

acknowledged societal need—during periods of reactive transformation of prior urban development, although, again, it need not and probably should not. This was precisely the kind of issue participants in the 1956 conference were confronting as they looked around at all they saw to be wrong about the physical conformation of American cities. It is also interesting to note that terms like *feng mao* and *townscape* are entering into the thinking and debate among general populations in East Asia, now that the massive first-round waves of new urban development have transpired or are transpiring. In these regards, urban design as a sphere of operations is likely to become more prolific, if not important, as the world crosses over, this year, into a situation in which the majority of inhabitants are urban dwellers for the first time in history.

Moreover, the global aspects of urban design, particularly with the relatively common deployment of international practices, now bring an uncommon need for critical cultural interpretation. The critical orientation comes about at least insofar as most societies' aspirations are seldom static and often require reflective alignment with and sometimes against prevailing sociopolitical attitudes and ways of doing things. The cultural focus arises insofar as differences rather than similarities, from one region of the world to another, remain very manifest and in places are even increasing, despite the often predicted leveling effects on such distinctions by globalization. In addition, representational technique, so essential to design as with other "forms of life," must keep pace with the broadening variety of urbanized and urbanizing circumstances occurring in various parts of the world, requiring further work and elaboration. To be sure, some classes of urban design problems are well known, but others are not. Furthermore, the global context and differing conditions to be found there also suggest avoidance of any glibness in overarching theories and perspectives. They also suggest a very different and more extensive client base than in 1956, with the widening and broadening of coherent interests that have accompanied transformations of societies, nation-states, and the international development milieu. Finally, urban design, again as a sphere of operations, is likely to continue to be reformatorily conservative—if history is any guide—at least in the sense of maintaining, while also improving, extending, and adding to existing modes of city building and the core civic values entailed. Even in circumstances where wholesale change is high on the agenda—as in parts of East Asia—the exchange of one value set for another is