the client as he designs for him.

At this point, let me characterize more clearly the first set of circumstances alluded to above: when there is a total congruence between the designer and the client. In this case, the designer fits perfectly into the shoes of his client for they are walking around on one and the same pair of feet. I designed, built, and, off and on, have lived in my own home. During that cyclical process, I encountered many of the usual limitations to my aspirations: money, climate, site conditions, none of which were hopelessly restrictive. Furthermore, the quantity of funds available in the construction budget at any given time was dependent to a degree on just how badly I wanted to build or alter some part of the structure. In other words, it was a question of how far I was willing to allow myself to go into debt.

Although there were these pressures, they were not as stringent or inflexible as most encountered in normal designer/client relationships. In fact, one important and obvious pressure was barely felt at all: time. If something did not get done during the course of one month, it could wait until the next month, or the next year.

Construction - and design - began in the first week of June, 1968, and still continue. The fact that construction and design began both at the same time should point up another unlikely circumstance: there were no formally drawn plans to speak of during almost the entire course of the project to date. While it is true that in April of 1971,
I drafted what I considered to be a complete set of detailed foundation drawings for a major addition, both the concept (formulated in a hurry) and the details quickly transformed as construction proceeded.

Another unlikely condition - one that occurred often and with relative casualness - was that structures already in place were removed, replaced, or dramatically altered to fit new schemes that might suddenly pop up. Parts of floors were ripped up, thus exposing cavernous openings, only to reappear at different levels or with different framing systems. Walls were leveled in attempts to make old small spaces into new grander ones, and vice-versa. Sometimes, it was a different type or configuration of wall which would replace its predecessor at almost the same spot as before. One may wonder the reason for all this seemingly futile or wasteful activity. I can answer the charge only by saying that the reasons varied. Perhaps it was a strong need for some new spatial configuration, or perhaps only that the old was one boring. At other times, it might have been a friend's chance remark which caused some particular feature to come or to go. Of items such as windows, doors, stairs, ladders, shelves, decks, and the like, none held a sacrosanct position. Any or all were free to disappear entirely or resurface elsewhere. The operation merely proceeded by my command. Perhaps, better to add: by my command, and then my labor, possibly assisted by others, and then sometimes with the help of a local mortgage banker. For all that, however, the situation was nothing if not flexible. Few preconceptions had to be strictly followed: there were no blueprints, precise and inalterable, which were drawn long before the day when the first shovelful of earth came up.

But, small or large, I should not leave the impression that most, if any, of my projects were undertaken without some thought behind them. Many different ideas tried to manifest themselves in some physical form both inside and outside the house. These experiments, some less than original, others less than complete, have seemed to lend to this house an aura of uniqueness. More than once, visitors have remarked on this attribute in describing their impressions to me. They
have said things like, "this house feels warm, or or comfortable, or cozy to me". This remark was made even though the structure is very large for a house, about 4000 square feet of floor area. Or, they might have said, "I can really tell what you were into when you built this place." The basis for these reactions has less to do with the sometime graciousness of the host than with what the visitors actually saw or felt.

What I believe they saw was consistency and repetition of many details and finishes. And contrasted with this consistency, was a marked specificity of size and orientation of given places throughout the structure. The observers also felt an empathy with the motivations behind the designs, although only some of these stemmed directly from the structural or environmental requirements of the building. Other motivations no doubt sprang full-blown from personal eccentricities of the designer. The point is that whether physical motifs were designated by function or whim, they still carried much meaning to the casual, non-professional observer. To repeat, I feel this is because the motifs were consistent, repeated, and personalized.

(Need I add: the point is NOT that my creations or my creativity is in some way remarkable; other solutions to other problems by other designers could have led to similar effects. And it is also certain that these types of effects are not achieved ONLY by professionals.)

No, I think it was the special nature of my situation - its fluidity and spontaneity - which encouraged these happy results. I was able to design and build and experience resultant feedback much more freely and quickly than in the usual case where occupant, designer, and builder are three separate and distinct individuals. True, not even my own scene was free of its stifling hangups. Not a few resulted from conflicts between the discipline I was encouraged to learn in architecture school and the fantasies that kept trying to express themselves in the field. There were images I wanted to project via my work to the surrounding farm-folk. The substance of these
images did not always correspond to the memories I wanted my friends in Cambridge to take home with them. In sum, given the multitude of peripheral considerations at work in this abnormally (sometimes excessively) fluid situation, one can only imagine how most design procedures are inhibited by factors seldom related to the best interests of the eventual inhabitant of the building.

I wish it were easier, as I presently write this thesis, to be more explicit about what were the principal reasons behind any particular structural change. Obviously, at any given moment, there were probably numerous factors operating. That finally resulted from them represented a trade-off between the divergent or conflicting motives and pressures operating at the time. What I hope to do now is to try to reconstruct a single episode or sequence involving two oddly shaped masses of concrete in the rear of the house. The story of how the masses came to be and what further happened with them is very brief. It is an easy story to complete. I will follow this simple "exercise" with one much more lengthy and complicated. The elements of physical structure involved in this second story underwent a major renovation just the very day of this writing. For this latter "tour de force", the saga of the concrete masses is merely meant to be a warm-up.

There are thirteen cubic yards of the concrete. It is constituted of cement, sand, and stone, as usual, in the hand-mixed proportion of 1-3-4. At first, these two gray hulks, gray, severe in line, were meant to serve as foundation piers with several additional, if unspecified, capabilities. It eventually turned out that only part of their upper surface areas were needed for taking the weight of structural columns. Otherwise, the piers could be sat on, lunched on, or merely stepped on by way of getting somewhere else. Furthermore, they could still act like a retaining wall, surface water break, bicycle rack, and all-around ledge to keep objects off the damp earth. After a while, I saw that I could bolt on a brace to support a porch deck and then follow this brace up with some kind of ladder to actually get to the deck.
These events never occurred because the piers became part of a new foundation wall for an extension to the kitchen. Presently, one pier constitutes a ledge and stepping platform in its outdoor phase, a foundation wall as it passes beneath the stud-framed kitchen wall, and a huge concrete block as it rests within the kitchen interior. This block is presently useful as a seat (more like a throne, albeit a cold one) or a table top. The outdoor section still functions as a retaining wall and may yet sprout a ladder to an upper deck. Meanwhile, the other smaller pier is hardly to be seen on the outside of the building and not at all inside. Its function is mainly to be part of the relatively new kitchen foundation wall. Only a small horizontal surface shows outside, its use being to act as a small ledge for plants or tools.

III

I want to start in now on a discussion of the "wall-zone". Like the word, "concrete", "wall" probably connotes many other meanings than purely physical ones. There may be a hundred little variations of meaning for as many different people. One may say that a "wall" is what surrounds a room; and usually there are four of them for each room. Another may regard a space of similar size, but he would not feel "surrounded" like the first, in the sense of being held captive within a miniature stockade of plaster or sheetrock. "Wall", then, would not be the best word for the second person to describe whatever physical phenomena limit or define for him this particular place. To describe a wall that is more than a "wall", I will use the term, "wall-zone". For me, this represents a tangible thing of three dimensions, of color, weight, and texture, and perhaps other physical properties. And, because purpose and motivation may have changed it through time, one may very well add that the "wall-zone"
may partake of a life as well.

I hope to illustrate this concept of a living "wall-zone" by reciting a simplified biography of just such a thing, which I feel exists in my home in Vermont. Older than the concrete piers described above, its history also precedes my own in this geographical area. When I first bought this piece of property in southeastern Vermont, the whole package consisted only of a small cabin and sixty-five acres of woods and overgrown meadows. The cabin was about sixteen feet by twenty-four in plan. It had a simple, gabled, tar-papered roof. One door, all of six feet in height, was planted squarely in the center of one of the longer sides. It was about thirty years old and had gone through some radical changes considering the original intentions of its builder, Walter Atwood, now deceased. For him and his buddies, and eventually for his sons and their buddies, the small shingle-sided structure was meant to serve as a secluded hunter's camp, approachable only over a rough plank bridge and up a slippery spring-fed path about two hundred feet into the woods.

Possibly, it was more the muddiness of the path than any severe distance from civilization which gave the camp an air of isolation. For, in fact, Atwood also owned a large home in Bellows Falls, a once prosperous mill village of some five thousand, located only about six miles from the site of the camp. There, Atwood normally resided with his sons and wife and three daughters. The second home in the woods, therefore, did not need all the trappings normally reserved for a real "home away from home". And, since thermal insulation was to come only somewhat later, it must have been a chilly place to spend a night during most months of the year. Perhaps he installed a wood stove at some point during his fifteen year tenure. If so, the device was probably lit more to warm up a few men who had gathered there to while away a Saturday afternoon downing a couple of cases of beer than for any other reason.

This would lead me to the conclusion that the earliest manifestation of the "wall-zone" I am trying to describe was, in fact, a nonexistent one; the potential was there, but little else. For this "wall-zone", whose life I hope to illustrate, would lie almost directly in the center of the structure. It seems unlikely that any even mildly convivial part of folks would appreciate a stud-framed barrier cutting in two what was already their very limited space. It is also
doubtful whether any such centrally located partition would have any special structural significance. The long outside walls of the cabin were kept from spreading under roof and snow weight by a system of tie-rafters spanning the shorter sixteen foot dimension. The partition, if there was one at this time, would merely act to support one of the ties-rafters, thereby adding little support to the remainder of the twenty-four foot run of the roof's peak line. Thus, neither structural nor social function would seem to make any sense of a wall plunked down in the middle of this little cabin. One concludes, therefore, that there was none.

Then, for a period of five years following Atwood's fifteen, it seems that nothing new was added or subtracted, except a number of softwood trees. Ownership of the entire property had passed into the hands of a woodcutter to whom the hunting camp represented a convenient place to store his chainsaws, axes, wedges, ropes, other paraphenalia, and perhaps some beer as well. I know nothing certain about the man's life-style, but assuming a need for sheltered workspace to sort out ropes, sharpen blades, etc., I would not suppose that he, either, had much use for a barrier running through the center of his workshed.

Now, things begin to happen. A man named Syzch (pronounced 'sitch') bought the camp and all sixty-five acres in the Spring of 1958. Although he and his family already resided upon three or four acres of land in rural Connecticut, he acquired this Vermont property to use as a retreat, selling it to me some ten years later only because illness in his family forced him to do so. Mr. Syzch immediately began by insulating the exterior walls and installing first quality double-hung windows on three sides. Then he sheet-rocked the interior walls and made a ceiling by hanging more sheet-rock beneath the sixteen-foot tie-rafters. Following these preliminaries, he began to set out some actual, discrete living areas within the sixteen by twenty-four foot space. Some may find it difficult to imagine how 384 square feet can be sliced into very many usable living areas.
Apparently, however, he succeeded. As Syzch, himself, later told me, during one very long and cold winter, not only his own elderly parents, but his wife's as well, occupied this little cabin all the way from the cold nights of December to the cold snows of February. Looking at the plan of the partitions erected by Mr. Syzch and appraising the living areas generated therefrom, it is hard to figure out how they did.

A footnote to this seemingly apocryphal story is that during a different winter season, the cabin was broken into by two unknown young women. They arrived one December day and did not depart until the following February or March. The local observer who reported this incident of squatting to Mr. Syzch the following Spring also noted that the two had come on foot and they had left on foot. Other than this detail, little is known of how the women survived the winter without a ready source of drinking water (besides melted snow), a prepared supply of firewood, or regular access to food. Oh yes, one other mysterious winter visitor comes to mind. A small black bear, probably, broke through one of the newly installed double-hung windows and rummaged through the pantry shelves in search of any remaining summer provisions. The visit was discovered the next Spring.

Let me bring the story up to 1968, if only temporarily, and my own entry upon the scene. I had decided during the late winter of that year to buy property in Windham County in the state of Vermont. The reason for choosing this location can be traced to 1964 when I lived for some six months in a reconverted 120 year-old schoolhouse in East Jamaica, more or less in the center of the county. How and why I got there may make for a brief and interesting tale. With two room-mates, like myself temporarily relieving themselves of college pressures, I had taken a large and expensive apartment atop an elegant Beacon Street address in Back Bay, Boston. Although the status of the address was inflating, my job - selling Grollier encyclopedias to unwary Northeastern University sophomores - could not help pay the rent. Two of us then decided to pick a spot, any spot, from an Esso roadmap and migrate there in an attempt to get our thoughts and financial resources into some semblance of order. The further the spot was from Beacon Street, the better, since a broken lease might be traveling behind us. My room-mate managed to pick an appropriately distant place. He did it while blindfolded. The place: Townshend, Vermont, a place neither of us had ever heard of in a state where we had never been. The next Sunday, we drove to an area which seemed likely to be the place indicated by the microscopic type of the roadmap. The fact that we ended up in neighboring East Jamaica, a place not on the map, can be attributed to the efforts of an ambitious (and talkative) real estate agent. A good deal was made on the empty schoolhouse cum ski-chalet because the 1963-64 Vermont ski season was unusually slushy and it was more than half over with the chalet as yet unrented.
This little gray schoolhouse sat on a ridge overlooking a wooded valley through which rushed the Wardsboro Creek, eventually joining the West River several miles downstream. The West River perambulated down through the county to meet the Connecticut in Brattleboro. The two then slowly waltzed through the states of Massachusetts and Connecticut, ending with a graceful swirl into Long Island Sound at New Haven. It was to the region of one of the sources of this grand sarabande that I wanted to return when circumstances allowed the purchase of land some four years later.

What is so important to me in all this is defining the setting in which my own labors were to continue. Recalling my remarks about problems of personal image that kept creeping into my design considerations, it should not seem strange that from the start have difficulties identifying and categorizing my own images of my new neighbors. Often, I would have a certain picture in mind of what someone was interested in and interested in doing. But, a few minutes later, the picture would be disrupted by what that person would actually do or say.

For instance, it was my great expectation that everyone in the countryside would be immensely interested in the subject of the area's bountiful natural attributes and their conservation. With the Green Mountains reigning serenely in the background of everyone's daily routine, it was difficult for me to accept that, almost to a man, the native Vermonter really doesn't give a damn. At least, not on the surface. What takes his interest first - understandably, I suppose - are issues like jobs, financial aggrandizement in general, new cars and appliances when it is possible to buy them, and trouble-free plumbing. Who got the best deal for what and where is a very prevalent topic of conversation. Meanwhile, here I was, a native city dweller willing to spartanly adapt himself to the rigors of the countryside. At that time, I was eagerly looking forward to the challenge of total non-electric living. To be sure, Bennington Battle Day (a state holiday commemorating the exploits of Ethan Allen, his brother, Ira, along with the rest of the Green Mountain Boys) was replete with political speeches full of reference to "our God-given heritage of green woods and fresh lakes". These types of phrases seemed to flow as easily as the barbecue sauce, the remains of both sailing off into
the green woods along with the paper plates.

The world of construction methods and materials also underwent serious misalignment in my eyes between its image and the revealed reality. Real log cabins, for instance, were to be found few and far between in the verdant Vermont hills. Like anywhere else, the lumberyards stocked quarter-inch thin, imitation walnut-grained vinyl paneling. There were warped and knot-ridden two-by-fours of questionable dimension. And there was pastel-shaded aluminum siding to tack up on the outside of your home and there were linoleum bricks to paste to your kitchen subfloor. This state of affairs is even more prevalent today than in 1968. To my mind, at least old crapped-up sheetrock can have a funky charm given the right circumstances. Unhappily, most of the remaining building wares exhibited in local showrooms was, in my opinion, nothing more than unadulterated junk.

That these kinds of material were abundantly available should have led me to question the kind of workmanship I would find practiced in the vicinity. At this time, in 1968, I was little more than a novice in relationship to hammer and nails, much less than to anything as subtle as hanging a door or framing a window. In the beginning, I was forced to rely upon the skills and thus the judgement of local people. This was alright with me so long as they were willing to live up to the image I had implanted in my mind: rouch-hewn timbers being adzed by rouch-hewn carpenters. Solid craftsmanship combined with unique form to make instant antiques. Yankee ingenuity teamed with a strong Calvinistic work ethic. Perhaps these were all characteristics which I needed to reinforce my own sense of myself trying to take solid root in the mysterious and uncompromising woods surrounding my new home.

As part of this syndrome, I experienced an enduring craving for permanence and steadfastness. I fought against all sorts of suggestions, among them one to remove some dwarf-like truncated hemlocks Mr. Syzch had planted around the base of the cabin to form a hedge. That I was told the hemlocks were a marvelous breeding ground for mosquitoes
and worse cut no ice with me; hemlocks were green, hemlocks were a part of Nature. However, one argument for their demise did eventually impress me: they held dampness and mildew in around the base of the walls. The sills and joists of the cabin were rotting out and several of the pine logs driven into the earth for foundation posts were shot already, leaving the whole cabin with a slight list. This was not a condition to make for permanence, so, one Sunday, with no one around to cry heresy or hypocrisy, the hemlock hedge disappeared over a bank.

Originally, I had planned to do little remodeling work of any kind. One thing was needed for sure, however, a new bridge of some kind so that people could get to the cabin without first embarking on an arduous portage. On my first day of ownership, I tried to make my way across the remains of a wooden bridge which had been severely damaged by the freshets of the previous spring. While Mr. and Mrs. Syzch were removing their last few possessions from the cabin and their children were happily absorbed sculpting little dams and canals in what was left of the path, I gingerly picked my way across the pieces of splintered wood. My mind was pre-occupied with wondering whether Mr. and Mrs. Syzch thought it shameful that such a young person seemed to have so much money to waste. A few coagulated tufts of grass and mud looked to me like a solid bearing, and my foot and leg went right through to the cold running stream beneath. At this instant, I took little comfort contemplating that this little unnamed brook was scurrying into the somnolent Williams River, which, in turn, swept majestically, side-by-side with the Connecticut, into the Sea, etc. No. The children broke into peals of shrieking laughter. When they subsided, their parents, Mr. and Mrs. Syzch, gracefully expressed their sincere hope that I would have as wonderful a time as they had had during their ten-year sojourn in Vermont. With that, the whole family, showing surprising nimbleness, skipped across the jagged wooden shards and pulled away in their sagging station wagon.

I was left there to ponder, and to dry off. For sure, I needed to do something about that bridge. And, later tip-toeing up a shaky makeshift stoop, I also determined that the six foot, zero, door would have to go as well.
Let us now enter this home, just now forsaken by its inhabitants of ten years duration. For the most part, this family made the house what it was this day; they have just disappeared from the face of the earth, and the new owner steps across the threshold. Picture the moment. There are no sounds but that of the forest. No one is there but yourself. You are walking into someone else's life - at least, into that much of it which still breathes in the old iron bedstead on your right, a tarnished yellow wood cooking stove across the room, a sheet-metal kitchen table with lopsided leaves sitting to your left. Plastic red-checked curtains stir idly by the small windows.

