

The city is only the first earth-space to experience the multiplier effect of human problems when concentrated in space. As urban sprawl homogenizes the landscape, the illusion of some that they can escape this spreading human condition weakens, and the possibility of at least magalopolitan, if not wider, planning strengthens. Gilbert & Sullivan produced the marvelous phrase on social leveling: "When everybody's somebody, nobody's anybody." Well, "When everything is everywhere, wherever you go there is nothing tangible to find."...The latter qt. is from p.166 of Serge Chermayeff and Christopher Alexander's COMMUNITY AND PRIVACY: TOWARD A NEW ARCHITECTURE OF HUMANISM (Anchor/65), a computer-assisted extrapolation of humane space-engineering based on certain human values....Why do we have to give attention to the humanization of panurban space? Old, pre-industrial cities are naturally human because (p.55) "the direct relation between form and pressure, and the slow process of development, generated a clear [and human] plan." Spaceship earth: keeping human the inhabitants of a total-environment space-capsule --nuclear sub, underwater lab, spaceship--is tougher than solving the technical problems. Polaris research on this problem pulled in some theologians, including me. Our authors contend that we have hardly begun to apply these learnings to the "open" space of the world. I think of Soleri's cities as intermediate-size, here. P.47: "If the design problem is solved there will be no capsule syndrome."...In the foreword, Ken. Rexroth: "Man is not only a rational animal, he is a contemplative one....Family prayers are long since out of date, but there is a kind of secret family ingathering of strength which is essential to human life. Above all others thing, it is this that" is this book's "main concern to enable, protect, and enrich" (p.16). With a reference to Werner Jaeger's PAIDEIA, K.R. on the next p. says the book helps us with "a kind of higher hygiene--the planned ambiance of the most abundant life....VALUES: tranquility, mobility, transitions between private/public and between individual/intimates and between parents/children, etc. P.213: "The integrity of each space, the preservation of its special, carefully specified environmental characteristics, depends on the physical elements that provide separation, insulation, access, and controlled transfer between domains.... Each different joint has its own special form. Terms like baffle, barrier, buffer, screen, filter, transfer point, lock, junction, terminal, serve to distinguish them roughly." P.251: "The integrity of domains and the efficiency of transfer between them is the crucial issue in organization. Who and what interferes with what and whom, to what extent, when and how, are significant questions that the urban designer now has to ask himself....[Like canal- and air-locks are those needed socially, visually, acoustically, climatically, technically:] Each kind of integrity can be maintained only by its particular locks and buffer zones." P.253: We must "identify and formulate" the "physical joints to the extent where they can serve as new practical blocks for planners" in order to "organize our commitment to restore equilibrium between community and privacy." P.254: We must address "the neglected human realm of the private: the innermost sanctum, the room of one's own, indoor and outdoor, to balance the places of domestic and civic scale, the cityscape, and the great systems and events to be encountered in the open earth and sky in the company of other people. Within this great hierarchy of natural and man-made order would be clearly comprehended functions and articulate forms possessed of integrity, nobility, and beauty. To create a better human habitat, both the natural and the man-made must command equal respect." P.255: "Artistic intuition" and "technical capacity" must be remarried: "At present, art and science appear to be wandering in their separate ways like parted lovers who, in search of solace, take refuge in promiscuity." We need "a unified field of environmental control in which art will once again be tempered by the purposeful discipline of science, and science be inspired by the insight of art."

So where's religion-theology in all this. You "do the theology"! To help you, I've added a few of the author's diagrams (useful elsewhere also!). One I'll just describe: a flower begun with two petals, NEED and FOUND TOOL; 2nd form of the image, NEED, TOOL, REFINEMENT; 3rd adds EXPERIMENT; 4th, RESEARCH; 5TH, PROGRAM-

MING, DEVELOPMENT, and OBSOLESCENCE. This is followed by a diagram of the "Development Cycle," successive circles labeled RESEARCH, DESIGN, PRODUCTION, DISTRIBUTION, UTILIZATION, ELIMINATION. [An aside: Are not diagrams themselves "the humanization of space"? Also, think about the relation of "diagram" and "design," using this qt. from S.C. on p.20: "The book advocates a Science of Environmental Design to supplement high purpose, creative ability, and technical skill before it is too late."]....This on p.67: And this on pp.248f:

Diagram of sequence of development from the barrier to the lock

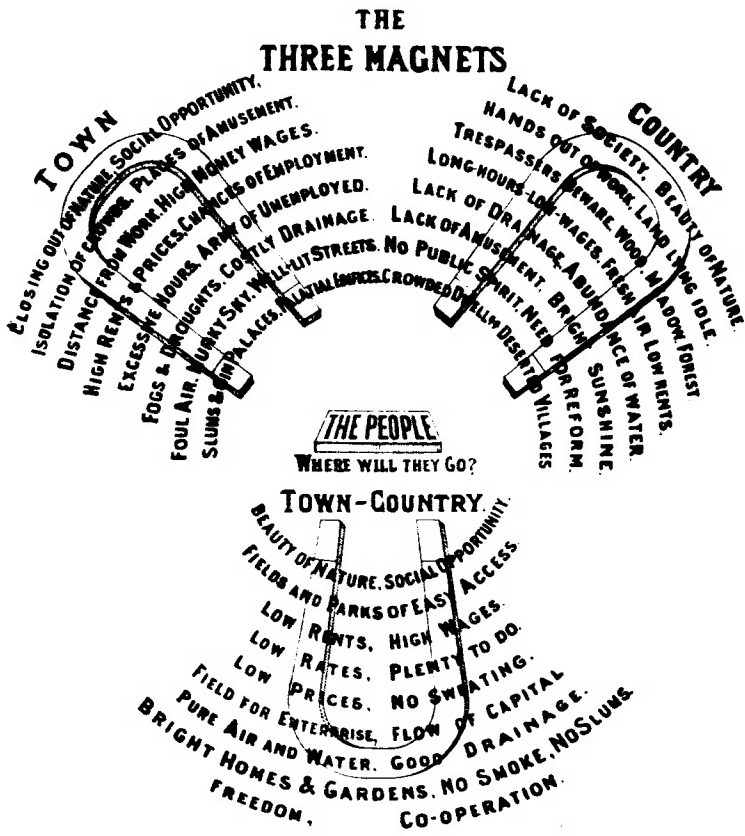
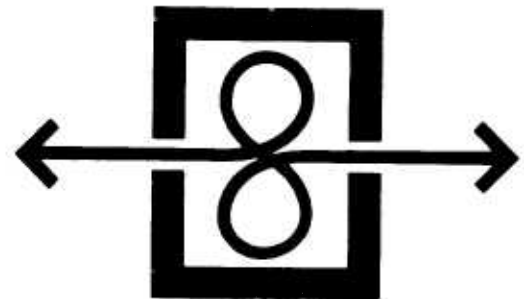
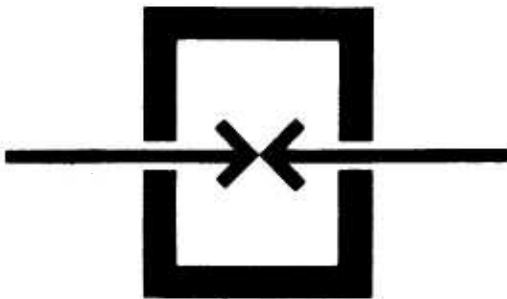
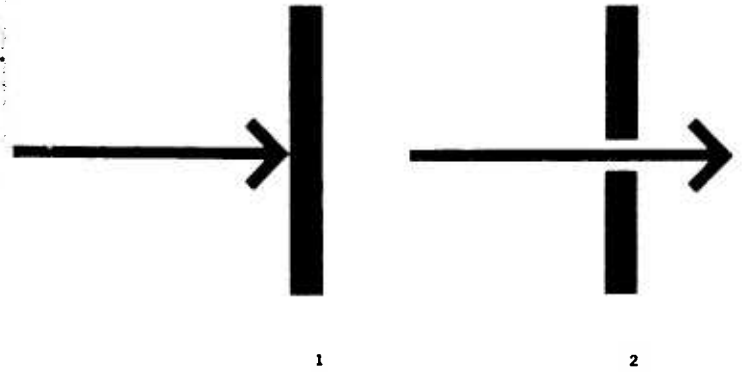
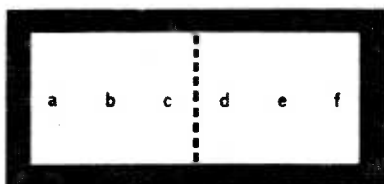


