ARCHITECTURAL CONVENTIONS AND CONTEXTUAL COGNITION

by Bradley Leonard Shotola

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Submitted to the Department of Architecture on May 6, 1983, in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Architecture.

ABSTRACT

What is offered herein are some tools of architectural criticism. The focus of these criticisms is concerned with the environmentally-public edge between individual buildings and their site-specific contexts. Within such a domain, the particular interest of this investigation pertains to the formal manifestations of convention in architecture; and seeks to characterize some of the cognitive effects of convention, in the built contexts of contemporary communities. Such an inquiry, into the 'meeting places' of architectural environments and their concordant contextual understandings, is not intended to provide new and revolutionary discoveries of this realm; merely critically-characterize its apparent manifestations.

The method of this investigation asserts 'positional' understandings of this realm, and seeks their domain of critical service by testing these positions against external evidence of documented performance. In doing so, this thesis 'reconstructs' investigative criticism, of the built environment, in the spirit of a 'research program'. (Imre Lakatos 1963, 1971)

Investigation proceeds from perceptual and socio-historic aspects of convention in architecture; to a critical position, less concerned with convention's objective significance, than an attendance to architectural convention as an environmental baseline for evaluating contemporary change. This view holds the familiar contexts of our everyday lives as a framework of developmentally-normative environmental understanding; and sides with the inhabitants of these contexts, who see their local neighborhoods as home, not as abstract formal settings.

Perceptual criticisms, of the formal manifestations of convention in architectural contexts, seems to enforce a kind of site-specific gestalt of contextually-interactive groupings. A collective datum, constructing a phenomenal ground of conventionally-preferred performance, against which the 'differentness' of our intervening buildings will be judged. Cognitive 'maintainance', of such a developmental aspect of architectural convention in contexts, can be thought of as a socially-interactive faculty; comparing familiar roles of one's own community's conventionalized formal postures, with the new supports provided (or imposed) by the more recent element of change.
This thesis seeks to blur the professional conception, of creativity residing solely in inventive originality. Such a notion tends to encourage contextually unfortunate extrapolations; with the most creative works receiving professional acclaim, precisely because of its unconventionality. The persistent emphasis on the heroics of professional concepts over cultural ones additionally tends to manifest an evaporation of urban fabric, as well as, an importantly local sense of a community's developmental history. The marvelous intuition of the diagram should be reformulated in the terms of the environment in which it will interact. This is to say that the support our professional interventions supply, no matter how attractive on their own, should be reconsidered at the conventional level of performance, which the context offers to a similar need.

Such a framing of architectural criticism in service of its context, does not mean to limit the intellectual capacity of the profession: it merely seeks to demonstrate socially-developmental cognitions of context, as an important creative source. Experiential understanding of our architectural ideas, formal or programmatic, may be very weak if our contextual positions appear too smug: astonishingly strong if our change is measured and cognizant of its contextual posture. Convention does not usurp creatively, it merely characterizes a developmental level of normative environmental performance; and through such norms, lends understanding and accommodation of environmental change.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I feel I must congratulate the MIT architecture and urban studies community, for the domain of concerns they profess. Recent tendencies towards highly fashionable formal play, has left the MIT school undaunted in their pursuit of user-oriented philosophies. Their efforts maintain a creative re-investment of people, as a significant contributing element to the very wide social role of architectural design.

In particular, I cite Professor Stanford Anderson. His academic pursuit of architecture's historical and theoretical aspects, has never transgressed pertinent criticism of socially practical reality. The willingness to risk his considered opinions to the test of the exigent environment, speaks well of the corresponding fruitfulness of his notions.

As an advisor, he has served as more than a sounding board: offering inspiration, demanding demonstration, and encouraging a sense of rhetorical clarity (the lack of which I apologetically surmise, I am still guilty). For the openness of his commitment, I am sincerely grateful.

Finally, I feel I should thank my parents, for their abiding trust in my judgement; and to Nancy, for the sustaining patience often required for life with an architect.
PREFACE CONCERNING EXPOSITIONAL METHOD

Writing a thesis sets the opportunity, and responsibility, of framing an inquiry of lasting concern. As learning does not end with formal education, so this document fails to represent its single crowning treatise. Synthesizing significant considerations from my entire architectural experience, this thesis is conceived in the spirit of commencement: the current investigation contributing to an ongoing program of sustained critical inquiry.

In the range of possible thesis formats, this one is primarily written: an exposition about architecture, and about theories of investigation into its understanding. In its attempts to outline a critical sensibility of architecture in the environment, this thesis might best be characterized as the gentle introduction of an investigative idea.

This thesis utilizes an interpretation of the methodological notions of Imre Lakatos, as an expository structure for its final presentation. These methodological notions do not attempt to construct logical conclusions from an initial premise; but attempt to characterize critical domains of serviceable performance, for both positive and negative evidence of our tested inquiries. The Lakatosian notion of problemshift is retained for its ability to allow the assertions of empirical evidence, to affect a shift of the investigative setting. Its constituent elements, of 'hard core positions' and core-generated 'auxiliary hypotheses', are explained at length in an essay on method, found in the Appendix of this thesis. Its reading is not essential for
those aquainted with Lakatosian concepts. However, my interpretation of Lakatos will probably differ from other's; resulting in expositional liberties, not directly explainable in the format of the ongoing investigation. Hense, the essay on method provides an explanatory reference of my particular use of Lakatosian programs.

The atomised presentation of the Lakatosian research program, best replicates the course of my investigative progress. Such a presentation serves to gradually weave the texture of terms and ideas at work. The progressive format of such an investigative reconstruction should be thought of as encompassing circles of criticism, rather than a sequential train of logic.

By reconstructing the 'history' of this research to the point of its contemporary conjecture, this method of explanation hopes not only to render theory-significant empirical evidence, but to aid a more precise understanding of the critical domain of the final submission. One could indeed divine the 'aha!' moment, of this thesis, by turning to the last pages. However, I ask your complicity in attending each section, as to allow the final notions a more convincing understanding.

B. Shotola

Cambridge, Massachusetts
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Page</th>
<th>Title</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>TITLE PAGE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>ABSTRACT</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>PREFACE CONCERNING EXPOSITIONAL METHOD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>A RESEARCH PROGRAM FOR THE ENVIRONMENT</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>ECOLOGICAL CONTINGENCY: THE HARD CORE POSITION</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The environment is not an object</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Models of architectural service</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Phenomenal appraisals and 'operative criticism'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23</td>
<td>PERCEPTUAL DYNAMICS: AN AUXILIARY HYPOTHESIS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Perceptual models of environmental appraisal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Human perspective as critical framework</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Gestalt Psychology and Arnheim's Dynamics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Kinesthetics and ecological synthesis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Exigent deviation as operative criticism: the work of Alvar Aalto</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Individual sensation and conventional images of architecture</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>43</td>
<td>CRITICAL CONVENTIONALISM: AN AUXILIARY HYPOTHESIS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Socio-historical model of environmental appraisal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Reciprocity of past knowledge and the empirical present</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Building never develops outside a social sphere</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Anderson's Critical Conventionalism: continuity and change</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>'Secular maintenance' as operative criticism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>49</td>
<td>A RECONSTRUCTION OF INVESTIGATIVE CRITICISM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>51</td>
<td>PERCEPTUAL AND DEVELOPMENTAL UNDERSTANDINGS OF CONVENTION IN ARCHITECTURE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Defining a context of environmental appraisal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Synthetic cognitions of conventional performance in architecture, and their perceptual manifestations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>53</td>
<td>THE PERCEPTUAL DYNAMICS OF CLASSICISM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Classicism as a context of convention in architecture</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>A 'text' of fundamental elements, and compositional proportioning</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Perceptual appraisals of classicism: Lipps' Raumaesthetik.
The subjective 'becoming' of external form.
The column.
Perceptual synthesis of an asymmetrical environment.
Classicism and dynamic stasis.
Dynamic expression and conventional performance.
Stylized representation versus environmentally enclosing operation.
Classicism's operational rigor of planimetric purity.
Soane's 'heterotopic' secularization.
Axial simultaneity and cognitive 'maintenance' of classicism's conventional enclosure.
Perceptual appraisals versus socio-historic contexts of conventional performance.

POLITICAL POSITIONS AND ARTIFACTUAL EMPATHY
Defining a context of artifactual performance.
The unselfconscious vernacular versus Pocock's semi-autonomous 'positions' of historical consensus.
Jeffersonian Neoclassical: the use of convention in the development of a political iconography.
Jefferson's dual role, as politician and architect.
Jefferson's literal appropriation of precedent versus Perrault's successive mannerisms.
Lifting the classical structure of the Old World, to anchor an architectural tradition in the New World.
Mechanisms of criticism by convention.
The 'framework' of conventionalized continuity.
Maintaining performance secures a developmental context of interpretive constancy.
Gestaltian documentation of Perceptual Constancy.
Developmental 'knowing' and perceptual 'seeing'.
'Familiar' contexts and contemporary perceptions.
The normative tradition and comparative characterizations.
Artifactual Empathy: convention as critical baseline.
A formal empathy of socialized aspects.
Academic exemplars versus locally familiar contexts: a phenomenal criticism of convention in architecture.

ARCHITECTURAL CONVENTIONS AND CONTEXTUAL COGNITION
Defining architectural contexts of contemporary performance.
Looking for a contextual consensus: literal popularisms versus locally historical performance.
Co-operative maintenance of the conventional framework.
Convention's iterative maintenance lends a gestaltian 'completion'.
Proxemic groupings construct a continuous 'field' against which the contrasting 'figure' becomes characterized.
Townscape as familiar contexts of localized consensus.
Gordon Cullen's visual design of 'harmonious' character.
Thomas Sharp and the 'maintenance of character'.
Kevin Lynch's 'district sense': particular contexts within a town.
Comparative criticisms within the experienced contexts in which one's building exists.
The 'historic district': localized contexts preserved by literal political instrument.
Conservative maintenance: posture, material and detail.
Perceptual Constancy, and the environmental 'memory' of our familiar everyday contexts.
Peter Smith's Habituation, and the cognitive constancy of specific environmental performance.
Contexts of historically familiar terrain versus the formally consistent 'historic district'.
Locally conventional performance versus free creation.
Some rules for specific case-studies.
The Charlestown maisonettes as locally 'invented' postures.
The Broadway Street project, and contemporary maintenance.
Secular performance and apparent improvements over the locally conventional.
Secularizing through the conventional framework, and cognitive 'explanations' of conventional performance.
Appraisal of contextual consensus as operational 'creative source'.
An environmental collective of specific 'building acts'.
Text and context: Pocock's socio-historic role of the institution.
Stan Anderson's 'streets as open institutions'.
A situational framework of locally 'institutional' performance.
'Textual' moves of contemporary re-interpretation.
Critical Conventionalism: the 'frontage area' of 44 and 54 Concord Avenue.
Programmatic arrest of the investigative reconstruction.

223 APPENDIX

225 AN INTERPRETATION OF LAKATOSIAN RECONSTRUCTIONS AS IT PERTAINS TO THIS THESIS'S EXPOSITORY METHOD
A method of correspondence.
Accommodate the conditional nature of observation and research.
Popper's 'refutational proofs' and scientific protocol.
Elkana's 'two-tier thinking' and a socio-historic protocol.
Eliot's 'historical sense' and a creative protocol.
Lakatosian 'problemshift' and the predictive value of 'progressive' programs: verifying excesses, not refuting absolutes.
The predictive value of the problem shift must recognize the context of its empirically interpretive mind. The 'hard core' serves as public record of one's interpretive understandings. Fact versus artifact: a condition for Lakatosian reconstructions. Summary of methodological elements.

WING ADDITION FOR MUSEUM OF FINE ARTS, BOSTON
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A RESEARCH PROGRAM FOR THE ENVIRONMENT
ECOLOGICAL CONTINGENCY: THE HARD CORE POSITION

The environment is not an object. The term 'environment', is one of those odd naming-games we play; assigning object-like qualities, to aid our understanding and communication of an event we only experience in part. Whilst the environment is surely composed of recognizable objects, the phenomena of their interactive ecology is the symptom we identify as environmental. A milieu of relative parts adding up, at some point, to the appearance of a synthetic whole, or phenomenal setting. If one further appreciates this ecological interaction with the knowledge of a universe in temporal change, one can begin to understand environmental relationships as constantly transgressing objective efforts at circumscription.

Add man to this composition and we animate the physical setting with particular understandings, or perspectives of appraisal and operation. Human influence is not merely another geometry, increasing the complexity of physical relation; but happily provides a baseline for sustained evaluation of the environment's contingency. The human inflection gives weight to the formal surroundings; not only by explaining its material interaction from a shared perspective, but by manipulating this world to promising configurations of exigent human need.

Indeed, these faculties approach the social role of the architect. For the large part, the profession of architecture is socially responsible for manifesting an instrumental service of the environment's optionality,
both as it exists and as it could be.

Purely 'objective' models would never produce satisfactory interventions of our relativist surroundings, as its information lacks the timbre of human perspective. Objectivity, taken as a value, is characteristically a repression of self-image. One could objectively appraise New York City as: a collection of enclosures built from 'x' material to a dimension of 'y' magnitude. However, we don't touch a humanely operative domain until we reformulate this data at its phenomenally interactive level, relative to our own experience of material and dimensionality: i.e. New York City is a cavernous vertigo of cool-skinned skyscrapers, each with hundreds of reified consumers behind them. Such an analysis could, of course, be expressed otherwise. The strength of its positional understanding, or 'irrational' partiality, coming with its convincing demonstration of exigent value.

'Moral' explanations, in search of encompassing social truths of architecture, fail to convince one as well. Their images of purity in formal operation attempts to suppress the contingency of the environment, by heroically re-ordering its elements in a single moment of frozen inspiration. Removed from the 'dirty' influence of exigent concern, its unchallengeable determinism imposes an external code of formal operation; dwelling in goodness, without capacity for real moral choice. It is indeed difficult to imagine such environmental purity; as the

socio-political complicity required, never seems to maintain convincing consensus.

Whilst an 'historicist' appraisal of architecture may indeed reflect larger social attitudes of formal operation, the design strategy of simply reversing this relationship rarely proves fruitful. Designing a culture around a building is considerably more difficult than its sensible inverse. These heroes who speak of 'the spirit of our times', always seem to neglect that while the times were ours, its axiomatic expression was uniquely theirs.²

Have no doubt, the 'objective', 'moral', and 'historicist' critique can and has been used to appraise our surroundings. The point of my rhetoric being that such understanding not only stands ignorant of the relativist nature of the environment, but more importantly, will yield operations of a similarly less-than-adequate epistemological domain.

A promising extrapolation of this position might value 'operational' congruence, of one's design ideas, with the inherent contingency of the environment. An unselfconscious model for change, able to accommodate local demands within the characteristic structure of its intervening order. Purposeful expression of local deviation might serve to demystify the ideal purity of external ordering systems, by emphasizing local

exigencies as meaningful; lending an authority to those peculiarities of
the environment which offer characteristic identity.

Such operational plasticity would match the experiential appraisal of the
environment, outlined earlier. This plasticity additionally recognizes
that man's creations, realized at a competitive geometry with his own
scale, must retain an underlying quality of mutation (or expressed
optionality) to overcome its unreal sense of environmental stasis; and to
involve man in a normative sense of ecologically-vital surroundings.

"We have thus come back to the question of form as such. A
constantly changing environment means that there is after all
a form that should be independent of how things are
constructed. We have already touched upon the importance of
variability. Nature, biology, is formally rich and
luxuriant. It can with the same structure, the same
intermeshing, and the same principles in its cells' inner
structure, achieve a billion combinations, each of which
represents a high level of form. Man's life belongs to the
same family. The things surrounding him are hardly fetishes
and allegories with a mythical eternal value. They are rather
cells and tissues, living beings also, building elements of
which human life is put together. They cannot be treated
differently from biology's other elements or otherwise they
run the risk of not fitting into the system; they become
inhuman. 3

The hard core understanding of this thesis's reconstructive research
program remains adamant towards the intrinsic link between our phenomenal
appraisal of the environment, and the normative understanding of
operations within that environment. More precisely, one might understand

3 Alvar Aalto, "Rationalism and Man," (orig. 1935) in Sketches/Alvar
this environmental model of critical appraisal, as that realm in which we believe our subsequent operations are to become fruitful.

Such an edge between thought and things, is the original inspiration of this thesis's investigation. The reliance of contemporary criticism towards the maintenance of its intervening structural authority, is the convincing operational aspect of both Perceptual Dynamics and Critical Conventionalism (to be framed as 'auxiliary hypotheses'). The embedded operational dependency of contemporary appraisal not only provided a 'hard core' of methodological indeterminancy, but framed an investigative positive heuristic as well. Convinced of this 'operational' correspondence, the task became one of grounding Perceptual Dynamics' purely formal analysis in a concordantly-interested realm of research, regarding the socio-historic aspects of convention's cognitive understanding in the built environment. Hence, the title of this thesis.
Perceptual Dynamics can be thought of, as a model for experientially-linked appraisal and operation of the environment's contingent character. Perceptual Dynamics connects the appraisal of environmental contingency, to the knowledge we have of the human faculty to perceive its exigent surroundings. It involves the operational contingency of man, at the ecological level of one's physical capacity to experientially-understand oneself, as 'framework' for environmental interaction.

Recall that the environment is not an object. From the human perspective, perceptions of our surroundings are always a partial survey of a larger milieu. Whilst architects tend to design buildings as a total object, they are never phenomenally perceived as such. We only experience partial impressions; temporal constructions of our fundamentally subjective physical sensibility.

Buildings often neglect this experiential aspect of the human perspective. Too often architects leave their well-conceived intentions on the drawing board; never rethinking their marvelous diagrams on the level of the tactily understood surroundings. Such diagrammatic formalism often bankrupts its own comprehension, by neglecting the capacity of the human framework of perception, to experientially-characterize it.

A theory for the concordant appraisal and operation of our external surroundings, then, should not be concerned with ordering theories of
Rubin's Vase: figure-ground objectification

Proxemic closure: Pragnanz completion to the 'simpler' shape
the entire architectural object; but with its experiential understanding as a setting for man's contingency as interactive subject. This makes the distinction between the experience of architecture as setting for human action, and architecture as environmental art object or formal concept-diagram.

"Words and plans are safeguarded among mental constructs. They are removed from real life, subjectivity, and sensuality. Even when the words of the printed page are metamorphosed into slogans sprayed on city walls, they are nothing but a discourse. Boulée's aphorism that "the production of the mind is what constitutes architecture" merely underlines the importance of conceptual aims in architecture, but excludes the sensual reality of spatial experience altogether."4

It is interesting to note that perhaps the largest contribution of empirical investigation, regarding the observable interactions between physical form and man's understanding of it, has been the notion of external interpretation being a function of subjective experience. The meaning never consistently residing in the form itself, but in our constructive perceptions of it. Whilst the subjectivity of milieu interpretation is mechanistically impossible and deterministically undesirable to predict, we can observe this individual faculty, through efforts made at revealing its generalizable external manifestations.

Gestalt Psychology of human perception has demonstrated convincing evidence of the experiential domain of man's environmental, corporeal subjectivity.