There is more here than just the unwanted, farmers-auction, furniture. It is a crabbed-up little network of walls and ceilings and windows which have enveloped some strange times and events. And poor times, times of hardship, hunger, boredom, depression, and cold. Certainly cold. People of normal height have stood in this little thirteen by sixteen space to the right of the miniscule entry vestibule formed between the end of the central partition and the door. The tops of their heads came within inches of the sheet-rocked ceiling. They surveyed the drab green of this ceiling oozing down to cover the walls, and they surveyed each other.

It is early February. A southeastern morning light slants down through the three small windows which are oriented to receive it. The windows are two feet by three feet and mask the strong sunlight so that only enough comes through in a narrow swath to make one keenly aware of the shadow obscuring the rest of the room. On the other side of this interior wall are two other rooms, both soaking at this moment in chilly gloom. The one with the shaky kitchen table has a work counter running along the north-facing exterior wall. The other room, which opens off the erstwhile kitchen, is a storeroom with no windows. The entrance to it is covered by a plastic shower curtain.

On this cold February morning, let us get up about eight o'clock. A bright shaft of sunlight has moved onto the quilt at the foot of the bed. A vague odor of incompletely consumed maple wood seems to emanate from the stove. The fire must be out. When we peek from beneath the quilt, we can see the steam of our breath dissolving in the air. One of us quickly swings his feet from beneath the quilt and feels for a pair of mocassins on the tattered rug. The leather is stiff from the cold but warms up quickly, initiating a clammy sensation in the arch of the foot. He scurries over to the wood stove, making sure to keep as much as possible in one of the narrow shafts of light. Leaning over the stove, he gingerly pries up a small black iron plate. Is the fire completely out? Perhaps, but a thin wisp of fine blue smoke curls into the sunlight. But it is either too dark in the shadow or not dark enough for him to spot any embers still glowing in the charred pieces. It is difficult to determine how much wood is even charred. He takes the poker leaning against the stove thrusts it into the black hole which is even darker than the cast iron stove top. Stirring the poker around, he tries to use it as a lever to turn up some of the wood down at the bottom. Tinder is going to be needed. A small cardboard box of it sits about ten steps away in the vestibule. He had left it there the afternoon be-
fore after slicing the pencil-thin fragments from a hunk of soft maplewood on the outside stoop. The sun was warm then, coming from the southwest as three in the afternoon. But the area is not warm now. The vestibule before the front door is dark, only illuminated from the outside glare coming through the windows. Little wisps of frigid air sift beneath the front door which has no weatherstripping. While he is here, he might as well go a few steps further and get some matches from the kitchen. Turning the corner around the partition, he spots an instant coffee jar on the kitchen table. It reflects a few arrows of light from the brightness outside. Otherwise, the small room is in deep gloom. And it is cold, cold, cold.

But, on June 1st, at one or two in the afternoon, the cabin is anything but cold. Shady inside, yes, slightly dank and foreboding in the darker corners, but not unpleasantly so. The new owner looks around a little bit, is bored by what he sees, and sits down on the rickety bedstead to assess matters. As he sits, a small invisible cloud of mustiness is rising around him. Having driven up from Boston that morning, I, as the new owner, had signed the deed at eleven, fell into my new stream at twelve, said goodbye to the former owners a few minutes after that, and then stepped into the remains of what had been their private world. All of a sudden, it had become my own, at least legally. However, although their belongings and their smells and presumably their spirits were still in this place, another important factor was beginning to work on me. It was warm and humid outside, cool and dark indoors. I decided to take a brief nap; my renovation activities could wait until later in the day.

I awoke anxious to get on with my list of priorities, the first being to deal with the bridge. It was obvious I was going to need help here. To find it, I decided to explore the neighborhood. Down the muddy path I walked and slid and then negotiated my way across the brook. This time I had more success. Turning the car around on the road and heading back downhill, I recalled that I had seen some men working with a backhoe near a small cluster of old houses about a mile away. There were still there when I pulled up. As I watched for a few seconds, the men put down the blocks of wood they had been lugging around and turned to stare at the intruder. For a long moment nothing happened, so I ordered myself not to be so shy and get a move on. Feeling a bit the effete city type, I slowly crossed the road and approached a dusty young man astride an old backhoe. He seemed suspicious of me in a wry way as I took a jaunty pose, one of my feet resting on some protruding part of his machine. I began to perspire, however, as I greeted him with a spineless, "hello, how do you do?"
He said nothing in reply, but motioned to an older man with short, steely gray hair to come over. While this other man slowly approached us, sweaty streaks apparent on his green work shirt, I finally noticed what kind of project they were engaged in: they were moving a house. It was a small, simplified version of a plain, two-story farmhouse. At the moment sitting about thirty inches off the ground, it had long day timbers poking out from beneath it. Supporting the timbers were squat criss-cross stacks of heavy squared-off logs. Apparently the boarded up structure had just been hauled from somewhere else and was about to be maneuvered onto a new cinder-block foundation.

The gray-haired man now stood before me. He wiped his forehead for a few seconds, and then asked slightly impatiently just what it was that I wanted. I told him that I had just bought this place up the road "about a stone's throw away" which seemed to have a swamp for a driveway among other attributes. A brook there ran into the boggy mess just off the town road on one side and emerged twenty or thirty feet further downstream. Would he be interested in coming up and taking a look? Yes, he would, in an hour or so, when their work here was done. That was alright with me, and I returned to my car, turned it around again, and headed back uphill. It seemed incredible to me that I had not noticed that house sitting up off the ground when I had driven past that same spot earlier in the day. Perhaps it had just gotten there from some other direction. Coincidentally, just a few months later, the same men would have my own house up in the air in exactly the same fashion.

About a quarter after four, a blue dump truck, much battered, screeched to a stop at my driveway. A billowing cloud of road dust instantly caught up with it, presenting a sharp contrast with the condition of my swampy driveway. Out of the truck climbed the man I had spoken with, followed by the boy who had been on the backhoe. The man introduced himself to me as Howard; the boy was his son, Don. We went down to the troublesome brook and surveyed the scene for a few minutes. All present agreed that something fairly drastic had to be done. The choice, Howard suggested, was whether to merely put in a big corrugated steel culvert and pile lots of fill over it or go to the expense of building a real concrete bridge. Whatever, it would have to provide a twelve-foot passage if I was ever expecting to drive a four-wheeled vehicle up to the cabin. Howard then suggested that I hire him to put in the bridge. He had several reasons, one of which was that he knew a carpenter who would be interested in helping him build the formwork, Howard not being much of a carpenter. I said that I would think about the whole thing and let him know down at the corner what I had decided.

One day, when we were all working on the new bridge, Howard and his carpenter friend, Barry, walked up the hill with me to take a look at the inside of the cabin. For some reason, Barry had taken with him
a long tool, perhaps it was an axe or a very large crowbar. By this time in my thinking, I had determined that the partition wall had to go as well as the low ceiling. For one thing, I could not stand straight without my head hitting against the pastel green sheetrock of the ceiling. Barry asked me whether I was really sure that I wanted the ceiling and interior partition to go. I replied that I was sure. "Well, let's see what she'll look like!", he shouted and flung the long steel tool through the ceiling. Several clouds of dust floated down on us from the gaping hole above. Since I had never really seen demolition take place from the inside, I was taken aback - not to say horrified - by this behaviour. Maybe it was the sight of a reasonably finished surface broken into so wantonly, or perhaps it was seeing Barry doing it with such un-concealed glee. Whichever, I now felt as though the die had been cast. A few days later, having moved outside as much of the old furniture as I could, I tore down the rest of the ceiling material and the entire inner partition. During that process, I was constantly wary of running into a hidden hornet's nest or some other unknown, but equally lethal, country insect. With the ceiling removed, the ambient temperature of the cabin's interior climbed at least fifteen degrees. Apparently the dead air space between the ceiling and the roof peak had been a very efficient barrier against the heat of the sun.

The interior of the cabin was now a large open area of almost four hundred square feet. The tie rafters were soon moved upwards another sixteen inches or so, providing a more comfortable head clearance although a less strong roof. That condition would be dealt with six months later when I saw what a five-foot accumulation of sense snow on the roof would do to carefully hung doors and mitred joints. Later that summer, however, the whole cabin was jacked up, much like the house down at the corner had been, then moved over twenty feet and turned about 45 degrees counter-clockwise. It was then set upon a concrete foundation which had been newly poured to receive it. I had gotten hold of an old redwood wine tank about ten feet high and twelve feet in diameter. From this I had had milled...
almost 1200 board feet of kiln-dried, matched and grooved, redwood boards. Much of this went onto the new ceiling formed by the relocated ceiling-ties. This made the cabin seem a very dark place inside, taking away any advantage gained by removing the partition and raising the ceiling height. However, concerns of time and money determined that enough work had been done for this year. Barry had already replaced the short, six-foot door with one of normal height, in the process building up a small dormer on the front of the house peaking over the new door. From the outside, the cabin now looked like a respectable, if minaturized, version of a little beach bungalow of totally indeterminate style.

The following March - the year is now 1969 - I compromised my pioneering scruples to the extent of arranging for electrical service to be run to the house. As there were no utility poles to be found on the town road passing my property, a number would have to be raised and wires run back to the farmstead several thousand feet up the road. The decision to go electric had several interesting side effects. For one, I had to swear to the electric company that someday soon I would be a year-round resident and not a vacationer. I had to promise also that, when I got around to it, I would install electric heat, electric hot water, and an electric range. It seemed that by thus indenturing myself to them for all this future business, I could avoid paying a substantial service charge for the new poles and wire. Important consequences were to result from these treaties. I was to find that heating a north country home and the price tag of that heat energy are two factors which strongly influence what the inside and the outside of that home are going to look like.

Another interesting, if indirect effect of hooking up the juice was to bring a certain orientation up the road in terms of getting to know my neighbors up there rather than those below. It worked like this. If one's home was not located on a dead-end road any new power line would probably reach it from only one of two possible directions: from the right or from the left, that is, from up the road or from down. With the power line would eventually come the phone line which was usually strung along the same set of poles. Much significance attaches to these seemingly trivial facts. First, in a rural area like most of Vermont, where many small concentrations of population are sparsely spread around, there are likely to be many different power and phone companies. My downhill neighbor, only about half a mile away, has both a different phone company and a different electric company than I. Our rates for both services are different: so is the equipment, installation procedures, etc. Until just last summer, it was a long distance charge for me to call this neighbor; yet there was no charge to call ten miles away and two towns over in the oppo-
Secondly, when a tree snaps, or some other calamity brings the lines down, it is your upstream neighbors who are probably in the same predicament and with whom you might as well cooperate to get the lights burning again. You go up to their house and find out whether they are stranded too or it is only yourself. If it is just you, well, call the power company from their phone, and sit down with a cup of strong black coffee while you wait. Hopefully, it is not too long a wait, for when you have electric heat, and the power shuts off, it can get chilly in a hurry. And, not meaning to mix metaphors, when you depend on an electric water pump for your water supply, one might as well say that you are as good as sunk without the power to run it. Then your neighbors are once again going to be important.

One other circumstance may be strongly affected by the direction from which your wires come from: whom you are going to have live with on the party line. And who is going to have to live with you.

So I made the fateful commitment and contracted for electricity. This opened the way for all sorts of structural manipulations not very practical without the aid of power tools. To deal with the problem of roof support under heavy snow loading, Barry and I put in a post and beam system running longitudinally through the center of the cabin. Exploiting some ideas from a current design class at school, I was much interested in playing with the concept of the superimposition of a post-and-beam network within a stud-wall house frame. It seemed a very efficient and direct way of dealing with sagging floors and roof lines. In our system, the posts and beams were able to interlock with each other, both being built up of laminations of two-by-six hemlock lumber. The surface continuity of the stud framed wall was also something I felt I had to get away from in order to open up the cabin's interior. Thus I could alleviate the feeling of dark closeness left by the small windows and dark redwood ceiling.

Removing the section of floor which had previously underlain most of the old bedroom area abruptly demarcated for me the "wall-zone" by leaving it a sharp edge overlooking the basement floor eight and a half feet below. Between a center column located on this edge and the long rear wall, I framed in at table height a large sheet of plywood. This would serve as a work surface or emergency
sleeping place. The center column to which the plywood was connected became trellised with a set of intricately framed shelving. It was true that objects could roll under the work surface right into the basement, and often did, but at least half the precipice formed by removing the floor was closed in by this construction.

I had some unusual plans for dealing with the rest of that precipice and its relationship with the basement level. A fairly wide set of stairs would come down along the front concrete foundation wall and complete its way to the basement floor. For reasons now hard to recall, I wanted the basement area which opened almost sixteen feet to the redwood ceiling above to serve as an arena for experiments in psychodrama. Audience or participants could seat themselves on the overhanging edge of the first floor, on the stairs down to the landing, on the landing itself, or on the final half-flight down to the floor. Meanwhile, the actors or whoever would use the basement floor for their stage. Alternatively, the stage could be the landing, and people would be able to view the proceedings from above or below it. With this idea still in mind, Barry and I built a concrete block room in the part of the basement beneath the remaining section of the first floor. One of the walls of this room made several odd turns in a hypothetical response to the proposed stairway and landing. Four years later, the room was furnished as a darkroom. Although this use did not really require block construction, it was built this way so that the oddly turning wall segment could also act as a structural butress. A length of the un-reinforced concrete foundation wall seemed capable of developing cracks under the pressure of clay hillside force on its outside face. The plans for a miniature theater of psychodrama never really worked out, at least partially because I had no true sense of the dimensions involved. The idea of people sitting on stairs and watching others who were perhaps watching them, however, was not forgotten. It came out again, several years later, while building the major addition. That will be discussed later.
Cutting away the first floor like this left a very small area for a main floor, about two hundred square feet. There was little space to sleep, let alone store or cook anything. As far as some of the other body functions were concerned, a service-station two and half miles away received a daily visit during the cooler months. The situation could not remain that way for long. There was no place to work, and all my personal belongings quickly became covered with sawdust. It was several months after cutting out the floor that the concrete piers described several chapters ago were built. They soon received two built-up columns and corresponding beams. Eventually a deck of matched three-by's sprang out along the beams. The deck was at an eight foot level relative to the level of the remaining section of the main floor. The slope of the old roof was extended up and over this deck to provide cover for it. Windows and walls were filled in, and thus a new sleeping loft was added to the usable area of the cabin. The windows consisted of two four-foot by seven-foot sandwiches of hermetically sealed insulating plate glass. They were bought in Keene, New Hampshire, from a dealer who had a stock of sixty-six such windows. Each one had been cut a few inches too long or too short for some particular job which was already complete except for the glazing, which had been wrongly dimensioned the first time around. The windows sold for about thirty dollars apiece. When I heard someone discussing this incredible bargain at a restaurant in Putney, Vermont, I immediately drove down to Keene to investigate. I mention this because chronologically the loft addition was actually designed around the availability of these windows, not the other way around.

It was now possible to stand on the basement floor, look up through the shelves or beneath the worktable, through the posts and past the new butcher-block kitchen counter, and out through the large windows of the loft into the sky beyond. That upward progression of levels and spaces paralleled in some ways the natural uphill climb of the wooded slopes outside. Further, the eyes' journey began from a vantage point beneath the surface of the ground, traveled onto the first floor level equivalent to the surface, and then took
off into the spaces beyond, punctuated only by the simple redwood casing around the loft windows. All in all, the feelings engendered in me, at least, were at this point satisfying, even if some visitors thought the experiment charming but eccentric.

The post and beam system, worktable, and shelves, and the loft addition constituted the major construction effort for that year. By this time, there was also running water entering the basement through a plastic hose. The water originated about five hundred feet up in the woods from a kind of makeshift springbox. From there, the water line came down a few hundred feet, gathered underground in a concrete tile, and then flowed through one-inch plastic pipe into the basement. It was a good gravity-fed water supply, developing about twenty pounds per square inch pressure at its downhill terminus. Everyone considered the system a great success when it was demonstrated to be able to shoot a stream of water clear over the ridge peak of the house. Unhappily, it was not to last. More on this later.

The spring of the following year, some local plumbers installed a bathroom, at least the fixture part of it. For the walls and floor, I decided to experiment with a total wood interior coated with a number of layers of waterproof varnish. This made for a nice color contrast with the avocado green of the new bathroom fixtures. One may be tempted to remark that the cabin in the woods was becoming ever so slightly suburban.

A kitchen counter was fashioned from a twelve-foot length of used bowling alley flooring. It was installed on the interior partition wall of the bathroom so that the kitchen sink could be plumbed along with the bathroom lines. The counter stretched along this wall from one of the last year's built-up posts up to the end wall. There it embedded itself in a complicated latticework of structural shelving which one climbed to get into the sleeping loft. This assemblage stands to this day, although much else has changed.

This brings us into the summer of 1970. I had moved to my Vermont house after school had ended, setting up a temporary darkroom in the new kitchen: an enjoyable situation for an amateur photographer, one experienced in an idyllic setting. But I was bored. One morning during the first week of August, I was developing some film in a small, light-proof tank in the kitchen. Through the AM radio, which was just making out a station in Keene, Arthur Godfrey aquainted me with the details of his latest visit to Banff National Park in Canada. He was saying that the air was pure there and that the only long-haired critter he spotted, fortunately, was a mountain goat. Or something like that. Curiously, his monologue left me with a cutting sensation of restless wanderlust.
My affairs were put quickly put in order. The next morning saw me heading west with a good buddy toward the California coast. Enough of the Vermont woods for the time being. A mattress had been thrown into the open pickup body, sleeping bags and pieces of clothing stuffed between it and the back of the cab. Let the rain be damned. In the interest of speed one person would drive, while the other could contemplate the great sky above while flat on his back on the elegant mattress in the rear. Twenty-five days and ten thousand miles later, our time-saving system of driving only having barely worked, we wearily straggled back over the Vermont border, slowly negotiated the dips and curves of route 9, and finally arrived home to Windham County. As the days became shorter, I realized it would soon be time to return to MIT. But I would not be leaving my home unoccupied. My friend of the great western tour had asked me if he could rent it during the intervening nine months until next summer.

VI

A new slant on things came with renting out the house. It became a sort of bitter-sweet experience for me even to be there. Although the rent was low, I suffered a passion that the house must perform perfectly any function that my friend - now, tenant - should require of it. His suggestions for minor, and not so minor, changes or additions were carried out all throughout the fall during weekend visits. I was perhaps experiencing a parental type of over-protectiveness, reasoning that if I remedied any conceivable imperfections in design or construction, my rentor would feel extremely hesitant about undertaking any such renovations himself. If it was made strongly apparent to him that I took such fussy care of the place, he, himself, might be less inclined to be anything less than careful.

