

# 'The Great Debate: Post-Modernism, the true inheritor of Modernism'

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## Charles Jencks

I'm very surprised to find myself tonight speaking at the Royal Institute for British Modernism! And I would think it were due to a clerical error if I didn't know the title of the series was 'The Great Debate: Modernism Versus the Rest'.

This talk will be a concerto in three movements. The first movement is called 'The Passionate Critics', and is marked *allegro furioso agitato e animato*, meaning lots of frenzied bombast, full of sound and fury. I'm here, as I said, speaking as a "rest", a leftover. One of those small, little nuisances, which Modernism can brush aside, as its great train of history rolls on inexorably like the zeitgeist, the spirit of history. Still, it's better to appear as a troublesome footnote on the Hegelian scrapheap of history than not at all, and I welcome the opportunity to challenge the Modernist orthodoxy, even if this challenge appears as fleeting and transient as Art Nouveau. I needn't remind you that Sir Nicholas Pevsner, one of the Royal knights of British Modernism, dismissed Art Nouveau as transitional between historicism and the Modern movement... what he called a short interlude perpetrated by freaks and their fantastical rantings.

It is as a minor freak, upholding the rantings of Post-Modernism, that I address the orthodoxy tonight. At least you may be happy that this short interlude of rant may not last for more than an hour, or much more than an hour. The Royal Institute for British Modernism has been rekindling its militant faith over the last few years, but it's really only in the last year that it's launched an aggressive reformation with the Dutch Calvinist, Aldo van Shout. I'm referring, of course, to the annual discourse of last year titled, with admirable fair mindedness, 'Rats, Posts and Pests'. "Rats, Posts and Pests..." you see how they characterize the rest? The "Rest"? Well, Aldo van Shout delivered his carefully deliberated sermon with the vehemence of a militant saint. A culminating exhortation (it must have been shouted, because it was printed in capital letters, and it received a great applause) advised the audience how to deal with the "Posts, and the Pests and the Rests". "Ladies and gentlemen", he said, "I beg you, hound them down and let the foxes go". Ian Paisley couldn't have put it more delicately. Here is the wonderful tolerance and pluralism one has always admired in the Modern movement. Another quote characterizes the way Aldo sees the "Pests and Rests". Quote: "at no point in history, bar one horrifying, fortunately localized exception" (he refers to the Nazis) "was there ever a constellation of notions concerning architecture so warped and awkward, so cribbed in stereotypes, so ill-behaved and willfully uncongenial, so useless and unbecoming, so unreal without ever becoming surreal", etc., etc. Turning Post-Modernists such as Léon Krier into Albert Speer is a favourite sport of these tolerant, level-headed critics, recently taken up again by that born-again Modernist, Martin Pauli. Like the other zealots: van Shout, Lubetkin, Frampton; Pauli was once the most perceptive questioner of the true faith. But now that others have successfully challenged the orthodoxy, he races back to the crumbling church. Never he leave ahold of nurse, for fear of finding something worse.

All the zealots have one thing in common. Some time in their careers, they took a very strong stand against the Modern orthodoxy. In fact, they've all attacked Modernist shoe box housing for the masses, even those who have built it, such as Lubetkin. We do not value a zealot, however, for his consistency or systematic reason, but rather for his passionate faith. In what sort of Modernism does Aldo believe? Apparently in what he calls "the great gang": Einstein, Joyce and Mondrian, and their view of simultaneous history. Gauguin and Picasso, and their egalitarian transformation of primitive and Negro art. Duchamp and Man Ray's surrealism, Cezanne and Brâncuși's essentialism, and a few architects' work: Aldo, Rietveld, Owen Williams and Le Corbusier. This is a strange view of Modernism, as indeed are all views of the true faith. And we can't expect him to be precise when he says: "that radiant beginning". When was it? 60, 80, 100 years ago? "There is no need to decide, nor is it wise to rely on historians" (end of quote). It certainly isn't. Historians might show how absurd is the belief in a Modernism starting just in 1880, or 1921. One might hope of passionate reformers that they mutually define and agree on the articles of faith, the doctrines and doxa, which are so important to orthodoxy, because then one could dispute a coherent ideology, instead of principles. But no such intention and definition exist. Pevsner puts the origins of the Modern movement in 1851, and the Arts & Crafts brotherhood, and other historians agree with this, plus or minus 50 years. That is, not at all. Berthold Lubetkin, who received the Modernist Gold Medal at last year's investiture, puts the origins of Modern art, or at least its cutting edge, right after the 1914 War. This, he says, produced a revulsion against lies and bluff perpetrated systematically during the war. The reason (which has been referred to tonight, and which he underlines), the reason of modernism was the result, the quote: "lucid geometry of Mies, and Le Corbusier's Villa Savoye", something he finds Goethe having proclaimed 100 years earlier. No one will disagree that Mies and Corb were Modernists in the '20s, although one might take exception with Lubetkin's characterization of Corb's Ronchamp as a huge fungus. But the difficulty is in following Lubetkin's attack on Post-Modernists, none of whom he names but all of whom he libels, not only with the usual tar brush of Hitler, but the equally fashionable spectre of Stalin. Clearly, he is trying to shout van Shout for fairness and tolerance, when he characterizes Post-Modernists as, quote: "the absurd, the opaque, the relentlessly meaningless has become the ally of those who seek the easy comfort of acceptance, who refuse to explore, who remain undisturbed, and endure the absurdity of the present predicament, proclaiming that ignorance is bliss".