Psycho-kinetic axes of the human body, with gravitational horizon as baseline.

Our empathetic re-cognition of these forces through perceived similarities in external bodies.
Although gestaltian understandings of environmental appraisal largely remain in the realm of individual sensation (a criticism I will address later), its notions of Prägnanz and 'figure-ground objectification', has a proven record of congruence, with cognitive aspects of environmental pattern-reading. (101,102) A gestaltian understanding acknowledges a bracketing of formal phenomena, as a visual psychology of tactile experience. It characterizes visual conditions which produce psychological effects: impressions of vertical, horizontal, solid and hollow which correspond to our own experience of physical interaction. (103,104)

"In a more general sense we can describe these projective effects as instances in which the viewer attributes to the objectively given situation visual qualities that derive from his own position and outlook."6

Rudolph Arnheim, descendant of the original Berlin School of Gestalt Psychology, is noted for his contribution of a perceptual critique, for works of art and architecture. It was Arnheim's notion, of "the dynamics of architectural form"7, which provided the context of my 1979 analysis of the architecture of Alvar Aalto;8 as well as the programmatic understanding of Perceptual Dynamics, related in this thesis.

Arnheim's model of the environment is sympathetic with the ecologically

5 All illustration credits are to be found at the end of the thesis.
7 Arnheim, op. cit.
contingent notions, developed earlier in the programmatic 'hard core' of this thesis. His efforts are attendant to man's experiential understanding of his own position in the physical environment, and the characteristic which human mobility contributes to its perceptual appraisal.

"No three-dimensional object can be completely recorded as an optical image by the eye at any one time from one fixed point. This is so because the optical image is a two-dimensional projection, which can portray no more than one point of an object at any one place.... In addition, visual experience is not typically limited to one aspect of an object. In the course of moving around in our environment, we see things from different viewpoints. We may change our position deliberately to gain a more comprehensive view."9

Perceptual Dynamics relies on the environment's non-objective optionality, as an authority of proxemic cues; stimulating a human perspective of self-location, and offering contingent directives of potential movement or 'operation'. It accounts for the diversity of the environment, as an array of formally incomplete events; and points to man's ability to perceptually-reconstruct consistent patterns, as a product of the experiential synthesis of their dynamic interaction.

"What has been discovered about the sensory inputs demonstrates that they could not produce the effects that they do in the absence of synthesis at higher levels in the brain... As soon as eye movement is examined, it is revealed that the image cast on the retina can never be the same because the eye is in constant motion. Once this is recognized it becomes essential to discover the process that enables man to see as stationary that which is recorded on the retina as constantly moving. This feat, accomplished by synthesis within the brain..."10

9 Arnheim, op. cit., p.110.
The 'operational' connection between perception and experience occurs in the forces between objects, more than a purely ontological analysis of object-sense. It is the subjective experience of a kinesthetic interaction, within the environmental optionality of our surroundings; the corporal experience of proxemic relation to a perceptual field of environmental objects.

"...the direct reverberation within us of the forces we experience in the objects we see....viewing a work of architecture lets the observer sense within himself perceptual forces of load and resistance, of pull and push, and so forth. This immediate resonance accompanies all perception, but is particularly decisive for aesthetic experience, which is based on expression."\(^{11}\)

Perceptual Dynamics can not only operationally accommodate the contingency of the environmental moment, but perceptually express its peculiar localism by purposeful deviation of the larger ordering structure. It plays through the physical to the psychological aspects of formal sensation; which, if constructed as a purposeful dynamic of architectonic clues, can provide a realm of environmental operation, scaled to the human framework of perceptual understanding. It is the tool Alvar Aalto used to upset, in a controlled manner, the stasis of traditionally-orthogonal building orders; to achieve a psychologically-desired effect or to further express an inherent one.

Ecological cohesion between Aalto's forms comes not by simple eclectic

\(^{11}\) Arnheim, op. cit., p.213.

adjacency, but through the necessary interdependence of his highly individualized elements. Each of these elements derives its unique form at once from its own functional constraints and the surrounding exigencies. Consequently each component must have the other, to maintain this more real sense of environmental completion. The primary problem one quickly finds in any survey of Aalto's buildings, is where to end. One can begin by shooting a photo of a lighting fixture, and end up frustrated because the camera can't capture the whole room. Obviously, one cannot obtain this kind of environmental diversity through a diagrammatic drawing-board language.

The main auditorium building at the Jyvaskala Teacher's College, provides an excellent example. The successive massing of stepped brick planes, culminating in a human-scaled void, subliminally announces this informal campus entry. (105) Similarly, the lobby of the auditorium entrance contains a plethora of Aalto's architectonic cues. The ceiling terraces back, reducing the scale as one approaches a small cafeteria. (106) A quick check to the left allows a view of an informal seating area, with the comforting casualness of the neighboring woods as a backdrop. (107) The right flank offers an open density of coat racks; screening the semi-public domain at the classroom stair hall beyond, itself an architectural event. (108,109) All of this is accompanied by the now

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12 Source of a longstanding disagreement I have, with the planimetric textual evaluation Demetri Porphyrios argues in his: "Heterotopia: a Study in the Ordering Sensibility of the Work of Alvar Aalto." in Alvar Aalto, D. Dunster and C. Dupeyron, eds. (New York: Rizzoli, 1979), pp. 8-19.

Public street entry facade: Town Hall, Saynatsalo, Finland.
Alvar Aalto, architect, 1949-52.
famous tile-clad columns; which when coupled with their seemingly random spacing, attain a dematerialization of their imposing geometry and an informalizing of their heroic function. All of this results in an almost subliminal conversation with the psyche itself; both in terms of movement directives and the varying moods of formality or public presence.

Aalto's use of unbalanced and oblique architectural massing emphasizes a sense of three-dimensional movement, but poses a potential source of confusion when the building is approached by the infrequent user. The Saynatsalo Town Hall is typical of Aalto's concerned solution, with its use of Perceptual Dynamics or architectonic cues. At the public street entry he utilizes a stepping down of the council chamber's massive brick face, the juxtaposed reach of the stair itself, and the perspective lines of the foreshortening library building. (110) Once the stairs are mounted, an informal overhead trellis begins your movement on a labyrinthine counterspirial up to the council chambers. (111,112) The overall effect of this enigmatic path is one not too dissimilar from the long, forrested drive of the Paimio Sanatorium, in its experiential reinforcement of a contemplative disassociation with the hub-bub of the external world. It performs as a set of social locks, to level one's psychological focus to the higher more serious tone of the town government.

As in all of Aalto's buildings, there exists a full complement of door handles and stair railings, which invite and emphasize one's sense of touch. (113,114) The experience of their use, accentuates the moment of physical contact with the building itself; connecting not only with our
hands, but with our minds. It is this synaptic aspect of experiential 'operation', which is at the very essence of Aalto's contribution to the world of architectural theory.

Although Aalto's work provides a quintessential example of a perceptually-dynamic manipulation of the environment, one feels compelled to characterize his formal constructions as appealing to the Modernist tenets of formal invention and historical avant-gardism. Indeed, Aalto himself posed the heroic ambition: "...how 'free-form' formalism will become the savior."13 The rugged Finnish topography, seen as context for his constructed landscapes, might begin to vindicate a concern for the 'conventions' of nature's forms; but the exclusion of collectively-conventionalized images of shelter, begins to suggest a weakness of concern for socially-normative exemplars. Perceptual Dynamics, as a model of appraisal, has concentrated primarily on the individual perceptions of environmental experience as 'operationally' significant; leaving open to speculation other potential influences of our surroundings, which we know to be effective.

Whilst many such domains might initiate fruitful study, the inspiration of this thesis suggested an important social domain of operation, epistemologically-correspondent with the dynamic contingency of

13 Aalto, op. cit., p.47.
Perceptual Dynamics. This notion of a socially-developmental understanding of the environment, Critical Conventionalism, is to be outlined as the second 'auxiliary hypothesis' of this research program.

As we proceed to search out the limits of convention's environmental 'operation', it is nonetheless important to keep Perceptual Dynamics in mind as a critique of our built surroundings, which values environmental experience as operationally significant. Subsequent investigation is to develop about a similarly experiential realm of architectural conventions, as well as its potentials of performance in the environment.
Critical Conventionalism provides a socio-historical basis for appraisal and operation of the environment's contingency. It compares collectively-normative appraisals of our surroundings, with contemporary surveys of apparent optionality. It involves the operational contingency of man's historical experience, as a socialized 'framework' of understanding for contemporaneous environmental interaction.

"...it is not a retina which perceives but a person." 14

For man, fruitful appraisal of our surroundings does not end with a sort of neutral language of 'environmental stuff' arrayed in a perceptually dynamic way. Rather, there exists a larger social consciousness in man that allows him to distinguish collective character or authority in his world. Man goes beyond the 'noble savage' of modern abstraction; he is not the reified gerbil unconsciously performing in the maze of life. He possesses a sustained social consciousness of life's phenomenological aspects; which he typically consults when trying to decipher the empirical confrontations of the present, in an effort to construct or consciously act in a way to insure a successful future. These constructs of 'successful futures', of course, gain their authority from like experiences of the past. Gradually through the recording of these historical successes, certain larger generalities appear which we can then collect into our pool of replicable effect or 'conventional knowledge'.

A conventionalist point of view is cognizant of the social aspect of knowing; and further is typically found to be most convincing, and contemporaneously practical, when critically participating in the social sphere of the moment. This socially-based, semi-autonomous reciprocity between the rules of the past and the empirical realities of the present remains convincing through the 'public' vehicle of maintaining criticism.

The 'operational' contingency of Critical Conventionalism appeals to our 'hard core' notion of a socially-practical use, of the past's success; much as Perceptual Dynamics' environmental contingency appeals to a rigorous, yet humanely-responsible sense of formal order. One never quotes the objective order, as such, but generalizes lessons from it; and maintains its authority through the reinvestment of contemporaneous criticism. A critical use of the conventions of the past, provides an operational understanding of our collective past success; just as a perceptually-based dynamic of environmental form, proffers an operational consciousness of formal sensation and self-location.

Even simpler, the contingency logic at work in both hypotheses, points to the semi-autonomous and socially-dependent nature of all architecture.

"Although a building is complete in itself as a formal design, it is an implement of physical utility and therefore reveals its full meaning only by embracing the presence of man."15

For architecture must surely be the most socially-dependent of the arts. Certainly the visual and musical artist (indeed chef and masseuse) may

15 Arnheim, op. cit., p.212.
offer statements of equal or even greater influence on a given society's milieu, than given works of architecture. The pure sensory artist, however, is characteristically a free creator; largely using inexpensive means and one's own craft and time. The pure artist, as the pure scientist, invents relatively freely; typically exploring the outer limits of political and socio-economic values.

Architecture, for the purposes of socially-normative definition, never develops outside of a social sphere. Building implies habitation and co-habitation; which ultimately necessitates some level of political co-operation. A sort of communal epistemology which constructs buildings as maintaining investments in a consensual pool of experience. This pool of experience may pertain to a simple set of vernacular building technologies, or iconographic images of desired political ideologies; but always with the authority of replicable success toward the effect intended. The replicable nature of the success begins to generalize the series of precedents into a 'rule-of-thumb', or a convention of knowing.

The context for my understanding of Critical Conventionalism was a history and theory course taught by Professor Stanford Anderson. Two related papers of his\(^\text{16}\) provide an excellent approach to this epistemology. It can be characterized as only generally appealing to the


formal academic domain, known as Conventionalism. Rather, it seeks to limit a potentially wide range of concerns, with an empirically practical socio-historic domain of artifactual criticism: characterizing contemporary positions relative to their maintaining demonstration of "classic"\footnote{The term 'classic' is meant to convey a sense of perpetual contemporaneity, as in Frank Kermode's: \textit{The Classic}, (New York: Viking Press, 1975).} performance.

As Anderson supports, "...social practices,...are inseparable from how and what we know..."\footnote{Anderson, "Conventions, Canons,..." p.l.} Convention, as epistemology, bounds its authority as a socialized framework of reciprocal operation; comparing historical records of success (the canon), in a semi-autonomous interactive criticism with the empirical potential of exigent positions. This reciprocity has the properties of a dynamic relationship with empirically-current experience. This new experience is contingent with the 'canonized' knowledge either through: (1) effective agreement and assimilation into the structure of the canon, (2) partial disagreement, in which the historically-developed structure accommodates or adjusts slightly to explain the effect of the new experience, or (3) total refutation of the canon's authority, and subsequent secularization of the rule to a new structure: in an ironic fashion, maintaining the purpose of the former canon through radical restructuring of its parts, but still dependent upon attendance to the former knowledge base as part of what is known to be the now larger pool of experience.
The formulation of social documents, shares equally in the opposing concerns for continuity and change. Although the canon of Christianity offered a fundamentally new notion of spiritual contract, it invested in a form of Biblical text which was conscious of its Hebraic origins (as an Old Testament); whilst pursuing an assertion of the contemporaneous authority of Christ's promise (as a New Testament). Similarly, our political Founding Fathers maintained much of the structure of English government; even as their revolutionary acts made important positional distinctions, of a secular independence.

The strength of an epistemology conscious of a conventional way of knowing, is obviously its utility. Utility in its formal aspects of providing a set of already developed technical relationships, in a generalized fashion: and utilitarian in its freedom to adapt the ideal to important local exigencies, without the formal determinism of moral recourse.

The contingent nature of this epistemological dynamic, is the pervasive common sense which this paper proposes to study as a thesis. The contingent dynamic has demonstrated experiential congruence, with the environment, through the notion of Perceptual Dynamics. Although I have related no specific evidence of Critical Conventionalism's dynamic 'operation', in an architectural realm, the bulk of the following reconstruction will address this domain. Generated by this research program's heuristic notions of phenomenal appraisal and correspondent operation, the following reconstruction seeks to investigate developmentally-cognitive characterizations of architectural convention in the built environment.
A RECONSTRUCTION OF INVESTIGATIVE CRITICISM
PERCEPTUAL AND DEVELOPMENTAL UNDERSTANDINGS OF CONVENTION IN ARCHITECTURE

What are architectural conventions? How might we recognize them? More precisely, how are they understood in the normative spheres of the everyday environment? Questions such as these became the source of some revealing discussion, at the recent M.I.T. conference on the topic of convention.\(^{19}\) The interdisciplinary mix of conference participants, provided healthy debate as to the role of convention in such fields as philosophy, politics, anthropology and language. However, similar efforts by the architectural contributors, left the non-architects particularly confused as to the precise formal circumscription of convention in architecture.

Of course, in many ways the question of purely 'objective' identification is far too complex to answer axiomatically; and would, according to our 'hard core' notion of environmental contingency, prove critically unfruitful. The following reconstruction begins with a programmatic understanding of convention, arrested at the level of its perceptual appraisal. Framing inquiries into the environmental experience of convention, through an extrapolation of the ecologically-interactive

\(^{19}\) "Conventions, Canons and Criticism," an interdisciplinary conference organized by Prof. Stanford Anderson and Jonathan Mathews: jointly sponsored by The History, Theory and Criticism Section, Department of Architecture, Massachusetts Institute of Technology and The American Academy of Arts and Sciences. Held at the House of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, Cambridge, Mass., on April 1-4, 1982.
aspects of architecture, outlined as Perceptual Dynamics. As such, this investigation doesn't seek to define convention (or a convention), but to characterize the effects of its formal manifestations.

Certainly, many instruments of direct political influence: such as building codes, zoning ordinances, and industrialized building production, manifest formal assertions of a socially practical domain. Any one of these might offer potentially fruitful positions for alternate research programs. However, each of these conventions of practice, assert themselves as a 'special interest'; contributing analytical elements to the total forum of concerns, which characterizes the whole architectural object. This investigation is more concerned with synthetic social conceptions, of architectural convention, as it interfaces with perceptual faculties of formal appraisal. It seeks evidence of convention's normative understanding, as a cognitive aspect of its environmental experience.

THE PERCEPTUAL DYNAMICS OF CLASSICISM

Armed with only the general heuristic positions outlined in the 'research program', this investigation began by simply applying the notions of individual sensation contained in Perceptual Dynamics, to a socially-grounded context of form offered by Critical Conventionalism.

The example of classicism, as a notion of convention, was selected for its ample documentation in the theory-constituent evidence of the 'conventionalist' literature, itself. A concurrent studio project, with Professor Gerhard Kallmann, provided an additional opportunity for testing and demonstration, within the context of a wing-addition to Boston's neoclassical Museum of Fine Arts.21

Offering only its five orders and an environmental vocabulary of spatial modules nearly Platonic in their fundamental geometry (115,116), classicism seemed quite appropriate for perceptual explorations of convention in architecture. A 'text' of constellations relying primarily upon the proportion of its elements, to manifest environmental relations of significance.

Perceptual appraisals of classicism have very substantial precedent with

Plate of the five Orders from *Quinto libro d'architettura*. Sebastiano Serlio, author and illustrator, 1566. Original woodcut from 1540.
nineteenth-century notions of Empathy. Theodor Lipps' "Raumaesthetik" characterized a theory of aesthetics diametrically opposed to the philosophies of objective beauty and ideal form, advanced by his predecessors. Lipps' notion of Einfühlung, or Empathy, observed the connection between our perceptions of the material environment, and the internal sensation of experiences sympathetic with our own corporeality. In doing so, Lipps risked the position that the perceptual experience of external form becomes 'realized', for us, through subjective internalization. In other words, objects are 'given life' or become real for us, only through the corresponding experiences those forms recall from the internalized experience of our own form.

"Already when, looking at the spiral, I follow it, and take in its separate portions successively, I am making this spiral 'come into existence for me' or 'in my perception'....the spiral 'becomes' successively narrower or wider, it 'narrows or widens itself', and it does this in a definite manner. The existence of the spiral is a 'becoming'."  

Such an appraisal of aesthetic understanding, not only attacked the myth of mental processes being purely objective and abstract; but it proposed a wholly subjective authority of aesthetic value. Of course, the authority of Empathy's critical service does not consist in a debate of personal significancies; but aims to characterize some of the larger consistencies of our shared corporality, in an objectively

22 English translations of Lipps' Raumaesthetik und geometrisch-optische Täuschungen (orig. 1897) and AEsthetische Einfühlung (orig. 1900), can be found in "Appendix to Anthropomorphic Aesthetics," an M.I.T. reprint, from Vernon Lee, Beauty and Ugliness (publ. ?, 1912), pp. 35-44.

23 Lipps, Raumaesthetik..., trans. Lee, op. cit., p. 35.
Illustration of the Roman Pantheon: spatial modules of Platonic simplicity.
autonomous world. In this way, Lipps' Raumaesthetik demonstrates a faculty of human behavior, more than it suggests rhetorical significancies for that behavior (or for the object).

"In other words, the act of 'Einftühlung' does not consist in giving this personal quality (Färbung) to the spiral and to the manner in which the spiral appears to rise, not to the 'spiral's form', but to the forces through which that form comes to exist....My own mode of existing is transformed in the spiral to whatever extent it is attributed by my feelings (Eingefühlt) 'to' the spiral; 'my' own mode of existing is transformed into a mode of experience in the shape of spiral. But this appears first in the spiral, not first in me..."24

Certainly as a notion of aesthetic understanding, the sensual domain of Empathy's critique is only partially representative of the manifold faculties of environmental understanding; however, Lipps' investment in the human body as normative framework for the appraisal of our built surroundings, might prove fruitful for this thesis's research program.