As one may imagine, so long as I was struggling under this heavy load of worry, it was difficult for us to even remain friendly. Consequently, the problem of trust between us became at times even more acute. I had heard that the Vermont winter could come to seem cruel and endless to some people, leading them to intense feelings of depression and frustration, not to say despair. Conceivably, just such a bout could result in some tantrum-like rage which, in its course, would inflict some unimaginable damage on the defenseless house. Just a fantasy, of course. I really had little reason to suspect that my friend, or anyone I knew, for that matter, would end up doing such a thing. But this was the tenor of some of my thoughts.
Fortunately, after the rental period was over, and he and his girlfriend helped me on a project and I helped them on another, our friendship seemed to revive.

As I said, though, when he first moved in, I interpreted his every wish to be my command. He said he needed more space than just the 200 square feet divided between the bathroom and the kitchen and the extra 90 square feet of the sleeping loft. This became even more true after his girlfriend moved in with him. In response, I abandoned my dissipating dreams for the psychodrama theater. Working swiftly one Saturday, Barry and I rapidly framed in a new floor to replace the one we had ripped out the year before. There were differences between the two. Most important was that the new floor level was set sixteen inches below the old. Also, though this aspect was hidden from any but a basement view, the new floor joists ran in a direction perpendicular to that of the old ones. We had attached a new beam to last year's post and beam system. This allowed the new joists to run into it, thus paralleling the long dimension of the house. Now we were able to frame in a long hatch-like opening along the rear wall. This opening would one day take a flight of stairs going down to the basement. Although this opening would noticeably cut down the small ten by sixteen foot dimension of the new sunken area, it was the sixteen foot dimension which would be diminished, not the already short ten foot one.

Another interest my new tenant expressed was to beef up the heating system. At that time, it consisted merely of two eight-foot electric baseboard heaters. For really cold days or just quick warm-ups, there was also on hand a 220-volt, 4000 watt portable unit heater. But this device was a nuisance to hook up, and had a tendency to eat electricity like a Cadillac eats gasoline. For more than a year I had been negotiating with a sportsman's club about fifteen miles away in Perkinsville to purchase their antique soapstone wood-stove.

Soapstone stoves are heavy, whitish stone boxes usually furnished with matching stone lids. These lids are capable of being pried up to load the stove only because they are usually counterweighted with iron cannonballs welded to overhanging steel brackets. Many years ago, these cute quarter-ton items were produced from the soft milk-white soapstone quarried at a number of locations through New England and Appalachia. Now they were made (when they were made) only in a small shop in the one-street village of Perkinsville. The specimen I was dickering for was about eighty years old, and had resided for the
last several years on the front porch of the secretary and treasurer of the rod-and-gun club. He told me that the club had either moved to new quarters or had switched to oil heat, I for get which. Soon afterward, they had sold one of their two stoves.

That left one other stove, which was in relatively good shape, and I had offered the man $200 for it when I had accidentally spotted it during the previous summer of 1969. A new version of a similar stove would have cost more than $550, assuming that the part-time stone mason could find time to make one. And it would not have had the cannonballs. The secretary-treasurer had wanted $300 for the stove when I first spoke with him, so the matter was left to stand for a time. For better than a year, as it turned out. When my tenant suggested that I get an iron or steel stove and put it in the new sunken living room, I decided to go back to the man in Perkinsville and offer him $250. The stove would do away with a lot of scrap lumber sitting around and would soon pay for itself through savings on the electric bill, I reasoned to myself before making the offer. $250 seemed fair to both parties and a deal was struck.

Several days later, four ambitious young men, including myself, backed the tailgate of the pickup to the ornate railing of the old front porch. Deploying an intricate combination of ropes and pulleys, we managed to heft the almost five-hundred pound hulk into the truck. The vehicle, even though rated a three-quarter ton pickup, sagged about four inches under the concentrated load.

As I bid adieu to the secretary-treasurer of the sportsman's club, he mentioned to me that he was by vocation a jeweler in Springfield. If I or my friends ever needed a fine wristwatch, we should stop by to see him. Assuring him that I would keep his offer in mind, we maneuvered the gently listing truck out of his graveled driveway and gingerly turned homeward with our ponderous load.

The "wall zone" now had a diverse physical form and combination of functions. Remember that half its length was consumed by the work table/sleeping place. This assembly included the center column with its plumage of shelving. The other half, towards the front side of the house with its dormer-covered door, became a large, two-seated, bench-like staircase. One descended the short flight of two steps down from the kitchen and bathroom area into the living room. Since the much used wood stove was located in this lower area, the steps were much traveled and easily became littered with sawdust, wood shavings, and pieces of detached bark. Not an ideal living room sofa from the point of view of tidiness. But the sixteen-inch height of the staircase considered along with the short eight or nine foot
width remaining to this room, the steps were not a bad place to sit oneself to warm up before the hissing and crackling woodstove.

An attempt to describe the general plan of circulation through the house at this time might involve using the concept of a spiral or corkscrew type of path. One entered at the mid-section of the twist, something like walking into the Boston Sea-aquarium of New York's Guggenheim on the second or third floor. The path turns around counter-clockwise and winds down the two wide steps, across the sunken living room and down a ladder into the basement. Going clockwise, one travels through the kitchen area and up a shelf/ladder into the loft bedroom. It is self-educating to observe that a couple of year's later, in the new, much larger addition, the motif is unwittingly repeated, albeit reversed. Enter here at mid-level and one goes up by moving in an abstract counter-clockwise manner. The 'genetic molecule' motif has thus replicated itself with a mirror twist.

My tenant now seemed happy with the new added floor area, the woodstove, and a brick chiminey built to vent the stove. I forced myself to retreat to Cambridge for a few weeks in an effort to encourage everyone to get on with their own lives for the time being. But a few days after the start of this proposed hiatus, a phone call came to lamentingly inform me that my wonderful, perpetual, gravity-feed water system had seemed to squirt its last. Obviously not being a landlord disposed to leaving his tenants high and dry, I immediately drove up to the house to assess the scene. And the scene was dry. Not even a rainfall of several days duration seemed likely to boost the depleted surface and ground water supply enough to replenish the spring-box.

I decided to go around to my neighbors in the valley to see whether they had similar problems and how they were coping with them. It turned out that whether they relied on a shallow springbox for sub-surface collection or a drilled artesian well to tap deeper sources, everyone was experiencing a greatly diminished supply. For me to hire a well-driller, myself, seemed the more certain and permanent step to take next. But the expense involved was likely to considerable, possibly catastrophic, by the time I was finished. For one paid by the foot for every foot the twirling drill forced its way down through the muck and rock. And this was the case whether or not any water was ever found in the hole.

Redigging the springbox up on the hill was an alternative, but
possibly a futile one. However, as long as the backhoe was pawing around in the woods, other sites for new boxes could be investigated. If need be, they could all be linked together, combining their individually modest collections as a tree's tiny roothairs acting together bring into the trunk a surprisingly substantial flow of water. (Did you know, for instance, that a fully mature broad-leaf tree can cast into the air upwards of 4000 gallons of water during one hot summer's day?)

But when I went for an exploratory walk through the woods looking for likely spots to dig, I found the fallen leaves and needles exceedingly dry to the touch. The earth, when uncovered, exhibited a uniform tawny brown indicating a high clay content only minimally moist. It was very questionable whether I would be able to locate sufficient patches of darker, humid soil which, when excavated, would liberate a hidden flow. But, in the short run, it seemed a cheaper expedient to pay the $12 an hour for a backhoe rather than contract for the services of a twenty-ton drilling rig. An absolute minimum price for a working artesian well of reasonable output had to be 500 or a thousand dollars. And that would be getting away easily.

Deciding to gambel on the springbox, I found that my neighbor up the road had had good luck when he dug out a bountiful springbox during a dry season a few years before. Like many gamblers of experience, he attempted to hedge his bet or at least help the odds along a bit. His wife's brother-in-law's cousin, or similar relation, claimed to be a diviner of the unseen paths of underground spring waters. In short, he was a water douser. My good neighbor informed me that this man had, indeed, a copious talent in this field and had located my neighbor's large spring quickly and surely. Perhaps he might do the same for me. I replied that, although I had never seen a douser operate, I was willing and interested in giving him a chance. My neighbor rang up his distant relation and then told me that he would show up the following noon. For remuneration, the douser would accept only the cost of his gasoline in driving to my house.

A few minutes after twelve the next day, a fairly new, light pastel Dodge hardtop uncivilly eased over my small concrete bridge and pulled up the now dusty driveway. From the driver's side emerged a tall, lean man wearing gold-rimmed spectacles. My neighbor, who was short, more portly, his face slightly florid in the heat, got out from the other side. We all greeted each other in the brief custom of the region: with a nod. Then we went on to comment on the dryness of the weather.

The douser then slowly walked to the rear of his car and began to search through the multitude of keys on his keyring. In the trunk was where he apparently kept the fabled instrument, his dousing rod. He soon found the correct key and inserted it in the small slot above the rear license plate. Above the slot, slightly rusted chromium letters spelled the word, DODGE, for the benefit of tailgaters, of whom quite a few probably found themselves behind this elderly gentleman's vehicle. The cover of the trunk then yawned open as though the magic
instrument inside was bored and pushing its way to get out. Opening full, the cover shuddered slightly as it came to a full stop. Somewhat anxiously, I approached the trunk and peered inside.

At first, I thought there was nothing there. There was no spare tire, no bumper jack, tire irons, or even old greasy tennis balls, not that I expected them. The only thing immediately apparent to my eyes was the mottled gray sheen of the vinyl covering material. Then I saw the "rod". It had been hidden in the shadow of the trunk cover. It sat there like a priceless fossilized bone in the midst of a large expanse of otherwise empty exhibition case. The "rod" was, in fact, nothing more than an old stick, a mere twig, denuded of bark and looking very ancient and dry. It was 'Y' shaped, not unlike a turkey's wishbone.

The diviner picked it up reverently, grasping the short, upper arms of the one-legged 'Y'. His hands took a peculiar position, the thumbs bent over backwards and apparently under great strain. I was reminded of being shown by a young friend many years ago a series of finger and wrist contortions which he claimed were powers granted him by a rare combination of genetic mutations. The grip of the diviner seemed so painful to me that I hesitated to test my own talents with the stick when he offered it to me. I tried to imitate the exact way he placed his fingers and thumbs, but it was too difficult. The stick in response to my efforts made no indication that a Great Lake was to be found beneath our feet if we cared to look and dig a little. The douser briefly commented that it appeared that there was either no water immediately about or that I couldn't find it. I imagine it was the latter.

Whichever, he took the stick back from my tense, cramped fingers and regripped it in his peculiar manner. Slowly he paced around to the rear of the house, my neighbor and I following him closely. Here was a shock. The douser had stopped and was peering down, whether studying the rod or watching his step I was not sure. Suddenly, the front unheld leg of the 'Y' dived downwards.

"Dive", is the only word I can think of to describe the strong, directed action the stick seemed to take of its own accord. I saw the sinews and veins in the douser's wrists stiffen and bulge with effort to restrain it. There was an intense battle of wills taking place. The once lifeless-looking stick wanted to shoot straight down into the earth; the diviner wanted to keep it up, gliding and tracking a path.

It was incredible. I could see no way, given the weird grip with the thumbs pulled down and back, that the douser, himself, could have snapped the stick downwards in such an acute, jerking motion. When I said as much to the others, my neighbor's perspiring face took on a very self-satisfied look. His relative, the douser, informed me that some water-diviners of his acquaintance did not use sticks of wood at all, merely bent coat hangers. Meanwhile, I saw
that, following the terrier-like stick, the man had managed to trace the exact path of the underground pipeline put in two years before. By this time, the ground had been raked smooth and planted with grass. Seasons had turned and leaves had dropped, all in all leaving no trace of the buried plastic pipe. Since neither of these two men had ever in my knowledge been on this property before, there seemed to be no way they could have known beforehand the precise path of the underground line. There was at least sixty feet of this pipeline making a wide arc from the edge of the forest around and into one corner of the basement. I was left with little to say as we trekked further into the woods.

Some months later, I had occasion to pass on my experiences with the water diviner to the county forester. He was a government man and said that if asked his official opinion on water-divining he would have to respond with a neutral, 'maybe'. But, off the record, what he had seen during his years of ministering to farmers and other landowners had convinced him that a good douser was at least the equal of geological surveys, rock soundings, and aerial photographs all put together. That is, if you wanted to find water, and not just spend some of the taxpayer's money.

As we went deeper into the woods, the diviner's talents were exhibited again and again. Strangely, I soon lost much of my original amazement at his powers. My thoughts were becoming preoccupied with contemplating the possible costs of the coming digging operations.

For there seemed to be springs all over the place, many of them just off the original pipeline. Each would have to be explored, and the plastic pipeline broken wherever one showed promise of delivering a reasonable flow. Everytime the douser found a new spring, I snapped off a dead branch and hammered it into the spot with a rock. An hour later, we left the woods near where we had entered. As a last favor, I asked the douser to find a likely spot in the front of the house to drill an artesian well if, for some reason, that ever became necessary. He did find such a place, though remarking that the vibrations from below were not felt so strongly by his stick when they came from so far beneath the surface. This was especially true, he added, when the detected water was flowing beneath many feet and thousands of pounds of dense bedrock.

When he, or his stick, finally narrowed it down to a precise point on the earth, I pounded in a large stake and asked him what I owed. "About two dollars", he answered. I handed him a five, thanking both him and my neighbor profusely. They said that they hoped they had been of service. Before they got into the car, the diviner reverently returned his instrument to its resting place in the trunk and closed the cover over it. Then the two gentlemen got into the car and slowly drove down the driveway, throwing large clouds of dry dust into the air behind them.
I duly investigated some of the springs the diviner had indicated with his bobbing wooden stick. Each one was marked with a twig near the point where it might be spliced into the existing line. A backhoe had come up into the woods and proceeded to excavate deep grave-like holes in the soft earth. As the hoe's narrow bucket scraped up a mouthful, the exposed layers of blue and gray clay would spall off a small section which would fall back into the deepening pit. Sometimes, a tear-like trickle of cloudy fluid might then ooze out as though a small wound had been opened. How much all these dribs and drabs would amount to together would determine whether the output of a given hole was sufficient to tie it in to the rest of the system. After three or four such craters were gouged from the floor of the forest, we stopped work to see whether any were filling with water. All were, but at a rate frustratingly slow. I called off the backhoe for that day and myself retreated for twenty-four hours before re-examining the holes. When I did so, I was disappointed to find only half a dozen inches in the best of them. So much for the springs.

I now got in touch with a locally known well driller who, several days later, backed in over the little bridge with his specialized rig: a long flat truck with an immense trussed boom atop. The resembled a massive rolling military weapon. Wide heavy steel tubes and ten-foot, solid shafted drill stems were draped on both sides of the boom. I pointed out to the drillers the stake I had driven at the divining rod's final nodding suggestion and left the men to set themselves up while I went away to pick up some supplies for another project.

When I returned little more than an hour later, the whole great mechanism was erect and clanking, the boom standing high, swaying with an easy rolling rhythm. From the surprisingly small puncture in the ground at which all the effort was directed, tiny brown and gray mudballs arched into the air a few feet, then splattered onto the adjacent soil. A small crater-like rim was forming from the accumulation of this wet debris. It was as though a large but slender subterranean animal were burrowing through the ground beneath us ejecting its refuse out behind it.

Of the two men involved with the rig, only one seemed to be paying any attention to it. His hand rested on a long lever, and his leg was propped up on a small steel staging projecting from the rear bumper. He seemed to be lost in thought, isolated from the surrounding world by the steady beat-beat of the diesel engine and the monotonous din of the shaft revolving in the ground. The other man sat calmly smoking a cigarette on a five gallon fuel can about twenty feet from the drilling apparatus.
Apparently interested in talking, the man on the gas can pointed out to me the large circular gage located by the collar through which the drill shaft was slowly descending. That gage, he informed me, showed what percentage of the weight of the rear half of the rig was bearing down on the drill head at any given instant. The softer the layer of material the bit was presently engaged in, the less downward pressure, along with turning and chewing, was needed to penetrate the layer. The needle of the gage was at that moment hovering between ten and fifteen on the percentage scale. Given that it was a twenty ton rig, with more or less half its weight already resting on the front tires, then about two or three thousand pounds of pressure were pushing down on the bit.

But, he resumed, that would change when we got through all the clay and muck and shale. Then the "fun" would begin. With upwards of fifty per cent pressure, about five tons, the larger nine-inch carbide bit now biting and chewing would be exchanged for a six-inch diamond studded bit. The heavy steel casing tubes, looking now so much like the ominous muzzles of heavy field artillery, would be hammer driven through the already drilled soft layers. This action would prevent those layers from collapsing in on the newly carved cylindrical channel. The new bit would undertake its grinding, augering task continually bathed and cooled by a stream of fresh water pumped down and then back up. The water would bring with it to the surface finely ground and powdered rock, forming a pasty mass as it sloughed onto the surrounding ground.

The talkative workman told me that most people entertained an interesting myth about the nature of artesian wells. They thought that when an underground vein or pocket or hopefully a small lake was finally struck by the relentless drill, a great geyser of water would foam up the tubular excavation. It would burst from the hole and drench men and machines before it could be capped. Actually, he said, very seldom did water in the shaft even come near approaching the surface. The only way one would know when water had been struck was to watch closely the pumped water already being disgorged from the hole in the ground and choked with rock dust. If there was a sudden, appreciable increase in this amount, it would indicate new underground sources augmenting the flow. And this is what the other man who was running the drilling rig was intently watching for.

As far as my own well was progressing, the shift in the operation from the larger bit to the smaller, diamond one took place when a depth of sixty-five feet had been reached. This was the point at which the clay, shale, and compressed mud gave way to dense, homogeneous bedrock. The first day of work also ended here. As I drove down to Bellows Falls early that evening, I closely scrutinized the deep gashes made by the approach roads to the Interstate highway cutting through the nearby topography. The multi-hued, striated masses thus exposed were representative, I gathered, of the bedrock the drillers back at the house had just penetrated. Here and there on the surface of this denuded rock set sparkling by the rays of the descending sun,
were sheens and glistens of steadily dripping water. I hoped it would not be too much longer before similar, yet perhaps more copious, sources found their way into the deepening shaft. It was seven dollars a foot going down, whether what was found was water or more pasty rock dust.

Work resumed early the next morning, the drill head advancing another ten or fifteen feet before anyone felt the urge to speak. Then my informant of the day before yielded up a few more details he had learned and experiences he had had during his days as a well-driller. For one thing, the highway department of the state of Vermont had hired some time ago a water diviner for its engineering staff. For whenever the state disrupted someone's water supply by its road-building activities, it was the state's legal obligation to renew that supply. They usually chose to do this by drilling new wells. And, to pick the sites of these new wells, they used their salaried diviner.

