

and gone. Differences of millimeters in facial structure or half-inches in body height are immediately recognizable; friends can be spotted at once in a crowd. (Identical twins are harder but still possible to differentiate, although they are genetically more like clones of a prototype than models of a type.)

Not only are subtle differences appreciable, humans do not tire of looking at each other. Indeed, we look at thousands of faces every year and are never bored by the next one that comes into our cone of vision. We are intrigued not just by visual differences and superficial details. We are interested in and drawn to the person behind the face, just as we appreciate authentic differences in a building's facade that promise differences inside. The ability of variations on a single theme to hold our interest is remarkable. Those architects who argue that typology makes architecture inherently less free and creative fail to recognize this immense human capacity to appreciate subtle physical differences and minute details. Indeed, it can be argued that type increases the ability to generate and appreciate difference and therefore actually liberates morphological creativity at the small scale. Later in this chapter, it will be argued that typology is also liberative at the scale of the neighborhood, town, city, and metropolitan region.

The limits of originality

Although Modernists eschewed the concept and tradition of typology, they would acknowledge the importance of prototype and stereotype and might also admit to three morphological types: centroidal, linear, and field or scattered. These basic categories are objective and abstract diagrams, as inevitable as they are devoid of function or history.

Modernists would also admit to functional types, such as office building or apartment house, but not in a way that prefigures a building's form. They tended to invent new architecture types with every new program. Indeed, Modernist architectural education taught an architecture of ideas, self-discovery, and self-expression, rather than one of learning from and building on exemplary precedent. (I can remember starting with "bubble diagrams" or paper cutouts of functional areas as a method of rationally arranging adjacent parts of a floor plan.) In the 1960s, studying a magazine article or book about a relevant architect or architectural type would have been looked at askance—a prohibition so well understood and inculcated that there would not have been the

need for the instructor to announce it. It was also understood that the inventive use of both functionalist architectural language and technology was far more valued than adapting or transforming an existing architectural type.

As a result of this forced functional and formal creativity, a generation of architects lost the decorum and discipline to do straightforward, non-heroic buildings when the program was ordinary and modest. (As an architecture student and young practitioner, I was looking to design architecture that was good but also attention-getting as opposed to simply good. Only later, with the insights of Critical Regionalism and New Urbanism, did I realize that the personal need, even duty, to be *always and forever* inventive and unique made me part of the problem, not the solution, of contemporary American architecture and urbanism.) To refrain from conspicuously creative and original statements when they were not necessary became and continues to be an act of architectural courage in both architecture schools and in our media-saturated society (which is why I admire Andres Duany and Elizabeth Plater-Zyberk's early, unequivocal assertion while they were still architecture students that the emperor of Modernist architecture was not wearing any clothes. They also asserted that traditional American architecture and urbanism were being foolishly overlooked. These were radical and embarrassing things to say at the time). The overthrowing of tradition, long the third rail in architectural discourse, became the curse rather than the blessing of Modernism.

The time and the place for idiosyncrasy and originality are when the program or site or both are unusual. Designers need not feel compelled to be constantly innovative with every commission, at least not at the scale of the whole building, on which Modernist invention usually focused. Typology means creativity is more often exercised at a smaller or larger scale than the individual building, such as at the scale of the window or of the neighborhood. It means that all building types are not equally conducive to originality. Housing, because it is a place of rest and retreat, tends to be more conservative and less inventive technologically, structurally, and morphologically than other building types. But its detailing can be personally expressive and idiosyncratic. It also has had a relatively unchanging program. It numerically compromises the bulk of the urban fabric, and consequently best plays a more subdued role in the city.

The types with which to be most architecturally inventive and expressive are places of recreation, entertainment, and work, where people extend