Lipps relates empathetical appraisals of the classical column, as a 'becoming' of the human experience of upright opposition to gravity. Indeed the verticality of a column's proportions has been, at least since Humanist times, consistently recognized as a representation of the human form. As the caryatids of the Acropolis suggest, historical evidence of this aesthetic understanding is not so hard to find. (117,118) The significance of such a formal understanding is not attributable to any particular theory of symbolism, but a generally cognitive embodiment of external form.

"The shape of the column...does not merely 'exist', but 'becomes', and that not once for all but over again at every

24 Lipps, AEsthetische Einfühlung, trans, Lee, op. cit., p. 36.
Detail view: the caryatids of the Erechtheum at the Acropolis, Athens, Greece, Built c.421-407 B.C.
Natives of Guinea becoming human columns; for the economical transport of their shelter to a new territory.

Illustrations of Minoan columns from Crete, and Egyptian 'bud-and-ball' configurations; upward thrust and released compression, as empathetic sensations of supported weight.
moment... The column seems to gird itself up (sich zusammen zu fassen) and erect itself, that is to say, to proceed in the way in which I do when I gird myself up and 'erect myself', or 'remain' thus tense and erect in opposition to the natural inertness of my body. It is impossible for me to be aware of the (shape of the) column without this activity seeming to exist in the shape I am thus aware of. Such an attribution brings outer things closer to us, makes them more intimate and in so far more seemingly intelligible.... We are reminded of processes which we can experience in ourselves, not of individual concrete instances of such processes, but of processes similar in character."25 (parentheses by translator)

Lipps goes on to elaborate the perceived congruency of the column's proportions, with the body's experience of supporting weight: the slender elongated ratios conveying effortless support (or a slight load), and the gradual tendency towards the other extreme conveying a feeling of compression. (119) Of course, the notion of experienced weight depends not only upon the shared corporeality of column and body, but upon the ecological imposition of a weight to be borne. Indeed, the equivalating nature of height to thickness of mass provides, for Lipps, a generalized notion of an empathetic sensation on an encompassing level of environmental form.

"We cannot possibly get it out of our mind that the widening or letting itself go into breadth 'must' render vertical movement slower, and that the narrowing in horizontal sense must quicken the vertical movement.... In (Classical) architecture we see everywhere unifies masses, particularly in vertical direction, projecting and receding. Everywhere do we meet the 'motif' of the upper and lower projections in the most universal meaning of this word. Through these the mass is transformed into a living rhythm of tension and resolution. The receding parts not merely 'go back' but 'hold' back, or affirm their spatial existence against the force of widening out or the tendency to coming forwards, which becomes visible in projections. They

(the receding parts) thereby embody a greater horizontal tension or achieve an increased inner cohesion."\textsuperscript{26} (my parentheses)

The counter-balancing tension and cohesion, of environmental composition, manifests a perceptual faculty to synthesize both directions towards the sense of a resolved whole. From the human perspective, environmental form most often presents itself asymmetrically; yet we mentally construct and reconstruct this literal phenomena, into an equilibrated sense of center. Much of our ability to navigate is based in our faculty to regularize our interactive surroundings into temporal compositions, giving the appearance of composed settings at rest.

"We have seen that the activity, through which a form, or any form-element appears to come into existence, cannot be thought of as without counter-tendency or counter-action. It is only through the working against one another, and the balance of activity and counter-activity that we obtain the resting (ruhende) Form."\textsuperscript{27} (parentheses by translator)

The Lippsian observation of equilibrating 'stasis', was to become the baseline against which the faculty of Perceptual Dynamics is outlined by Rudolf Arnheim. Arnheim had conceptually updated the notion of Empathy; through the specific empiric advances, provided by the contemporary models of Gestalt Psychology and, to some degree, Constructivist theories of aesthetics. In the general sense, however, Empathy remains the generative idea behind Perceptual Dynamics. It provides the notion of the perceived phenomenon of external form, as being that which is experientially 'realized' to us. Additionally, it holds our body as 'static' datum

\textsuperscript{26} Ibid., p. 42.
\textsuperscript{27} Ibid., p. 40.
Exterior view: Walhalla, near Regensburg, Bavaria (West Germany). Leo von Klenze, architect, 1830-42.
phenomenon, against which externally contingent settings are dynamically compared. The internalized expression of such a relation, being its determining characteristic, as a perceptual criticism of formal appraisal.

Armed with the fundamental notion of dynamic comparison, we might expand perceptual understandings of classicism beyond the simple Empathy of columns. Although we partially shelve the Lippsian notion of Empathy in favor of the more specifically external demonstration of Arnheim's, we generally retain Empathy's critical understanding of the human body as normative framework; providing a 'familiar' interpretive context, for distinguishing character in bodies outside our own.

Fundamental Arnheim's appraisal of the dynamics of environmental perception, is the resolution of enclosing form, with gravity and the ground plane. Its critical parallel with our own experience of horizon and support, is that faculty of Empathy which contributes most powerfully to the critical service of Perceptual Dynamics. Quite often successful dynamic effects are generated by the stimulus of exciting, even threateningly-ambiguous resolutions of enclosing form, with our own sense of gravity as an environmental experience.

Classicism, as a convention of architectural enclosure, is not ambiguous in this regard. The clear resolution of its compositional elements, conveys an 'operational' dynamic comparable to our own ecological perceptions of stasis. (120) Indeed, classicism is often produced as a quintessential exemplar of environmental stasis (or a resolved lack of
Plate from Parere su L'architettura (an architectural fantasy).
Gianbattista Piranesi, illustrator, published 1765.
dynamics) by the Empathy and Gestalt schools of architectural criticism.28

Although such criticisms of the classical conventions of architectural enclosure appear to find convincing demonstration through the faculties of Perceptual Dynamics, they conversely seem to imply a discordant refutation of this investigation's 'core-generated' positions on the contingency of our interactive surroundings. Further, how might classical stasis, as a recognizable manifestation of its convention of ecological enclosure, find important levels of contingently dynamic secularization; if maintenance of classicism, as a framework of normative formal understanding, is so clearly demanding of environmental stasis?

Giambattista Piranesi engages the required elements of the Classical Order, but dynamically exaggerates their formal roles beyond any conventional reference to normative composition. (121) Even though his overt expression of the entablature's horizontal weight increases one's sense of 'static' compression; this perceptual emphasis quickly over-extends the historically-developed exemplars of classical composition, and its conventionally-held notions of ecological stasis.

The classical treatment of the ceiling of the Casino de Pio IV, in the Vatican, offers a dynamic example of the opposite extreme; whilst finding a similar criticism, regarding conventionally-held notions of classical

28 H. Wölfflin, T. Lipps and R. Arnheim all specifically address the subject of 'The Column', as a formal exemplar of their respective theories on perception and Aesthetics. (see Bibliography)
Detail of vaulted ceiling: Camino di Pio IV in the Vatican, Rome, Italy. Ligorio, architect.
composition. (122) Classicism's normative ecological relationships, are radically subverted by the distorted sense of perceived horizon.

The verticality of the applied 'columns', as elements of dynamic action, over-express this important empathetic reference by further craning the neck with the curve of the ceiling vault. Perceptually, these 'temples in the sky' seem to confuse conventional understandings of classicism, on a level of architectonic 'operation'. We know this 'Order' is not constructed enclosure but surface applied in the style of, or giving the appearance of classical architecture.

Both of these demonstrations have appealed to the dynamic manipulation of the surface level of perceptual appraisal. The purposeful expressions of secular deviations from the convention, become least convincing on this level of applied style. Such a secularization confuses an experiential understanding of the classical, at the level of its language of enclosure. This mere indication of architectonic elements arrests, as is too often the case, the convention of classicism at some deflated representational caricature of its compositional style. This discovery makes the distinction between the conventionalized elements of classical composition as: the stylized representation of architectural enclosure, versus the corporeal experience of its surrounding environmental form. For the columnar Order of classicism, provides more than a representational satisfaction of our projected experience of human form. Classicism provides an order of constructed environmental operations; favoring the proportioned resolution of its architectural elements under the larger geometries of its compositional building modules.
Marc-Antoine Laugier, author, published 1755.
"The orders are, in many Roman buildings, quite useless structurally but they make their buildings expressive, they make them speak; they conduct the building,... Visually, they dominate and control the buildings to which they are attached.

How is this done? Not just by pinning columns and entablatures and pediments on to an otherwise bare structure. The whole thing - structure and architectural expression must be integrated.... Every time an order changes its plane of relief - say from pilaster forward to half, from half forward again to three-quarter, the entablature has to break forward too. You cannot dodge columns about under an unchanging entablature. That is one of the rules."29 (my underlines)

The Primitive Hut of Laugier's vision (123) is not a fundamental expression of classicism, merely because of its unnaturally 'authentic' primitive facture. This mythical 'Classic' also gains authority, through its absolute minimal framework of compositional operation: returning classicism, in the 'enlightened' context of archeological authority, to the divine realm of a 'natural fact' of building. The purity of the Muse's proposal, of course, proved a bit too divine for the real needs of contemporary shelter. Nonetheless, the elemental simplicity of the lines of dynamic resolution do seem to produce a sense of operational clarity, which even the uninitiated may perceive.

A quintessential example of this operational resolution is Soufflot's Ste.-Geneviève. (124) The free-standing column, clearly expressed entablature, and ascending 'sky' geometries of pure platonic modules simplifies the ecological interaction of its enclosing elements to such a degree, that this building is often cited as the first to satisfactorily approach Laugier's elemental purity. The regularity of its environmental

Plates from Précis des leçons d'architecture (theories on architectural design). Jean-Nicolas-Louis Durand, author and illustrator, 1802-05.
composition, and consistent relation to the supporting details of the columnar Order, further enhance the dynamic appearance of static resolution.

The operational character of classicism's planimetric purity not only mitigates local contingencies of environmental assertions, but typically rules them out from the start. The staggering variability of Durand's planimetric compositions, offers a framework of served and service spaces; but suppresses any local variation of these relationships, under the rigours of a formal ethic, to regularize throughout. (125)

If perceptual characterizations of classicism are to be further appreciated through its enclosing operation of rigorous formal regularity, how might such a rigor satisfy this research program's 'core' desire for an accommodation of the environment's interactive contingencies? Further, how might classicism's architectonic stasis serve as a framework of normative performance, for the 'secular maintenance' of contingently-dynamic forms?

Sir John Soane derived an architectonically-dynamic manifestation of classicism, which maintained specific spaces as a 'conventionally' regular module; but composed these modules sequentially, as a dynamic function of exigently useful adjacencies. Soane's interior surface treatments might differ greatly from the conventional classical Orders; however, the dynamic resolution of their static modules of enclosure closely convey the 'conventionalized' experience of classical enclosure. (126,127) A glance to the plan of these spaces (128) reveals an abandonment of

conventionally classical syntax, in favor of a dynamic accommodation of contingent adjacencies. Soane's operational order maintains the fundamental experiential vocabulary of classicism; but rearranges the syntax of its planimetric composition, as asserted by local exigencies.

Such an ordering dynamic is very close to the "Heterotopic"30 notion, developed by Demetri Porphyrios to describe the architectonic sensibilities of Alvar Aalto. As opposed to the 'homotopic' constructions of systemic purity, Heterotopia recognizes an operational limit with the perception of specific enclosures. Each enclosure, or room, is allowed to discriminate from the rest autonomously; and cohere only through sequential adjacency.

These operational notions appear to offer correspondence with this investigation's 'hard core' position on the human perspective, and its perceptual limits with the survey of one's immediate surroundings. Nonetheless, this architectonic level of dynamic operation still confuses normative understandings of 'conventionally' classical performance, by fragmenting the axial simultaneity of rigorously regular modulation. Even though Soane's deviation might find favor with the 'core' understanding, of ecologically contingent accommodation, the larger historical convention of classical architecture gains a constituent element of its normative character from such an unreal axial-redundancy.

Sir John Soane, architect, 1788-1833.
129 Plan: Villa Capra (Rotunda), Vincenza, Italy. Andrea Palladio, architect, c.1550.

This aspect of compositional center finds ample document throughout the history of conventionally-held exemplars of classical performance. (129,130)

Although one can never perceive all the spaces of the highly-structured classical plan at once, one can carry over a cognitive sense of the building's centrality. Further, the perceptual faculty to retain visual after-images, becomes resonatingly compounded by the unrelenting unity of this classical axially. (131) To a large degree this axial simultaneity accounts for the oft-noted characterization of classical architecture, as unearthly or utopian. Taken to a monumental scale, classicism's rigorous regularity, coupled with the empatheitic sensation of ecological stasis, has always belied an impression of a grandly eternal resolution and a pervasive sense of architectonic order. (132)

Having noted such experiential constituents to the architectural 'convention' of classicism, the recurrent appropriation of classicism by both political and ideological institutions to reflect their roles in the larger social order, is not surprising. Indeed, many societies have utilized the convention of classicism in such a symbolic manner. The ancient Greek Parthenon (133) and the Madeleine of nineteenth-century Paris (134), might find very similar perceptual appraisals; but the social and developmental aspects of their 'conventional' understandings would differ greatly with the position of authority each building represents, within its respective historical contexts. Leo von Klenze's Walhalla (135), contemporary with the Madeleine, must have manifested
132 Exterior view: British Museum, Smirke, architect, 1823-47.

133 Historically reconstructed perspective view of the Acropolis; approximating 450 B.C.

Exterior view: Walhalla, near Regensburg, Bavaria (West Germany) Leo von Klenze, architect, 1830-42.
still other understandings of positioned authority, related to the particular societal context which characterizes its Bavarian setting.

Certainly such socially-interactive notions must figure into classicism's cognitive understanding as an architectural convention within importantly positional socio-historical contexts. Although this investigation has been exploring perceptual aspects of the Classical Order, it has neglected the historically-developed understandings behind the formal tradition. Further, this socialized interface of positional authority, seems to limit convincing perceptual appraisals of classicism's 'conventional' performance. Until this investigation approaches the positional aspect of convention's developmental understandings, the service of its criticism will suffer the groundless associations of a historical cartoon. (136)

To address this domain, an interest in the perceptual aspects of convention should be temporarily shelved, in favor of a demonstration closer to this social realm. Thus, I propose a methodological problemshift: maintaining the formal context of classicism as a matter of empirical continuity, whilst seeking manifestations of the socio-historic aspects of convention in architecture as it pertains to cognitive understandings in the built environment.
POLITICAL POSITIONS AND ARTIFACTUAL EMPATHY

The domain of this investigative problemshift arrests characterizations of architectural convention, with the assertions of their socio-historic positions of exemplary performance. It explores this realm for critical contributions to a developmental understanding of convention in the built environment. Further, this inquiry seeks the formal limits of convention's socialized aspects, as they demonstrate criticisms of service for their artifactual positions.

A search for the conventionalized contexts of exemplary performance, might appear to convincingly commence with the generalized notion of the traditional 'idiomatic' of classical architecture. However, specific evidence of idiomatic performance is rather elusive to document consistently. In addition, the strength of the idiomatic character appears to lie in its unselfconscious maintenance of historical precedent. In this way, the idiomatic more closely approaches the unexamined authority of custom, than the contemporaneously-reciprocal authority of Critical Conventionalism.

conventional "text"\textsuperscript{32} according to Pocock serves a particular social group as an interactive history of the acts of its members. It interfaces the practical needs of the community, as a document of historically consensual performance. It reserves certain aspects of the community's past experience, as a formal text of socialized authority. The contemporary significance of such a text, becomes internally characterized by the interpretive service of the past it provides.

Over successive generations of documented experience, Pocock maintains, particular communities gradually come to institutionalize these interpretive positions as a historically consistent "awareness of the past."\textsuperscript{33} Many such perspectives might be possible; however, this aspect of the conventional 'text' additionally serves its community by externally securing a particular position of interpretation, among others. Reinvesting use of a given conventional text, implies a sympathy with that particular history of acts, as well as a quasi-political investment in the 'reputation' of that shared history. In such a manner, a conscious investment in a given convention of past performance becomes a political, as well as, a formal expression of reference with that socio-historic position.

Architectural equivalents of Pocock's interpretive 'text', then, must appeal to documented performances of a social stature broader than the

\textsuperscript{32} Pocock, "The Origins of...", pp. 213-216.

\textsuperscript{33} Ibid. pp. 209-211.
simple idiom: where its builders consciously take a specific position within a larger tradition of documented artifactual performance, for the purpose of reflecting concordant positions of the community it supports.

As a demonstration, of such a political manifestation of convention, within the artifactual context of classicism; I present the case of Thomas Jefferson. Jefferson's search for an authentic American iconography, for its newly founded political institutions, provides ample evidence of a convincing political interface within the convention of classicism.

As a true gentleman-architect of the Enlightenment, Jefferson played the roles of both politician and architect, as a singular opportunity to harmonize these systems in support of a new spirit of social contract. Indeed this ability to play the dual role as one, is what perpetuates a fascination in the nature of his contributions. One feels compelled to overstate this pervasive quality of Jefferson's concern. In a historical moment of unique questioning as to the changing nature of political authority, one can't help but appreciate Jefferson's enthusiasms for the social need of an aesthetic sensibility, as well as the specific benefit of his legacy as a competent architect. His ample depth of concern for rigour of formalizing method gives interested onlookers a detailed story of the vital elements of formal interface, between social authority and a representative iconography.

"You see I am an enthusiast in the subject of the arts. But it is an enthusiasm of which I am not ashamed, as its object is to improve the taste of my countrymen, to increase their reputation, to reconcile to them the respect of the world, and
procure them its praise."34 (my underlines)

By announcing such an enthusiasm, Jefferson invested a pseudo-political importance upon the subject of the arts. The desire to establish a 'reputation of respect' begins to point to an interface of social posturing, within formal traditions already held in esteem. Jefferson had seemingly realized that socialized exemplars, in the arts, are not purely inventive; but gain their collective reputation by assuming some position, within a chosen tradition of artifactual conventions. Jefferson's early training in Law and the Classics could well have generated this 'enlightened' sensibility, regarding the orderly and measurable aspects of a well-founded legalistic criticism of architecture.

"Classical taste in architecture was epitomized for Jefferson by the classical orders....The things which he stresses are the shape, placement, and proportions of parts, and the appropriateness of the ornament. In other words, his evaluation assumes its authority from a preconceived proportional and decorative system, on the basis of which the building can and must be judged."35

The notion of the Law as an 'operative' model for architectural criticism, has correspondence with the semi-autonomous nature of convention.36 Engaging a rule-supported method which provides socially-interpretive criticism, within a specific structure of archeological precedents. Further, this re-reading of precedents appealed to the developing


Detail view: Maison Carrée, Nîmes, France.
Built by the Romans, circa 16 B.C.
Plate of Maison Carrée, from Vol. IV of Quattro libri dell'architettura. Andrea Palladio, author and illustrator, published 1570.
Elevation study for the new Virginia State Capitol: original Jefferson drawing cites Palladio's version of Maison Carrée as the model of precedent, circa 1780.
political sense of 'fair criticism'; democratically averting subjection to fashion or momentary desire, by testing against a kind of archeological system of checks and balances. It is this level of self-consciousness, regarding the specifics of form and its relation to historical precedent, which characterizes Jefferson's notion of architectural criticism as it interfaces social authority.