The man worked in the usual way, the story had it, with a rod fashioned from a bent fruitwood branch as his instrument. But this particular diviner, someday to be pensioned by the state highway department, was apparently a superman among diviners. For whenever his knarled wooden stick honed in on a really large aqueous deposit deep beneath the earth, the lifeless tool would shake and rear up and down in the diviner's hands. And then it would burst into flames! This was told by the well driller sitting on the gasoline can. I would have thought that the last thing a dry wooden stick would do on contact, spiritual or otherwise, with water, would be to catch on fire. If ethereal matters in any way corresponded with corporeal ones, water would quench the fire, not ignite it. But perhaps the correspondence between the two worlds in this instance worked in such a way that opposites attracted or at least initiated each other. Furthermore, there was no use in doubting the truth of the story, I was told. The public service diviner had polaroid photos to prove his claim.

Another tall tale I heard that morning concerned a school teacher who had built a house for himself and his family in the next town to the south of us. He had recently arrived in the county when he built the brand new structure, and he had waited until it was finished before trying to locate the water that would service it. That turned out to be a mistake.

The teacher hired just these drillers to set up their quivering rig and search for the precious stuff. Search they did. Five hundred and fifty feet down and almost four thousand dollars later, they had not found a single drop. Quite distraught, to say the least, the new homeowner halted the operation and begged them to try another spot. The drillers courteously obliged him, but another four thousand dollars further, the teacher was now absolutely besides himself.

Consider: already a new home to pay off, a young growing family in the roost, a new job which was not one of the highest paying. With great but wavering fortitude, he determined to give it one more try.
The teacher asked the drillers to try one more place. Under no circumstances was it to be near one of the old ones. Accordingly, the drillers lowered their rig, and reset and raised it at the new designated position. (The landowner always picks the site.) They put their pulleys and shafts into motion.

Twenty feet was all they went down. They had seen no signs of water thus far and neither had they any expectation of it at so shallow a depth. But the pacing young teacher had seen no water either. He stopped the drillers at twenty feet and walked off the site. Even this minute dry scratch in the surface had been too much for him. His nerve was shattered, and he could not bear to go on. Shortly afterward, he left town with his family and was never seen again. It was said that some arrangement had been made to deed his now almost worthless dwelling to the drilling company owner in lieu of payment for the barren holes in the ground.

Needless to say, by now I, myself, was sweating bullets. The grating mechanical monster was yet spinning at full blast. I remembered that a neighbor two or three miles up the road, the person nearest to me with a drilled well, had gone down about five hundred twenty feet, finally forced to settle for a total flow of two quarts a minute. And, at that, it was two quarts of very hard, mineral-laden water. I hoped that I would not end up paying some $3600 for that kind of result. My worries were beginning to get the better of me, so I decided to leave the drillers to their clanking dreadnaught for a time. I drove into the Falls for a prolonged lunch helped down with more than one cold brew.

Later that afternoon, I returned to the scene of action. As hot and dry as the weather was, my mouth was still dryer, the cold beers notwithstanding. As I parked the car and began to trudge up the driveway, I quickly saw that the whole drilling rig had disappeared. And so had the drillers. Maybe they thought that I, like the calamity-struck schoolteacher, had simply abandoned the site, not having the stomach or the wallet to suffer the consequences of a prolonged drilling operation.

Covering the he section of steel casing protruding from the wellhead was a large, upside-down plastic flower pot. This I removed to peer down into the humid depths of the hole. I could detect nothing but blackness. I threw a little pebble down the shaft and quickly put my ear to the opening. Nothing. Perhaps the pebble had been too small. I would not let myself face the possibility that the shaft had been too deep to hear the hit bottom. I poked around on the ground for another stone, perhaps the size of a marble. When I found one, I gingerly dropped it into the casing.

Seconds of silence. Plunk.

Now that I had done this and had counted the seconds of the fall, I could not for the life of me remember the simple highschool formula to figure out how far in feet the fall had been. Not only could I not
guess the distance down the water was, but I had no idea how much of it there was, or how deep the well went beneath the surface of the water level making the 'plunk'. Perhaps what was plunking down there was just a puddle remaining from their pumped cooling supply. But the drillers would return, for I saw scattered around the site some wrenches and other paraphernalia which belonged to them.

I was right. Fifteen minutes later, I spied a cloud of dust rapidly boiling up the town road. Then an old blue pickup swept across the bridge and over the driveway. My heart was in my mouth as the men stopped their truck with a skid just in front of me. They jumped out and immediately set about retrieving their equipment.

"What's the story?", I asked hesitantly of my confidant of the past two seat-filled days.

"You were lucky", he replied, not even looking at me as he busily packed away the tools. "Yep, ten gallons a minute at a hundred and thirty feet. Yep, you were lucky."

With that, he popped into the truck where his silent partner was silently waiting. The two quickly spun their truck around and wheeled down the driveway and out onto the road. The ubiquitous dust cloud followed them out of view. Presumably they were in a hurry to get to their next job. As far as I was concerned, however, I had had enough experience with that particular line of work. At least the bank would be more than willing to lend good money for a good well. There were few better investments in the State of Vermont than a strong, certain flow of water. At least, not that year.

Meanwhile, I sense that I had better get back to my own business, that is, the business of this thesis.

VIII

I left my tenants alone in their well-supplied little home for a number of months. Not returning until April of 1971, I was in Cambridge building minute model buildings to be tested in a wind tunnel. A research company was interested in testing the aerodynamic effects winds circumventing the full-scale originals of these buildings would have on innocent pedestrians passing by. Following this lucrative job undertaken in a small business building in Central Square, I returned to a design class at MIT. The job had left me some
funds with which to think about doing some more building in Vermont. Thus, as I sat drawing up a remodeled Southend tenement, I saw visions of a new massive structure of concrete to be situated this time in front of the house. It would be tied into the rest somehow through a connection with the front door to be made at a later time; there were to be no renovations undertaken on the existing house while people were still living there.

At first, the hypothetical structure was planned to end up as a so-called capped-off cellar hole. A full foundation would first be built; then, a deck and roofing material would be placed over that until time and money allowed a superstructure to rise over all. Under these circumstances, a further possibility struck me. No where around the original house were any flat grassy areas, that is, lawns. I could tar and waterproof the proposed new deck to a sufficient degree to sod it over with six inches or so of loam and grass. Then I could step right out my front door onto a scrupulously flat stretch of lawn which had the added advantage of resting several feet above the surrounding terrain. Thus could be avoided problems of wash and burrowing animals. Furthermore, just such a raised deck might soak in a bit more sunlight than would otherwise be possible on the generally north facing slope. Add to all this the convenience and utility of a new garage and workshop resting just beneath the green turf-covered flat.

But plans changed. After, and for the first time, I finally managed to come up with a set of drawn plans which my carpenter friend, Barry, could begin to form into a gray-concrete reality, I decided to go whole-hog into a fully grown structure. Barry was to get the foundation in while I was tied up in another job in Boston, and then the two of us would build the rest of the structure above that. I had found all throughout the area all sorts of used building materials, un-used but wrongly cut insulated windows, and a whole barnful of old timbers. Stories of the construction of that vast addition could perhaps fill many pages. However, my purpose here is, or should be,
to tell how the new structure would relate to the old. Now, especially, it would relate to the "wall-zone".

If I ever had a feeling for some 'axis' of either circulation or dimension running through the old house, its direction would run the long way, through the original 24-foot length of the cabin. The original front door opened right into the middle of the extensive flow of foot traffic from the kitchen/bathroom area into the depressed living room/woodstove area and back again. With the new addition, however, it was apparent that the main traffic pattern would be from the enlarged kitchen area, past the bathroom, through the front door/connective situation, and into the spaces, large and small, of the new building. If that was to be the case - as, indeed, it turned out - then the living room area, with its soapstone heater and its sixteen-inch lower level, would no longer constitute a major terminus of the traffic flow. It would become merely a small cul-de-sac off of it. For a time, it would be a necessary diversion off the main path because of the need to feed the stone stove with wood. But, total electric heat was in the works for the complete older section, and that would obviate many further visits to the stove.

To me, this change of status of the living room in the circulation plan implied an opportunity to actually change the function of this area. I thought now to make the living room area into a real "room", for once, not just an ill-defined, amoeba-like entity labeled, "area". Following through on this wish would imply a radical change in the past nature of the "wall-zone". No longer would a feeling of open-ness and space be so important here because that quality would have been provided for in the addition. What was more necessary now was privacy and a sense of separation between spaces.

So, Barry and I decided to accomplish several needed improvements at the same time. One of these was to move the range and the refrigerator from the kitchen's rear wall in order to gain some usable space. Another was to give the living room a sense of detachment from
the rest of the old house, as was described above. Given these aims, we dismantled the work table and some of the trellis-like shelves. In their place, we built a six-foot wall not directly down the center of the "wall-zone", but on a line closer into the living room. This cut into the sunken area somewhat, so when the new wall got to the center column, it made a turn back towards the kitchen. This seemed to have the effect of giving a certain feeling of enclosure to the kitchen area, not necessarily a bad result. The turn thus completed provided a natural niche into which I could shove the refrigerator and range. The wide eight-foot double step down towards the soapstone stove remained but now opened from a new corridor-like space outlined by the path connecting the old kitchen and the new addition. This seemed a more natural orientation for the old lowered area, partially because the corridor could act as a service route to bring wood into the stove from the addition. All these changes were stimulated by the construction of a wall which, even with its final turn, ran to a full length of not quite ten feet. Neither did it attain a full floor to ceiling height, being cut short six feet above the level of the kitchen floor.

A bright idea struck me as to how to make use of the small space remaining between the top of this wall and the ceiling. I placed there two rheostate-controlled fans, making sure to shim them well with vibration absorbing pads. With these fans, I planned to facilitate the passage of warmed air from the woodstove over the new wall into the remaining areas of the old section, particularly up into the loft area. As I said, a bright idea, but one not remarkably successful. I had forgotten to include in my calculations the need for a return air duct. Thus, as a device to improve heat circulation, the twin fans were a failure. The system, however, did have one redeeming feature. It could very rapidly clear the air of smoke, say, from an overdone casserole. In fact, it could do this in record time. It was necessary only to open two windows, one behind the fans, the other out in front somewhere. The fans were then tuned up to a turbo-prop pitch, and out whooshed the foul air. In a matter of seconds. And, if it was cold enough outdoors, the ambient temperature inside dropped in a
Meanwhile, the other side of the new wall, facing into the living room, was converted into a safe harbor for wayward books and magazines. A heavy three-by-eight column already rose from the basement, its previous function there being to support the framing system of the sunken floor when it had been installed almost a year before. Now, as the column passed up by the rough-sawn pine cladding the new wall, it formed a good barrier against which to run bookshelves. On one side of the thick section of wood were merely shallow shelves for large photos, magazines, and the like. This whole set-up remained until several days ago from this writing. What happened next will be mentioned in the concluding section of the thesis.

The following winter, of 1971-72, it occurred to me to increase even further the privacy of the sunken living room, for now it was serving more often as a bedroom. Accordingly, the wall of the previous summer took another turn. This continued the original intention of spanning the width of the old house and cut off the living room still more. If I then turned the wall back a bit, now into the living room cum bedroom, I would form another niche. This one would correspond to the one on the other side of the wall, which currently housed the range and refrigerator. In this new niche, I could put deep shelves to store clothing and other personal items relevant to a bedroom. All this was done, but the wide step down into the sunken area maintained its original eight-foot dimension so that the upper shelves facing the bedroom could be utilized more easily. These new meanderings of the wall, unlike those immediately preceding, encompassed the whole dimension between the floor and the ceiling. This naturally allowed for more shelf space and increased whatever potential there was in this space for privacy. But, in addition, a more important aim was accomplished, for it appeared that some additional roof support was needed once the connection was made between the large addition and the smaller house.

The summer following this winter's work saw the fitting out of the grand addition with fully enclosed bedrooms. These were more con-
servative than the earlier spaces, and made me think about what I had just done in the way of adding privacy to the older living room/bedroom in the small house. It seemed that my effort there was superfluous. These thoughts I mulled over for quite a while because I did not want to rip down a piece of work I had just put up. It would almost seem that the whole thing had been a mistake in the first place. Philosophically, it seemed to me that every past effort should at least leave some small imprint on the present. Thus, to maintain my philosophical integrity, I decided to let the new shelves be, and also the last inward (vis-a-vis the living room/bedroom) turn of the wall. This would support the shelves and also support the roof. Therefore, only one stretch of the floor-to-ceiling wall need come out. This would open up the room again to some extent and have the added benefit of allowing the shelves to be used from both sides of the "wall-zone". The new deep shelves had been almost completely useless before except for the very front edge, for they had been at a level too high from the sunken floor. Even the availability of the eight-foot step had proved to be of little help, since it was very difficult to keep balance on it when reaching far overhead.

Furthermore, and need it be added, removing the relatively new section of wall would act to strengthen the visual relationship between the now-a-living-room space, then-a-bedroom space, and the rest of the older section, including the kitchen area. This latter space had just undergone an enlargement of its own, using the concrete masses described so many pages ago. A large kitchen like this one seemed to draw and make a pleasant gathering place for many more people than did the old cramped one. This had one important implication for the sunken area: persons finding themselves in the kitchen often wanted to amble over to this nearby area to withdraw from the noise and bustle of cooking, washing, etc. Then these same persons, or perhaps others, once seated by the comfortable warm stove did not want to move, but also did not want to lose track of the goings-on in the kitchen. Thus, I felt that the place had to be opened up a bit.

In many ways, the four years of my tenure in this abode represented an 'epicycle' which had itself turned 360 degrees while
at the same time it was engaged in a journey around another, larger wheel. This larger wheel represented a thirty-year cycle which had now come around almost a full swing. The little cabin, now a house - squiggles of walls here, a nub of a loft popping out there, a huge blob of an addition oozing out the front door - this almost living and breathing organisms has again the same open plan it had all those years ago.

It may sound as though the structure, itself, had some sort of inner motivation which was somehow determined to express itself. Perhaps so, yet not in a literal sense. Every move or change in the cabin was made with what I thought was a rational reason behind it. The reason was always my own reason, even if some prior compromise had to reached with someone else's reason, request, or opinion. Therefore it is I, the designer, to use the old terminology, who seems to have been holding to an inner course, if not precisely an inner motivation. This inner course seems to have been inspired by the conjuncture of my lifestyle and the physical attributes of the building, itself. In one way, this situation is fortunate, since, for the foreseeable future, I will be the one who lives there. In satisfying others who may have rented or lived in the house, it has come to seem that I have been really satisfying myself once again, for I have never actually regretted a design move I made ostensibly to fit another's purpose.

But it would be useful to have a technique whereby these inner reactions a person has to their particular setting could be more openly and directly explored. By this time, I tend to believe that, given the existence of some of the particular physical attributes of the old house, I would always react to them in almost the same manner. That is, of course, if it were always in my province to react or to change or to manipulate the house as I wanted. For, even though the new addition now presents a very large space for my use, I still want the openness of the older section to remain. I give as my reason for this opinion that it would not feel right to step from the new large space of the addition to a cramped space in the older side. So, one can
almost assume that, no matter what other circumstances may have come to exist, that old section, with its "wall-zone", would have inevitably come around again to an open plan. In some way, it was "in the cards", given the reaction between myself as a personality and that particular house as a physical environment.

Now, I do not want to make more of the inevitability of this reaction than necessary. But, suppose that it were even partly true. Then I, for one, would like to know about it and know about it before I went off designing in half a dozen other directions. In other words, a certain amount of self-knowledge would have been useful under the circumstances.

Thus, we get to the movie, "Diane". For from this film a great deal of knowledge was generated in a unique way about and for the subject of the work and the makers of it. It is the story of one, particular person who experienced a violent, depressive reaction to the change of physical and social environment she experienced when she moved from South Dakota to New York City. I do not feel it is important here to describe the specifics of her background and the details of what did or did not happen to her in New York. This is not to censor the content of the film, but to direct our focus more to the making of it. For, in brief, the film is instructive to the outsider who views it, and, as I mentioned, it also said a great deal to its subject and to the people who shot it.

What went on here was an attempt by several persons to interpret the troubled life of another person by producing a kind of biographical document about that life. The words were the subject's words, and many of the shooting locations were ones which she suggested to the film-makers. Some of these related to Diane's style of life and dress as a semi-successful New York model; how and where in the city she sometimes found herself; and even included a put-on cocktail party Diane threw for the purposes of the film.

After the New York location shots, we cut into the film previously shot scenes from the other, past environment to illustrate
the comments she was making about that other life. And, during certain verbal descriptions of the past life, we would cut back to visual scenes of life in New York. An important point was that it was not necessary to be explicit about the connection between what we injected into the film and the particular words and memories Diane used when she spoke about some aspect of her present or past life. We reacted to her words with our reactions. The difference between the two types of reactions was that we were using visual and auditory motifs which by themselves would not have had particular relevance to the observations our subject was making about the people or places around her. She was reminiscing, while we were more or less throwing together odd bits and snatches of images and sounds.

All this led to a greater, at least different, truth or view of Diane's life situation. At the time of the film, that greater or added dimension led everyone concerned with the production to a fuller view of the differences between the country and the city and the way we individually reacted to one or the other. It is possible, in retrospect, that it was the act of seeing and hearing flat, stark statements about real-life experience appearing on celluloid which led to the additional dimension of the portrait. Not that the film was in any way a sentimental tear-jerker. Aside from the somewhat sardonic, or wry, or at times self-deprecating statements about her life, there were few, if any, overt sentiments expressed. A few such affects, however, were added by the film-makers.

The film comes across the way it does, I think, because it is intensely personal and revealing of a state of mind without seeming narcissistic or clinical to the point of irrelevance or boredom. What gives it its wider appeal is the collaborative effort of the subject who made the statements and the film-makers who reacted with their own images.

How like a parallel to a classical, couch-bound psycho-analysis this may sound. Here is the patient on the couch (on the screen) who describes an incomprehensible segment of a dream (a memory from
South Dakota). The analyst does not try to explain or interpret at first, but he reacts to it in his own mind. He carefully follows his further reactions as they proceed. Whatever associations come up in connection with this or that statement of the patient, the analyst will note and then express some of them out loud for the patient to hear and to react to further. Presumably, of course, the analyst, through his or her own analysis, is supposed to be sufficiently free of hangups so that the spoken response to the dream segment will relate to the patient’s expressed bit of data. And now we are back to one of the fundamental holdings of the thesis: that people are generally alike enough to each other in basic ways, so that they can help each other expose important facts and perceptions previously hidden to themselves.