Lubetkin never bothers to proclaim or quote one Post-Modern attack on reason, but just goes on to show his delicate understanding and appreciation for the enemy, something he summarizes with great fair play as, quote: "synthetic whimsicality and startling novelty produced by the fashion trade... this is transvestite architecture, Hepplewhite and Chippendale in drag" (end of quote). Now, I do know some Post-Modernists, who won't be named, who would support an hermaphroditic architecture because, they say, we have suffered from too much macho Modernism. But clearly, the sexual metaphor in architecture should be played with as much ambiguity as sexual politics. There's plenty of room for all persuasions. It is, however, precisely this pluralism which the zealots would deny, seeing all complexity as irrational. This is the favorite abusive term of Pevsner, Lubetkin and other old time Modernists, when confronted with Art Nouveau, Gaudi, Ronchamp, Baroque, or even Michelangelo. The new term of abuse for the born-again Modernist is "kitsch", and I first heard it used in this way about eight years ago by that architectural policeman, Kenneth Frampton. Constable Frampton was giving one of those more gloom-filled talks on Adolf Loos, and he was looking into the void, that black hole of beautiful nihilism, when he caught sight of Gaudi speeding down the road enjoying himself. "Stop there! Gaudi is kitsch!

As the critical historian writing a critical history on modern architecture and the critical present (and next week, it will be modern architecture and critical regionalism), I declare a critical concern that the kitsch of Gaudi and the kitsch of Robert Venturi and Charles Moore and all the other kitsch-ifiers has become critical". Constable Frampton is not any better than van Shout or Lubetkin at giving examples or citing line verse. In his one mention of me and Post-Modernism in his so-called 'Critical History', he says, quote: "Venturi, like the recent ideologues of Post-Modernism, such as the historian Charles Jencks, is determined to present Las Vegas as an authentic outburst of popular fantasy" (end of quote). I was so surprised to find myself holding such unlikely opinions, that I actually read my book on Post-Modernism and found, unsurprisingly, the references to Las Vegas were just the reverse of what our critic averse. For that matter, Robert Venturi has always been careful to distinguish the positive and negative aspects of Las Vegas, a city he has never equated, as a whole, with an authentic outburst of popular fantasy. He has admired the creativity of the neon artists and certain formal characteristics, but that is another thing.

The problem of Constable Frampton's traffic laws is that they immediately turn any historical allusions into kitsch, and any attempt at an architecture which can be broadly understood into populism. Now who is actually going to support kitsch populism? Not even our favorite enemy architect Adolf Hitler would go that far. The problem, once again, is the intolerance, the uncharitable characterization of the opposition as freaks and fantasists, as Pevsner called them. The 'Great Debate' is in danger of turning into the ungrateful diatribe, an acrid polemic between the two-party system of the "Mods" and the "Rests". The point where this debate came to a head, or rather, tail end, was of course, Michael Graves' Portland Building. This Pietro Belluschi, the designer of many late Modern skyscrapers in Portland, lampooned as an enlarged jukebox, or an oversized be-ribboned Christmas package. Appropriate, as you'll guess, to Las Vegas, it was unnecessary for him to call it kitsch. But Belluschi partly had his way, and the ribbons were turned into stylized steel plates. You see the ribbons on the model to the right, and how they've been turned into stylized steel plates on the left. The top sconces and buildings, the vernacular buildings and sheds, were removed, and the figure of Portlandia, which you can see in the model on the right, had to be designed by someone else. This emasculation of the design, by intolerant Modernists, was not entirely destructive of the building, but it was very reminiscent of a previous attack, this one launched in 1927 against Le Corbusier's winning entry to the League of Nations competition. A Monsieur Le Merisque[?] suggested that it be banned on a technicality. He said, "this scheme has not been drawn in Indian ink. It breaks the rules, I insist that it should be disqualified". And so it was. The architectural traffic cop was at that time slightly more successful than Belluschi, although one should not underrate his high-minded destruction of Graves' building. Why should the zealots be so repressive? What do they fear so much that they can't allow our building to be built as intended? A critic, our professional elite, does not become censorious and hostile unless either he wants a total victory, let us say the totalistic style of Walter Gropius or Pugin's Gothic Revival, or he fears total defeat. Thankfully, in the real world of England or America or France today, we can have Modern, Post-Modern, Late Modern, Revivalist and "other" buildings. We may have a majority, two-party system locked in reductive battle, but it doesn't rule out a host of other approaches. If we examine the attacks mounted here in the Royal Institute for British Modernism, we can see that the polemicists are more united in their opposition to a movement they dislike (Post-Modernism) than committed to a shared goal. Van Eyck will support the great gang of Cubists, Lubetkin the classical calm of rationalists, a gang Aldo happens to dislike, and Frampton supports the production of place. All of these goals may

be admirable in part, but none of them is either distinctive to Modernism or widely shared, and however exemplary they may be as architectural touchstones, they pale into insignificance when compared with the great cultural goals of the past. Imagine John Ruskin proclaiming a crusade in favor of critical regionalism. Imagine the cathedrals or the Pantheon are coming down an architectural notch. The Houses of Parliament built for the goals of lucid geometry, reason, or the great gang of Cubists and artistic avantgarde. These are not fully social, religious and political goals, the great inspirations of past architectural programmes. The Modern movement did have the equivalent of such goals during the '20s, its heroic period. But today it is without this unifying ideology and shared values, which is one reason why it is "Late Modern". It is also the major reason why the polemicists are in danger of becoming like the reactionaries of the '20s, angry and uncreative, repressive rather than openly positive. The 'Great Debate' will turn into the ungrateful diatribe unless the Modernists start agreeing on some credible public action and stop using their shared hatred as a unifying substitute.