Diagram by Ebenezer Howard

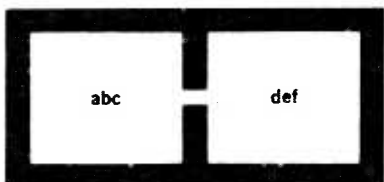


MORE

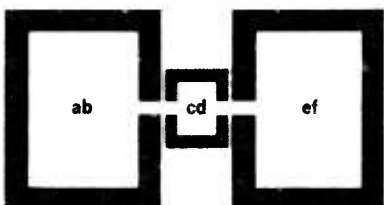
Now, notice at the heart of "The Three Magnets" the basic space-question: "THE PEOPLE: Where will they go?" So! This whole long thinksheet turns out to be on the subject of open housing! Yes, and more. "Open" to what? To the opportunity to participate in suburban tickytacky and bumbertobumper transportation? Open, more and more, to only more of the same. More and more people struggling to get what turns out to be less and less in quality and quantity. The myth that where one's space is will make all the difference is myth, negative meaning. The truth --the book says, and I agree--is not *where* the space is anywhere near as much as *how* the space is designed and structured. So notice, in the second diagram, the transition from "barrier" (e.g., a wall) to doorway to unused space between buildings to a room that's a mere passage-or-encounter-way to a "lock," in which significant human activity occurs and its fruits emerge from it. P.252 is another illustration of (next p.) "the principle of articulate and efficient jointing systems":



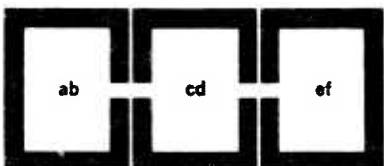
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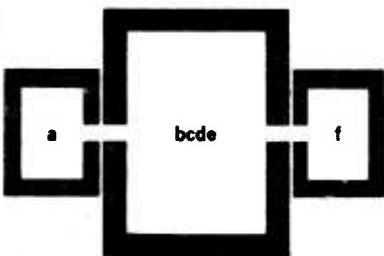
LOCK emerges as



a REALM



and ACTIVITY ZONE."



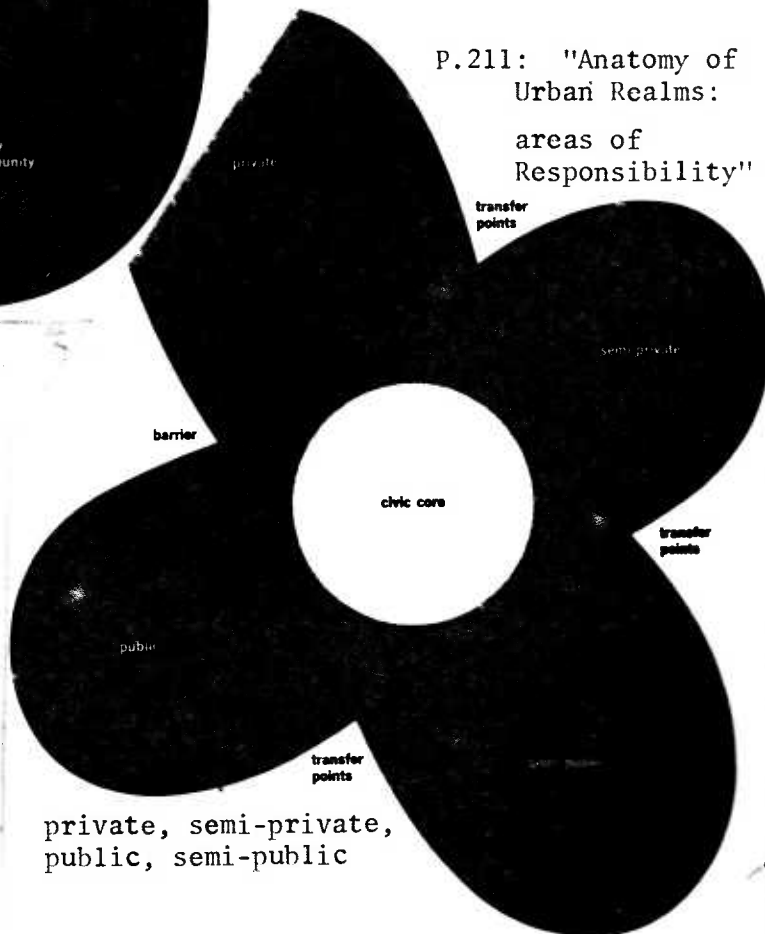
adult privacy,
children privacy,
family community



P.210:

"Anatomy
of Dwelling:
people"

P.211: "Anatomy of
Urban Realms:
areas of
Responsibility"



private, semi-private,
public, semi-public