Rather than discussing it in detail, I would rather show the film to an audience and let the viewers draw their own conclusions about how and whether it may be relevant to this thesis. One reason for this feeling is that after the shooting sessions in New York and the initial editing, my personal participation in making the film practically came to an end. Some personal squabbles had come between us, the makers of the film. As a result, beyond the knowledge of the origin of certain general situations in the film, the "reactions" to Diane’s words and descriptions as expressed in the film were not specifically my own, although they were all culled from footage which I had helped to make. At the scale of the minute detail of the final editing, the “reactions” were those of one of my ex-partners. Therefore, I can describe the theory behind our making of this type of film, and, to an extent, I can sit back and judge how well the theory was followed and how well it worked out in terms of its objective. But, as I say, it would be very difficult for me to discuss the fine-grain, two or three second editing decisions which really constitute the film as it appears on the screen.

However, I can and will try to follow through on a similar exercise of my own. It will be in a medium other than film, the one of
narrative fiction. In some ways, the aims of the two exercises are similar, to investigate the interaction of people and their environment in novel ways. But, otherwise, the orientations of the film and the written scenario which follows are greatly different. The film, in my opinion, really tries to focus primarily on the person first and then her traumas and frustrations relating to her environment. The narrative writing, on the other hand, wants to deal with the environment as its main subject and only incidentally with a specific individual. The narrative seeks to use the characteristics and activities of an individual, in this case a fictional one, as a means of illuminating and predicting difficult or unsuccessful features of a planned, but as yet unbuilt, physical environment.

Thus, I think we are prepared to enter Part II of the thesis.

END OF PART I
Six vellum sheets sit before me depicting in some detail a multi-use development on the site of the old Watertown Arsenal. A cursory overview of the drawings tells me that there are three separate and distinct built-up zones planned for the forty-seven acres. Spreading around and beyond these zones is an open space which has in it paths, roads, green areas, and poskets of forest and brush. Also found in the open space is a large shed-like structure servings as a place for covered recreational activities.

As I do much writing and thinking in the open, anonymous spaces of the Boston Public Library, I take with me there reduced reproductions of the original plans. These glossy white photostats I am studying now and I must say that they are small and eyestraining. The six shiny prints measure only about eleven by eighteen inches. The originals from which these copies were made are more than twice the size of these. Their lines are thicker and more intense, making them much easier to read than their minaturized copies. The scales of the drawings on the originals ranged from 200 feet represented by one inch of drawn line all the way up to four feet to the inch. But the reproductions now spread on the
library table are yet again half this size. Thus, opening my five fingers on the site plan, I note that the span between the thumb and little finger covers very nicely the two thousand running feet of building, road, and grass lying innocently beneath. A similar stunt tried on the land-use plan of sheet number one and drawn to a scale half that of the site plan buries the whole Arsenal and most of the surrounding neighborhood easily under my hand.

Enough, for now, on the phenomenology of the designer's plan drawings: better, more on what I propose to do with them. I see my whole purpose in this project manifesting itself finally and uniquely in the act of making changes in my drawings. To me, this is what it all comes down to. These drawings must be improved somehow to make them more responsive to the persons who might live or work in this place if the drawings were ever realized physically. If this statement bespeaks my primary purpose, then a primary question I must raise is: how shall I go about making these changes and improvements? What standards can I use? To whom can I go for reaction and feedback except to other professionals or community groups or zoning boards, etc? I lament, why is there no Everyman apartment dweller or store clerk who can speak for his or her peers and unflinchingly declare, "Yes, the position of the door in that hallway looks good, and I know it will work for me." Or he may retalliate, "No, a stairway starting here and going there is little short of blasphemous." There simply are no such ombudsmen to take on the client's role. The designer may never know precisely who his client is or will be. If he does know, it is unlikely the client will perceive and react to the signifigant details of the plan. We went through this many pages ago. The conclusion: I, the designer, will be the judge and jury here. Once the planning guides, the local ordinances, and the manuals of good and standard practice have been consulted, it will be up to me, Mr. Everyman's personal designer.

And should this not be so? Should not the arrangements and the mitifs, the subtlties of design as well as the more obvious, be
left to a professional, cultivated sense of taste and order? Once, almost ten years ago, while I was earnestly and naively trying to absorb the fundamentals of classical music composition, my teacher made a telling remark. He said that, in the end, all that separated the great works of music from the merely competent boiled down to the degree of the composer's sense of taste. "Taste is all", he pontificated. Lest we forget, a well-known composer of architectural "music", himself considered one of the greats, has let it be known to all who cared: "God is in the details". And why not, one is tempted to ask. An answer, perhaps crass, that the modern age gives is that people do not inhabit great works of music but inevitably end up living and working in pieces of architecture, great or otherwise.

But the question of taste should not be merely shunted aside, left only as an egocentric concern or attribute of the so-called artist. There may be other good reasons than just the ones of aesthetic cleverness or ingenuity which influence those works - whether of music or architecture - thoughtful persons might refer to as "great". That much overused term may have little or no meaning for us today, but the concept of "taste" may yet have value for our discussion. For it seems a good word to describe a certain distillation of degree-of-fit some given human project has when it attempts to answer some perceived human need. The need may be for a new shelter or for a new configuration of words or musical notes. It may not be a need which is necessarily crying out for want of an answer; no one may ever have realized the need existed before it suddenly came to light when an accidental act fulfilled it. Whatever the source of the need, to me, what is critical is the quality of the response. Does the response fit the need or doesn't it? A next proposition would logically have it that any serious or important need must be met or fit by an appropriately serious response. In terms of an architectural problem, a need merely defined and thus delimited by a made-for-the-masses specification can hardly be dealt with by a serious, let alone original, response. So it would seem.
Given the concerns discussed here and at the start, my job is to make a fitting response to a basic set of needs. The context of my attempt is the more general problem of what to do with the site of the Watertown Arsenal. Specifications and recommendations have already sifted down to me via official pronouncements accompanied by professional surveys and projections. Much of these have been accounted for in my first set of plans, the ones which are now to be operated upon. I want my new set of plans or at least a few small parts of them to really fit any human life which might someday come to inhabit the built place. In other words, it is time to inject some "taste" into my responses.

"How is one to accomplish this? Following below are some notes, reported here verbatim. They positively blew from the electric typewriter during a recent 60-second barrage of brainstorming:

"The next step will be to take a try at investigative imagination. I have at my disposal a landscape which must be peopled and lived in. I must imagine a person or set of persons, and then, given the constraints and possibilities of the "landscape" depict their lives in it in as real a way as possible. Details must come, where possible, from the realm of this given "landscape". Nothing can be added ad hoc to explain this or rationalize that. No deux ex machina of outside circumstance. Also, wherever possible, action, motion, direction - all must derive from the landscape of the plan. To delineate what grows from it and what is motivated from stimulus outside it - that is an important distinction to make. A novelist's approach is called for: here, the story you are telling depends for its sense of versamilitude on the details of background, of landscape. It is also a novel experiment, to characterize the backround, to make it the figure against the ground of the people who have come to inhabit it."
Samuel Noahswood.

Sam Noahswood stretched and glanced at himself through the rear-view mirror. He took a comb from his pocket and ran it twice through his hair. When the traffic light suddenly changed, he replaced it hurriedly in his breast pocket and prepared to move on.

Driving out Storrow Drive from his State Street office had not been a long journey, but a gritty breeze had caught up with him as he got onto the Soldiers Field Road section of the highway. Feeling his mussed hair, he quickly wondered where he should park his coupe in the massive five-story garage waiting for him at the end of his trip. He could leave it there in Level Three for the present and move it up top later in the evening. He would like to leave topside in the first place for he found it extremely unpleasant to start a new day off by making his way around and through the damp concrete layers of the garage. And there would be no need of shelter the next morning, he decided as he glanced at the clear sun declining westward over the river.

The next light blinked green at the corner of Greenough Boulevard and Soldiers Field. Sam drove swiftly through the interchange onto the next stretch of highway. There were no median barriers here, and his view of the dark river water on his left was unobstructed. He felt cooler, too, a phenomenon which almost always occurred at this point. He had noticed it when he first started following this route on his return trip to Watertown. That had been at the beginning of the summer. Perhaps, he thought, the coolness had to do with the way the wind came over the water now that his route had shifted northerly following the intersection. He was still driving beneath the late afternoon sunlight here, but it was nothing compared to the Storrow Drive section. At 5:30 on a summer's afternoon, that road
seemed to Sam one of the hottest he had ever traveled. There, he
drove due west and the sun beat on him through the windshield in
hot liquid waves. Now, on Greenough, the traffic was lighter, and
a coolness seeped up to him from the river. Sam sometimes associated
this quality of sudden chill with the dankness of the garage to
which he was now headed.

The sparser traffic here and less direct rays of the sun
allowed Sam to notice some familiar vehicles traveling near him
on the road. These were some of his fellow parkers in the cement
monolith, he realized. And this brought his thoughts back to the
parking situation. Why park on Level Three to begin with, he asked
himself. He was only going to want to move the car away from there
later. But he knew the answer to that one. It was the same conclusion
he had come to for the better part of the past week. He knew exactly
what was going to happen. Parking near one of the steel firedoors,
he would quickly leave the dingy subterranean atmosphere of the
covered level. He would enter a low concourse area of shopfronts,
benches, and small exhibition stands. A pleasant change from the
garage, he would note. Eventually, he would make his way to one of
the elevators. But, before ascending into his residence tower, he
would make sure to pass one of the stores in particular. It was a
small boutique wedged in between two larger chain stores. In the
window of the boutique were hanging strands of colored trinkets and
weird little amulets. Small plastic boxes with flashing lights in-
side a translucent face sat on a shelf beneath. Five days ago, Sam
had noticed a new employee bending over into this display space.
She had been busily arranging a straight row of little pastel
candles along the bottom of the window.

Sam first saw her as he was rushing past the boutique to get
to the food market at its side. He had hastily come down from his
eighth floor apartment to gather up a few spices necessary for an
omelet he wanted to prepare. The fact that his blond guest upstairs
anxiously awaited his return did not prevent Sam from deciding to
hesitate a few extra seconds before the window of the boutique. During
those seconds, he made a mental note to himself to do more of his
shopping on that floor.

Entertaining a similar train of thought each day since, Sam made a temporary home for his little coupe every afternoon on the third level. This intention came to him at approximately the same instant each time during his drive home: just as he turned right off of Greenough onto Arsenal Street. It was also when the three towers of his particular residence/shopping/parking complex hove into his view. Traffic always slowed here as other vehicles converged onto Arsenal Street. Although many of these were headed into Watertown Square, Sam was again able to pick out vehicles he recognized as having the same destination as he.

But, if he recognized the cars, he also realized that he probably did not know the persons driving them. For the five-tiered parking structure served many more than only the residents of the apartments and condominiums physically attached to it. And there were many of these ranked just across the concourse levels or stacked above the garage in towers. Most of the residents Sam did know well enough to nod at when he met them in the elevators or shops or in the garage, itself. However, there were other low clusters of dwellings to the south of it and yet others grouped atop a low flat structure immediately to the west. The residents of these also used the parking facility. To make matters more difficult, some of Sam's fellow parkers were always pulling into the garage just as Sam would be driving out each weekday morning. These were the proprietors and sales people employed in the concourse shops, and perhaps a few of their early customers.

Sam was aware of all these people mainly because he knew the cars if not the drivers. The faces he met in the vast gray spaces of the garage were seldom familiar to him. Once in a while, a lively feminine profile he happened to spot on one of the many tennis courts of the development he would see again elsewhere. She would be walking perhaps along one of the concourse levels adjoining the garage. But now the lithe young figure of the Saturday sunshine would be hidden beneath a pressed business suit. Her once fresh complexion was here turned garish beneath the intense storefront
display lamps.

These casual, disappointing failures or shocks of recognition did not really bother Sam so much. No, it was more the young male strangers he encountered sometimes in the parking garage. This was the other side of the coin of living in the midst of so many attractive young females, he often reasoned. For they were sought after by men other than just the ones who, like Sam, lived within easy shooting distance. He could never decide when he noticed a slightly disheveled person hovering around a shiny new sports car whether this person belonged here or not. Perhaps he was one of a bunch of kids down from the Square who had come here to have some fun. On the other hand, perhaps not.

A large number of Sam's neighbors were in the same well-appointed boat he was. Mostly young people in their twenties or thirties, they held good jobs in the downtown law offices and insurance companies. Most had their own bright little compact autos, and a stereo system, and skis, and whatever else there was of the paraphernalia common to those leading a life ascendant. And this left Sam, along with most of the young persons he knew in this development, living in what he could only call a well-heeled ghetto. There was working class Brighton just over the river on one side, while working class Watertown squatted on the other side, just up Arsenal.
Street. On the south was the river, which was a consolation; but, on the north, was highway and seemingly endless industrial landscape. He remembered the real-estate advertisement in the Sunday Globe: "A Brand New Funfilled Multi-use Community Just For The Young Funloving Modern American." He quickly noted the address: Arsenal Street, Watertown. Arsenal Street. The name was particularly descriptive. Another description of their isolated position was an island surrounded by hostile straits.

These thoughts were on Sam's mind as he made a quick left off Arsenal and swung through the west gates of the development. He drove slowly past a hundred feet of low shrub bushes, then stopped, flicking his turn signal to right. A red convertible just leaving the garage turned and drive past him on its way out to the street. He waited for it to pass sitting in the shade of the high parapets of the parking structure. Sam felt a quick foretaste here of the cool dankness of the inner layers of the garage.

He now turned in to it and became engulfed for a few seconds in gloom until his eyes became used to the pale, low-contrast setting. He continued past the rows of parked vehicles to the ramp. Through the clerestory windows on his right, he could see shafts of sunlight slanting down on the rushing traffic of Arsenal Street. On his left and continuing into the garage structure was deepening gloom. It was punctuated only by chrome trim flashing reflections from the street. He got to the ramp and negotiated a series of short twists and straightaways until he spotted the huge red figure three of his level. Recently he had sometimes felt trapped in this sequence of wheel-turns. He saw himself spiraling endlessly up to the left, finally alighting on a level overlooking the whole world. He knew his attention always strayed on the way up the ramp. Coming down was more of a challenge, more dangerous as he let his speed increase in stabs and jerks. It was also more fun.

Sam maneuvered around the narrow lanes of the third level until he found an open space somewhere near the exit door he wanted. He pulled into it, turned off the ignition, and, gathering his briefcase up by the handles, he got out of the coupe. As he fiddled with
his car keys, he made out a crouching figure about fifty feet away. He quickly thought, here was that problem again, how to deal with strangers, how to know which reaction to them was the right one. It boiled down to the question of how to know them for who they were or what they wanted. These thoughts passed through his mind as he pretended to fumble with his car keys for a few seconds longer. Perhaps that youthful Brando-type over there by the Volvo was a car thief awaiting his departure before springing in to action. On the other hand, perhaps he was only a new playmate of one of Sam's own evening companions of the week before.

This latter intuition made the point for Sam, and he gave up his speculations. How could he ever know who the hell anyone was around here? Letting the matter pass, he dropped his keys into his suit pocket and walked on. He approached the red steel firedoor, conscious of his deliberately calm steps. He was now thinking about another related problem which often bugged him about this place: its rampant incestuousness. Here they all were, less than a thousand people living on almost fifty acres. But the combinations and permutations they found and made with each other seemed endless. This question seemed all the more irksome to Sam when he sometimes stood alone gazing idly from his eighth floor living room. His glance would cover the river moving in the near distance and the suburbs stretching out to the south and west. Now he would sense again that there were moats all around this handsome new island of concrete. There were the roads, the industrial wastelands, the nondescript triple-decked working neighborhoods.

And we go and return to this island, he would think. We are stuck here with each other. And with our charming little boutiques and our fashionable stores and our private clubs. And in the monotonous, vaguely fevered round of the same tennis partners, drinking companions, lovers....

He thought, there were other islands like this one all around the city and scattered through the suburbs. Sam wondered
always ended up admitting to himself that this was as good a place as any. The rent was affordable, it was clean, there were many facilities. And, he mused, with certain kinds of jobs', you have to say you live at certain kinds of addresses. You had to get an image across to your clients. The chain of thoughts on this subject usually terminated at this point. There could be no return in carrying it too far.

One relief to this feeling of forced seclusion Sam often felt was the presence of the river. Many warm Sunday afternoons, he found himself walking idly along the shore, reminded that this was one of the most important reasons that he had moved here. The Charles flowed placidly past the banks of the development, coming from the southwest somewhere. The slightly rank-smelling water continued then past Watertown, and appearing to drive a thickening wedge between the shores of Boston and Cambridge, eventually made its way to the bay. To Sam, and, he assumed, to many others here, the river was a true godsend. It seemed to touch their sequestered island as it came and went from them. It brought lives other than their own to its shores.

The residents of the developments could see the river when they were many miles away high up in their Boston offices. They merely had to hesitate a few seconds to gaze out an inoperable skyscraper window. From either office or home, Sam, himself, saw there a continuity and a flow: rowing crews glided silently upstream and back down during late Spring afternoons. In the summer, strolling along the shore, he could notice string green plants and sodden branches moving by at a pace much slower than the clouds overhead. When the active life of the development's clubs and little discotiques wasn't calling him, Sam often pondered on this natural circumstance beneath his window. He felt fortunate to have a riverview apartment, although he realized many of his friends would have opted for a flat on the tower's opposite side. They wanted to see the lights of Boston, they would tell him. But he could never understand why they wanted to look right back on the place to which they had just sold eight hours of their life. A fascination with evil, he supposed, and he left it at that.
Sam Noahswood yanked open the heavy, steel-jacketed fire door and walked through the doorway. He left behind the low gray cavern of parking level three. A new world of colors and lights struck him as he crossed the threshold. Carmine tiles of quarried stone covered the floor. Above him, a latticework of thin wood strips was suspended from the ceiling. A dark void was behind the wood strips, but here and there, intense spotlights pierced the blackness. They created fuzzy circles of light on the patterned floor. Somewhat straight ahead of him, Sam could see the hazy orange light of the passing afternoon through large plate glass windows.

He walked quickly past display windows brightly lit and ringed with cosmetic bottles and shaving gear. These were on his right side. On the left, an alcove broke the parallel length of lighted displays. There was a circular counter in the center of this alcove, a young woman standing in the middle of it. Her back was turned to Sam, but he could see that she was busy distributing cigarette packs in a rack beneath the glass counter top. Beyond the alcove, the wall of display windows continued as before. Now, neatly arranged on shelves behind the glass, were pairs of boots and cowboy skirts and jackets with tassles hanging from their seams.