Jefferson's investment in classicism was not so much a desire for the historical milieu of antique Rome, as it was an interest in the systemic nature of its formal conventions; not the concern for a mythical 'noble savage', as much as the appeal to an interpretive tradition of reasoned maintenance and secularization. The feeling that all future situations could, in some way, be evaluated against this most basic statement of political monumentalism.

Jefferson's attraction to Antiquarian theories of Eighteenth-century Neoclassicism was empirically consistent, in intent, with those of his European counterparts. However, his literal appropriation of the ancient Roman Maison Carrée to the contemporary needs of the Virginia State Capitol was not nearly so revivalist or intentionally progressivist, as it was a secular attempt at harmonizing a disparate cultural background of the Colonies with a fundamental expression of solidarity with all European ancestry. His concerns for the objectivity, not only of history but of all Natural Systems, maintains the intent of conventional European thought. His literal transfer of antique artifacts, however, radicalizes the final formal solution in a way appropriate only to the ungendered forests of the New World. (137-139)
This is a subtle, yet important, 'operational' difference from Perrault's view of convention; generated in the ongoing European milieu, of generational successions of interpretive mannerisms. Perrault's original task of translating Vitruvian theories of antique authority into French gradually transgressed to a polemical mission based in a commonly-felt desire to reconcile the methodological workings of contemporary enthusiasms for Natural Law, with the still mysteriously elusive truths of traditional classical conceptions of beauty and divination of taste. (140,141)

Subsequent studies maintained that each country had developed their own set of artifactual versions of Antiquity, and that these models were variant with time as well. Although there was a degree of replicability to these conventions of social tradition, Perrault's findings proved a reciprocity of authority as to the actual rigour of their formal specifics. This criticism of reciprocity offered an alternative freedom from the near-moral view of Antiquity's lessons, which reformists such as Laugier were to continue to willfully popularize through the eighteenth-century.

For Perrault, relativism of formal solutions was based in the purely empirical observations of culturally-oriented consensual agreements, (at best) of what the classical had meant. He had not anything like the conception of a new-born culture, which was the only problematic for Jefferson and the colonial artisans. What, for Perrault, was a structuring of multiple viewpoints and historically-collective notions of conventional performance (leading, at best, to a cultivated
142 Conjectural elevation of Jefferson's Virginia State Capitol: as per his design of 1780. (Buford Pickens, illustrator, 1975.)
View of the Virginia State Capitol: Richmond, Virginia. Thomas Jefferson, architect, 1791. (Photo taken in 1865.)
sense of norm and deviation); was taken, by Jefferson, without this contextual backdrop as a 'natural fact' of formal criticism and historical change. There were no questions of artifactual authority, for Jefferson, because there was hardly a codified society as yet; let alone the dearth of replicable indigenous precedents.

As such, Jeffersonian Neoclassical makes its critical assertion, by literally lifting the structure of European artifactual theories as a positive form. Those elements of structural solution, to what was a problem of completing or perfecting a reconstruction in the reformist neoclassisizing of Europe, became empirically expropriated at the highest level of representative formalization, in the search for coherency of principled roots in colonial America. (142)

Perhaps this all seems terribly obvious as it must have to the Founding Fathers, but the utilitarian sense of this rather unique formalization grew as much out of the circumstances of colonial settlement, as did their most cogent reaction to it. Having only the endless landscape of virgin forests, they could only see the need for a structure of imposition. In short, the elements of what was a reformist continuity of iconographic authority in Europe became methodologically shifted to a positively-employed discontinuity, significative of the new spirit imposing itself on the unsettled world. (143)

Such a strangely 'ahistoric' use of the classical tradition not only arrested a fear of rootless progress, engendering an unbroken chain of provincialisms, but also provided a formal posture of the least
144 Design for a woodcutter's lodge: Claude-Nicolas Ledoux, designer, circa 1780.

obstrusive implication to collectively represent those aspects of Constitutional Liberty so vital to the position of their newly-won respect.

This observation made, re-awakens interest in Jefferson's opportunity to play a dual role. His ability to cross the line between architect and politician allowed him convincing breadth of scope, as to knowledge of social practice. Further, his dual position of authority in the ungendered colonies provided a unique opportunity to usurp these artifactual relationships, independent of the historical and political contexts which limited the European search for an appropriate iconography. While the theoretical formalizations, often frustrated to only visionary renditions, of Ledoux, Boulée, and Durand contributed to the European sphere of ideas by effectively breaking-up their lineage of classicizing rules, setting these symbols in motion; (144,145) Jefferson, situated in an iconographic search of truly political consequence, furthered their trends in a manner unavailable to the Europeans.

By aligning the pragmatist sense of a New World mobility of values with the artifactual language of classical structure, Jefferson not only offered an early manifestation of uniquely American 'taste', but through his effort returned a critical 'position' of formerly unimaginable formal dimensions. The nature of this contribution, I would maintain, has to do with an expression of this mobility for its own sake. By usurping the convention of classicism literally, without the backdrop of a contrasting medieval context upon which to overlay it, Jeffersonian Neoclassical manifested a political position analogous to the urban
"Checkerboard Plan" for the expansion of Richmond, Virginia: Thomas Jefferson, designer, circa 1790.

Paintings of Paris, contemporaneous with Jefferson's residency: depicting the demolition of Medieval street patterns to conform with the axial grids of European Neoclassical Urbanism. Hubert Robert, artist, 1788.
mobility of the colonial town grid. Both are offering an operative system of social mobility as formal end-product; leaving open to future generations the implied re-investment of contemporary interpretation. (146,147)

Just as the power of Constitutional Law comes with a continued attendance to contemporary criticism, so does the literal adaptation of a structurally-rigorous artifactual classicism rely upon future adjustment for the maintenance of authority. This anticipation of contemporaneous change could perhaps only be fully embraced in the New World, as it was there that most of its inhabitants had come for their own secular interpretation of 'Utopia'. It is no great surprise either that the structure for change which they had appropriated, was based in the authority of an empirically-found 'history of change' from the Old World. Again, what was an archeological reconstruction of Antiquity's 'story' in the Old World, became a sort of formal baseline of normative performance for the charting of unknown territory and assumed progress in the New World.

It is this cogent approach to the lessons of a convention-oriented view of change through time, combined with the American pragmatist's sensibility of the reciprocity of epistemic and empirical means, occurring with the urgencies of the moment which characterizes a convincing position for Jeffersonian Neoclassicism; as an unique contribution to the contemporary interface of social consciousness and the formal convention of classicism. (148,149)

149  View of the Maison Carrée: Nîmes, France. Built by the Romans, circa 16 B.C.
"No society can make a perpetual constitution,... or a perpetual law. The earth belongs to the living generation." 37

The preceding demonstration has been able to characterize socio-historic positions for the work of Thomas Jefferson, but it has yet to delimit those aspects of convention by which it was able to arrive at such characterizations. Certainly the notion of Jeffersonian Neoclassicism, as a uniquely American appropriation of the larger classical framework of formal conventions, could not have been discerned without the developmental consensus of artifactual exemplars which contribute to the critical sense of a documented tradition in the first place. Even as Jefferson seemed to demonstrate, the measure of one's positional reputation can only have significance against some framework of conventionalized continuity, it is to be critical of.

Of course, the 'framework' of conventionalized continuity is rarely something one can cite objectively. As with the naming-games we formerly applied to the interactive phenomenon of the 'environment', we assign object-like qualities to the historical continuity of conventionalized exemplars to give the illusion of an objective framework; and thereby aid our critical understanding of that which is actually a developmental phenomenon. Make no mistake, the specific contributions to such a framework of continuity are objects and are unique in their particular

37 Pierson, op. cit., p. 334. (originally from Jefferson, specific source not cited by Pierson)
position in the tradition. It is the developmental consensus of these particular artifacts, over time, which lends the appearance of an 'objective' framework of conventionalized exemplars.

In such a manner, the maintaining re-investment of conventionalized performance secures a normative context of interpretive constancy, through the appearance of a correspondent constancy of its formal exemplars. Indeed, continued investments in a preferred code of conventionalized performance appears to manifest continuity in the formal aspects of that conventionalized code as well. The formal continuity of 'building documents' serves to codify the conventionalized 'code of preferred performance' in this way.

Convention's developmental continuity, then, has demonstrated critical performance through its figurative constancy of formal 'document'. A kind of interpretive baseline of normative exemplars, against which one might characterize the quasi-political 'positions' of formally-dynamic secularizations. This illusion of a developmental constancy seems to lend a critical interface to the socio-historic aspects of convention; thereby providing a way to characterize the object of conventional performance, which reflects the socially developmental assertions behind that conventional performance. Such a notion might allow formal characterizations to appreciate the simple perceptual models outlined in the first problem-setting; encompassing an important socio-historical grounding behind the formal tradition.
The capacity of the developmental framework of conventional exemplars to provide formal characterizations of a social realm, finds an interesting reference with Gestaltian observations of "Perceptual Constancy".\[38\] Simply stated, Perceptual Constancy is an observed faculty of environmental discrimination, which appreciates simple perceptual surveys through a similar developmental constancy of normative exemplars or 'cues'. Although the Gestaltian domain of its demonstration exists outside of the historical contexts this investigation has been pursuing, Perceptual Constancy presents an interface of formal and developmental assertions analogous to the critical service provided by the figurative constancy of artifactual exemplars. In an appeal to the larger domain of this problem-setting, I propose a demonstration of Perceptual Constancy as it furthers convincing criticism of convention in the built environment.

Perceptual Constancy should be prefaced as an observation of human perception not directly explicable by perceptual faculties, as such. Gestaltian studies have pointed to its mysterious ability to complete perceptions of objects one can only partially 'see'. Of course the 'seeing' of environmental perception only transmits presented information. The faculty of Perceptual Constancy goes further, by actually supplementing perceptual appraisals; correcting the mechanical

\[38\] The notion of Perceptual Constancy, used in this thesis, is found in David Canter's: Psychology for Architects (New York; John Wiley & Sons, 1974), pp. 35-40.
An illustration of Perceptual Constancy: the constancy of one's developmental experience with 'tables', reinforces the perception of its top as a rectangle.
distortions, pure vision presents.

"...because the retina is essentially two dimensional, a square table will give rise to an image on the retina which is only rarely square. It will vary from diamond to trapezoid depending on our angle of view. Indeed the use of perspective drawing relates to this, but nonetheless we usually perceive the table as a square one. We must learn how to draw in perspective. Figure (150) illustrate the way in which our perceptions of actual forms maintain constancy. Both the polygons are the same shape but the one which is seen as representing a table will be perceived as rectangular."39 (my parentheses)

The ability to 'know' more about the table than mechanical perception informs, does not come from a miraculous x-ray vision. We 'know' that a fourth leg exists on the table and that all the legs are of equal length, yet this information is not physically presented to us. Obviously we supply the additional information; not based upon the contemporary perception, but upon a conviction in a developmental history of prior perceptions of similar forms. In this manner, the developmental aspects of perceptual experience adjusts and appreciates formal surveys of the moment.

"Perceptual constancies are thus an excellent example of the way in which our knowledge of the world modifies what we perceive. If we 'know' what an object is, we know and perceive it as the appropriate size, shape, etc....The important point about this experiment is that it illustrates that it is our knowledge of what the world is like, built up from previous experience, which creates these distortions (or adjustments) of perception."40 (my parentheses)

This aspect of Perceptual Constancy would seem to place an importance upon the particular context of past experience one has to draw upon. The

39 Ibid. p. 37.
A table in a 'familiar' context.

Part of my household of objects.
thoroughness of one's explanation of a formal presentation, being correspondent to the closeness of one's past experience with the context of objects presented. For instance, I can offer quite complete explanations of the table in illustrations 151, 152 and the objects on it, as they are part of my daily context of experienced objects. According to the original Latin definition, they are 'familiar' to me; they are of my 'household of objects'. Further, I would be quick to characterize as 'unfamiliar', any objects on that table that were not part of my 'household of objects'.

Of course, the context of this example is admittedly extreme in its intimacy. Social communities larger than my own 'household' can't have such a direct 'familiarity' with the objects about them. Generally speaking, however, the closer one's 'familiarity' with a developmental context of objective 'cues', the more 'knowledge' one may attribute to the formal presentation.

Of course, this interface might contribute formal information in the other direction as well. Contemporary perceptions may not confirm the developmental construct of past experience; or it may confirm only aspects of the 'perceptual constant'. In which case, the contemporary perceptions contribute to the ongoing development of informed experience by adjusting the construct of constancy. Upon a more complete formal

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The Ames 'distorted' room: the perceptual resolution of this scenario, involves a reciprocity of presented surveys and constancies of past experience.
survey of the table in illustration 150, one might not find the 'fourth leg' to really exist. This would certainly have an impact upon future characterizations one might attribute to the formal presentation of 'table'. Even in this case, however, it is important to remember that the contemporary perception finds its significance as a characterization of its dynamic comparison with developmental constructs of past experience.

Actually, as humans we utilize both the internally normative aspect of Perceptual Constancy and the assertions of formal perceptions of the moment, to fully understand the presented environment. (153) Both aspects must be seen as contributors, if the figurative 'constancy' of environmental perception is to be truly developmental. It is this reciprocal aspect of Perceptual Constancy, which seems to manifest a service of environmental characterizations closest to the critical faculty convention provides through its framework of exemplary performance. The developmental constructs of Perceptual Constancy, lends additional information to the formal presentation, in a manner similar to the socio-historic aspects of convention's figurative framework of exemplary precedents; appreciating purely formal readings, by grounding such surveys in a 'familiar' context of conventionally normative performance. It is in such a manner, that Perceptual Constancy provides analogy for the developmental interface of convention's internally normative 'baseline' of socio-historic exemplars.

How, then, might this faculty provide characterizations of contemporary performances of maintenance or secularization, taken against that
framework. Recall that the measure of Jefferson's positioned 'reputation' among the arts, could only have gained significance if taken within some internally consistent tradition of architectural form. However, the actual characterization of that position could only have happened as an externalized comparison of formal deviation, from the figurative tradition of normative exemplars. In such a manner, convincing characterizations of maintenance or secularization, of a socially-developmental formal tradition, had faculty through an externally-dynamic comparison against the normative reference of artifactual exemplars: quasi-political 'reputations' of sympathy of deviation becoming bounded by formal ones.

In this way, the socialized 'framework' of artifactual exemplars begins to suggest a critical service of characterizing formal continuities and differences, similar to that of Lipps' Empathy. One should recall that in earlier empathetic appraisals of classicism, we were able to characterize the upright proportions of its enclosing forms through an externalized comparison of one's internalized experience: one's own body serving as normative reference for criticism of environmental 'bodies'. In many ways, the externalized comparison of convention's internally-normative 'constancy' has demonstrated a similar faculty. The perceived constancy of its framework of exemplars provides a normative formal baseline for a socialized level of empathetic criticism; characterizing maintenance of normative performance, or aspects of secular deviation from it. (154-156)
Of course, the domain of Lipps' critical notions lies outside the socio-historic contexts of convention. However, the extrapolation of Empathy, as an analogy of convention's externalized accommodation of contemporary performance, might promise a fruitful interface for convincing formal characterizations of the quasi-political 'positions' taken against the artifactual tradition of conventional performance.

Heinrich Wölfflin, a contemporary of Lipps, outlines a slightly broader sense of Empathy than Lipps' 'becoming'. Wölfflin's notions might be of service towards understanding empathetic manifestations of convention's socialized framework of artifactual exemplars.

"...the forms of bodies can have character only through the fact that we ourselves possess bodies. If we were mere optically receptive essences, then aesthetic judgement of the world of physical forms would be forever beyond our grasp. But as human beings with corporeal bodies which teach us what heaviness, contraction and strength, etc. are we collect in ourselves the experiences which enable us to sympathize with the states of others."42

A re-thinking of Wölfflin's notions appropriate to the socialized interface of formal criticisms implied by an Artifact Empathy, might best be approached through a terminological paraphrasing of this Wölfflin reference. For example:

"...the forms of (contemporary performances within an artifactual tradition) can have character only through the fact that we (as a collective community) possess bodies (of documented artifactual performance, or a socialized framework of normative exemplars). If we were mere optically receptive (individuals), then (developmental and social understandings) of the world of physical forms would be forever beyond our

Interior view: First Parish Congregational Church, Brunswick, Maine. Richard Upjohn, architect, 1845-46.
grasp. But as human (communities) with (a collective history of artifactual performance) which teach us what (has been successful or preferred performance in the past) we collect (a familiar body of exemplars) which enable us to sympathize (or comparatively characterize the level of maintenance, or positioned secularization, offered by the formal assertions of contemporary performance)."

The point of this exercise is not to discover that Empathy can find convincing demonstrations within social domains, but that the social epistemology of convention and the perceptual notions of Empathy might share an interfacing faculty of formal characterization. In this sense, Artifactual Empathy is not offered as a hard theory of perception, but as a possible critical sense of formal characterization which embraces the socialized contexts of artifactual performance.

The line between the socialized aspects of convention's developmental tradition of formal exemplars and the quasi-perceptual manifestations of this socialized 'constancy' is admittedly difficult, as it relates to encompassing formal criticisms within both social and perceptual domains. The notion of an Artifactual Empathy does not mean to suggest a kind of perceptual 'Zeitgeist'; claiming to divine the subjective impressions of an entire community, under a single perception of form. Merely that there exists a perceptual manifestation to the socializing continuity of the conventional 'framework', which furthers perceptual understandings of the world external to that tradition by dynamically comparing 'familiar' formal qualities in the manner of Empathy. A formal empathy of socialized aspects, if you will. (157-161)

The importance of this distinction might be further clarified through an

158 View of bell tower: Christ Church (Old North), Boston. William Price, architect, 1723.
159 View of bell tower: St. Mary-le-Bow, Cheapside, London. Christopher Wren, architect.

160 View of bell tower: Old South Meetinghouse, Boston, 1729.
inspection of a much later work of Wölfflin's, which addressed an empathetic criticism of artifactual exemplars with a very different emphasis. In an attempt to re-explain the near-Renaissance character of Albrecht Dürer's sketches, Wölfflin outlined a perceptual criticism of particular artifactual performances; comparing the formal qualities of Italian and Germanic works, under the psuedo-psychological notion of a "national concept of form."