The difficulty of this is shown by Frampton advocating, like Team 10 and Post-Modernists, for creation of place. He then tries to sustain this valid notion with the idea of a critical resistance. In his words, the projects of, say, Gwathmey - which you see on the left, Gwathmey and Siegal on the left - the Perinton housing and Grassi, Giorgio Grassi, on the right... students' housing which is just about finished now. These, according to Frampton, resist the placelessness-ness of megapolitan development. He proffers, he supports, a degree zero architecture, as stripped and chaste as that of Adolf Loos, in order for it to be unconsumable by a consumer society. Resist accommodation, resist contamination, resist kitsch. Sounding like a French resistance fighter, carrying on his heroic struggle under the Nazis, he comes up once again with a standard, savoury comparison. "One could argue" (this is a quote of Frampton's), "one could argue that fluorescent Post-Modernism" (he means Charles Moore) "plays a role in respect of welfare state consumerist culture close to that played by [xxx] kitsch in the Third Reich" (end of quote). Had he dared mentioned the Piazza D'Italia, Moore could have sued him for libel, except that Moore has received so many slanderous epithets because of this scheme (he was called even the Shah of Iran because of it), that he couldn't afford all the lawyers required. I might point out, just in passing: one of the things that Frampton and those who condemn it miss, is its relation to the St. Joseph's day festival and the whole notion of participation in architecture. It was built partly in participation with the local Italian community, and you can see them here during one of those festivals. Like the Modernists in the '20s, he has to bear the calumnies of the Alexander von Sengers and the Schultze-Naumburgs and the Wilhelm Fricke. Am I really comparing the slander of Frampton to these unsavoury Nazis? Certainly not. Because as it happens, Frampton holds opinions that are Post-Modern. Opinions that I have been stating for 10 years. He advocates Modernist works, quote: "because they resist the monovalent propensity of consumerist culture". It's true, I've used the word "univalent" since 1969, but we mean the same thing. More importantly, he advocates an architecture of the public realm, the res publica, as defined by our common favourite Hannah Arendt, believing that architecture can only regain its full credibility when it is sustained by a democratic politics, based on participation and a forum for action. This is absolutely correct, just what I have been insisting on since 1971, so we must conclude that Frampton is no other character than myself, except in a grey flannel or black suit.

This conclusion is not surprising, and it must prepare us for the other main revelation of the evening: that van Eyck and Lubetkin are also Post-Modernists, even if they don't like it, even if they'd like to hide

it. I didn't say in drag. You will agree that Lubetkin's famous porte-cochère at High Point II, on the right, with its plaster caryatids, is a prescient example of the genre, occurring in 1938, the year that Arnold Toynbee coined the term Post-Modern. Anthropomorphism, irony, architecture as sign and historicism. It's all here, which is why I illustrated it as the opening shot in my chapter on Post-Modernism. I can't claim credit for the insight however, as Colin Rowe somewhat before pointed out its lessons for collage design and the density of mixed meaning. Aldo van Eyck and his partner Theo Bosch, on the left, have also produced an excellent example of Post-Modern housing, illustrated in the same chapter as Lubetkin's work. The Zwolle scheme, 1975, is contextualist urbane ad hoc, neo vernacular, even a bit Dutch in its partial suggestion of the gable. For calling it such things, van Eyck threatens to - constantly threatens to - sue me, but I'm prepared to take on the suit and win. After all, it's a very good Post-Modern building and ought to be defended as such. And here ends the coda to the first movement.

The second movement is called 'The Religion of Modernism', and is marked *largo sostenuto tranquillo e adjectivo*, meaning slow, sustained, tranquil, and, I hope, objective. If we are to get anywhere with this debate, the tone has to change, tolerance reemerge, and the terms define. To act immediately for the first goal, that may be explicit about what is probably obvious. I continue to admire and respect the architecture of van Eyck and Lubetkin, and I find Frampton a first-class historian when he isn't being contemptuous of Gaudi. To act on the second point is much harder because the word and concept of Modernism are so various and large as to be ill-defined as the concepts of romanticism and democracy. They mean contradictory things to different people, to the same person, and to different professions.

To painters and historians of art, Modernism starts with the 1860s, with Edward Manet's Olympia, its frank sexual realism, and its abstracting contrasts. It gains momentum with Impressionism and Post-Impressionism: Renoir, Degas, Manet, to reach a new plateau with the abstractions of Cézanne, which influenced Le Corbusier. All this makes sense, but it is quite at variants with modernism and literature, music, dance, drama, sculpture, of course film, and architecture. The editors of a book called 'The Modern Tradition: Backgrounds of Modern Literature', written in 1965, claim as "Modern" Catullus, but not Virgil; Villon, but not Ronsard, Donne, but not Spencer; Clough, but not Tennyson; Conrad, but not Goldsworthy. And although one can understand the threads and distinctions, they don't help us particularize a temporal idea. The Modernist sensibility in literature, some would claim, finds expression in the 1850s with Baudelaire's declaration, quote: "the heroism of modern life surrounds and presses upon us. The painter, the true painter for whom we are looking, will be he who can snatch its epic quality from life today and can make us see and understand how great and poetic we are in our cravats and our patent leather boots. There is also Rimbaud's "Il faut être absolument moderne". But these statements of intent do not really culminate in literature until James Joyce and the poetry of the '20s, in spite of earlier attempts by Mallarmé. In architecture, the situation seems more defined. Most architectural historians (Siegfried Gideon, Peter Collins, Vincent Scully, Leonardo Benevolo, Manfredo Tafuri, Norberg Schulz and Kenneth Frampton) put the origins of Modern architecture sometime in the 18th century, with the Industrial Revolution, the Enlightenment, the beginning of conscious eclecticism and the presence of Piranesi, Boullée, Ledoux and socially concerned architects. We've already seen that Pevsner places it 100 years later, and it is likely that Xavi Banham and Hitchcock would place it 150 years later, about 1900. On one level, of course, their differences are merely semantic. The 1750 supporters are referring to the roots of Modernism and the 1900 supporters to the tree of Art Nouveau, secession, and reinforced concrete. There is still a real difference of opinion over the content of