From both sides of the corridor and from above, the intense light of the spotlights streamed down on Sam. He felt rather than saw an oppressive difference between these hot yellow spotlights and the warm dusty afternoon light he could see ahead through the plate windows.

He was leaving now the corridor from the garage exit. He stood for a moment at the junction where the corridor joined the main concourse. From this point, Sam could look through the large windows over the roofs of the housing clusters just before him. A
dusty haze hung in the distance over the suburb of Newton. Turning around, he could see the length of bright display windows and the spotlights randomly deployed in the wood strip ceiling. Now Sam could define the curious depression he felt whenever he stepped from the garage into the bright lights and saw the glowing panoramic windows ahead. The fact was, he just did not want to be inside this building on a fine afternoon. The view from the glowing plate-glass ahead tantalized him, the spotlights warmed him. He wondered, why couldn’t he just step through the great transparent pane into the real thing. He had had enough such teasing throughout the day from the large tinted windows of his office building.

Enough. There was something he had to do. He headed to his left now and started down the concourse. On his right for a short distance continued the plate glass windows. Sam did not study the view they presented although he was aware when they ended and he was again enclosed on both sides. A few feet beyond this point, Sam knew to angle his path a bit into the center of the concourse. A constriction took place here. On the right were the doorways into two apartments forming finger-like abutments off the concourse. Protecting the doorways from the foot traffic along the concourse was a screen jutting perpendicularly out from the wall. Just opposite this protuberance on the other wall were the doors of the elevators. There was often one or two persons with bundles in their arms standing before these doors. Sam knew they were usually waiting for an elevator up or down to another concourse floor. Once in a while, he recognized one of the persons standing there as a neighbor of his up on one of the floors of the tower. If this person did not have too much to carry he or she would usually have a key in their hand. This was because only residents of the towers could open the elevator doors on a tower floor. And when several of the residents were fumbling with their keys and their packages and their brief cases as the elevator ascended in jerks and stops, a standard joke would arise among them. Someone would remark sardonically how they had always wanted to be a member of an exclusive key club. A short laugh or a rueful groan was the
usual response.

So Sam steered his way past the doorway screens and the waiting people. In more thoughtful, less hurried, moods, he would sometimes note that there were two sides to this problem of obstacles in the path of rapid pedestrian traffic of the concourse. They were definitely a pain in the neck, especially on a crowded weekend afternoon and he was in a hurry to get up to his apartment to shave and shower. On the other hand, the little knots of waiting people provided some relief and sense of scale to the four hundred foot long throw of the concourse. Sam could see the little swarms of waiting people up in front of him and then he knew roughly how far he had to go to his elevator. He could estimate by the size of these knots whether he would have much wait for a cab going up or down, and he could plan any last second stops on the concourse. All the little people spread along the giant's yardstick, he would comment to himself.

Sam took a certain professional pride whenever he felt himself able to make what he thought was an objective observation about the building he lived in. It and many other parts of the development were many times the topic of end of the day conversation in one of the little bars scattered through the concourse levels. Sam knew that many of the residents now considered themselves amateur architectural critics. They thought it their privilege as they were the first generation of occupants within the new complex. They would sit around discussing this feature or that, and many times Sam thought that he or a companion had come up with a very shrewd comment. The comments were often right on the nose because, he estimated over a beer, they were all based upon personal experience. Sam also knew that none of the architects of the building were among the residents of the towers of his complex, so he was unlikely to become engaged with them in conversation. There was one other similar complex on the fifty acre development, several thousand feet away. Sam doubted the development architects lived there either. He doubted this because he knew of no architects whatsoever who lived in either place. Come to think of it, this was strange because almost all the
other professions were represented here, even though there did
seem to be a preponderance in law and business.

Just past the doorways, Sam slowed his brisk pace. Ambling by
a large shoe store on his left, he peered first at one pair set
up on clear plastic stands, then another. Next, he crossed the thirty
foot concourse to survey the view from the plate windows which at
this point had resumed their luminous presence. He walked slowly along
the lengthy panes. Shadows from the apartment towers abuting the
concourse fell across the landscaped paths outside and below him.
He nearly sprawled over a low wooden bench which suddenly cropped
up from nowhere. He decided to sit down and watch the scene a few
seconds.

Sam's eye sought out the small boutique. A number of people
were rapidly passing before his view and he had to shift his head
back and forth to catch any sight of its small windows. A number
of these pedestrians Sam recognized as residents of the complex.
The ranks of outside shoppers had been much thinned. Studiously
avoiding the possibility of meeting, thus having to acknowledge,
someone's gaze, Sam kept his eyes busy and lowered. He pretended
for his own benefit to read some fine print which could be present
in the lower half of the boutique window. He continued this de-
tailed scrutiny until he feared he might be appearing foolish in
the eyes of anyone happening to be watching. If he had to squint
so much to see something, why didn't he just get off his butt and
go look at it? Sam wondered this about himself as though he were
standing in someone else's shoes looking on at this spectacle.

He suddenly felt he might have seemed ridiculous already,
especially to someone watching from inside the darkly lit boutique.
Feeling a surge of embarrassment, Sam slid around on the bench as
though to hold his wristwatch up to the daylight outside. Continuing
this ruse, he figured he might as well check the time. He had
trouble doing this as strong evening shadows slanted across the
window from the west. Sam squinted at the watch. Almost a quarter
to seven. He had better get a move on, he thought, for it was
He hastily got up and crossed the concourse. But he could not get himself to move directly towards the boutique. First approaching the food store on the right, he convinced himself to search for someone he knew inside of it. He side-stepped along in the direction of the boutique, passing oranges, Danish cheese and then ponderous waxen sausages suspended in the grocery's window. In a few too short seconds his eyes came to and traversed the vertical aluminum strip which marked where the grocery ended and the boutique began. He slowly side-stepped further, still peering through the glass, his eyes but a few inches from the cold surface.

Sam saw the girl bending over a glass-topped display case. She was absorbed in cleaning something very small with a light-colored cloth. As he watched, she took a small bottle from the counter and brought it up to the cloth. She tilted the bottle up and replaced it on the counter. Unaware of the eyes watching her stealthily through the hanging chains and trinkets in the window, she carefully went on cleaning the small object.

Sam decided he might as well go in there and get it over with. He had made overtures toward unknown women before. All it took was a little casual conversation to break the ice. He screwed up his courage and broke away from his stance before the window. He strode briskly to the door of the boutique. He took hold of the dull gray aluminum handle. The cold of the metal was quickly felt by his sweating hands. After another infinite instant of hesitation, he yanked at the door.

He did not quite make it.

"Sam, old buddy! How the hell're you doing? Hey, come on down and have a little drinky with me. Wait'll I tell you how I did last night. You see, there was this...."
It was past nine o'clock.

By the time he got out of the first floor bar, Sam felt that his talkative chum had all but chewed his ear off. And Sam had been impatient and cross to begin with. When his friend interrupted as he was about to enter the boutique, Sam was ready to vent his nervousness in as explosive a way as possible. Several sound reasons had stopped him. For one thing, his friend would not have known what was going on. And if he did, all he would have done would be to tease Sam and laugh at his shyness. Which Sam would also have done if their roles had been reversed. In short everyone knew instinctively that they had to learn to live with one another. It was foolish to be too touchy. Privacy, self interest, and a strict moral neutrality - these were the great tenets to abide by in this homogenous community where the golden rule and some elements of jungle rule were sometimes mixed in weird proportions.

Thus, Sam had been regaled endlessly over scotch and soda in the little cafe. As he sat there suppressing one yawn after the next, he wished he could tell his companion some good reason why he had to leave him. But, since he had been planning - rather, hoping - that a rendez-vous of sorts could have been worked out with the girl in the boutique, he felt at a loss to think of some plausible place to go.

He sat watching the currents of shoppers outside the cafe gradually diminish as the hour went from seven to eight. At about 8:30, he noticed numerous young couples arriving for the nine o'clock showing at the cinema. He decided at last that there was no point in continuing to drink. So he begged off from his friend's companionship, saying he had an important call to make and was expecting several others. Sam left the cafe irritated, jealous, and a little bit drunk.
Walking slowly past the short line of people buying their movie tickets, Sam added a few twigs of loneliness to his already considerable bundle of anxieties and vague depressions. He eventually reached the central pair of elevator doors along the concourse and studied them a moment before pushing the upper button of the two before him. He was noticing for the first time that the doors were clad in a rich shade of stained and varnished plastic.

He pushed the button.

Responding to the heat of his finger, the little round button, with its translucent arrow pointing to the heavens, lit up with a reassuring orange glow. A very responsive mechanism, Sam thought. He wondered, perhaps slightly alcoholically, whether the little button would be so sensitive if he were not such a warm hearted person. A muffled chime startled him from puzzling over this hypothesis. Aha, he exclaimed silently, as the elevator doors slid open, my coach has arrived. And he was suddenly very thankful that no one was waiting to surprise him in the brightly lit interior.

Crossing the threshold of the elevator cab, Sam blinked sharply beneath the incandescent glare emanating from the ceiling. The doors waited respectfully a few seconds before slithering shut with a hum and a click. Another instant passed and the elevator silently, if not too smoothly, began to accelerate upwards. As he pushed the button marked 'eight', Sam distinctly felt that his lower stomach and intestines still wanted a close affinity with the first floor. They seemed to resist being forcibly removed from it.

Trying to pay no attention to these recalcitrant parts, Sam impatiently awaited each change in the succession of numbers flashing above the doors. Two, three, four, five. At five he noticed that faint strains of recorded music were being piped into the elevator cab. The parts of his anatomy that Sam been hoping to forget began piping up to his brain a few faint strains of nausea.

Six, seven. At seven, the cab suddenly decelerated, as though with a mind of its own. It stopped completely, Sam groaned, and the doors slid rapidly open. He closed his eyes and waited.
Nothing. The only sounds besides Sam's slightly labored breathing were some faraway moans from the Muzak. He opened his eyes, saw no one was there, and reached for the 'close door' button. He pushed it, and the button answered him with its familiar orange glow, but nothing else happened. Sam exclaimed a short exasperated oath and pushed both the 'close door' button and the 'up' button at the same time. He used only one hand, its fingers outstretched, to do this. With the palm of the other, he pounded the button cheerily glowing 'eight'. But the 'eight' button responded poorly to such treatment and suddenly turned as dark as all its numerical brothers. And the doors courteously remained open.

With his fingers still on the 'close door' button and the 'up' button as before, Sam decided to try a new, more stern, tactic with the unruly 'eight'. He took his palm from it, and balled up his hand into a tight fist, making sure to leave a very stiff middle finger protruding. This he then ground ferociously into the dark elevator button as though that button were the eyeball of some dreaded fiend.

The button blinked on again. And the doors, apparently in appreciation of Sam's less than delicate gesture, quickly slid shut. Gayly, the Muzak swung into a waltz theme from "The King and I". And once more, with a start, the elevator rose.

Only three seconds later, it stopped again, finally reaching its destination, the eighth floor. The quick-to-please doors opened again, and Sam lurched out. He did not feel so bodily sick now as he felt indignant at the vagaries of the independent-minded elevator. It had at first seemed so obedient, coming right to his call.

Sam steadied himself for a few seconds as he stood in the hall before the open elevator doors. They soon closed, making him aware of the relative dimness around him. The hall, or lobby, was roughly "T" shaped, the short, squat stem of the "T" beginning from the twin set of elevator doors. From there, the stem ran about ten feet before opening right and left into the upper cross-bar of the "T". Each wing of the cross-bar was about eighteen feet long and twelve
feet wide. In all, the dimensions defined a much truncated "T".

Sam's pupils soon enlarged to scoop in the diminished level of light. The hallway did not now seem so dingy or dark, merely very enclosed. Two doors faced him as he stood with his back to the closed elevator doors. He would eventually go to the left one. Around each inside corner of the "T" Sam knew there were located three similar doors. All were finished in the glossy plastic veneer of the elevator doors. The walls of the hallway were covered with a light colored paper which had a slight sheen to it. The ceiling was the same, with three solitary lamps suspended in the two wings of the "T" and in the stem before the elevators.

Sam slowly walked to the proper door. His tie undone, his right hand groped in the left pocket of his suit jacket trying to dig out his keys. Glancing briefly around at all the brown doors, he was not surprised to see that they were closed. He was disappointed, however, his habitual curiosity frustrated. Very seldom did one of his neighbors leave a door casually open, even though every one on the floor knew each other. Others had told him and once or twice he had seen that the situation was different on a few other floors scattered through the residential towers. There the apartment doors were often left open at reasonable hours, the friendly neighbors nonchalantly roaming from one apartment to the next. The residents were nearly always women with perhaps one or two young couples thrown in. Otherwise throughout the development, unless there were fairly specific invitations, it was not a normal thing to just drop in a neighbor's apartment without first loudly knocking.

He had found his key by now and impatiently scratched the tip of it along the door searching for the keyhole. He could not find it. The brass knob was there as usual, but try as he might in the shadow cast from the overhead light fixture, Sam could neither see nor feel the familiar keyhole.

Thinking that perhaps the drinks he had earlier were really getting to him, he stepped back from the door. The yellow light of the hall ceiling lamps flooded over the door and adjacent section of wall. Sam swung his head around and back and muttered another
oath. This door was a firedoor, not his apartment door. It was just like the one next to it. First he had to open this heavy door and then walk past the flight of concrete fire stairs before he would be standing before the door to his apartment. It was the same story for the apartment next to his.

Why it took Sam all these months to get used to this arrangement and still slip like this was a mystery. Perhaps it was because the fire door and the apartment door, separated by a dingy gray hallway, represented such an unpleasant and inconvenient nuisance to him. Only the two center apartments of the eight on that floor suffered this condition. In more sober moments, Sam also felt almost insulted by the relative lack of privacy his apartment door gave him considering that it opened onto the fire stairs. Six of the eight apartment doors opened onto the "T" shaped elevator lobby, but not his. The doors of Sam and his neighbor fronted on the same vertical column of concrete stairs as similarly positioned apartment doors on ten other floors.

It seemed contradictory. Here he often wished for a better rapport horizontally with his neighbors on the eighth floor. Yet he was cut off from them by the twenty foot corridor of the stairwell. Better, it would seem under these circumstances, for Sam to strike up an acquaintance with his neighbors above or below. But to get up and down there would mean climbing or descending the damp, echo-filled chamber of the stairwell. The echoes were so persistent in this space that Sam could hear foot steps, and exclamatory greetings or whispered partings from up and down the eleven story shaft. And this definitely went against the cardinal tenet of privacy.

Walking through the stairwell just now, he heard no noises except his own. As he had prepared his key once, it was but a second's work to insert it into the keyhole and let himself into his studio apartment.

N.B. - otherwise, change whole design.
The door swung open and Sam entered the apartment. He snapped on the light switch on the wall to his right, and then closed the door behind him. He put his briefcase down by the closet opposite the light switch. Walking further down the entry corridor, he removed his suit jacket. Turning right at the end of the short entry hall, he placed it on a hanger on the near side of a long closet located just around the corner. Facing this closet, he closed the right set of folding doors where he had just hung his coat, and pulled open the left set. There were plates, glasses, and other dishware on the lower of the shelves found on this side of the closet and a some food stuffs on the upper. With the foodstuffs were assorted empty jars and laundry detergents.

Sam reached up and took a tea bag from a wide-mouthed peanut butter jar full of them. Then he reached below for a cup and saucer. With these, he walked further past the closet with the two sets of folding doors and turned right into a small, so-called pullman type kitchen. He put the tea bag into the cup and put that down on the saucer on the counter top to his right. He now reached around the little outcropping of wall enclosing the counter top and flicked on the kitchen light. The switch was located just outside the kitchen on the wall next to the long closet. Sam turned from this counter next to the sink to the one opposite and turned a switch on the electric range. Rummaging in the cabinet beneath the counter top between the range and the refrigerator, he found an enameled metal tea kettle. He turned back to the sink, filled the kettle half full of water, and then turned back to the range to place it on the now heated platen.

All these preparations done, Sam felt he could relax the few minutes it would take the water to come to a boil. He left the kitchen, walking by the small round breakfast table sitting just outside of it. He entered the living area which was still relatively dark. A star field of suburban lights twinkled at him through the large picture window in the far wall of the apartment. Slowly approach-
ing the window, Sam just missed bumping into the edge of a desk protruding around the corner which more or less separated the end of the dining area just outside the kitchen from the living area. He continued towards the window, passing between two arm chairs, the one on his left sitting directly before part of the window.

Now he stood before the cool glass. Much of Sam's view was obscured by reflections from the harsh kitchen and hall lights. Standing there and gazing out, he felt his head begin to clear a bit from the alcohol; he felt more relaxed. Newton and the other southwestern suburbs spread out before him. The view was bounded by an upper and lower margin of highways. The turnpike just below was brightly lit but few vehicles were traveling on it. While, far beyond, Sam could make out the thick streams of white headlights and red tail lights rushing around the great circumferential highway, route 128, ringing Boston. The road was unlighted.

The kettle, with a hollow gurgle, suddenly announced its readiness. Sam turned reluctantly from the window, and started hurriedly back to the kitchen. As he passed the obtrusive desk, he flicked on the small TV set sitting on it. Gun shots and sirens immediately burst into the tiny apartment. Sam cut short his kitchen-bound momentum and turned back to lower the TV volume. Annoyed, he resumed his way to the bubbling kettle. The metal lid of the kettle was clattering a little jig, steam spurting from beneath it, by the time Sam got there. He quickly took the hot kettle from the range, making sure to keep the live steam from his wrist and arm. He turned to the counter adjoining the sink and poured the hot water into the white tea cup with its bag resting inside. The bag bloated up immediately, swollen with warm air and steam. It floated and twirled as the cup filled with steaming water. A string was tied to the tea bag, at the other end of which a cardboard tag rested hanging in the cool air outside the cup. But the bag was bobbing and spinning caught in the whirlpool of the filling cup and the whole string and the tag at the end of it flipped over into the hot water. Sam said, Damn it.

He abruptly returned the kettle to the range top. The metal lid of the kettle clattered like a midget cymbal as the kettle came down
hard. With the cardboard tag floating in the steaming cup, Sam returned to the anxious mood he had experienced before in the elevator. He thought he had better calm himself down; the tea would help. Turning back to the sink, he opened a drawer beneath the counter top to his left and took a teaspoon from the plastic bin of utensils. He moved over to the right section of counter top on which the cup sat, the teabag and the morsel of cardboard still revolving in the water. Sam fished out the cardboard and used it with the string to retrieve the teabag, which he threw into a small plastic-lined garbage can in a cabinet beneath the sink.