His ambitious investment in such a 'collective spirit of imagination' fails to embrace a truly socialized level of formal understanding, by limiting the framework of artifactual exemplars to a culturally implied 'instinct' of formal perception. Successful demonstration of such a realm of criticism, however, would seem to require a sort of normative framework of socially-held perceptions of form. Indeed, Wölfflin presents his argument in terms of such socially-held notions of form and contour. Not only is Wölfflin's attempt at characterizing the collective imagination of an entire culture slightly absurd, but the notion of capturing perceptual aspects of particular artifactual 'survivals' of history, seems impractical as well. Wölfflin's notion of artifactual criticism would have us believe that it is the continuities of perceptual appearances, which bestows characteristic significancies to the historical contexts of a socially-bounded repertoire of form. However,

44 Ibid. p. 228.
Artifactual Empathy as developed in this thesis' investigative reconstruction, maintains it is the consensual authority of historically preferred performance, which manifests an 'appearance' of consistent character upon the formal tradition: and that socialized levels of artifactual criticism might have faculty through a realm of formal characterization akin to an empathy of comparative appraisal, against that consensually-held tradition.

With this distinction comes a reminder, that it is the socialized consensus behind particular contexts of artifactual exemplars, which maintains the 'perceived constancy' of conventional performance. Artifactual characterizations on a level of conventional performance become importantly bounded in their socio-historic contexts of demonstration. The notion of formal criticism by convention implies a particular view of formal understanding, as bounded by the community which holds these exemplars as a yardstick of historically-preferred practice.

These artifactual exemplars of socialized 'constancy' not only internally limit the contexts of formal appraisals, but might also return an externally-operational framework of environmental understanding; the socially-developmental aspect of which, grounds one's perceptual reporting of environmental presentations, in an importantly local context of socio-historic interpretation. This developmental constancy might supply additional information, to mere perceptual surveys, in a manner similar to the faculty of Perceptual Constancy, earlier described;
reformulating criticism of the presented environment, in terms of the familiar 'cues' or exemplars of artifactual performance which that community holds as conventional. As with the faculty of Constancy, the amount of 'added information' has an operational limit with the degree of 'familiarity', or developmental experience, one has with that particular context of artifactual performance. In this way, the consensus of conventionalized performance builds a normative context of socially-developmental formal understanding, with an importantly local limit of environmental appraisal and operation. As J.G.A. Pocock, a historiographer of political action, points out; the context serves the conventional 'text' as a socio-historic framework, for the understanding of its reading.45

The political 'positions' of Thomas Jefferson's archeological classicism found formal characterization, of conventional performance, through a comparative empathy of artifactual contexts: yet the precision of one's socio-historic sense of 'familiarity', with these artifactual positions, is limited to reconstructed speculation on the interpretive contexts of its time and place. Certainly the survivals of documented performances and subsequent bodies of interpretive surveys allow academic levels of historical insight: however, one can't fully understand the contemporaneous social 'reputation' of Jefferson's positioned

performances, without an experienced socialized familiarity with the interpretive contexts of conventionalized authority.

Although the historical investigations, of this problem-setting, into socially-developmental understandings of convention in architectural contexts, has offered more encompassing criticism than the purely perceptual aspects of Classical dynamics; this inquiry has also found the critical service, of these characterizations of artifactual position, to be limited with the speculative nature of one's 'familiarity' with their contexts of socio-historic interpretation.

A check with this reconstruction's programmatic 'core' of investigative honesty will point out the operational deficiency of such a limit upon fruitful characterizations of convention, in the exigent contexts of contemporary environments. The socialized consensus of exemplary performance which most convincingly demonstrated the normative 'constancy' of convention's formal characterizations occurs, for us as contemporary critics, within the phenomenal contexts in which our buildings exist. Until this investigation accommodates contemporary contexts of convention in architecture, it can never convincingly approach truly operational characterizations of convention in the built environment.

As such, I propose to methodologically shift the empirical domain of investigation; shelving the academic contexts of archeological document, in favor of the built 'contexts' of contemporary social consensus. Seeking both perceptual and developmental characterizations of
convention, as they contribute criticisms of service towards experiential and cognitive understandings of convention in the built environment.
The domain of this investigative problemshift arrests characterizations of architectural conventions, with its contemporaneous contexts of socialized consensus; as it manifests a perceptual constancy of 'familiar' formal understanding, in the built environment. Recognizing that contemporary architectural contexts are co-present phenomena, indicating reciprocity of past and present positions of consensually-normative performance, this demonstration seeks not only maintaining elements of convention's developmental continuity, but a contemporaneously-cognitive sense of formal limits for the ongoing secular criticisms of that normative consensus.

Such a problemsetting suggests that if we, as architects, are to be instrumental in such a service of our architectural contexts, convincing demonstration must attend evidence of contemporary consensus as well as outline formal limits for the normative positions of the past. Hence, the domain of evidence presented should engage contexts of contemporary communities; both in an effort to characterize more presently-familiar exemplars of local historical continuity, and to offer a truly developmental service of our contemporary criticisms.

If convention's normative constancy, in contemporary architectural contexts, is to be demonstrated against that context's local consensus of preferred performance; then how are we, as architects, to get at this
contextual consensus? The socialized 'consensus' of convention, as a framework of formal continuity, should not be taken literally. Door-to-door surveys or 'u-build-it' strategies of political participation do indeed address some political assertions of architectural contexts; but place far too much conviction in the contemporaneity of populist opinion. Such populisms might well serve to actually evaporate time-tested consensus, in ad hoc expressions of secular individualism. Further, the durability of a conventional 'framework' of consensual norms would lose its value as a socially-practical document of historical performance. The time-bound aspect of populist consensus imposes too great a limit on the 'life expectancy' of such large objects of environmental composition as buildings. We need not re-make our world with each generation, to understand its significance.

The offerings of such movements as SAR, in The Netherlands, seem to mediate libertarian enthusiasms by providing a formally-constructed 'support' system, within which individual elaborations are freely accommodated. However, the many environmental rules necessary to generate these literally-built frameworks, seem to elucidate the difficulty of design by committee. Further, these 'Friedman-like' diagrammatic frames seem only to be repairing a

46 The body of work available on SAR is wide. For the purposes of this demonstration, I shall be referring to: N. John Habraken, ed., The Grunsfeld Variations (Cambridge: Lab of Architecture and Planning, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, 1981).


Yona Friedman's literal 'framework'. From his *Toward a Scientific Architecture*, 1975. (english edition)
164 The expressed advocacy of Friedman's diagrammatic 'infrastructure'.

165 SAR's diagrammatic 'tissues': consensual frameworks, by design.
166 General view of Delft, the Netherlands: traditional 'frameworks' of historical consensus.

167 An SAR directed design, by José A. Aldrete-Haas, 1980: a developmental continuity, generated all at once.
socialized consensus which wasn't necessarily broken: supplanting a mechanist rationalism as generating force for social continuity, in place of the historical consensus of conventional exemplars which any town of the Dutch tradition already strongly demonstrates. (166-168)

I would maintain that the apparent continuity in the architectural context of Delft, for example, is not a function of formally-literal frameworks of expressed advocacy; but a consensually-'maintained' approach to building, in which each building of that context contributes in some way. It is the perceived level of ecological co-operation, between an environmental group of building 'acts', which lends a cognitive sense of conventional performance to the characterization of that architectural context. The Dutch-town tradition builds evidence of its conventionally-held framework of consensual exemplars, not as a set of temporal lingual rules, but through the replication of its characteristic formal performance over time. In a manner similar to the figurative context of classicism's artifactual exemplars, so too do these environmental contexts build the cognitive continuity of conventionally-held postures, by reinvesting maintenance in a shared history of formal performance.

Thus one finds that conventional 'frameworks' not only demonstrate a consensual constancy between buildings, but also between generations of buildings. In this way, the cognitive strength of convention's normative constancy utilizes a practical reciprocity, of historical performance and contemporary consensus, common to our other demonstrations of convention in architecture. The perception of a framework of historical continuity,
General view of Delft: a localized co-operation of individual building acts, over time.
being a phenomenal manifestation of a context's collective evidence of normative performance. This might be an initiating notion of convention's cognitive effects, in contemporary architectural contexts. The consensual authority, of these contextual ‘frameworks’, being a socialized posture maintained over time; rather than the literal authority of contemporary political advocacy.

If such consensual frameworks aren't literally presented in the forms of contextual enclosure, then how does one construct environmental perceptions of convention's formal constancy? Further, if one limits appraisal of architectural contexts with the co-operation of individual building acts over time, then how does one attribute, to these environmental pieces, characterizations of a collective similarity? It is important to remember that one could not have attributed a characterization of convention's consensual performance, in the Dutch street, without the formal interface of each building as a constituent document of such a consensus. The collective evidence of convention's consensual and historical norms of exemplary performance could not have been convincingly demonstrated without some correspondingly-formal level of localized continuity, as a phenomenal characteristic of the context presented. In this way, the perceived co-operation of contextual continuity demonstrates a characteristic of environmental consensus, beyond the mere sum of its individual parts. Convention's epistemological interface between use-organization and formal tradition reinforces socialized aspects of this apparent contextual constancy: the socio-
An illustration of 'figure-ground' comparison.
historic continuity, becoming approximated through a formal one.

This is not to say that the formal continuity somehow indicates a social community of internally-consistent opinion. Nor is the implication intended that any environmental grouping must have such a formal continuity, to be identified as a 'context'. Certainly there are many 'contexts' which have no such recognizable unity. However, convention's consensual framework of formal replication, in contemporary contexts, appears to manifest an environmental accommodation of individual building 'acts', which might reinforce one's cognitive sense of contextual continuity.

The lessons of Perceptual Dynamics might suggest the effect of environmental continuity, manifested through an historical appeal to convention, occurs through the faculty of gestaltian 'completion'; or visual simplification of each building's discrete elements of iterative maintenance, towards the consensually-preferred performance. Perhaps the most fundamental notion of gestaltian perception is that of distinguishing character through comparative surveys, of the formal milieu presented. The very notion of figure on a ground implies the corollary distinction of both figure and ground, as attributes of the observed presentation. (169) If one can distinguish the black blob as a figure, then one also must be making judgements about the white area. Not only that which stands out is a manifestation of gestaltian constructs: that continuity, which forms the backdrop against which the figure is contrasted, must be perceptually constructed, as well.
An illustration of gestaltian 'closure'.

An illustration of 'proxemic groupings': the iterative similarity contributing towards the localized construction of a continuous field.
Recall the illustration of closure (170) as a very simple example of an ecological grouping of discrete, yet highly regularized objects. Of course, the known identity of a circle gives these individual segments an additional level of significance. However, if one is to randomly disperse these segments among a competing set of figures (171), one still finds their iterative similarity compelling as an ecological grouping of forms larger than the sum of their individual ciphers. Further, when one reads this presentation in terms of proxemic groupings of mixed forms, the apparently higher concentration of one of these forms over another actually serves to emphasize the differentness of the least-occurring form; as an odd figure, against the regularized field of the iterative grouping.

The iteration of stimuli, in a given presentation, seems to strengthen the individual object's collective effect as a backdrop or continuous field; against which stimuli radical to the iterative collective, becomes characterized as a comparatively contrasting figure. The faculty of 'collective iteration' appears to be at least one way in which characterization of a gestaltian field becomes actively constructed. It is also, I would maintain, an effect of convention at work in architectural contexts of contemporary consensus.

Obviously, each building of the Dutch street is different. However, the perception of a synchronized co-operation between buildings can not only be thought of as a manifestation of conventional consensus in architectural contexts, but can also be analyzed in terms of its formal elements of gestaltian regularity. Although developed for a different
Smith's diagrammatic analysis of the Honfleur townscape: the iterative similarity constructing a locally continuous field.
174 View of Amsterdam's 'convention' of townscape.
sort of perceptual theory, Peter Smith's analysis of the Honfleur townscape (172,173) does offer diagrammatically-simplified evidence of such a gestaltian aspect of contextual continuities. Just as the dots and dashes of the earlier gestaltian example constructed ecological groupings of proxemic formal continuity, so does the regularizing of major architectonic elements, under the consensual authority of a convention of contextual postures, manifest an ecological perception of proxemic formal continuity.

Since the formal complexity of 'real' architecture contexts is considerably greater than the simple gestaltian diagram, one might well be skeptical of an easy comparison between the two. However, the synthetic effect of convention's consensual regularization, of contextual enclosure, does appear to manifest a perceptual characterization of field-constructive iteration; against which the non-constituent, or unconventional, elements are contrasted as non-iterative or secular objects of an unsympathetic 'differentness'. The iterative maintenance, of the locally familiar formal positions of conventional performance, perceptually enhances a context-constructive effect of environmental continuity.

Such a deceivingly-simple correspondence might appear to satisfy this thesis's 'programmatic' desire for a critical level of environmental appraisal, between convention and perception. However, we still have no evidence of its socio-historic realm of service, or the formal limits of its environmental operation. Certainly the historical consensus of
View of Mykonos, Greece: another 'convention' of townscape, born of a different socio-historic context.

View of mid-town Manhattan: still another 'convention' of townscape.
conventional authority called upon by the gables of Amsterdam (174) carries a collective characterization of an identifiably-different nature than the Greek island-hill-town (175) or the towers of New York City. (176) These differing characterizations of collective presence, I would maintain, are not derived from one model but from hundreds of building 'events'; each appealing, in their own fashion, to the collectively-conventional position of that particular context, or 'townscape'. This idea of 'townscape', then, might be one way of characterizing quasi-political and perceptual components of convention; which, by analogy, might additionally bestowed an 'artifactual empathy' of a contemporaneously-collective nature. With such notion, one might gain an externally cognitive sense of contextual relations based upon an empathy for other towns (as with Wolfflin's Empathy), through a sympathetic comparison of our own 'familiar' contexts of conventional performance.

Although such a city-wide notion of convention is convincing when presented simultaneously by photographs, this level of observation might not prove detailed enough, to provide a critical service of direct consequence to our individual design projects. The internal distinctions of each building 'event' seem to become lost in the gross simplification of this cross-cultural comparison. The mere mention of the term 'townscape', however, conjures up the recent memories of studies performed in the 1960's. These investigations attended rather similar domains of architectural evidence, whilst pointing towards quite different critical explanations.

The work of Gordon Cullen is first to come to mind. Cullen, as is
typical of the 'townscape' philosophy, approaches contextual settings in the manner of a collective empathy; but with a decidedly-stronger emphasis upon the internal coordination of its visual character, than the grossly-cultural level of comparative townscapes earlier mentioned. Although there exist several limits to the service of his critical notions, their local domain of appraisal, at a context-constituent level, does being to outline a range of concerns which have specific consequences for the individual building 'act'.

A study such as *Tenterden Explored*\(^4\) provides a typical example of Cullen's critical notions. The subject of a quaint old town, developed within a highly consistent socio-historic context, usually without architects, appeals to the 'townscapers' programmatic 'core' notion of contextually-'pleasing' surroundings. Cullen then proceeds to take apart such an 'obviously humane' environment, through a series of graphic diagrams; investigating large-scale movement directives and actually rating individual buildings on the basis of his appraisal of 'harmonious fit'. A strangely biased, yet visually-critical notion of figure and ground as a kind of urbanistic document of formal topography. (177-179)

Cullen's disturbing inability to accommodate contemporary layers of 'townscape' as anything but degenerative to the 'pleasantness' of the formal composition, seems to indicate an unspoken emotional criteria for historically-sanguine contexts of environmental form; whilst producing

Gordon Cullen's graphic diagrams: townscape as movement directives. From his *Tenterden Explored*, 1907.
43 The Eight Bells Public House *** Grade II, 15th century two-storey, timber-framed building with later 18th century painted brick front. One of the few converted buildings that retains unity of ground and upper floors which are painted white with black frames to windows and doors. Timber-framed first floor to east side is jettied out over lane while ground floor has painted weather-boarding. A building with good interiors and of character and importance to the townscape which should be retained in present form. (Note: This building was once known as 'The Angel', then 'Six Bells' and in 1774 changed to 'The Eight Bells'.)

45 ** Grade II, 18th century two-storey painted brick building with attic. Tiled roof above moulded and dentilled eaves cornice. Was a building of very good character before ground floor torn out for modern shop front unsuitably in antique dress and affected fascia lettering. Remaining portions of building indicate the very good proportions of roof to wall and also the proportions of bay windows and dormers. Colours, including gloss white finish to walls are good.

179 Cullen's critical ratings of individual buildings; as to their obviously 'harmonious' contributions, towards the reconstruction of an environmentally 'pleasant' townscape.
critical evidence solely on the visual level of a pseudo-gestaltian reconstruction. Cullen's charcoal cartooning of townscapes remains attendant to the consensuality of architectural contexts, but misses the socialized aspect of that consensual operation; both by trying to serve as 'architect' of formal criticism for an entire town, and by restricting significant design choices to a personally-generated notion of environmental 'pleasantness'. Whilst the idea of historically 'restoring' a town, as one would restore a building, might be very stimulating to Cullen as a serious exercise; chances are, the residents of that town might not sympathize with his enthusiasms. Certainly, some level of Cullen's critical analyses is useful to the architect concerned with the contextual relationship of his individual building. However, the personally-omnipotent operation of Cullen's 'townscape', taken literally, seems to offer only a minor service of our architectural contexts, within the socially-practical limits of everyday life.

Thomas Sharp is similarly conservative, in his purely photographic presentations of 'townscapes'. Even though Sharp's notions of a "maintenance of character"\textsuperscript{49} decidedly supports the unexamined preservation of historical frameworks of formal consensus, the terminological facture of 'maintenance', as an operational interface, begins to approximate a domain of environmental appraisal sympathetic with this thesis's model of convention.

\textquote{...the rest admits the inevitability of some new building and redevelopment taking place and asks only that, when it is}

\textsuperscript{49} Thomas Sharp, \textit{Town and Townscape} (London: John Murray, 1968), p. 20 and all of Chapter Two.
180 General view of Brighton 'new-towne' buildings, Sussex County, England, c.1750?

undertaken where there is existing unity of character, it should accept the disciplines that have brought that unity about. Though this attitude does in part seek actual preservation of the more important existing structures, it is maintenance of character that is generally aimed at...."50

In the course of pursuing his own set of investigations, Sharp also discovered the coordinative unity, of these historical townscapes, to be a perceptual manifestation of their collective iteration. Each individual building 'act' participating as a sympathetic constituent towards the larger 'maintenance' of that context's characteristic identity. The closer the operational iteration, the more concentrated the appraisal of collective unity becomes.

"Clearly where unity exists through the repetition of identical elements, as in the formal groupings, the character of the total composition can only be maintained by maintaining the form as a whole. To maintain the form as a whole, the form of each unit and each part of each unit must be maintained."51

Certainly the high level of architectonic consistency found in the facades of Georgian London, manifests a gestaltian continuity of environmental enclosure which would not be difficult to recognize. (180,181) Of course, these streets were designed as a single 'new-towne' project; and therefore aren't really born of a socialized level of formal consensus. More accurately, these individual facades are really very large buildings; subdivided to appear as a perfectly harmonious context of urban enclosure. For the purposes of visual perception, it doesn't

50 Ibid.
51 Ibid., pp. 20-21.
182 Kevin Lynch's behavioral mapping of the 'district sense'. From his *Image of the City*, 1962.

