

A Third Way for Urban Design

Kenneth Greenberg

Michael Sorkin asserts in “The End(s) of Urban Design” (this volume) that we have reached a dead end where “‘New’ Urbanism and Koohaasian ‘Post’-Urbanism represent a Hobson’s choice, a Manichean dystopianism that leaves us trapped between *The Truman Show* and *Blade Runner*, . . . [a] division of the urban imaginary into faux and fab . . . with the cookie-cutter conformities of the former and solipsistic, retro avant-gardism of the latter.”

The pinpointing of this no-win dichotomy between New Urbanism and posturbanism has surfaced over and over in different forms in recent years in talks, articles, and symposia. It permeates this book, arising in the discussion, “Urban Design Now,” as well as the wide-ranging and provocative pieces by Edward W. Soja, Richard Sommer, and Timothy Love, and is conclusively nailed by Michelle Provoost and Wouter Vanstiphout in “Facts on the Ground”: “The post-Katrina urban design experiences present us with a tragic divide between the self-conscious heirs to Modernist and experimental urban design and the apostates of Modernism who have the ear of policy makers, business people, and the general populace. The first group rightly accuses the second of being conservative and opportunistic; the second rightly accuses the first of being irrelevant, elitist, and naive.”

The critique of these bifurcated positions is valid and the frustration