naïveté of the descriptions of the "ills" of the city and the naïveté of the idea that design can heal them. Perhaps this is due to the fact I am rereading the proceedings from my office in Shanghai, looking out from my thirtieth-floor window and thinking that in 1956 the problems of the city were trivial compared to those faced by cities like Shanghai today, with its sixteen million inhabitants and astounding speed of development.

In 1950 the largest city in the world was New York, with a population of just over twelve million. Today a city with a population of twelve million would not rank in the top fifteen largest cities. In 1950 London was the second largest city in the world, with eight million people. Tokyo was third, with seven million, and Paris fourth, with six million. Projections suggest that by 2015 the largest cities in the world will be Tokyo, with twenty-seven million; Dhaka, with twenty-three million; Mumbai, with twenty-two million; São Paulo, with twenty-one million; and Delhi, with twenty million.[2] Cities have grown to an extent unimaginable in 1956. And unprecedentedly huge cities present new issues and problems.

In addition, the largest demographic growth has shifted over the past fifty years from Europe and the United States to Asia and the developing world. These trends should make us think about urban design's position today in relationship to such new realities. With the majority of the world's population living in urban environments that have more in common with Shanghai, Mumbai, and Bangkok than they do with London, Paris, and New York, the experience of urbanism and urban design's purview will change from a Eurocentric conception of how cities should be designed to one informed more by "other" urban perspectives. This presents the greatest challenge for urban design in the coming decades. It raises the question of how urban design will define itself in huge, rapidly developing urban situations.

A confluence of complicated new social contexts, the result of country-to-city population shifts and economic forces resulting from globalization, is impacting the way cities work, are thought about and operated on, and while the discourse on the role of the city in an age of globalization today is varied and energetic, no conclusions can yet be drawn. We are dealing with unprecedented urban situations in places like China, India, and South America. By 2008, by some estimates, for the first time in human history the majority of the world's population will live in urban areas. The city and urban life will be a