183 Lynch's 'thematic unit' within the Beacon Hill 'district' of Boston: a localized environmental continuity within the larger urban milieu.
really matter which way one plays the game: the notion of the individual unit maintaining a consistent posture of environmental enclosure, finds ample evidence of a gestaltian faculty of contextual continuity. The formal 'constancy', of each element's interactive contribution, increasing the composite effect of contextual consensus. Although we are aware of other domains of service for convention, beyond simple visual 'maintenance', Sharp's terminological framing of individual building to collective grouping does begin to offer a service of contemporary contexts (or 'townscapes') beyond these few 'quaint' settings.

In an attempt to further limit the localized aspect of convention's iterative continuity as a critical notion, I suggest Kevin Lynch's environmentally-cognitive 'district sense', as outlined in his Image of the City. The critical notion of 'district' found its way into Lynch's behavioral mapping of cities, as a localized level of environmental cognition within the larger urban milieu. (182,183) His observations discovered that the sense of being "inside of" a recognizable 'district' of contextual continuity proved quite convincing, even if only in a casually-rigourous manner. In fact, even in an urban center as large as New York City, one rarely experiences the entire 'townscape' as a single event. The urban composition is cognitively made up of many smaller areas; as towns within a town. In such a manner,


53 Ibid., p. 66.
184 General view of the Oudendijk area of Woudrichem, The Netherlands: environmental consensus between buildings, in the phenomenal presentation of the moment.
the kind of 'maintaining' continuities of contextual character, which Sharp bestows to the historical 'townscape', might have reference with the Lynchian discovery of localized 'districts' within the contemporary urban experience.

Although I don't entirely share Lynch's enthusiasm for the operative role of the 'district's' subjective structuring of the city, I would suggest a retention of the 'district sense' as a possible formal limit of convention's critical service in contemporary architectural contexts. A kind of cognitive 'community' of everyday buildings, which constructs an urbanistically-significant field of localized contextual enclosure. Not as the figurative monument of which an architect may design once or twice in a career, but a region of formal criticism which approaches the more pervasive 'datum of the city'; of far more common service to the typical task of the profession. Further, this 'district sense' reinforces an experiential aspect of convention's critical appraisal; an environmental event of consensual authority between buildings, in a phenomenal presentation of the moment. (184)

This experiential realm of appraisal suggests a localized notion of architectural operation, correspondent with this thesis's 'core' convictions concerning environmentally-contingent criticism; establishing the cognitive sense of 'district' as an ecological level of socialized groupings of buildings, which emphasizes the local 'history' of that particular context in which one's building will exist. The 'posture' one's building takes, with respect to the locally-consensual position,
186 View of 353 Marlborough Street, the Back Bay district of Boston: certainly an unconventional 'posture', for the context in which this building sits. Krockyn and Krockyn, architects, 1959.
187 View of the historic Bryggen Harbor, in Bergen, Norway.

188 View of a new housing project on the Bryggen Harbor, 1981. (left side of photo)
contributes strongly to the sense of conventional performance of that building, in its 'public realm'. No matter how marvelous the internal experiences, the building's apparent cognizance of its surroundings context's level of conventional performance will be perceived as belonging, or not belonging, to the context in which it sits. (185,186)

A correspondent example of contextual districts and convention is the relatively recent interest in the 'historic district'. Largely brought about through conservationist attitudes contemporary with the 'townscapers' of the 1960's, the 'historic district' might be defined as a localized context of consistent environmental character; set aside as a preserved document of a particular history, shared by a consensus of its constituent buildings and streetscapes. The consistency of new buildings within the 'historic district' has become directed by the literal political instrument of building ordinances; intended to require any new building to sympathize with the formally-constituent elements of the historic exemplars, which bestow the identifiable characteristics to that particular context.

Examples of new work almost exactly matching the historical forms of the surrounding buildings can be found in many contexts today. New houses on the Bryggen harbor, in Bergen, appear much more regularized than their historic neighbors; but still exhibit a formal sympathy which is quite convincing on a literal 'postural' and 'material' level. (187,188) An infill house within historic Nuremberg goes even further in the detailed iteration of its contextual precedents. (189) The perceptual strength of
the gestaltian 'context effect' appears, at least at a glance, to overcome wide gaps of historical identification. The greater the attention given to sympathetic iteration of formal 'posture' and detail', the more strongly the new building appears to interact as a constituent member of the contextual grouping. Although sympathetic detail certainly reinforces the contextual sense of formal continuity, not every detail need be iterated to cognitively structure this environmental conventionality. As in the Nuremberg example, one might not even notice the much larger windows of single pane glass; a quite impossible bit of technology for its historic neighbors. The secularizations of contemporary modifications have been cognitively accommodated, under the locally-conventional maintenance of 'posture' and 'detail'.

If one were to overlay this thesis's programmatic notions of convention upon the ordinanced contextual framework of the 'historic district', one would be inclined to characterize it as a very conservative form of socialized maintenance. An externally-enforced political framework which encourages only the iteration of that district's historic formal character, without the purposeful examination of what that maintenance provides in terms of contemporary needs. Further, the politicizing of what is normally held by unspoken consensus usurps the opportunity of gradually-responsive shifts in formal and social consensus; or 'secular maintenance', as an option of convention's critical service in architectural contexts.

Aside from a generalized social desire to conserve historical areas of
View of a new infill house within historic Nuremberg, West Germany, 1979.

Sharp's comparative view of Chapel Row, in 1966: the erosion of environmental 'pleasantness', for Sharp, is an 'obvious' manifestation of contemporary change.
our cities and towns, it appears the attitudes of the 1960's 'townscapers' were after additionally formal aspects of history in architectural contexts. The formal consistency of the 'historic district' appears to manifest a Perceptual Constancy of environmental character; not only through the perceived regularity of its iterative elements, but by reinforcing a cognitive 'familiarity' of that locally-historical performance. The "pleasantness", which Thomas Sharp attributed to a streetscape of well-maintained character, does not solely reside in the gestaltian unity of a contextual presentation: else the monotone unity of the 'new' Chapel Row would be seen as a favorable improvement over the much more irregular enclosure of the antecedent grouping. (190,191)

Apparently what these 'townscapers' were after was not only a gestaltian unity of our contextual enclosures, but an implicit value in the durability of the past; and an internal rejection of change for its own sake, or change without cognizance of the surrounding 'history' of building. As Sharp, himself, calls to reference: the contextual "rot" of the Chippenham street scene (192) is not merely due to the phenomenon of physical change, but additionally to the radical loss of contextual 'memory' from one stage to the next. This 'memory' might be akin to a contextual cognition of 'familiar' terrain; built up through the historical 'constancy' of these particular buildings, as constituent to the identifying character of that context.

54 Sharp, op. cit., p. 19.
55 Ibid., p. 34.
There exist many psychological treatises on this notion of 'suffering change': however, their emphasis on pure conservation of our environments is acknowledgeably fruitless with regard to the investigation of this thesis. Rather, it is the cognitive manifestation of this historical 'constancy', as it interfaces formal understanding in daily interaction with our architectural surroundings, with which this investigation is interested. Additionally, that these cognitions of contextual 'memory' within one's 'familiar' terrains allows one critical analogy; identifying characteristic continuities of our everyday contexts, as one might investigate the more clearly demarcated 'historic district'. In other words, the example of the 'historic district' might merely remind us of the historical and developmental cognitions, of environmental 'constancy', which one utilizes in the less-rigorously regular contexts of everyday life.

Such a jump, from the environmental attributes of the well-defined 'historic district' to the contemporaneously-developmental cognitions of our everyday contexts, might not be possible without a reminder of the earlier-discussed human faculty of Perceptual Constancy. You will recall the example of the table (150); and how one attributes formal understanding beyond the illustration presented, through one's developmental experience with 'tables'. Although purely perceptual appraisals of the perspective illustration greatly distort and even omit information, we complete the notion of 'table' based upon our

developmental memory of tables, in general. If we now shift the domain of demonstration to contemporary architectural contexts, we must additionally limit the notion of a developmental constancy or environmental 'memory' to the more specific and importantly local objects of our 'familiar' everyday contexts. Although the individual buildings may be quite different in their formal specifics, they still tend to manifest a developmental sense of normative performance; an interactively-understood environmental posture which builds collective character, for us as subjects, over time. In this way, the cognitive 'history' of the locally-specific context asserts a critical limit, with regard to our continued interaction in everyday experience. (193)

Peter Smith's notion of a cognitive "habituation" to an environmental set of stimuli documents a developmental faculty of formal 'familiarity', which becomes stronger with our iterative interaction with that environmental situation.

"In scientific terms, 'habituation is a response decrement arising as a result of repeated stimulation' (Jane Mackworth, Vigilance and Habituation). When an advanced organism is faced with a stimulus pattern, the classification procedure begins in order to test the pattern against models in the brain. If there is total conformity, then there is no call on the orienting response, and arousal quickly subsides. If, however, there is a significant degree of unfamiliarity, then the pattern is observed with concentrated awareness, so that an immediate response can be made if the situation becomes threatening. The orienting response comprises the focusing of mental activity upon a selected stimulus pattern.

Jörg Müller's illustrations of "The Changing City": the cognitive 'history' of our everyday contexts, as an environmental constancy of familiar terrain.
The second time that particular pattern is observed, the arousal increment is lower; the third time, lower still, until eventually it is perceived as totally familiar.... Repeated experience can produce cognitive reinforcement. 58

Smith goes on to assert that the cognitive strength of this 'historically'-developed familiarity, within our locally-particular architectural contexts, may well prove more powerful to the viewer/subject than the aesthetic concerns or intellectualized intentions of the 'creative' designer.

As we discovered with the example of the objects on the table (151,152), the amount of additional information I could extract from the photographic presentation was not only due to gestaltian faculties or even a generalized Perceptual Constancy; but due to the fact that it was my living room, which was being presented. The particular context of objects presented manifested far more environmental 'information' to me, because they were part of my household: these objects were 'familiar' to me. Through the 'habitual' interaction of everyday life, I had developed a cognitive 'history' of specific environmental performance; which contributes a known constancy of formal understanding, beyond the visual service of purely gestaltian surveys.

Again, the import of such an environmental constancy, is to suggest an analogous domain of critical appraisal concerning convention; particularly as it interfaces those contemporary architectural contexts which might lack the 'formally' recognizable character of the more consistent

58 Ibid., pp. 183-184.

View of apartment and office building, Amsterdam: the locally-conventional performance becomes a critical 'baseline', against which the 'differentness' of the new work will be cognitively reformulated. Albert Cahen, architect, c.1965.
'historic district'. This suggestion attempts to re-integrate the overt manifestations of convention in the 'historic district', with the less-clear evidence of the everyday contexts in which we build. The apparent emphasis on the existing conditions as 'historically' familiar terrain does not mean to chastize any change: as new construction undeniably requires some cognitive change in one's mental and experiential structuring of the local context. Merely that an appeal to that antecedent 'familiarity' may accommodate the re-cognition of the old in the new; not as a value in itself, but as a source of possible critical service, regarding the 'conventionality' of the new architectural creation. For us as architects, this notion of criticism might enforce an awareness of locally-conventional norms, as a 'baseline performance'; against which our new building 'acts' will be cognitively reformulated. Change too radical to its surroundings might never reach satisfactory reformulation within its context; in which case it might merely be perceived as 'odd-man-out', in its lack of interactive membership with its contextual 'community'. Again, this is not to impart an implicit value upon a conservative maintenance of existing conditions; but to attempt characterization of a cognitive manifestation of architectural convention, within the contexts of contemporary consensus.

In an effort to more clearly understand the formal limits of such a criticism, I suggest a brief demonstration of specific cases; both in an effort to discover a more practical delineation of conventionalized levels of consensual performance outside the formally-clear 'historic
district', and towards more directly operational aspects of contemporary service for these secular assertions.

Firstly, it is important to remember that the notion of convention is tied to specifically-practical histories of socialized 'use-forms', or the building 'program-type'. Although formal references may be drawn from a locally-characteristic 'program-type', to allow contextual continuity with a different programmatic use (as in DeKlerk's library made to look like the surroundings 'row houses') (198), the cognitive reformulation of new building against the 'familiar' performance of the locally conventional reaches most convincing comparison when one considers similar building 'program-types'. Whilst many types of building programs might be suitable for such a comparative criticism, I shall, for the sake of demonstration, only present examples of relatively recent multi-family housing schemes within existing residential areas.

Secondly, although evidence of conventionalized performance might be discovered in a variety of contextual settings, I impose an additional limit of an experienced familiarity with the contemporary socialized assertions, of a given context, which contribute to the local 'history' of contextual performance. With such a history comes a correspondingly-sympathetic understanding of the particular elements of contextual performance, which hold a cognitive 'familiarity' for that localized community. Whilst such a critical familiarity can rarely be totally intimate, unless one lives in the context in which one is building, some level of regular physical observation and general community awareness is implied before the critic can truly begin a search for consensually-
199 General view of the Mishawum Park housing project, on Main Street in the Charlestown district of Boston. Freeman Hardenberg Architects, Inc., 1972-73.

200 View from the parking lot: Mishawum Park housing project.
preferred performance. For such a reason, I limit my study to the personally 'familiar' Boston-Cambridge area.

Finally, none of the sites presented were chosen for any particular pre-cognized significance; beyond their ability to demonstrate the critical notions discussed previously. As the operational contingency of these critical notions are derived in the light of the original 'core' desire to accommodate convincing demonstration in a variety of contextual situations, responsible criticism is encouraged to attend contextual evidence at the level of 'everyday life'; without particular concern for the exact details of construction or even the original design intentions, of the buildings I am investigating.

Mishawum Park, a 1970's scheme for multi-family housing on Main Street in Charlestown, demonstrates programmatic aspects of convention in architecture through the utilization of a documented type-form. (199,200) However, the 'maisonette' typology does not find referential consensus within any of the characteristic contexts of Boston, let alone at the foot of Bunker Hill. There is nothing wrong with the maisonette typology, of course. It has found many successful applications in the new-town schemes of Europe. Indeed in the history of the street-wall housing type, the maisonette appears not so terribly radical to the fundamental use-diagrams of its neighboring row-house units. (201-203) The major programmatic secularization, a slight increase in unit density, resulting in an unfortunate need to usurp the ground for parking and extend the notion of sidewalk to the removed plane of the 'skybridge'.

3-5 Bedroom.
Low, moderate, middle, upper middle income families with children, similar to households in single family homes.

Efficiency 3 Bedroom.
Low, moderate, middle income families. Ground floor can accommodate families with elementary school age children; upper floor, families with young children, older families, married students and single students sharing apartments.

Diagrammatic comparison of the 'row house' and 'maisonette' programmatic typologies.
General view of Charlestown, one block from Main Street; illustrating locally-conventional manifestations of the row house typology.

General view of side-street entrance, onto the Mishawum Park housing project; illustrating a non-localised reformulation of the abstracted maisonette typology.
The apparent shortcomings of this particular use of the maisonette comes with the rootless universalizing of its typological form. As with the perpetual world-traveler, this simple scheme could be placed interchangably in a variety of contexts; but never appear to be comfortable in any of them. Even as Quatremère de Quincy, one of the great purveyors of typological design, knew; the programmatic type is only a vague, generic kernel of a building; which is only as formally indeterminate as its ability to accommodate variation to the exigent assertions of its surrounding context.\footnote{59}{Paraphrased from: Quatremère de Quincy, Dictionnaire Historique d'Architecture (1832); as cited by Demitri Porphyrios in "The Retrieval of Memory: Alvar Aalto's Typological Conception of Design," Oppositions, 22 (Fall, 1980), p. 55.} The over-simplification of this project's formalization of the maisonette typology ignores the locally-consensual assertions of conventional housing 'posture', as a critical voice in its formulation; not be being better or worse than the local performance, but by failing to reformulate the maisonette-type into the specific terms of the Charlestown context. What is a well-known convention of housing-form within the architectural profession, must appear as an 'invented posture' to the local residents of this specific context.

Material considerations appear to be freely applied, as wallpaper only. The brick and claboard signal pseudo-gestaltian sympathies towards an iterative continuity of contextual enclosure, but fail to complete operational notions of locally-conventional construction. As a paper
model, the opportunity of its modern technological freedom never quite matures to the locally-specific facture of Charlestown's material fabric. Again, such a criticism does not mean to cast aspersions upon the venerable maisonette-type, or to belittle the material patterns chosen; only that the cumulative combinations of those particular design choices, within this particular context, can't help but be noticed as secular contributions of an abrasive 'unconventionality'. In a community as sociologically 'tight' as Charlestown, the physical imposition of such a well-packaged\textsuperscript{60} 'vision of the new' might actually serve to strengthen a sense of territorial boundary; rather than ease a cognitive impression of sympathetic change.

By way of contrast, Linwood Court, a recent project on Broadway and Columbia Streets in Cambridge, presents what appears to be a comparable density of multi-family housing; which 'restores' the local consensus of familiar contextual relation. (204) As opposed to abstracting the programmatic type, this project maintained a literal reflection of the conventional performance found in the very same block, and many of the surrounding blocks. (205-207) By conserving this community's 'posture' of building to site, and by closely reiterating the massing and material of its specific neighbors, these newly 'reconstructed' buildings help strengthen a cognitive sense of co-membership with its local context.

\textsuperscript{60} As an interesting side-note: I was told these units were pre-fabricated in Texas, and literally 'trailered' to the site in Charlestown.
Diagrammatic block plan of the Linwood Court housing project; illustrating the locally-conventional posture of 'double-loaded' lots, as a means of increasing unit density.
View of a neighboring precedent on Broadway Street.

View of Linwood Court housing: a contemporary maintenance of the locally-conventional 'posture'.

General view of the Mishawum Park housing project, Charlestown: the maisonette's unconventionality is demonstrated most clearly, at the edges of its exigent contextual setting.

View of 'skybridges': Mishawum Park housing project.
(The third bridge in the picture, is Interstate 93.)
Their conservative maintenance additionally increases perceptual manifestations of context constituency, by closely reflecting the formal framework of environmental enclosure; thereby appealing to an almost gestaltian notion of visual 'continuity'.

One's observations of Linwood Court further suggest that just as important as massing and material sympathies, is a critical understanding of the context-generated 'posture' of individual building to others. This postural consensus gains its cognitive power, as an already-understood model of 'familiar' contextual relation. When one builds a maisonette in Charlestown, it seems rather likely that its well-intended social interface might be unknowingly misunderstood; independent of its successful utilization Europe. Further, it never becomes particularly clear how the maisonette's secular performance, as a housing use-type, achieves a significant improvement over the conventional housing types of its exigent surroundings. These Charlestown maisonettes make purposeful attempts to visually re-integrate themselves in terms of general size and materials. Why not fulfill these sympathetic notions on the level of programmatic use-type; utilizing the conventional model, of convincing consensus, found in that specific setting? (208) Balconies, skybridges, and low-maintenance aluminum sheathing materials do demonstrate clear notions of secular use-performance, resulting from contemporary architectural technologies. (209) However, could not these contemporary assertions been integrated into a more conventionally-understood framework of contextual posturing? The programmatic contribution of the specific secular element might be more easily understood if it cognitively
Views of the Linwood Court housing project and its contextual neighbors, Cambridge.
'explained' its presence, by assuming an analogous position in the contextual framework of that localized setting; maintaining the 'familiar' contextual posture, whilst purposely secularizing specific elements of that consensual framework.