He went now to the refrigerator at the end of the kitchen compartment next to the counter adjoining the electric range. Opening the massive, balanced door, Sam leaned over and looked around for a small container of cream. There was none, and, he saw with rising irritation, neither was there any milk. A short oath. Giving up on the lightener, he next went looking for a sweetener. He turned from the refrigerator after giving the pale enameled door a good slam. A faint crash reached his ears from within the mechanism. Above the sink and its adjacent counter tops were hung several small cabinets. Sam opened one of these and took out a cardboard box of brown sugar. Without even opening the box, he could feel that its contents had solidified into a brick-like mass. He opened the box and tried to dig out what he needed with the teaspoon. As usual, he punctured the box with the spoon, and loose bits of sugar scattered over his hand and into his cuff.

Sam did not consider himself much of a housekeeper. Partly because of this, he liked to spread out over the apartment those typical household accouterments which had to washed, cleaned, dried, sorted, folded, stacked, and eventually hidden away somewhere. If there were few such items concentrated in any one location, he would not have to see them all in order to deal with only a few. That was one reason Sam kept the dishware segregated from the rest of the mess that often accumulated in the kitchen. Another was that it was difficult for more than one person to work in the small kitchen. Therefore, if a guest were cooking a meal there, Sam, never wishing to appear lazy,
hard. When the cardboard tag jumped into the steaming tea cup, Sam returned a little more to the anxious mood he had experienced before in the elevator. He thought he had better calm himself down; the tea would help. Turning back to the sink, he opened a drawer beneath the counter top to his left and took a teaspoon from the plastic bin of utensils. He moved over to the right section of counter top on which the cup sat, the teabag and the morsel of cardboard still revolving in the water. Sam fished out the cardboard and used it with the string to retrieve the tea bag, which he threw into a small plastic lined garbage can in a cabinet beneath the sink.

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He retired to the living area. It was still dark except for the overthrow of the kitchen and hall lamps and the flickering pale light cast on the rug and furniture by the television screen. He settled down on the foldout couch across the room from the noisy TV set. Eventually the couch would become his bed. He would move aside the arm chair to his left, then lift out the seat cushion from the frame work of the couch. Presto, with springs twanging and quick bang, a thin foam filled mattress would pop into view like a ripe fruit. Throwing on a few sheets and blankets would complete the transformation of the couch into his king-sized double bed.

However, just now, he did not unfold the bed, only letting himself down on the folded mattress-cushion of the couch. He tried to focus his attention on the distant screen of the TV. A female's voice brazenly sang out, "What has Sheraton done for you lately?" Not being sure, Sam's gaze began to wonder about the living room. Small sounds of sizzling came from the kitchen. Sam contemplated the phenomenon of the TV dinner. He thought he saw a similarity between the way this building was laid out and the arrangement of food within the frozen tray. There was the Salisbury steak on the bottom of the tray in that glossy photo on the carton. Ostensibly, that was the big deal of the dinner. The big red letters said so. But it was little black letters which described the less important side dishes strung above the big one. Just so in this huge residential and commercial complex. The concourse, the recreation clubs, the gigantic parking garage, all the shops - these made up the Salisbury steak which had lured him and most of the others to live here.

"Come on, all you little potato nuggets, you peas and you carrots, and even you apple-cherry compotes. If you sit in a seasoned sauce or stew insugery syrup, come along. Join big Mr. Salisbury and have a barrel of fun."

And there they ended up, each in their own walled little compartment, stewing in their individual juices. Presumably, when and if the big Salisbury got eaten up somehow, they would go too. They would all go down together.
Samuel Noahswood suddenly grew very weary. Another commercial was assaulting the TV screen. This time, montages of Hammond Electric organs jogged around the tube face dancing an electronic polka. He stretched back on the couch. A soft velvet undertow began tugging at his consciousness. Weird snatches of make-believe experiences flashed through his mind. For an instant he saw his face looking up at him from the shiny reflective surface of the glazed apple-cherry compote. This made sense to him because he felt just a little bit stewed. The feeling enlarged, the fruity syrup was dragging him down. He was caught in an undertow. Down he went, into fitful sleep.

A vast complicated dream began to outline itself in Sam's befogged mind. There was a giant television screen and Sam was not just looking at it but through it. An oddly proportioned man stood by an upright piano which seemed to sprout keys and wires from all over itself. The man gestured vividly. His swollen, florid face oscillated forward and back in blurry red motion. The blur was becoming as formless as the fruit compote on the frozen dinner carton. Endlessly, the man regaled Sam:

XIV

Hello, out there, Have you seen our new model 7, electronic piano? With this sumptuously appointed, precision mechanism, you, too, can make the today sounds of today's generation. You don't have to be an expert. Or even a half-witted amateur to grind out those jivy notes from the past. Just buy a model 7. I am going to show you why this instrument is a bargain at even half its monthly cost of just under $280.60.

Take me, for example. I have never been considered a Chopin. Or even a Bobby Darin for that matter. Why, when I was younger, I lost my hearing for a time due to congenital illness. Of course, now, thanks to modern hearing aid technology, I have just been able to qualify for fifty per cent disability pension. But that is another story.

I was about to demonstrate. I approach this simmering wonder box with a sense of pride and awe. I sit down comfortably on this
wide, foam-filled, patented couch and reach right under here for the concealed master switch. It is not just concealed. This switch is disguised! You would hardly know it from your common, burglar-proof, brass padlock. Give it a light pull and all is in readiness.

Naturally, you can't forget to plug in your beautiful new electronic piano. The only power supply you will ever need for this exceptional, plastic-coated instrument is your everyday three-phase, 440-volt, industrial receptacle, suitable for automobile punchpresses and other light machinery. We plug the little beauty in, and we're all set to go.

First, we touch this little button aptly marked 'light rock'. You see it glows at our touch, bringing forth from the instrument's inner depths a radiant mixture of snare drum, tympani, rhythm glockenspiel, and musical saw.

Then, just for kicks, we'll throw in some mid-sixties Beatles ny just turning up the calibrated Yah-yah control. We're really swingin'. Compare this delightful music with any Beatles album and see the difference for yourself.

Now, we simply add the optional tone generator, model 7, priced at only $34.50. Listen to your Yah-yah's come out on any of three different notes. Snap in a little melody and you're in business. We just push buttons 'two', 'three', and 'four' on the separate melody console and we tune in any one of three well-known melodies.

And remember, these are not just any old melodies, but three of the world's greatest. Honored in the orient and in the occident. You can't go wrong.

What creativity!

There's only one step left now. Then you, too, can hear at your convenience an enchanting song first made popular by the world's foremost singing group just seven years ago come March. And all your guests will be green with envy at your newfound talent.

Notice how I turn to face the gleaming keyboard. Its three hundred and forty-two keys are arranged in perfect numerical order. Let us search for key number two hundred and five. Here it is. I'll push it gently and see what happens...ahhh! You can hear it for yourself...the whole panoply of modern technology has become chained to your command.

Well may you ask yourself: WHAT HAVE I WROUGHT? and the answer?

MUSIC! Just listen to this glorious sound...

Now, then. Suppose you want to leave your versatile model 9 entertaining your friends for a few short minutes while you help yourself to a refreshing beverage. Just reach below the patented foam-filled couch. You will find a special shelf there. On it can be a new, vinyl covered, four-color instruction book, complete with
glossy photos. It is available for only eight dollars with any new instrument. Take this marvelous volume like so...and merely rests its spine on that special key, number two hundred and five. Rest it there, just like this.....now, walk away.

See what happens? The wonder of it is, the incredible model 8 will keep on playing like this indefinitely.

There you have it. Our new model 8 electronic piano, a wonder of space age technology. All we ask is that you compare. Compare its sound with any partially used monaural record of pre-1954 vintage. We are sure you, too, will reach the same conclusion we have in our independent tests.

As we fondly say of our great musical friend, the model 7... we are sure it will never be equaled.

Gray light streamed through the large picture window. Groggily, Sam lifted himself from the couch. Stabs of aching cramps moved through his back and into his legs. Pain held his neck and temples as in a rigid vise. He had trouble clearing his vision, and his sense of smell told him a very unhappy story.

For a sticky foul stench floated visibly in the air of the apartment. Layers of it hung soggily like mists over a swamp. The air was very warm, strata of heat sitting stationary amidst the smoky clouds. A strident farmer's voice was hurtling sharply at Sam from the TV. There was no image to be seen, but the voice said that lima beans were selling at a new high this morning. Soy bean futures were low.

As were Sam's spirits. Flailing his arms at the smoke, he made his way to the talking box and shut it off. He trekked to the kitchen leaving little curling eddies in his wake. Snapping off the switch on the range, he did not dare open the oven door. That could wait
until later. He headed now for the patio doors across the dining area from the kitchen, tying not to trip over the breakfast table or chairs sitting around it. Reaching the glass doors as though flying through a cloud, he saw they were smeared with an oily haze of residue. He yanked one open and stepped onto the porch.

Sam walked to the rail taking a deep breath. By comparison, the air was much fresher out here, even though he guessed that on some days there would not be much difference. A very slight green sweetness wafted up to his nostrils from the river below. It occurred to him that if he opened the sliding glass door into the living room as well, some sort of cross ventilation might result. He tried to pull open one of the clear panels, but it was locked. Why the door had a lock to begin with a hundred feet above the ground was one more mystery to Sam. He went back through the dining room area, around the sharp cornered desk, and snapped open the lock of the stubborn door. Yanking it fully open, he again stepped onto the patio.

Sam would have liked a more western oriented view from the outside deck. The exterior side wall of the apartment continued out beyond the dining area limiting the view toward the west to just what he could see from the railing. Like blinders on an old milk-horse he thought. Unfortunately, that left the view from the living room heading straight into the concrete blinder.

So he stood right at the railing of the deck and sniffed all around at the morning air. Detecting faint whiffs of incinemer Salisbury steak emanating from inside the apartment, Sam realized he did not want to stick around there too much longer. He would wash quickly, change his clothing, and get out of the complex as soon as he could this morning. He remembered that downtown there was a reasonable restaurant on Commerce Street where he could get some eggs and sit undisturbed for an hour and a half with his coffee and newspaper. Perhaps he might indulge in one petite Bloody Mary to ease his nerves and muscles.

Yes, he would leave here as soon as possible today and make
sure not to return before late in the evening. If he left the patio doors open all day, perhaps the place would be aired out by then. With a certain amount of luck, he need not come back here at all this night. That would depend on a resurgence of vitality in his social life. But, in any case, better not to plan on anything like that. With a small sigh of resignation, Samuel Noahswood turned back into the smoky interior of his apartment to make his preparations for the coming day.
"Can you please tell me how to get out to the Watertown Arsenal?"

"Why, sure thing, young lady. Just take that number 57 bus standing over there to Brighton Center. When you get there, just change to a bus to Central Square, Cambridge. Ask the driver to let you off at the Arsenal and then just walk over the bridge there."

"Thank you, very much," and L.C. (pronounced just like 'Elsie') walked from the information booth in the Kenmore Square bus station. As she headed for the number 57 bus, a somewhat emaciated young man stepped up to take her vacated place before the glass window.

"How can I get over to Brookline Village?" the youth asked the bespeckled transportation employee who by now had his nose buried again in the racing pages. "Excuse me, do you know what bus I should take to get to Brookline Village?"

"Huh? What's that?", he grunted, peering over the top of the page at the boy. "How should I know? Go ask one of the drivers over there."

L.C. boarded bus 57 and sat waiting while the bus filled with other commuters. When a surge of riders came up from the subway and filled into the bus, the driver put down his coffee, thumped closed the front door, and swung out into the thick morning traffic.

The route went up Commonwealth Avenue, passing summer school students hurrying to their nine o'clock classes. L.C. had a good view of them from the high window. Until this past June, she had been one of their number. Now, she was a working girl, a half summer's vacation just behind her. Up Commonwealth Avenue the bus plodded and lurched in the weaving traffic. At first, the curbs were lined with automobile agencies. The, low non-descript store fronts and small parking lots predominated. Past the Harvard Street intersection, the wide lawns of a Catholic hospital came into view. Then the street grew narrow again as the bus turned into Brighton Center.
When the bus came to a stop, L.C. got off, followed by several other passengers. She looked around the crowded intersection for the bus headed towards Central Square. She did not see it. Asking an older woman peering into a shop window where the bus usually stopped, she was directed to an empty corner diagonally across the street. A bench was there, but no one waited on it. As the bus ran only every twenty minutes, L.C. was informed, and one had just left, she would have some minutes to pass. She decided to investigate any nearby coffee shops. If it was to be a reoccurring event, this delay between missed connections, it would be nice to find a place to sit and relax during the wait. But no coffee shop or restaurant could be found from which she could keep an eye out for her bus. Making the best of the situation, she entered a small shop around the corner and ordered a coffee to take out with her. This she took to the bench at the corner bus stop and sat there sipping it and she waited.

After about fifteen minutes had passed, a long vehicle with 'Central Square, Camb.' written across its brow glided into the bus stop, its air brakes squealing at the annoyance of having to stop at all. Nearly empty of passengers, it stopped lightly and quickly on its large black tires. L.C. boarded at the front behind several other people. She paused briefly at the driver's side to ask him to let her off at Arsenal Street. In a bored tone, he promised he would do so. Taking a seat towards the middle of the bus, she glanced through the window at the street outside. It was crowded with storefronts, glass doors, shop windows, and hanging advertisements, but very few people walked about. Suddenly, the bus took off towards Central Square with a muffled roar. And, just a few minutes later, the driver, his vehicle stopped at a red light, leaned back and signaled to L.C. that her stop had come. She walked quickly to front of the bus and dropped a quarter into the metal coinbox by the driver. Mumbling a quick thanks at him, she disembarked from the vehicle. Just then, the light went green. The bus turned sharply to the right in front of L.C. and left her standing in a veil of blue haze as it roared away.
Standing there for a few seconds, she surveyed the short highway bridge she would have to cross to get to the Arsenal project. This was her first day on this job which, in turn, was her first job since graduation. Although she had been to a few parties at the Arsenal the previous spring, it was at this moment very difficult for her to physically orient herself. The place was so huge. She could see a group of low townhouses sitting atop a renovated structure to the left somewhat over the bridge. Beyond the townhouses hovered the bulky residence towers of the first of the two major areas of the project. What would be especially disconcerting, as well as disorienting, she remembered, would be the first sight of the two huge parking structures which would hove into view as she approached closer.

Just over the bridge, L.C. passed a small marshy field. Then came the lightly used frontage road along the river. A 'Walk-Dont Walk' traffic signal blinked her to a stop at this intersection. The sign seemed to her out of place in this otherwise pastoral little section. High grass grew in the marshy plain on her left. The Charles River flowed past and under the highway bridge. Into the project area the frontage road twisted and disappeared under tall shade trees and through low vegetation which crowded the roadside. Although a few vehicles emerged from the shaded section of frontage road and turned past her into Arsenal Street, the blinking sign offended L.C. even though it merely reminded her to look both ways before moving on.

Cross she did, however, walking unhurriedly along the blank wall of the flat brick building supporting the clustered townhouses above. Although there was a string of windows on this wall, they were of glass brick and set well above eye level. L.C. would have enjoyed being able to see some of the Haymarket type of activity which she had heard was conducted inside this sprawling featureless building. For the pedestrian, the most prominent display along this facade was a rusty iron fence about ten feet high, a relic from the days when the Arsenal was a munitions factory. Even the townhouses above the brick and glass structure seemed very removed from L.C. and from anything else at street level. She wondered what it must be like to
live in such an isolated place above the trees, the street, and above the roads and pathways within the project with whatever hustle and bustle they might contain.

She walked on, finally reaching a large opening in the iron fence. A sign chiseled in painted wood hung over the entrance. It said, "WELCOME TO THE ARSENAL EAST, MAIN GATE". Entering beneath the sign, she was passed by a number of autos moving in the opposite direction headed out to Arsenal Street. Very soon, a line of them backed up when the traffic light at the gate went red. L.C. continued walking on the left side of this access road. She could see the large service doors of the indoor market space on her left. Cut up tires had been fastened together to make bumpers for the loading dock. To her right, across the access road, loomed the piled layers of the five story parking structure. Two side wide openings in the bottom layer swallowed and disgorged vehicles at a rapid pace.

Looking for a quiet place to cross the road, L.C. walked past the section teeming with cars leaving and entering the garage and with trucks backing into the loading dock. She came to a part of the road which had almost no traffic moving over it. Here she leisurely walked across to her destination, the large building with the shops and apartments. She found herself at the head end of a wide path which passed with several small jogs straight down between the high towers on the right and the low, row-like clusters of townhouses on the left. At the end of the footpath, L.C. could see what appeared to be another parking lot. Along the dark, asphalt path were spread benches and trashbaskets about twenty or thirty feet apart. They were in shadows cast by the three-story townhouses on the left. But the lightly landscaped lawns around the base of the towers to the right of the walkway glowed gently under the morning sun. As the sun moved higher, L.C. thought, these shadows would recede, eventually leaving the path with its benches drenched in brilliant noon sunlight. It would not be such a comfortable spot to sit and have lunch, and she hoped that the newly planted trees scattered around would be able to provide some shade.

She had been told to report at about 9:30 A.M. to a boutique located somewhere on the third concourse level of the eastern com-
plex of the Arsenal development. The only thing L.C. was certain of at this point was that she had found the east complex. She stood there on the paved footpath, faced with five vertical banks of stacked apartments. Three of the banks rose into imposing towers over the other two. Not sure of which door to enter, she walked all the way down the five hundred foot long path to the other end of the huge building. It would make no difference where she entered the huge building; she would be lost anywhere. Between the banks of apartments were layers of reflective glass windows. Centered in the first floor layer between each bank were a double pair of glass doors. An offshoot of the main path led to each grouping of doors. As they had all seemed similar to L.C. on her walk along the building, she simply went to the most recent bunch of doors she had passed.

This took her into a man-made canyon of high concrete and glass walls. It surrounded her on three sides. Directly before her, eleven floors of glass windows and concrete columns rose more than a hundred feet. On her right, a surface of concrete pricked in a regular pattern with inset windows rose to a similar height. And on her left, a similar concrete wall went up about sixty feet. Straight up with no relief of articulation or setback ascended the walls of the complex. The height of glass walls before her shielded a black, shadowed interior as the sun rose higher behind her. It cast deep shadow within the building and threw blinding sheets of light off the mirror-like windows.

L.C. entered the monolith. It took her eyes a few seconds to adjust to the difference between the brilliance of the outdoors and the fainter incandescent paleness inside. Except for the section of floor immediately before the glass windows, the hallway was really quite dark. Here and there ceiling spots picked their way through into the cool, airconditioned gloom. Turning back for a brief glance to the trees and benches outside, L.C. felt suddenly trapped within a very different, if not actually alien, environment.