Modernism, and how it fares during the 19th century. Does it really make sense to make Ledoux and Gustave Eiffel into Modernists, as historians have done? They would complain, much as Voysey did, of being saddled with the responsibility for Le Corbusier and the international style, which they would probably find reductive if I can put words in their mouth. Certainly, Voysey found it reductive. An extreme violence is done to history and its protagonists if we use the same word to refer to the ideology and style of the '20s and then project it back 150 years. This violence has become standard, historical custom, and like all custom must be respected in court. Yet if probed systematically, the definition turns out to be both too large and too small. It is too generous because it includes all of the 19th century as Modern, an absurd situation since it was so clearly a continuity, a revival, of Western periods rather than a revolutionary disjunction, in spite of individual Modernist efforts. It does little good to turn pre-Modernists such as Sullivan, McIntosh and Wagner into later figures that developed from them, as Benevolo and Frampton do, because they kept a very important commitment to architecture as symbol, to ornament, and polychromy, anthropomorphism, the orders, and so much else that Loos and Le Corbusier threw out. At the same time, the conventional definition is too small, because as economic and social historians argue, the roots of the modern world are in the Renaissance: mercantile capitalism, a world economic system, the rise of European supremacy, and its new sense of history and pluralism, that is, its acquaintance with many other cultures. Above all, secularization, the waning of the medieval Christian view, and the word *moderna* or *moderno*. Both occur at this time, in the 1460s. Antonio Filarete, in his treatise on architecture, was sort of a Post-Modernist *avant la lettre* when he said, quote: "I, too, used to like Modern" (that is, Gothic) "buildings, but when I began to appreciate classical ones, I came to be disgusted with the former. I seemed to see those noble edifices that existed in Rome and classical times, and I appeared to be reborn" (end of quote). Born-again Classicism was, of course, named the 're' or the *Renaissance*, and it was experienced by many as a spiritual rebirth, an interesting fact we shall discover with born-again Modernists. But it is the positive reuse of the word with which I am concerned. The way Giorgio Vasari, that first systematic historian of art, uses the term in the High Renaissance, he straightens out the confusion of Gothic with *Moderno* by advancing three different labels for three different epochs, one each to do with what we would call today Gothic, Byzantine, and then Classical Revival. The last, this Renaissance style, was the best for him, what he called the "most glorious", a "*buono Maniera moderna, il moderno si glorioso*". Vasari's usage was gradually accepted, as was the periodisation of history, although it has become continuously more elaborate. With historians and architects up to the 19th century (Soane is an example) Modern means Renaissance, plus everything else: Mannerism, Baroque, Rococo, Neoclassicism, all the periods that were named later.

Thus, I would suggest to historians such as Frampton, that if we accept the relations between the economy, society, architecture, religion and etymology, then modern architecture (small 'm') was born much earlier than they think - in 1450 it was born - and that Modern architecture (capitalized like all world religions!) was born much later than they believe, about 1900. In fact, it might be convenient to use Modern architecture, uppercase, the way the man in the street does, as a synonym for the International style and its derivatives. Because in the '20s, there usually was a coherent style and ideology. To explore adequately the meaning of Modern and its cognate terms, the *avantgarde* and the new, requires more than a lecture or even a book, because the journey cuts across countries and more importantly, cuts across professions. Specialists in each field, architecture, music, literature and painting will give their weighted bias of the situation. Let me just summarize some evidence, which also

puts the case that Modernism (capital 'M'), should be located at the beginning of the century. Malcolm Bradbury and James McFarlane, in their anthology *Modernism, 1890 to 1930* give several persuasive reasons for dating that period within these limits. The usage of the term "modern" and "new" by intellectuals in the major cities, London, Paris, New York, Berlin and Moscow, had an explicit understanding of the role of the avantgarde by major creative figures: Yeats, Joyce, Elliot, Lawrence, Proust, Valéry, Gide, Man, Rocha, Kafka, not to mention figures outside literature. The testimony of individuals on the Annus Mirabilis, the important year when Modernism struck, can be quite as exciting as the year when Modernism died - for architecture, this is 1972 as we all know. Here is Virginia Woolf on the Annus Mirabilis: "On or about December 1910, human nature changed. All human relations shifted. Those between masters and servants, husbands and wives, parents and children. And when human relations change there is at the same time a change in religion, conduct, politics and literature" (end of quote).

Whether it is the death of King Edward, or the beginning of the First World War, as Lubetkin and so many others testify, whether it is 1922, the year of Le Corbusier's Vaucresson, T.S. Elliot's *Wasteland*, Joyce's *Ulysses*, the famous Bauhaus exhibit... or 1919, the Tatlin Tower... of course, the end of the war, 1918. Most every historian agrees that something modern had finally exploded across European culture. A little scholarly investigation shows, however, that it is funnier than that. The real birth had taken place in 1886, when the word and concept of the modern, "*de moderne*", was used in an address by Eugen Wolf in Berlin. The notion caught on quickly in Germany, and for the next 20 years, there was an outpouring of literature and art on the subject, including Leo Baeck's "*das sexual problem in der moderne literature*". One wonders how their literature can have a sexual problem, but maybe my German isn't good enough to find it. And secondly, the Superman in modern literature, Leipzig, 1897, Nietzsche's post-Christian modern man. Then there was the balance sheet of the modern Berlin 1904, and so on. Finally, in 1909, in Dresden, Samuel Lublinski announced the death of a movement that was beginning to bore everyone to death: "*der ausgang der moderne*", the exit of the modern. The word modern had become, so Bradbury and McFarland tell us, quote: "old fashioned and bourgeois" (I wonder what Tom Wolfe would think of that), suggesting, quote: "nothing so much as exhaustion and decay" (end of quote). As these authors also show, exhaustion and decay and the breakdown of culture then became positive facts, to be witnessed and borne by the Modernists of despair, the followers of wasteland during the '20s.