On the other hand, the literalness of Linwood Court's 'restoration' of the context's formal conventions begins to raise suspicions as to the effort given to a critical examination, of that local performance. (210)

In the programmatic language of Critical Conventionalism, this project would certainly be characterized as a highly conservative maintenance of the contextual 'framework' which surrounds it. Specific elements, such as front stoops or bay windows, might have been expanded upon in a manner of maintaining 'intent'; whilst secularizing the final formal resolution towards some practical improvement of contemporary service (i.e. solar collectors, private balconies, etc.). These new desires need not change the entire notion of housing-type, but might merely attend an appropriate level of 'postural' service within the locally-conventional framework; thereby adjusting an otherwise 'familiar' model of contextual performance.

As Pocock reminds us, the 'rebuilding' of a context is only one service of that context.61 Contemporary inspection is responsible for purposeful secularization, in accordance with exigent need. The

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View of 'street entries': Mishawum Park housing projects, Charlestown.
View of 'street entry': housing block adjacent to the Mishawum Park housing project, Charlestown.
opportunity for interactive contribution allows the convention to remain alive and useful.

The manner in which one might cognitively characterize these secular moments, finds faculty through the sense of additional programmatic performance the new intervention provides by being different from its surrounding context. Unfamiliar secularisms, without a conventionally-reformulated attention to detailed support, leaves open to conjecture why the new building is not 'like' the other ones around it. The maisonette's frontage onto Main Street provides an interesting example. (211,212) The actual doorways, as a built interface with the sidewalk, appear similarly abrupt in both the maisonette and its neighbors. However, the locally-conventional 'posutre' of bringing that entry plane tight to the street has been strangely broken by the comparatively-radical frontage of the maisonette. (213) Again, it is important to emphasize that this particular design is not automatically a negative secularization, because it is different. Rather that the imposition of this new posutre without the apparent supplement of any additional service leaves open to question what this interventionary move provides, aside from a widened slab of concrete.

No additional use-supports were provided by the new building, I would suggest, largely because the cognitive manifestations of this locally-consensual posture wasn't even observed as a design assertion on the designer's abstracted 'site plan'. There can be no developmental interpretation of a localized consensus of conventional performance, if
Comparative view of 'building frontage' onto Main Street: the maisonette steps back, unconventionally, without providing any purposeful new service for its difference.
one is blind to the existence of its framework. Too often designers select freely from the world of professional ideas; which is a proper concern of our service, as architects. However, the 'free search' encouraged by professional originality often fails to utilize the 'conventional' performance of the very context in which one's building sits, as a creative source for that search. Such a lack of renective tissues, between our buildings and their contexts, is rarely the fault of intelligent design; but merely a lack of open observation of what surrounds one's environmental designs. Again, a plethora of contextually conventional and intellectually stimulating design sources manifest themselves with the locally 'familiar' frameworks in which one's very building will exist.

The characteristic manifestations of convention in architectural contexts, as this thesis has developed it, would always find the locally 'familiar' consensus as a stronger factor in the cognitive construction of environmental continuity, than the 'free originality' of the well-intentioned designer. Without assigning positive value upon either the local convention or the designer's free originality, one might appreciate a 'critical' understanding of the locally 'familiar' performance as a cognitive datum of environmental constancy; against which contemporary interventions will be 're-cognized' as contributing to the developmental construction of that conventional character, or as a non-constituent secularization of comparative difference.

If this investigative observation provides a fairly convincing domain of critical appraisal, for convention in architectural contexts; then by
this thesis's programmatic 'core-generated' notions of operational contingency, this critical appraisal of the locally-conventional framework as cognitive datum might additionally serve designers as an operational starting point with which one could purposefully 'secularize' towards specifically-contemporary needs. The notion of a consensual framework of contextual performance, as an operational starting point, might provide at least three general domains of critical service:

(A) Visually, it would serve to intensify exigent formal continuities, which lend a gestaltian sense of interactive 'harmony' to the built environment. This domain of operational service would find its limits with the perceptual manifestations of convention, as it contributes a 'field-constructive' sense of experientially-specific environmental groupings.

(B) An appeal to the locally-familiar framework additionally invests in a cognitive sense of contextual 'membership'; supporting an 'habitual' constancy of contextual relationships, of which hold known programmatic-use expectations for the everyday subject of that community. This domain of operational service would find its limits with the developmental manifestations of convention, as it contributes towards a specific 'cognitive memory' of habitual use-performance, within the locally-familiar contexts of everyday life.

(C) This framework of specific use-performance might reflexively provide an interpretive baseline, of a known constant performance; against which contemporaneous adjustments may be contextually 're-explained', as to the nature of its secular contribution and operational domain. This contemporaneous domain of critical service seems to find operational
limits, with one's close observation and critical documentation of specific 'postures', of conventional performance, in their contexts of localized understanding.

The critical documentation of consensual performance, as found in the contemporary contexts of everyday life, is not gotten at through any particular organization of investigative rules or empirical patterning, as such; but might best be thought of as a perceptual and cognitive sense of co-operative 'building acts', which collectively build-up an environmental and in some ways socialized context of locally-sustained consensus for those acts.

Such a notion of interface between 'building acts' and the socially-developmental understanding of those acts begins to recall J.G.A. Pocock's analysis of the socio-historical role of 'institutions'. Pocock reminds us that 'texts' can be seen as documented historical extensions of our socialized actions; and the socio-historic contexts, of these 'acts' provides the 'situational' framework, required for the understanding of those 'texts'. With such an analogy one can view the specific performance of an individual work of architecture as a representative 'text' of a documented performance, or 'building act'. Additionally, the larger 'contexts' in which these acts are actually presented, might be understood as providing the 'familiar'

socio-historical frameworks for the contemporaneous interpretation of those acts.

This critical analogy might lead one to the understanding of site-specific contexts as a sort of consensually-held 'institution', of historically-preferred environmental performance. Perhaps a more 'architectural' manner in which to portray such an operational service of contexts, would be Stanford Anderson's notion of the "streets as open institutions".63

"We continually make, and re-make the street in the cycles of our social transactions and commercial exchanges....And, reciprocally, the signs and symbols of the street inform us, evoke memories, and charge our imaginations....

But in a physical and spatial sense, too, the street is continually constructed and re-constructed....the character of its boundaries, ...are products of man's artifice.64

The 'everyday street' is not a literal institution, of course; its only mechanism of historical continuity lies with a continuing investment in its consensual framework of contextual character, by us its builders. As a professionally-practical notion, the 'open institution of the street' might offer a critical domain for the contemporary observation of our everyday contexts; a situational framework of locally 'institutional' performance, which contains constituent elements of specific programmatic expectations. These 'textual' elements may be gradually replaced by others, as contemporary need requires. However, the conventional framework of localized continuity serves the interpretive understanding


64 Ibid., p. 26.
of these 'textual' moves, by providing the literal physical context for its experiential and developmental characterizations, in the environmental moment. Each building shares in the construction of a characteristic 'familiarity', by which the contemporary re-constructions will be compararively re-cognized.

As a demonstration of this 'textual' level of operational secularisms, I present a pair of multi-family housing projects in the Radcliffe area of Cambridge, on Concord Avenue. Although these brick boxes appear rather unconventional in their display of contemporary material and detailing techniques, they do formally modulate to the gross 'postural' sizes of their contextual neighbors. (214-216) Even though the programmatic advantages of flat roofs and stark wall surfaces never become clear, this project does succeed in responding to a range of contextual edges with a 'visual' concern for sympathetic blend.

I wish to focus attention, however, upon the specific 'textual' performance of the 'frontage' area, between the sidewalk and the building-entry plane. (217) You will notice that these Concord Avenue projects have taken a similar posture, with regard to their frontage area, as their typologically-concordant neighbors; stepping down to a less-public 'entry zone', before actually passing through the front door. (218-221) Each of these local exemplars of precedent comes to a slightly different formal resolution; but each maintains a collective investment in reserving this zone, to a less-public passage towards the actual entry portal. While the older buildings step down only slightly and still present a significant formal announcement of 'front door', these newer
General view of 'Concord Avenue' housing projects (44 Concord Avenue in the foreground, and 54 Concord Avenue up Observatory Hill about a half-block), Cambridge, Massachusetts. Eco-tecture International, Inc., 1974-75.

View of 44 Concord Avenue, looking down Parker Street; stepping down the hill, to visually sympathize with the gross scale of the neighboring houses.
Views of 54 Concord Avenue: this building cuts through the middle of an entire block, responding to the 'street-wall' posture of Concord Avenue, whilst visually scaling-down to 'house' size on the residential Healy Street.
Detail view of building 'frontage' as entry zone, 29 Concord Avenue (Craigie Arms Building), Cambridge: a local exemplar of contextual performance.
Detail view of 44 Concord Avenue: contemporary notions of building 'frontage' as entry zone.
Detail view of building 'frontage', 38 Concord Avenue, Cambridge: another interpretive accommodation of a locally-conventional contextual posture.
221 Detail view of 54 Concord Avenue: yet another reconstruction of building 'frontage' as entry zone.
Concord Avenue projects make their 'textual' secularization by reducing the decorative importance given to 'doorway' and commensurately lowering the elevation of the entry zone so as to apparently present only the undefined face of the brick entry wall. (222-224) This lowered entry zone finds even further penetration by virtue of 'planting wells', which allow light and air to a subterranean parking garage. (225) Although one might have preferences for one 'textual' resolution over another, one can easily observe the intent of the contextual framework being maintained; whilst the final reformulation of its interpretive secularisms finds consistent characterization in the contemporary desire for a criticism of formal reductionism. (226)

These designers appeared to have 'constructed' their building's contextual edge with an informed concern for local performance; transcending the abstract line of the 'site plan'. They sought out a locally-consensual 'document' of particular building performance; thereby appealing to a contextually 'institutional' level of programmatic-use understanding. By observing the conventional uses of this building frontage in similar typological precedents within its local context, these designers also gained a practical creative source as to what could be done with this setback area. With this demonstration one might further limit the critical search for a contextual 'consensus', with its environmental replication of locally-consistent 'textual' performances; that is, the general formal iterations of building 'posture' in its context, as well as the programmatic use-performance aspects associated with the developmental 'familiarity' of everyday life.
Detail view of 'front door', 58 Concord Avenue: an announcement of significance, through decorative elaboration.
Detail view of 'front door', 44 Concord Avenue: secularly reducing the decorative importance, and presenting only the undefined brick wall.

Detail view of 'front door', 54 Concord Avenue: this time the actual 'door' totally disappears under the horizon.
Detail views of 'planting wells', 44 and 54 Concord Avenue: a secularization which allows further penetration of light and air to the parking garage below.
Comparative view of the 'newer' 54 Concord Avenue and its contextual neighbor, 58 Concord Avenue: this 'edge' demonstrates a pervasive contemporary desire for a secular criticism of formal reductionism.
In attributing these manifestations of conventional performance to the Concord Avenue projects, I do not mean to claim their pre-meditated understanding in the minds of their designers. Their specific formal resolution might have been motivated by entirely non-conventional criteria. Nor would it prove fruitful to claim that this secular appeal, within its contextual posture, will be instantly 're-cognized' or comparatively understood by the very members of that local community. This case study merely seeks to demonstrate the critical notion that the Concord Avenue projects made their secular 'differences', within the situational framework of architectural conventions in which they find themselves. Thereby accommodating the experiential and socio-historic 'contexts' of conventional performance, in which it will exist; and proposing operative adjustments, of the locally 'institutional' posture, in the spirit of a Critical Conventionalism.

In as much as this thesis is not a pre-conceived systematic analysis, but an expository reconstruction of investigative criticism, this Concord example should not be construed as a personally-preferred success; but a clear case of a 'textual' level of developmental interpretation, within an equally-lucid contextual framework of conventional exemplars. In this sense, this final example acknowledgably claims a more 'archeological' criticism, of a particular performance within its context, than a crowning example of comprehensive success. Those selections, I leave to individual conscience.
In accordance with this thesis's expository interpretation of Lakatosian method, I arrest its programmatic investigation with the contemporary domain of this latest critical demonstration. The operational dependency upon the concordant manifestations of human appraisal as well as the critical accommodation of the contemporary contexts of everyday life, of the programmatic 'hard core', finds satisfaction in this problemsetting's demonstration of both perceptual and developmental aspects of convention's environmental constancy, as set in the contemporary contexts of architectural performance. This demonstration has additionally succeeded in outlining a contemporaneously cognitive sense of formal limits, for the ongoing criticism of purposefully-secular interpretation.

Although I claim adequate satisfaction with this temporary base of evidenced findings, I readily admit that this base merely provides still another platform; from which spring the anticipated 'progressive shifts' yet unseen by the eyes of the 'present'. Further I believe the necessary testing-ground for the practical operation of these notions lies firmly in the world of professional practice.

What has been offered herein, are some tools of architectural criticism. The focus of these criticisms is concerned with the environmentally-public edge between individual buildings and their site-specific contexts. Within such a domain, the particular interest of this
investigation pertained to formal manifestations of convention in architecture; and sought to characterize some of the cognitive effects of convention, in the built contexts of contemporary communities. Such an inquiry, into the 'meeting places' of architectural environments and their concordant contextual understandings, were not intended to provide new and revolutionary discoveries of this realm; merely reflect its apparent manifestations.

The method of this investigation asserted 'positional' understandings of this realm, and sought their domain of critical service by testing these positions against external evidence of documented performance. In doing so, this thesis 'reconstructed' investigative criticism of the built environment, in the spirit of a 'research program'. (Imre Lakatos 1963, 1971: see appendix for detailed explanation).

Investigation proceeded from perceptual and socio-historic aspects of convention in architecture; to a critical position, less concerned with convention's objective significance, than an attendance to architectural convention, as a localized-environmental baseline against which one evaluates contemporary change. This view held the familiar contexts of our everyday lives as a framework of developmentally normative environmental understanding; and sided with the inhabitants of these contexts, who see their local neighborhoods as home, not as abstract formal settings.

Perceptual criticisms, of the formal manifestations of convention in architectural contexts, seemed to enforce a kind of site-specific gestalt
of contextually-interactive groupings. A collective datum, constructing a phenomenal ground of conventionally-preferred performance, against which the 'differentness' of our intervening buildings will be judged. Cognitive 'maintenance', of such a developmental aspect of architectural convention in contexts, could be thought of as a socially-interactive faculty; comparing familiar roles of one's own community's conventionalized formal postures, with the new supports provided (or imposed) by the more recent element of change.

This thesis sought to blur the professional conception, of creativity residing solely in inventive originality. Such a notion tended to encourage contextually-unfortunate extrapolations; with the most creative works receiving professional acclaim, precisely because of its unconventionality. The persistent emphasis upon the heroics of professional concepts over cultural ones additionally tended to manifest an evaporation of urban fabric, as well as, an importantly local sense of a community's developmental history. The marvelous intuition of the diagram should be reformulated in the terms of the environment in which it will interact. This is to say that the support our professional interventions supply, no matter how attractive on their own, should be reconsidered at the conventional level of performance, which the context offers to a similar need.

Such a framing of architectural criticism in service of its context, does not mean to limit the intellectual capacity of the profession: it merely seeks to demonstrate socially-developmental cognitions of context, as an important creative source. Experiential understanding of our
227 View of the old harbor district, Copenhagen: a high degree of 'creative' individuality, within a recognizably conventional sense of contextual relation.

228 View of Greensburg, Indiana: the same general mechanisms of socialized conventions, at work in our contemporary contexts of everyday life, as well.
architectural ideas, formal or programmatic, may be very weak if our contextual positions appear to smug: astonishingly strong if our change is measured and cognizant of its contextual posture. Convention does not usurp creativity, it merely characterizes a developmental level of normative environmental performance; and through such norms, lends understanding and accommodation of environmental change. (227,228)
APPENDIX
The inquiry of this thesis found its interest in a correspondence of two competing approaches to environmental understanding: and began to search out fruitful realms of architectural criticism as a result of this sympathetic accord. From the inspiration of that correspondence, it formed temporary theories in a willful way (suspending skepticism for a moment) and tested these theories against evidence received from external sources: other critics, pertinent readings, formalizing designs and observations of the environment. This tended to characterize a domain of fruitfulness for the position of that temporary theory; recognizing both positive and negative feedback as informative to an operational demonstration, rather than constructive evidence of a proof of the inquiry's objective rightness or wrongness.

Some of this evidence didn't apply so much to the temporary theory in question, but suggested an alternate inquiry which was nonetheless fundamentally sympathetic in its concern. More importantly, it offered a domain of fruitful criticism much closer to the original sense of correspondence. Similar testing of this successive assertion produced, as one might suspect, an even finer grain of consecutive inquiries; arrested for the purposes of exposition, at the currently convincing topic of this thesis.

Upon reflection of this kind of research dynamic, the overriding concern became: was this type of inquiry of sufficient methodological discipline, or simply ad hoc madness? Indeed this introspection is the question...
about which much discussion revolves, regarding investigative method. Does one enforce an internally consistent theory upon the environment, conforming evidence to it and seeking interventions 'lawful' to our objective conclusions; or should one respond to the seemingly random fortunes of natural phenomena, constructing immediately pragmatic solutions to ad hoc evidence of empirical utility? Underlying this introspection of methodological choice is the implied question of, what sort of demonstration one expects of it.

I take a position of operation, as being the most important aspect of considering methods. As I understand it, operation insists upon generalizable control of external phenomena, as fruitful predictions of possible performance; but understands the comparative and conditional nature of observation, and the social and natural contexts which distinguish or formalize 'facts'. Operational investigation must attempt a grounding in an important phenomenological setting, if it expects to practice its findings in this same external setting. The intent of this concern for evidence in its context, is merely to remind one of the boundaries of our conclusions; and to insist that any instrumental sense of objectivity, regarding methods of inquiry, must be limited to the specificity with which it involves the context of its evidence. In short, we seek a greater congruence between ideas and the environment,¹ and as

such, require a continuing criticism from the assertions of each.

This suggestion of an investigative method, still doesn't suggest a normative structure of methodological inquiry. Imre Lakatos does describe such a dynamic of investigation. His methodological research programs utilizes the concept of a hypothetical 'problemshift'. This technique recognizes the formative influence of external specifics to limit the domain of demonstration of one's hypotheses, and suggests a method of evidential corroboration as a test of these inquiries against observational externals. This notion places sufficient value on the rigor of external corroboration, as to insist upon a shift of the entire hypothetical setting consequent to the level of empirically correspondent evidence supplied by these externals. He notes these environmentally relative shifts as 'progressing' or 'degenerating'; finding fruitful domains of one's hypothesis in a thoroughly researched testing against observational refutation or corroboration.

This has direct precedent, of course, with Karl Popper's refutationally based 'progressive adjustments'. Although Popper's methodological notion is quite properly applauded for its ability to account for positive corroboration and negative refutation; it is correspondingly
cited as placing too much value on the latter. It is only the doubting voices which are heard as 'progressive adjustments' in Popper's world: only an emersion in the universe of external specifics, which allows ascension to methodological 'proof'. This overt attention to even the most infinitesimal of empirical data, effectively enforces a notion of the generalizable, as only that which has satisfied an attendant world of specifics.