But business was supposed to come first. The first order of the day was to get to the boutique before she found herself fired without having set a foot within the door. There were no signs or directories
to be seen anywhere. Perhaps she should walk down the corridor looking for some source of information at one of the other entrances. Paralleling her recent journey outside the building, but traveling now indoors in the opposite direction, she past various kinds of stores and a series of secondary corridors. These corridors were perpendicular to the main one along which she walked. They were interior extensions of the paths outside which cut off the main path between the access road and the parking lot. Signs hanging overhead in the corridor informed L.C. that these left-hand cutoffs led to the first level of the parking garage. Into her mind came a concept of this whole place as a grand cycle. She had walked from the automobiles on the access road off Arsenal Street all the way around and then back to the very garage from which the autos had emanated and to which they were destined. The footpaths struck her as merely a secondary loop, a detour, something like the digressions computer programs always took during her courses at the University. The loop spun off from the main thrust of this place which appeared to be centered in the garage, which was the first building one comprehended when entering the development. The stores and apartments were only stops on the secondary loop which traveled right past and through them on its way back to the main organ, the garage. The stores could deploy themselves where they could; the loop would take no detours. It was the garage which shaped the flow of people walking; and where the people were directed, there the stores and apartments could set themselves up, accessories to the flow which past them.

L.C. felt she wanted to leave this transportation grid, to get away from the automobiles, access roads, and parking lots, and from the main paths, the main corridors, and the cutoff corridors. Finally, she would like to get away from the feeling that the huge garage was there sulking behind everything. To get out of the grid, she had to step into a vertical extension of it, the elevator. If every concourse level was similar to this one, she might as well do her walking back and forth on the right one. L.C. turned back to the elevator she had just passed on her left. Punching the up button, she glanced around while she waited. A blank wall stared at her from across the main corridor. It had a little nub-like protrusion which seemed to serve
as a screen for two apartment doors just inside of it. To the left and right of the protrusion, the blank wall continued about fifteen feet. Then it met with a painful contrast of light with the floor to ceiling glass windows. L.C. was forced to turn her eyes away. Just then, the elevator announced its arrival with a low chime.

She entered the small music-filled compartment and pushed the button for three. The doors had already shut and now the elevator accelerated for the brief ascent to the third level. With a wry smile, L.C. recalled walking along the small marshy field by the river but a half hour before. She had gone a great distance between there and this closed little cubicle now carrying her upwards. The distance consisted of something more than just the few hundred yards physically separating the two places.

But there was little difference in distance or atmosphere between the first and the third concourse levels. When the elevator doors glided open, L.C. could have been facing the first level again. It was as though the elevator had embraced her for thirty seconds, had whispered sweet nothings of Muzak into her ears, and then had let her go on her way. Leaving the elevator she wondered which way to turn down the nearly empty corridor. Nothing indicated to her in which direction the boutique could be found. Across from the elevator doors was the same set of screened doorways as on the first level. Only here, on the third, somewhat less of the floor was illuminated by the sun. The brilliant white region of the floor was slowly slipping out through the plate glass windows as the sun rose.

L.C. decided to turn to her left as though to continue the direction of her first level promenade. Walking slowly down the corridor, she watched carefully the shop windows on her left. The first one she came to was full of shoes. Bright display lights picked out small reflections on shiny buckles and bright leather. Corrugated yellow paper formed a backing up to eye level behind the racks of footwear. Over the backing, L.C. could see a young man in ties and shirtsleeves arranging low footstools before a line of wooden arm chairs. Apparently there were no customers at this early hour. The young raven-haired man was dressed modishly in a brightly
striped shirt and colorful wide tie. He sported thick side burns below his temples. On his feet he wore light boots which had a tan sheen of fine polished leather. She noticed that the boots were of much better quality than the goods in the window. He must have bought them downtown. This young man looked interesting to her. She was surprised, even encouraged, to find such a person employed out here so far from Boston or Cambridge. As she watched him, he seemed to be arranging the footstools more according to his own inner sense of artistic design than by someone else's bidding.

L.C. remembered with a start that she was not her own boss, however. Unless she got to her job soon, she might not have any. She continued past the show store along the concourse. Just a few feet further she at last saw behind the next glass door unmistakable signs of a boutique in operation. She peered through the door. Lobster traps were hanging from a ceiling which was cut through here and there by multi-colored spotlights. At the far end of the narrow shop, a disc with bright colors arrayed on it in triangular wedges revolved slowly before an angled desk lamp. Chains and trinkets, small ornate iron crosses, and clay candle holders hung everywhere from the heavy burlap covering the walls. Along the right hand side of the store was a glass windowed and topped counter holding still more odds and ends. Many of them were unidentifiable to L.C. even though she guessed they mostly consisted of small metallic and glass smoking pipes. Looking through the glass door, she could see no one moving inside the shop. But this was not surprising since her new boss could easily be obscured by some fold of burlap or hanging lobster trap. She reached out to pull open the aluminum handled door.

"Wait a minute, young lady, the store's not open yet", and a middle-aged man stepped up and unlocked the door.

L.C. spent the morning with her new employer absorbing numerous details about the store and its contents. Very few customers came in during the morning hours. Of them, only one or two had bought anything. Most of the shoppers she saw wondering around seemed to be housewives in their thirties or forties. They had packages from other stores in their arms when they stopped into the boutique and poked around among
the candles and lobster traps. Assiduously, they kept away from the pipes under the counter and the iron crosses hanging on the wall. Promptly at one o'clock her employer departed for lunch at a cafe on the first floor. Today she was to have lunch, herself, at two, and stay until 7:30 or 8:00 in the evening. After today, she would start coming in at noon and working till eight. Wondering how to spend her lunch hour, L.C. thought she could look at all the stores on all the levels. But it might be better to spread that out over the days to come. Today she could investigate the third level and perhaps find there a bookstore to get something to read during the slower moments of the day.

Shortly after her employer left, a number of younger men and women began drifting in small clumps in and out of the boutique. Seeming to know one another quite well, they made quiet jokes and remarks as they asked to look at one of the pipes or some other piece of smoking paraphernalia in the counter. One or two even purchased some mechanism put together out of odd bits of copper tubing, glass stems, corks, and old plumbing fixtures. Some of the young people carried tennis raquets and she guessed that they were employees like herself who had found something to do during lunch hour besides read, eat, or wonder around.

At two, the proprietor of the boutique returned and sent her off to lunch. L.C. went out the door and down the corridor. Taking a quick look out one of the floor to ceiling corridor windows, she saw the bright day outdoors and she thought about the tennis players. She decided to get a sandwich somewhere and take it outside to eat. Remembering her observations of the morning, she hoped she could find a shady spot to sit down for a few minutes, or perhaps she might go to the tennis courts.

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This account will break off here for it has become very difficult to go on with the writing. I have been feeling a growing weight of effort over the past few days. It could be that there are no further specific plans to use in order to generate new information which would
useful and interesting. More and more speculation is being needed to
narrate a realistic account of the shopgirl's working day. For want
of more plans, this speculation would have to subsist on matters
related to her lifestyle as a salesgirl, as a recent college graduate,
or merely as a person with some interesting story to tell. But the
intent of this whole exercise is to provide a running check on the
plans already at hand. This exercise is not being undertaken to create
persons for the artistic or paradigmatic purposes of a short story
or novel. If it were being done for those types of reasons, the
evolution and movements of the characters would depend on the inner
needs and drives of the characters, other than just their reactions
to their environment. Therefore, without the substrate of physical
plans or proposals to feed upon, the exercise becomes lifeless. At
least for me. Since I am not engaged in defining or building characters
and situations, only the physical surround for their activities,
further writing about characters comes with difficulty. The work would
be pulled in two diverging directions. For, when the actions of the
character no longer have particular relationship or dependence on the
surround, the intent of the thesis goes unanswered. And when the
character's actions have no particular consistency to them other
than to an environment which can only be guessed at, then the result
will be random and arbitrary writing. Either I should go on with
a third character and its relationship with some other aspect still
unexplored in the plans I do have, or get on with the next phase of
the experiment. The difficulties I having presently writing about this
shopgirl and the pressure of time influence me to go on with the next
phase. That will be to start modifying the existing plans to make
them better fit whatever needs and perceptions have surfaced through
the device of narration.
Conclusion

XVII

It seems now as though we have reached a good point to step back and sum up where we have gotten so far. A page ago, I described the frustration I was feeling as I wrote that page about three weeks ago. As noted, the scenario writing was coming along only with much labor and, in my opinion, with very unsatisfying results.

It was unsatisfying because I could not feel as though I were getting a good "handle" on the character I was writing about. Although I knew where the story was headed, I could not smoothly and with further benefit to the thesis get it to go there. L.C. was somehow supposed to look up after a long day behind the boutique counter and see Sam's eyes watching her through the window glass. That would have wrapped up their two vignettes in a neat fashion. Perhaps, also, the reader would have been given a small jolt with the memory of what Sam had been up to during his previous moments beneath our scrutiny. However, all that was not getting me anywhere new as far as scrutinizing the Arsenal plans was concerned.

Which is not to say that the narrative could not eventually have gotten somewhere. This experience points out a difficulty with the "method" technique of narrating a scenario about what a hypothetical character's life would be like in a hypothetical environment. The difficulty: it is very hard work if the writer, himself, cannot somehow directly and personally indentify himself with the person about whom he is writing. Now, if that person were a real person, then the task might be easier. But the weight of creating a character
with reasonably believable reactions as well as creating the influences on his life of elements of the hypothetical environment is really almost too much. This might imply, then, that the technique would perhaps work better in those situations where, in fact, flesh and blood clients were concerned.

There may also be an implication that the "method" technique would not be particularly suitable where the client was not an identifiable inhabitant. Unfortunately, that inhibition might preclude the consideration of many larger types of projects or developments. On the other hand, if the writer could find or dream up a surrogate to use for the inhabitant or user, then, conceivably, the writer would again be in a position to project a scenario. But now we are back to where we started.

Perhaps I am expecting too much of the process and should be satisfied with less of a result for a given expense of effort. For example, although I felt more frustrated while writing about L.C., in some "artistic" ways, I felt I was actually able to generate somewhat more specific and usable information through her part of the exercise. Perhaps that was because there I did attempt less, not being so interested in creating a full-scale and complex character with all sorts of thoughts and perceptions. I think also that I stuck more to the point with her, especially in the middle part of the section.

Yet, as a note on the working method, I was constantly pushing to keep on with the motion of her journey, first to get her to the site and then to walk her through the structure, itself. When L.C. got to the boutique where she, of necessity, had to slow down her travels, then I, for some reason, really felt as though I had run out of steam. In some ways, the same sort of vaguely frenetic sort of activity was kept up in Sam's part of the scenario. But there I was more willing to accept and even to encourage an ebb and flow
quality to the amount of action in the writing. For I was anxious
on the one hand to continue the pace, yet, on the other hand, to
throttle it to a crawl or even a total halt in order to amplify
a detail or fantasy which might have stuck in his mind.

Much of the writing about my house also had a quality of
rapid pace through the purely descriptive passages and then an
easing off during a passage of reminesce. This was done so that
the weight of the descriptive, technical detail would not overwhelm
the reader. And, in its turn, the writing on the detail was supposed
to allow the reader to take a breather from the folksy stuff,
merely retaining a flavor of it to give a perspective on the rest.
But it was difficult to keep up the distinction between the two.
There is little doubt now in my mind that it is very hard to dwell
on an element of hard-won and perhaps painful experience without
letting it begin to run away with itself in some way. This probably
began to happen during the parts on the water diviner and the
installation of electricity, if not in other places as well. For
my own satisfaction, I am glad these sections are included, but it
is questionable whether they were much help in making available
much information which could be used later in interpreting the
Arsenal plans.

And that really was the point: to get to the Arsenal drawings
and change them to make them more suitable to hypothetical inhabi-
tants without having to build and occupy the development just to
generate the possible design innovations. In terms of the overall
structure of the thesis, the bridge between what useful techniques
emerged from dealing with the house plans and memories and then
how these techniques worked or were even used with the Arsenal plans -
that bridge is something mysterious and should be closely examined.

The physical occurrence of the bridge is to be found in the
section about the movie, "Diane". Perhaps a perception offered to
us here is really a key to what this thesis has really turned out to
be. I do not refer, necessarily, to specific comments in the film
relating to the good or bad points of the city versus the countryside, etc. Except possibly in this way: to expose the question of how, when, and why one should liberate and mobilize past emotional experience and perception in order to deal with present circumstance. Here may be a reference for us to a meaning of the phrase, "method acting": the building up of a technique which will yield to the actor's effort all the strengths which can be derived from his own history of emotional development.

This technique of the persistent actor breaks down into specific parts to accomplish its goal. Briefly stated, the stages are: to isolate the characteristic or response to be portrayed in the role; to search out an analogy to it in your own life; to recall the emotion you felt then, fleshing out the circumstances if necessary; finally, to amplify that emotion and inject it into the current role.

These events or steps are not too different from what the "method designer" would try in order to inject into a given design effort the qualities earlier referred to as "fitting", "relevant", "appropriate", etc. Sometimes, such a sequence of thoughts as implied by using the "method" may be the only way to achieve any sort of design response. Unfortunately, I can see how, throughout the thesis, this clear sequence may have gotten confused in its presentation to the reader. Chronologically, I took the next-to-last step of the sequence first when I discussed at length the experience of building the Vermont house. It was not until later in the thesis, when going through the Arsenal drawings, that an opportunity arose to use the insights, if any, thus unearthed. Normally, the opportunity involved would have suggested itself first and only then would the designer reach back to some specific episode in his personal experience.

This backwards approach and application of the technique may be understandable if it is realized that it was not until very recently that I saw clearly the connection between the two sections, that memories of the past experience could help in making design
explorations of the current problem. Otherwise, there was good reason why the house descriptions came before the Arsenal scenarios. For the technique, itself, of doing the scenarios had to be built up. It was as though an alphabet had to be formed before the words and sentences could be constructed.

Now, it is apparent that I ended up in a different place than where I started. At first, all I wanted to deal with was the technique, which I described simply with the phrase, "narrative scenario". I attempted to build up my skill at writing such things through writing the house descriptions and recollections of my first years in Vermont. Then, I applied a narrative technique to the Arsenal plans, and there ran into all sorts of problems. A good many of them were literary. For instance, on a simple level, how could one generate a life-like character and keep him interesting to the reader? More complicated was the problem of weaving together two motivations behind the generation of the character which did not want to go together. One motivation was just stated: to invent and flesh out a character who was believable. The other motivation was to get that character to do things and think things which related to and would be informative about his physical environment. It was not so much that these criteria for character formation were in direct opposition, only that the demands of one did not necessarily add anything to the status of the other.

Then, I went back and wrote, or tried to write, the pages about the film. These pages were the most difficult to do of all. They seemed to add an issue which complicated the others which were already complicated enough. The issue, or dimension, which the movie suggested was the importance of getting at the personal frame or viewpoint each of us brings to almost every situation we encounter. Without such an understanding, or at least a recognition, of how our pasts are likely to shape our perceptions of the present, we would be standing on shifting and arbitrary soil.
Much of the content of the film sprang from a conflict between the influence of the particular personal frame or viewpoint of the subject, Diane, and the shape of the picture of her present circumstances it struggled to contain. The presence of such an obstacle as the picture of life she brought with her from the hinterland constituted an element of constant frustration and depression in Diane's life. This was partly because she had found no way to overcome or modify it. A shade of hopeless resignation colored her view of life. She was caught up in some of blockage of any ability to use her past to come to grips with her present situation.

My thesis, on a somewhat different level of consideration, would like to convince the designer of physical things that he seldom need to feel blocked or stifled by his past experience or lack of it. For he may find a source of competence, power, and creativity in his past associations and experiences with physical phenomena. And he can inject perceptions, images, or ideas from these sources into his present designs and conceptions.

In sum, I feel that my thesis may present an interesting example of the possible influence this type of inspiration can have on an ambitious but otherwise useful design program. Appended on the next several pages is the original statement of goals and criteria I tried to follow as I designed and drew up the first, relatively complete, set of plans. These plans can themselves be found interleaved throughout the pages of the thesis. The program, itself, probably provides as good a place as any to begin roughing in the total or schematic conception of the design. But it gives comparatively little sense or feeling of what the finished place or environment could be like in its full, multi-dimensional reality. Perhaps the program is comparable to a blank sheet in a typewriter with the writer's outline of subjects to be covered sitting alongside. The question: how does one turn the called-for framework into a living and breathing reality, at least in plan? For me, one possible technique has been the "narrative scenario" which represents merely one of the possible forms of "method design".
Goal One: Answer an assumed need for middle and upper income housing with adequate and attractive dwelling unit designs, keeping in mind the need for compatibility with other facilities on the site and the need for some sort of modulized form of planning and producing those dwelling units.

Criteria for: Marketability
- range of sizes and plans
- some relationship in physical form to other housing
- differing degrees and types of privacy
- take advantage of natural amenities of site
- take advantage of physical facilities provided on site
- enhancement of other on-site facilities
- dense enough to draw services and clients for commercial
- sufficient population to influence mass transit policy
- enough units per acre to be economically feasible
- provide some regular users of open space
- physical form should control and define visual links between parts of the site and between inside and outside
- have an "urban" quality amidst open space

Livability
- private outdoor spaces and public "community" spaces
- defining a range of sizes of outdoor community spaces
- convenient parking
- punctuation and contrast for diversity and identification
- related to pedestrian and vehicular circulation
- controlled and convenient access to commercial resources

Goal Two: Provide an attractive mix of residential, commercial, municipal, and open space facilities on the site.
- bring people to area
- return some tax to community
- service basic needs of on-site residents
- provide some specialty services or goods for on-site and off-site clients
- relate to and help make strong circulation patterns
- entice potential residents
- not to conflict with Katertown Square commerce
- make use of natural advantages of site
- help shape open space and perception of open space

(more)
Goal Three: Develop a site plan responsive to the natural features of the site, to the needs of on-site and off-site circulation, to the possibilities of growth of various facilities, and which speaks to some overall goals of open space planning in an urban region.

- Maintain and extend green-space linkage with areas above and below on the Charles River
- Deal with the use of the open space the site makes available, not just the amount
- Control, intensify, and variegate relationships with the river
- Exploit natural topographical features wherever possible
- Provide for some specific recreational needs of some groups or individuals
- Control and define visibility of the open space and its uses, from both vantage points inside the site and outside, including from roads
- Develop one or more intensive use "playground" areas
- Develop useful and controlled links with residential and commercial areas
- Develop screens between facilities and open space areas

Goal Four: Use as much existing structure as possible.

- Maintain and/or renovate existing buildings
- Use foundations and slabs where possible
- Explore uses of unusual structures such as crane ways, ramps, etc.

Goal Five: Develop a set of drawings which communicate in a condensed fashion as many responses to the above goals as possible.