The point is, that if '*de moderne*' was born in 1886, and died in 1909, then Le Corbusier and Gropius and Mies and Lubetkin are really born-again Modernists, which makes Martin Pauli and Tony Vidler into born-again, born-again, Modernist Modernists. This may sound funny, but it's actually very serious because Modernism, like Classicism, is a religion and it is held onto as firmly, tenaciously and dogmatically as any of the great faiths. In fact, one can only really explain it as a religion or spiritual movement. And understand, the heat of the battle today is stemming from what is, in effect, the wars of religion. They haven't gone on yet for 30 years. The Modern movement (telling spiritual word, 'movement'), and its primary idea, the concept of the avantgarde, was the last persuasive notion which united intellectuals and the creative elites in the West. After the breakup of Christianity as a shared world view (that is, shared by the leading creators) Modernism and its heroic destiny came to fulfill a religious and ideological role. TS Eliot, Stravinsky, Eisenstein, Picasso, Le Corbusier, Tatlin, Mayakovsky, all subscribed at one time or another to the utopian view that the Modernist should

transform society and, quote: "purify the language of the tribe". "Purify the language of the tribe" is a quote, which I think Elliot took from Valery and Corbusier also used similar concepts. The alternative to the avantgarde was kitsch. As Clement Greenberg later put it in 1938, of course, he wrote that book called 'Avant Garde and Kitsch', which dichotomized, in a radical way, the choice you had to make at that time. For the architect, for Gropius and Le Corbusier, for Gropius... sorry, for Mies on the far right, talking to Le Corbusier with his pipe, there just to the left of him... the two of them dressed in wonderful black and white graphics, looking like true international type men with their type hats, type Corvettes, type Spats... Look at their specs, and type pipes "type pipes" as Corbusier called them, and type glasses were formulating... and this is a picture taken 1927 during the Weißenhof, during the great Stuttgart exhibition, they were formulating that universal language... For Gropius and Le Corbusier, this meant elevating the standards of production and consumption to an elite aesthetic level, purging bad taste, the bizarre, purging indecision, ornament, even tradition in favour aristocratic, pure, spiritual, even Cistercian quality. Several years later, actually, Corbusier said that there couldn't be a new spirit, the people were not up to it. They couldn't raise their tastes and ideas high enough. Le Corbusier stands in this respect as the culmination of modernism, the hero of the heroic period. A supreme, passionate Puritan out to change the world. His well-known and still stirring exhortations made in 1922, quote: "a great epic has begun. There exists a new spirit. It is a spirit of construction and of synthesis guarded by a clear conception. There exists a mass of work conceived in the new spirit. It is to be met with particularly in industrial production. Architecture is stifled by custom. The styles are a lie. Our epic is determining, day by day, its own style. We must aim at the fixing of standards in order to face the problem of perfection. The Parthenon is a product of selection applied to a standard". The Parthenon, of course, for him was perfect. And he illustrated throughout his treatise, comparisons of new technical products, airplanes, ocean liners, and of course, automobiles - here's a cross section of the Delage brake - and he would write underneath the Delage, in this case: "this precision, this cleanliness in execution go further back than our reborn mechanical sense. Phidias felt this way - the entablature of the Parthenon is a witness. So did the Egyptians, when they polished the pyramids" (I imagine the Egyptians polishing the pyramids in order to face, as he calls it, the problem of perfection).

Evidently, Le Corbusier was out to change the world in 1922 when he wrote this, and within a few years prophets in Berlin and Moscow were sending him back similar manifestos. *L'esprit nouveau* was born, or rather born-again, after it had died in 1909. The Protestant Reformation soon triumphed at Stuttgart in 1927, with Martin Luther Gropius, John Calvin Corbusier and Mies van der Knox, all building white temples to the new faith. Quickly thereafter, the message spread throughout the wicked decaying lands of bozar detritus, thanks to the epistles according to Saints Pevsner and Richards, and the Bible according to Gideon. Modernism soon triumphed as a militant faith in American 1932, and Britain in 1933, even as it was being put on the index back in Germany. We all know the story, or parable, and repeat it in 50 key histories to cheer ourselves up. It seems generally right if we make several amendments to it. The Modern movement in architecture, as conceived by Gropius, Le Corbusier and Mies, was positive, spiritual and constructive, whereas the greater Modernism from which it came, was often agnostic, destructive, and nihilistic, especially after the First World War, and Oswald Spengler. And one should really make this distinction very strongly, those two Modernisms. Secondly, as a live spiritual quest and unified ideology and style, it really didn't survive the rise of Stalinism. That is about the year 1933, when CIAM had to hire a boat in Athens instead of go to Moscow for its Congress.



Thirdly, as it triumphed stylistically and commercially, it lost its reformist zeal, its spiritual direction, and became, as it remains today, Late Modernism.

Here is two unreadable diagrams, which I can't even read up close, but are the basis in current architecture for trying to distinguish 'Late' from 'Post' Modernism and their philosophical and ideological roots. If you could read the top column, under "ideology" up here, this is a Modern column here, this is the Late Modern, this is the Post-Modern column... you see the basic distinctions are concerned with the notions of a zeitgeist, a utopian and social idealism, say with Modernism and a, if you like, pragmatism, taking over its place as a leading ideology within late Modernity.

