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# The Smell of Politics: *Civilia*, *Collage City*, and Liberalism in Architectural Discourse


## John Macarthur

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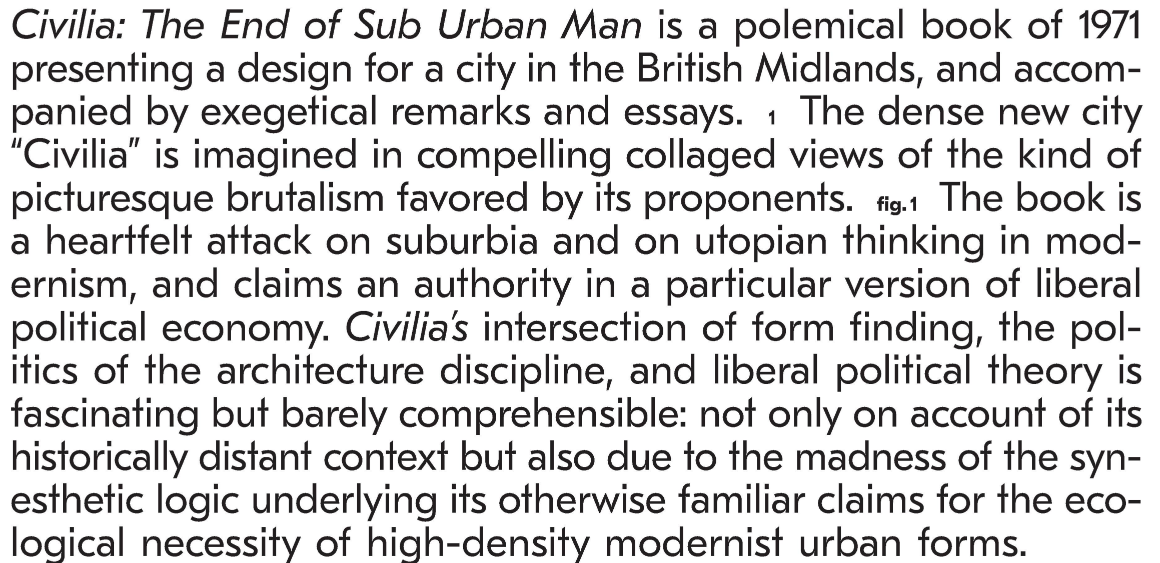

*Civilia: The End of Sub Urban Man* is a polemical book of 1971 presenting a design for a city in the British Midlands, and accompanied by exegetical remarks and essays. [1] The dense new city "Civilia" is imagined in compelling collaged views of the kind of picturesque brutalism favored by its proponents. fig.1 The book is a heartfelt attack on suburbia and on utopian thinking in modernism, and claims an authority in a particular version of liberal political economy. *Civilia's* intersection of form finding, the politics of the architecture discipline, and liberal political theory is fascinating but barely comprehensible: not only on account of its historically distant context but also due to the madness of the synesthetic logic underlying its otherwise familiar claims for the ecological necessity of high-density modernist urban forms.

The principal author of *Civilia*, Hubert de Cronin Hastings, once asserted that one could smell architecture and hear politics. His claim is for an analogic relation where the forms of politics and those of architecture and urbanism influence one another. Framing this assertion within a model of synesthesia has a further effect of suggesting that the political agency of architecture goes beyond concepts of land and construction economics and is experienced sensorially in images. For Hastings, architecture does not merely illustrate consequences of political concepts, it speaks politics in a non-conceptual language of pictures. To claim to hear, speak, and even smell politics in architectural images is the tip of an elaborate argument for an analogy of liberal political theory and architectural theory. Few would think that this is a true analogy that runs both ways. Political theory might be an interesting lens to put over architectural theory, but Hastings went further, suggesting that this analogy of architectural theory could reveal an image and a design of the liberal polity.

The present essay is something of a sketch history of this grand and faulty gesture. [2] It follows Hastings's early work in the Townscape urban design movement in the 1940s and the under-acknowledged pattern that Townscape and *Civilia* made for Colin Rowe and Fred Koetter's *Collage City* in the 1970s. [3] I claim that it is salutatory to read *Civilia* and *Collage City* against today's critiques of neoliberalism in the built environment which too easily map politics onto form, tending to exaggerate the novelty of the "neoliberal" moment and overlooking the history of liberal political theory being appropriated into architectural theory.

1 Ivor de Wofle, *Civilia: The End of Sub Urban Man; A Challenge to Semidetsia* (London: Architectural Press, 1971).

2 This is the third in a series of texts that I have published on *Civilia*. The first was in Chapter 5 of John Macarthur, *The Picturesque: Architecture, Disgust and Other Irregularities* (London: Routledge, 2007) where I argued that one should see Townscape as part of a long history of the picturesque. The second concerning view point and sovereignty in *Civilia* and *Collage City* was published as John Macarthur, "The Figure from Above: On the Obliqueness of the Plan in Urbanism and Architecture," in Mark Dorrian and Frédéric Pousin, eds., *Seeing from Above: The Aerial View in Visual Culture* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2013), 188–209. The present article is an attempt to thoroughly analyze the political theory of the work, an issue that I had previously dismissed. This text also draws on previous publications on Townscape that I have made with Mathew Aitchison, which are cited at the relevant points.