Whilst opening up an awareness to the input of externals, Popper's conscious reliance upon the protocol conventions of scientific logic, shortcircuits this openness by failing to recognize the ability of the internal structure (of a hypothesis) to select evidence; further to form significant realms of influence, with regard to the specific character of its observation. This failure is largely due to an unspoken conviction in the ability of rigorous logic to evaluate 'objectively'. All externals, under his system, have absolute value. One need only observe a single white raven to refute the hypothesis that "all ravens are black."4

Certainly, we still value the reality of refutation as hard fact. The quarrel now rests with the judgemental acuity towards which one directs these operations. For if refutation is conclusive, 'operational truths'

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4 This example was the subject of a discussion in Popperian positivity, in Stanford Anderson's seminar "Conventions, Canons and Criticism" (M.I.T. course no. 4.697), held on 21 October, 1981. The book of reference for the discussion, was: Popper's Conjecture and Refutations.
must be a matter of experientially verified conviction. Fact-finding can never be useful as an absolute process. If one can assume that methodological inquiry is a purposeful endeavor, then it is the embedded domain of that purpose, of externally related context of interpretive mind, in which one becomes interested.

It is this embedded belief or implied judgemental consciousness, as a product of a deeply-held heuristic conviction, manifesting itself through conventionally-accepted normative appraisal, which compels Imre Lakatos to re-examine Popper's methodological falsificationist progressivism. As a starting point, Lakatos reminds us of Immanuel Kant's well-known dictum: "Philosophy of science without the history of science is blind." Lakatos similarly recognizes the conceptual poverty of methodological naivete, and urges us to recall the "...intrinsic unity between the 'logic of discovery' and the 'logic of justification'..." By this observation, Lakatos means to supply an awareness of any methodological truth, as being dependent upon the philosophical directedness of its interpretive context of mind. More simply, the facts one derives have a great deal to do with the questions one asks and the manner in which one asks them. More importantly, the willingness to accept a given framework of inquiry depends still further upon the

5 Lakatos, "History of Science...", p.91.

consensual acceptance to believe a normative line of inquiry as the most effective and justifiably valid approach to the problem.

This is a distinction similar to that of Yehuda Elkana's concept of 'two-tier thinking': maintaining that we work within a framework of inquiry which is a 'relativist' and socio-historical realm, and then proceed to use this conventionally conceived framework in a 'realist' manner. Asserting its presence as an externally existent system of autonomous organization, or as an authority somehow outside of our heuristic ability to direct its use. As the spider's web, we make it, but it holds us up with an objective presence of its own. He goes on to suggest that the relativist rhetoric of a position of a given framework (or Lakatosian logic of justification), should not be thought of as secondary to the rational discourse of the articulation of that framework against reality (or Laktosian logic of discovery).

This notion of a socially normative use of history, as a reconstruction of its empirically exigent presence, finds example in the literary realm of T. S. Eliot, as well. His discussion of the creative methods of the individual artist, offers a critical reminder of the social setting or tradition, within which one's creation has value.

"...no artist of any art, has his complete meaning alone. His significance, his appreciation is the appreciation of his

relation to the dead poets and artists... In a peculiar sense he will be aware also that he must inevitably be judged by the standards of the past."  

Eliot speaks of a creative tradition or "historical sense", which "... involves a perception, not only of the pastness of the past, but of its presence... of his own contemporaneity." And similar to Lakatos, goes on to purport the significance of a consciousness of this methodological contemporaneity:

"What is to be insisted upon is that the poet must develop or procure the consciousness of the past.... But the difference between the present and the past is that the conscious present is an awareness of the past in a way and to an extent which the past's awareness of itself cannot show."

The importance of reviewing Eliot at this time, is not his corroboration of reconstruction, as a vital aspect of criticism; but precisely because Eliot wishes, indeed is compelled as artist not historian, to transgress this boundary to the proposition of reconstruction as creative tool, or "... as a principle of aesthetic..." As such, Eliot begins to outline a methodology of using this historical sense, as creative criteria; suggesting a realm beyond investigative evaluation. As we now direct ourselves to a methodological formulation of what we have learned, his

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9 Ibid. p. 38.
10 Ibid.
12 Ibid. p. 38.
thoughts might be valuable as a starting point:

"And I hinted, by analogy, that the mind of the mature poet differs from that of the immature one not precisely in any valuation of 'personality', not being necessarily more interesting, or having 'more to say', but rather by being a more finely perfected medium in which special, or very varied, feelings are at liberty to enter into new combinations."13

This recombinant medium is rather akin to the Lakatosian problemshift, which we earlier retained for its ability to value, indeed internally accommodate, external observations in and of their contexts. The advantage Lakatos now seeks over Popperian falsificationism is an opportunity for the problemshift to anticipate possible performance, suggesting (as does Eliot) a fruitful realm of research beyond mere analytical evaluation; and thereby characterizing a truly instrumental progressivism for the methodological adjustment.

"A research programme is said to be progressing as long as its theoretical growth anticipates its empirical growth, that is, as long as it keeps predicting novel facts with some success ('progressive problemshift'); it is stagnating if its theoretical growth lags behind its empirical growth, that is, as long as it gives only post-hoc explanations..."14

Lakatos now views 'progress' as a perpetually open-ended dialogue of historical success, with the best theories gaining distinction through their repeatedly proven ability to anticipate satisfactorily. This finds emphasis in an excess of empirical corroboration. An hypothesis can only be replaced if it explains more, or has greater empirical congruence with the external world it seeks to explain. With this sense of methodological

13 Ibid. p. 40-41.
14 Lakatos, "History of Science...", p. 100.
progress, even 'superseded' theories stand as only relatively false. Since the investigative search attends contemporary externals and does not attempt truth for all possible situations, a presently weak theory may be 'shelved' along with a tighter sense of its domain of success; and could well prove useful if similar conditions arise in the future.

"In this code of scientific honour modesty plays a greater role than in other codes. One must realize that one's opponent, (competing theory) even if lagging badly behind, may still stage a comeback. No advantage for one side can ever be regarded as absolutely conclusive. There is never anything inevitable about the triumph of a programme. Also, there is never anything inevitable about its defeat."15

Hence Lakatos buries the question of absolute conclusions, in a near common-sensical plea for a more fruitful dynamic between external evidence and one's heuristic capacity to contemporaneously apply it. As Eliot speaks of the artist as "catalyst"16 or transparent directive force, so does Lakatos bring the motivation of a purposeful heuristic into the interpretive operation of problemshifts; setting the normative method in a contextual position of mind, just as the problemshift sits in a dialogical context of external evidence.

"Thus progress is marked by instances verifying excess content rather than by falsifying instances; empirical 'falsification' and actual 'rejection' become independent. Before a theory has been modified we can never know in what way it had been 'refuted', and some of the most interesting modifications are motivated by the 'positive heuristic' of the research programme rather than by anomalies."17

16 Eliot, p. 41.
Of course this places epistemological importance on the power of the judgmental heuristic, to positively structure. We have already made the first step of revealing the relativist position of our methodological frameworks, by recognizing the fact that any normative method had an embedded point of indeterminancy, or its socio-psychological domain of 'understood agreements'. Further we propose such a realm of inspection as necessary for one's own methodological success. The metaphysical impossibility of perfect, or thorough self-knowledge is properly raised at this point. However, as one knows from everyday experience, this need not be cause for despair; and commensurately desperate refuge under the nihilism of irrational gibberish, or uselessly moral absolutism. Indeed, as Lakatos points out very early in his argument,\(^\text{18}\) this socio-psychological aspect of conjecture need not be conscious, as a condition of using its normative conventions, or even deriving its truth. This aspect of investigative methods allows the lab technician to perform experiments, or the architectural draftsman to draw a detail, without requiring pervasive knowledge of the whole project. The point is, of course, without this sort of self-inspection of epistemological setting, we are all servants either to accidents of fortune;\(^\text{19}\) or to the implied view of truth bounded by the normative reconstructions of one's chosen

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18 The proposition of the autonomous aspect of internal history is made in Lakatos, "History of Science...", pp. 91-92, and argued later in the article.

19 Discussions of the anticipatory weakness, of inductivism and falsificationism, and correspondent methodological history of coincidental discovery; is attended many places in Lakatos, "History of Science...", eg. pp. 102-103.
(or unchosen) methodology: worse one might be interpreting data under an improper judgemental sense, with regard to the method one is utilizing.

Attempting to consolidate our developing notions of methodological research, we must first admit the existence of an investigative 'core'; and reaffirm the operational valency of such a limited understanding, as a disciplined consciousness of purposeful questioning. Secondly, and most difficultly willful, we must attempt the honest rhetoric of self-inspection, as to the fruitfulness of our relativist frameworks. An externalization of socio-psychological reference points; giving form, however crudely, to an interior topology of our interpretive core positions.20

The sense of awe at such an endeavor, is largely due to the fuzziness of its expansive boundaries. This anxiety might be lessened by a 'symptomatic reading', of the kind Demetri Porphyrios reminds us of, in his recent utilization of the term "problematic":

"...the problematic is not a world-view. It is not the essence of the individual or epoch which can be deduced from a body of texts by an empirical, generalizing reading; it is centered on the absence of problems and concepts as much as their presence; it can therefore only be reached by a symptomatic reading (lecture symptomale)..."21

20 This task might well benefit from attention to the terminology of the relatively recent research of psychology, moral development or any number of related enthusiasms.

This directed shying from a 'world-view' is followed by Lakatos as well, when he speaks of reconstructions of "history to varying degrees". Treating one's 'hard core' self-inspection as problematic, allows one to attend only that section of one's demarcation criteria which is relevant to the domain of the problem one is considering.

"Whatever problem the historian of science wishes to solve, he has first to reconstruct the relevant section of the growth of objective scientific knowledge, that is, the relevant section of 'internal history'." This might be done positively, by symptomatic corroboration of corresponding programatic frameworks, keeping in mind the domain of their empirical demonstration and the context of the quandary at hand; or reductively, by asking how much of one's normative core one could give up, and still satisfy the needs of the exigent crisis. Either way, this self-inspection is likely never to attain total satisfaction as it is, almost by definition, subject to the very embedded comparative value it seeks to unveil; although the particular acuity of its general realm of inquiry, is importantly different.

Nonetheless, this exercise still holds eminent value for our methodological inquiry, as it makes the inner implications behind our search, public property. As such the 'core' inspection will appeal to some relative position of normative understanding, and therefore opens

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22 Lakatos, History of Science...", pp. 116-120.
23 Ibid., p. 106.
24 Ibid., p. 110.
itself to further criticism on a most profound level. One can now stand in judgement, as to the honesty with which one has pursued the license of an heuristically based progressiveness.

"One may rationally stick to a degenerating programme until it is overtaken by a rival and even after. What one must not do is to deny its poor public record....It is perfectly rational to play a risky game: what is irrational is to deceive oneself about the risk."25

This realization leads to Lakatos's final assertion. That is, an open-minded comparison of 'cores'; which if in pursuit of the same inquiry, can guarantee, at least a fuller sense of the facts surrounding that inquiry: just as public debate can allow all sides to be heard. In fact, this is how Lakatos, himself, develops his own argument for his methodology of scientific research programs.

The comparison of normative understandings, as with Lakatos's essay and my own attempt, can be quite appropriate to the initial attempts to frame and clarify one's own amorphous intuitions. My only exception comes with a post-facto self-criticism cum justification. The point of 'core' comparison being, not to justify oneself as right, but as consciously directed; the character of that direction being the domain of its service.

In the same spirit, I have selected the Lakatosian notions of method, to structure the reconstructive explanation of my own research; as it aligns with the way my research developed originally. By making such a

25 Ibid., p. 104.
comparison, I do not mean to justify my technique as right; but the
Lakatosian method as close to, or characteristic of, the path of my
research dynamic. Therefore, it supplies the best way for me to recount
or reconstruct the findings of my research, whilst utilizing a documented
method of investigative understanding.

If one has quarrels with my findings, they can trace their exceptions
through the internal framework of the method. If they should have
trouble, at some point, with the position of the method itself, then
criticism should take the form of a competing view of investigation;
thereby offering a different sense of the whole inquiry, and offer us all
a wider understanding of the questions I raise.

Although I have invested much discursive effort in some interpretation of
the Lakatosian method, there is one further distinction I feel I must
make regarding the realm of epistemological domain. Lakatos, from the
outset, declares his role to be that of a historiographer of the
scientific realm. As such his methodological inquiries, no matter how
compelling, must attend those aspects of 'facts' derived from
contingently arranged systems of Nature and its physical implications. It
seeks important 'discoveries' as facts of those relationships, and
predicts the probability of such relations repeating their
phenomenological conclusion. My interest in an architectural realm, must
reformulate a role, as quasi-historiographer of the socially creative or
artifactual world. This shifts the teleology of scientific
'form-discovery', to a decidedly more ontological pursuit of
'form-creating', or at least the metaphysics of formal qualities. To the degree that we recognize man and his works as embodied in the general phenomena of Nature, we can still utilize the terms of discovery: but contra-positively we should recognize that human production, generally carries a greater range of autonomy, than the diagnostic intervention of man within the fortunes of Nature.

Certainly, neither field exists outside the pervasiveness of Nature's physical assertions, and to this end we can applaud Lakatosian insistence upon the reality of its inputs. Similarly, both fields employ the internal abilities of man to positively construct interventional futures; here too Lakatos's 'operational' intention is most welcome. The difference lies in the value placed on 'conclusion' and the generalizable aspects of tested performance. Whereas Lakatos opposes a "proof-generated theorem" to naive conjecture; Royston Landau reminds us that the importantly arbitrary aspects of artifactual and cultural characteristics, will almost certainly seem 'mistaken' and rationally naive to the cross-cultural rigor of evidential Science. For while science is in exchange with physical evidence, and desires conclusions of natural phenomena; architectural archeology, if you will, involves a dialogue of artifactual 'production' and seeks aspects of cultural 'positions' in their contexts. While both epistemological domains are concerned with

26 Lakatos, "Proofs and Refutations," pp. 130-139.
demonstrative exercises in the understanding of form, and the potentials of possible directed performance; artifactual inspections are always concerned with cultural 'positions of production', and to that condition can only obtain a limited sense of 'Natural' truth, which Science portrays. Again, this is not to weaken the case for Lakatosian method, only further qualify its sense of conclusion.

Now that we have seemingly come to an end, one might do well to ask: "So what do we have?" To that end, I will recount the argument and attempt a further formalization of 'method'. We have repeatedly discussed the methodological weakness of conclusionary absolutes; and have consistently placed emphasis on those theory-constructive aspects which increase an 'operational' understanding, of the external environment in which our conjectures are tested. As such we seek not only hypothesis of observational understanding, but demonstration of instrumental performance as well.

WE VALUE THE OPERATIONAL ASPECTS OF POSSIBLE PERFORMANCE

The first contributive element in an operational methodology then, must be one of an openness of research to the assertions of both internal conjecture and external evidence. The greatest opportunity for operational success of our theories, coming with a closer correspondence with external evidence, and an inclusion of such evidence in the contexts which give them objective significance.

THE PREDICTIVE APPRAISAL OF EXTERNALS MUST INCLUDE THE CONTEXT OF THOSE EXTERNALS
To this end we found Imre Lakatos's methodological 'problemshifts', based in evidential refutation or corroboration, highly useful; in its ability to risk predictions concerning generalizable possible performance, as well as internally accommodate empirical evidence of this performance, within their contexts.

WE RETAIN THE NOTION OF AN EVIDENCE-CORRECTED PROBLEMSHIFT

We further discovered methodologically normative decisions of discovery, to imply a judgemental acuity, evidenced by points of methodological indeterminancy or a 'hard core'; which existed solely by understood agreement, and although related, existed outside the method's ability to explain it. In short, a consensus of interpretive position or a logic of justification.

ANY NORMATIVE LOGIC OF DISCOVERY IMPLIES A LOGIC OF JUSTIFICATION

Through the help of Elkana and Eliot, we established a consensus for the existence of the Lakatosian notions of methodological reconstructions, as consisting of an internal code of normative honesty, grounded in an external history of socio-psychological positions. In short, we have found one's judgemental heuristic most operational, if declared as a sort of context of mind: just as we discovered the fruitfulness of addressing empirical evidence, within its significant context.

THE PREDICTIVE VALUE OF THE METHODOLOGICAL PROBLEMSHIFT MUST RECOGNIZE THE CONTEXT OF ITS EMPIRICALLY INTERPRETIVE MIND

The advantage of such a heuristic awareness was not purely for consciousness sake; but includes the opportunity to allow the anticipatory ability of that directedness, to establish a predictive
problemshift which seeks external corroboration in empirical excess of historical success. This not only allows 'progressive' shifts to truly contribute positively, but enforces a more precise sense of the degenerative shifts, as well. These contemporaneously falsified theories are no longer discarded, but temporarily shelved; able to become operational, if subsequent conditions corroborate its usefulness.

WE VALUE HEURISTIC ANTICIPATION CORROBORATED IN HISTORICAL SUCCESS AS TRULY OPERATIONAL PROBLEMSHIFTS

Although we outlined the difficulty of characterizing our 'hard core' understandings, we still believe in its import as a public record of one's subsequent honesty of heuristic license. Additionally, we suggest a critical comparison of normative understandings; which if in pursuit of corresponding inquiries, can produce a fuller sense of interpretive approaches, as well as more precisely circumscribe our own position.

WE RETAIN THE NOTION OF HARD CORE AS A PUBLIC RECORD OF RESEARCH LICENSE

Finally we remind ourselves of the difference between fact and artifact. Recognizing that Lakatosian method, although eminently helpful in the physically correspondent demonstration of investigative possibility, was bounded by its scientific domain of factual conclusions concerning natural phenomena. And that our concern for the artifactual 'productions' of epistemologically arbitrary cultural positions, might render a more limited sense of conclusion, in a domain not so rigourously scientific.

FACT VS. ARTIFACT: A CONDITION FOR LAKATOSIAN RECONSTRUCTIONS

This thesis intends to employ such a methodology; by firstly outlining an operative understanding of architectural environments, at the rhetorical
level of an investigative hard core position. Secondly, it portrays two correspondent hypothesis of the environment, and their socio-psychological 'positions of production'. It seeks corroborative and refutational evidence of the inclusiveness of their contexts, and the fruitfulness of their position to demonstrate the hard core understanding, as a characteristic of the environment.

By reconstructing the history of my research to the point of this thesis's contemporary conjecture, this method of explanation hopes not only to render theory-significant empirical evidence, but to aid a more precise understanding of the critical domain of the final submission; and the course of inquiry, which conjecture and conclusion will track in the professional world.
This M.I.T. studio project, given by Professor Gerhard Kallmann in the Fall of 1981, became an integral element of the concurrent investigation into the Perceptual Dynamics of Classicism. Prof. Kallmann's own enthusiasm for 19th Century Neo-Classical, encouraged contemporary reinvestment in the socio-historic formal conventions of this 1870 'American Beaux Arts' institution.

I present these plates only in the effort to more fully complete the context of investigative sources utilized, during the section of study concerned with The Classical.
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