We do not find late Modernists such as Richard Rogers or Norman Foster trying to change society or, quote: "purify the language of the tribe" or "liberate the working class". They are as happy as the rest of us if they can persuade Lloyds, with Hong Kong Shanghai Bank, that they offer a progressive and expressive technology. This, of course, is not what Le Corbusier and the prophets of the 20<sup>th</sup> century fought for, and to obscure this by calling it all Modern (capital 'M') is to be too generous, or at least lazy. No doubt people will continue to do so. What really matters, however, is the spiritual notion of modernism. Where in the 20s, armed with their strong beliefs, they did manage to produce the most convincing and creative culture of the time, it is not necessary to downgrade Edwin Lutyens in order to say this. One does not have to excommunicate a host of traditional architects in order to prove one's faith. Only reactionaries have to do this on a cultural level. Because culture belongs in the last analysis to the most creative and wise, not to the repressive. It is undeniable that the most creative impulses were coming in the 20s. From De Stijl, Expressionism, Constructivism, the Amsterdam School, the Bauhaus, Purism, while traditional architecture was relatively quiet. And it's arguable that the reverse is true today with Post-Modernism. Some of the most creative individuals are practicing a form of born-again classicism, or traditional architecture, rather than a neo-De Stijl, or neo-Constructivism, the revivals of late Modernism. But Post-Modernism is a true inheritor of modernism, on the creative level where it matters, if not the spiritual level, where it is dangerous. For one thing distinguishes the two movements. It is over this question, faith. We may live in a post Christian society, an atheist, agnostic or indifferent society. And that may be a fundamental problem for architecture as it is for culture in general. But if there's one thing we have learned in 50 years, it is this: Modernism, like other ideologies, and the zeitgeist, is an inferior religion, an unsatisfactory politics, and a questionable sociology. That's the finale to Movement Two.

Movement Three is called 'The Rebirth of Architecture' and is marked *allegro, contando, conspirato*: light in spirit, a comparison between Post-Modernism and traditional Western architecture. Happily, Jeremy Dixon, whose coffee shop on the left is having a Post-Modern opening tonight, sent me the slide, and it's obviously related to the well-known building on the right, Sir John Soane's breakfast room in the Soane Museum.

The Rebirth of Architecture. One of the virtues of classicism is, as TS Elliot remarked about Catholicism, that it has been in existence long enough to have absorbed many contending approaches and keep a balance between them. Depth of development and equilibrium are the two most important characteristics of classical architecture, if not the mother church. From the Egyptians, who invented classism long before the Greeks who get credit for it, all the major architectural ideas stem. The arch,

the true arch, the false arch, the true dome, the false dome... they invented both the true and the false. The grid, the module, the modular man, anthropomorphism, decoration as well as ornament, polychromy, cavetto molding, even the five orders, lotus and palm etc., rather than Doric and Corinthian, etc. Indeed, just about everything except the I Beam, the train shed and the hyperbolic parabola. This may be an exaggeration, but we flatter and confuse ourselves. We flatter and confuse ourselves to think 20th century technology is so far removed from the Egyptian, Roman and Gothic. Fuller's geodesic dome is, in plan, a Roman flower pattern. I mean, everybody's seen that Roman flower pattern we have in British Museum, they're all over Rome... the Romans had been designing the hemispherical dome for centuries BC - and in diagonal it's related to Gothic structures and [xxx] domes. The dawning conception, which is beginning to grow into conviction among Post-Modernists, is that the architectural language is a universal grammar discovered and transformed in time. To see its universality, we have to understand its transformations, hence the Post-Modern interest in the past solutions. That is, their interest in transforming, not repeating, previous types.

I think this is one transformation. Let me show, rather than analyze, four different types, since there is not the time to describe a transformational system in any depth. The 18th century palace, Versailles, was a mixed urban and country type, midway between a hotel and chateau. On the right you see a drawing, Victor Considérant's drawing, of a Fourier phalanstère model of Versailles. And I'm sure you all know Versailles, so I didn't show it but... it is the same type as Versailles. Versailles is midway between a hotel (the Paris hotel, that is) and a chateau, the country chateau. It took its U-shape from the streets, the hotel and the palazzo. It took its wall *au du nord* from the Colosseum, aqueducts and temple. Fourier, via Considérant and others, transformed the palace type, Versailles, into a utopian socialist plan street in 1834. An ideal unit of all the various functions necessary for a self-sufficient community of 6,000 people. The palace became a social bastion, still with its Versailles morphology. Le Corbusier then, 110 years later, basing his *unité* (on the left) on Fourier, straightened out the U-shape, raised it on piloti, cut away its central dome and symmetry, but kept its function and superimposed [xxx]. It was not a true transformation of the type. But Ricardo Bofill's recently completed Les Arcades Du Lac, near Versailles, is a version of the phalanstère, both socially and architecturally. We see all the salient parts, including the rhythmical bay system, the heroic order, and the relation to the landscape and courtyard. If you know the chateau, as indeed the hotel, is a building between the street and a garden. It's defined between the two. One finds those relationships here. We see all the salient parts including the rhythmical bay system, the heroic order and the relation to the landscape and courtyard. The notion of the urban type, which includes the street, the arcaded piazza, the enclosed court, has generated the plan. You can see the piazza in the center, the street, the pedestrian street, and the urban block type, enclosed to outside traffic. In fact, parking is underneath the parterres you see on the far right. There's a view of Les Arcades du Lac, the arcades extending over the *lac* (a lake, which is three feet deep). And on the right, this rather surreal piazza... that part, that round pedestrian oasis, free from traffic. You see that rather enigmatic monument – I'm wondering what it's a monument to – standing in a piazza which looks at the same time both too big and too small, so a surrealist space because (there's a person that you see in the slide) the arcades are about half the size they are in a traditional architecture.

Typically, Post-Modernism took the urban constants and social reality for their departure points. Another transformation is not morphological, or stylistic. The concern was psychological content,

anthropomorphism. The Egyptians and the Greeks peopled their architecture with figures and colossi and imbued their proportions and columns with a perfect image of the body. A very early drawing on the right, showing part of a sphinx... and a statue inscribed between its legs, the legs signifying the *ka* or the spirit, and the head, of course, signifying the spirit as well. So, a large body if you like, in a small body, cut into the stone. Anthropomorphism is in all the colossi, in Egyptian architecture in all of those transformations of the animal, half figural, half animalistic, you can see it's going on for 2,000, 3,000 years. And being transformed by the Greek in this meteorological relief here, rather a modular man with his arms outstretched here, imposing himself on what looks to be something like a pediment. Taking the notion on the right, which is the notion of measure, of literal measuring, of course, the arm, *cubit*, and transforming that into a different dimension.

So, anthropomorphism was used then, both, if you like, as a literal measuring device and as a psychological device. And you can see it transformed by the Greek, on the right, that wonderful, early archaic pediment with its various [xxx] figures, that's a Medusa and two beasts. On the left here a whole city, as transformed as a person... it's taken from a description in Vitruvius' second book, the architect Dinocrates designing a city for Alexander the Great, decides to design it as a great figure for Alexander of himself, and builds the whole city in his image. So, you can see the colossi of the Egyptians becoming the size of a city. Well, this idea was taken up in the Renaissance, and you can find many people like Francesco di Giorgio laying out cities in the shape of the body, even deciding that the center of the cathedral has to be in the navel, or belly button, of the man lying down. Today, Jeremy Dixon, and so many other Post-Modernists, veil the anthropomorphism so that it doesn't short-circuit the experience of the body image, or become nothing but a face. In his housing, he takes the face image (again another constant in classicism), and he codes it in such a way that it is not explicit. If it were explicit, of course, it would eat the inhabitant every night, which would be an unnerving.

A third transformation concerns the column as order, that is a systematic metaphor and ordering device. Again, the Egyptians were there first, in depth, with their natural and plant metaphors. Owen Jones on the right showing more than five colourful orders. And they were the first, the Egyptians were the first, to invent a syntactic structure in stone. A page taken from Gideon's book on the first stone architecture, the beginnings of architecture, has what he considers the first column. If you look at the first stone column, those papyrus drawings of [xxx] there, 2650 BC, you are struck by the beautiful sophistication of the [xxx], that vertical line down the center of the shaft that catches the light and cuts a sharp shadow, and the elegant double swell of the capital. These engaged columns mark a measured order of wall and procession. So, they're more than just an applique. Otto Wagner (this slide on the right) in 1906 produced what has to be the first High Tech order, and still the most beautiful. Here one understands what an order really is, and how it differs from a column as an applied element. For the order extends into every part: floor, ceiling, wall, and even mechanical equipment column as you see in deep focus on the right. So sophisticated is Wagner's pre-Modern classicism that his tripartite pier even has local or Viennese meaning, recalling Lucas von Hildebrandt's mannerist belly button pilasters. If you look at the countless articulations in that pier, you can see it's relating to von Hildebrandt. We're in Vienna, so it's, in a way, even a local column. The column on the left is Terry Farrell's column in his office and you can also see the way in which it constitutes a order that goes through the office, as it happens... an order like Wagner's, which is a, not only an order of measure and mechanical equipment, but it's also a lighting order.

For the last several years, I have had students design symbolic columns and one of them, Mark Johnson, has produced a most engaging mixture of symbolic meaning and the new technology. He's designed a tensegrity column as a memorial to solidarity. It's a column that depends as much on the traditional Solomonic (that is, curving) column in the Vatican as it does on the tense, even unstable, feeling of stacked up tetrahedra from which it's made. Everything in his design is there for both a structural and symbolic meaning. Triangular forms and plans are veiled references to the Trinity. The unsteady shape refers to solidarity's, quote: "tenuous stability under Soviet domination" (unquote). The dates on the banners, which are highly evocative in Poland, refer to actions, strikes and martyrdom. The Polish national colours also find a suggested presence, the reds and whites, as does the present situation, with a hammer turned into a stepped plan and the sickle, turned into a split [xxx]. This is not propaganda. It's not a propagandist order. Nor is it crude representation, because the meanings are multivalent, many sided, and worked through with a technical and syntactic skill. Once Norman Foster starts designing representational columns, Post-Modernism will enter its classic phase.

The fourth transformation concerns the monument to the public realm, and the ultimate goal of architecture, which is to symbolize those public meanings that society both cherishes and disputes. As I mentioned, Kenneth Frampton also supports this traditional role of architecture, as indeed did just about every Western architect up to and including Adolf Loos. The only theoretical dispute I have with the [xxx] Frampton view is that it regards today's public symbolism as already corrupt, as kitsch. Hence, although they argue, quote: "architecture resides in the monuments and graves" (unquote), they must distinguish themselves from a consumer society designed in an elitist style. Sometimes only two other architects understand it. And here is the absurdity of public realm, of public monuments, for the private realm, the happy few. Frampton forgets the most important precondition for the *res publica*. Before people can participate in it, they must understand the laws, customs and architectural conventions. Architecture must be understood for it to help create the public realm, just as voting conventions, issues and candidates must be understood before there can be democracy. Esoteric architecture creates the private, not public, realm. The crucial idea of Post-Modernism and Post-Modern classicism in particular, is that architecture, the public art, must be accessible without being accommodating, understood without being kitsch, popular without being popular. It may use kitsch elements (the Parthenon and Pantheon on the right... Pantheon also did) but for non-kitsch ends in an entirely authentic and creative way. For critics to carry on damning this hybrid work as kitsch is, as Susan Sontag pointed out in another context, for them to produce a rather low version of it themselves. The Pantheon was the first great monument to cultural and political pluralism. Hadrian and his architect, Apollodorus, transformed the concrete dome (actually, we don't know if it was Apollodorus, who designed it and we don't know if it was Hadrian, but I'd assume it's with them together...) they transformed the concrete dome, which had been used as a bath house and in Nero's golden house. They transformed it into a cosmic symbol of unitary time. The eye looking into heaven, the Oculus, sent its round solar disk, Egyptian Sun God, on its daily journey, marking out the time and the [xxx], originally covered with yellow stars against the blue background. Below this Egyptian Roman symbolism of unity was the plural pantheon of gods, a mixture of mythical and real-world rulers: Venus and Julius Caesar, and five others, with the Emperor himself as judged in the center. From many accounts, Hadrian seemed a tolerant and liberal pluralist, allowing different cults to exist, although one story has it that after getting some strong criticism from his architect Apollodorus, who labeled his domes 'pumpkins', he put him to death. If this account is true, it

seems the one blemish on an otherwise great eclectic. The transformation of the Pantheon as a type has already been treated by many historians, including Summerson and McDonnell, and I'd just like to focus on the notion of the classical monument transformed. Claude-Nicolas Ledoux, perhaps the greatest free manipulator of a classical language in the 18th century. He combined previously separated forms in a way that was considered ungrammatical, but which in retrospect looks positively synthetic. That is, he resuscitated the language by using it in a new way. Le Corbusier, in his League of Nations competition on the right (1927), and Louis Kahn in his Dhaka Assembly building on the left (1962). Both use a freestyle classical language in the public buildings, and both use it in a primitive way. One might say that they use monumental classicism, not so much for its overtones or associations (that is, as a classical sign of the forum of the *res publica*), but as a consequence of formal organizations. As is well known, they both went back to zero to derive a new architecture, and when they got there, what did they find? Classical archetypes: circles, squares, triangles, the archetype one associates with Mycenae or the symmetrical palazzo with a sculpture group on the front of it, like many traditional monuments. Today, Michael Graves is carrying on his speech about classism, and I'm sorry to have to end my talk with a building that has received too much publicity. But one shouldn't avoid an architecture just because it is popular, or has become (for the moment) fashionable. It cannot be consumed by the press ([xxx] Frampton), because its quality resists that. The Portland Public Services building (or the Portland as it is known publicly, a symbol now for the city), is not a great building, as Graves admitted at the dedication ceremony last month. Besides being emasculated by Belluschi, it suffers from being \$50 per square foot, some say 1/20 of the comparable figures for the Hong Kong Shanghai Bank. It suffers from cramped space inside, and the fact that Post-Modern classicism is just starting as a tradition. Mistakes are always made in the fresh beginnings of a period, and anyone who doubts that I would invite to walk down Le Corbusier's ramp at the La Roche house – it's so steep and slippery, they'll end up running. In any case, the Portland building, like the Bauhaus, is not so important for what it actually does as for what it symbolizes: a new epoch that has returned to the Greater Western tradition. To all the things that Loos and Le Corbusier cleaned up and threw out during their, quote: "vacuum cleaning period of architecture" (unquote - that was actually Ozenfant's quote), all the things outlawed by the Modernist repression: polychromy, anthropomorphism, decorum, proportion... you've heard the pluralistic classical virtues *ad nauseum* since Vitruvius... reaffirmed them. The taboos against ornament, symbolism and tradition have been broken by Post-Modernists in their radical critique of the orthodoxy. And in this criticism, they are, like the Modernists of the 20s, more rigorous, revolutionary, and creative than their opponents. So, their critical creativity makes them inheritors of Modernism. But there are two provisos to these assertions, opposed to my title, which names them the true inheritors of Modernism. They really share this role with others, their siblings. And secondly, they do not seek to revive Modernism so much as revive Western architecture. What is really at stake is the rebirth of architecture as a cultural and art form and language in its fullness, in which ornament will not be stigmatized politically. In which the full spectrum will be recognized (and here you see on the right Le Corbusier gesturing the [xxx] monument over to Michael Graves... take it, Michael, it's yours)... You see an understanding by Corbusier at that time, in 1931, one of the few periods in his life when he did representational sculpture, you see that complex language. This radical eclecticism, or pluralism, may look classical because classicism took out the major patents on most formal art types. But it is really concerned with the reaffirmation of architectural reality, the autonomous language, and its rights to existence. Now some may object, following Heinrich Wölfflin, that not everything is possible in an epoch, and that Post-Modern materials, economic realities and tastes limit the scope of the language

considerably. While this is true, these limitations should be sharply distinguished from those which are ideological.

To end, then, let me pose a double question. Nicholas Pevsner ended his exhortation *Pioneers of the Modern Movement*, 1936, with several resounding trumpet calls. One concerns the agnostic, futuristic positivism of the age, quote: “it is the creative energy of this world in which we live and work which we want to master, a world of science and technique, of speed and danger, of hard struggles and no personal security. That is glorified in Gropius’ architecture...” (unquote). Jump on your motorcycles, you Nietzschean superheroes, God is dead. Drive, he said no security there. It's all very heroic. Pevsner also, like Gropius and Corb, only knew the style of our age in the singular. The styles are a lie. And he constantly refers to the “genuine” and “true” style of our time, the anonymous International style, as if there were, or should be, no other. He even suggested in 1936, even ended in his book, supporting what he called a “totalitarian architecture”. Now, I'm not calling Pevsner a Mussolini or Stalin, nor indulging in character assassination. Pevsner’s actual histories are, in fact, great demonstrations of pluralism in action. But I am claiming that the ideology of Modernism was suspiciously like totalitarianism, without being the same thing. It claimed universality, it rode roughshod over traditions, and even distinctions within its own elite. Because at the bottom, it was a monotheistic ideology, not a pluralistic political forum. This totalitarian streak, for streak is all it is, must be fought in every moment. Thus, I retract my title, meant as a provocation to the Modernist claim to be the one and only true inheritor. And I replace it with a statement: Post-Modernism, one inheritor of Modernism and the Western tradition. Secondly, and since this is supposed to be the great debate, I end by asking the next speaker, Kenneth Frampton, the question: Kenneth, where do you set the limits of ‘Modern Architecture’, capital letters? Where do you define its imperial and totalistic limits? Do you see it swallowing the 19th century and the regionalism of the present? Or are these things fundamentally different from those for which the heroic period fought? And here ends the last movement of my talk, the postscript to the Post-Modern movement. Thank you.