3 Colin Rowe and Fred Koetter, *Collage City* (Cambridge, MA: MIT, 1978).

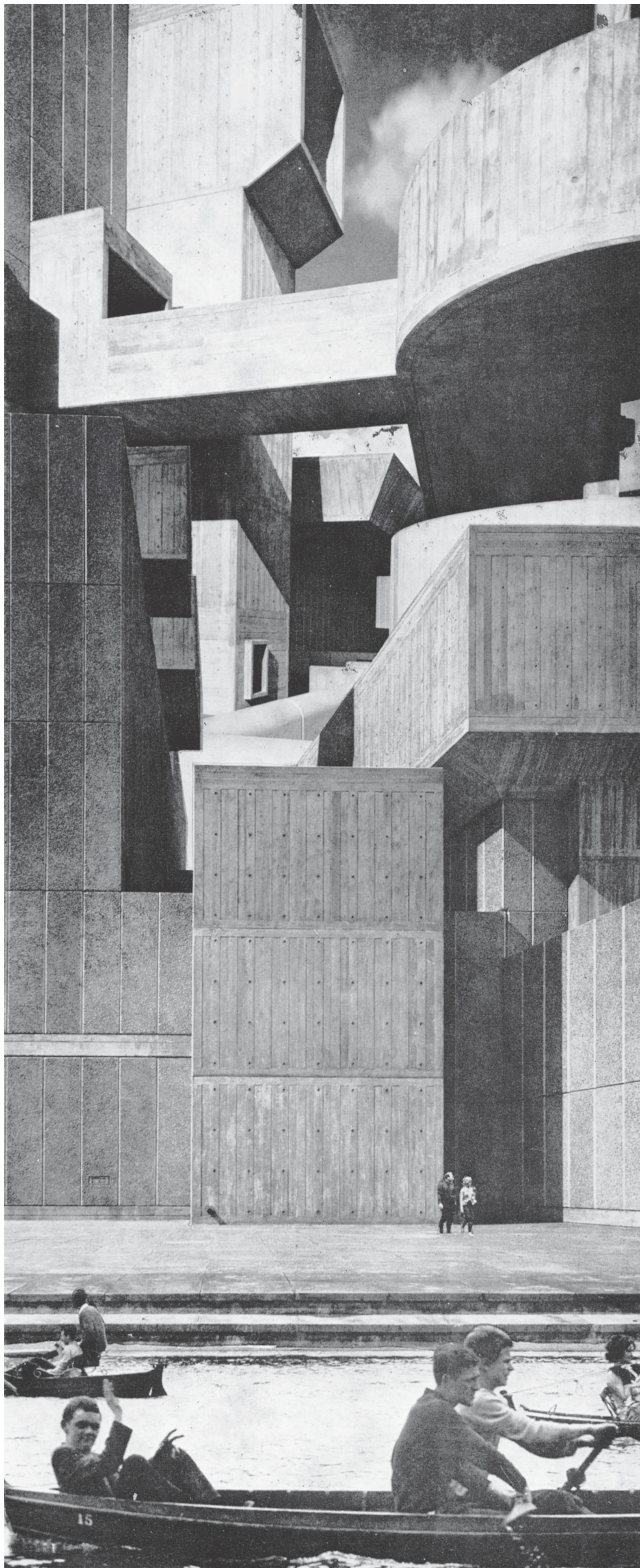


**fig. 1** The university megastructure. Source: Ivor de Wofle, *Civilia: The End of Sub Urban Man; A Challenge to Semidetsia* (London: Architectural Press, 1971), 83 (fig. 82). By permission of RIBA Library.

**figs. 2 a–b** Sailing the marina.
Source: Ivor de Wofle, *Civilia: The End of Sub Urban Man; A Challenge to Semidetsia* (London: Architectural Press, 1971), 54 (fig. 51).
By permission of RIBA Library.

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The book *Civilia* was published by Hastings's Architectural Press but preceded by an abbreviated version in a special issue of the journal. [4] Today the limited interest that exists in the proposed city has much less to do with Hastings's text than with the dream-like architectural images of the city by Kenneth Browne. **figs. 2 a–b, 4** The nominal author of *Civilia* was "Ivor de Wofle," an amusing typographic accident befalling Hastings's usual pseudonym "Ivor de Wolfe," the main author and proponent of the Townscape movement from the mid-1940s.

*Civilia* is a pertinent place from which to sketch this history because of its long back story and largely forgotten influence. It was the last sortie by an aging and beleaguered faction of the architectural intelligentsia, and its intellectual formation takes us back to the 1920s. Hubert de Cronin Hastings inherited the journal *The Architectural Review* (*AR*) and its press from his father, publisher Percy Hastings. Hubert joined the magazine in 1918 after briefly studying architecture at the Bartlett School of Architecture and became its editor in 1927. [5] The younger Hastings, familiarly known as "HdeC," held the executive editorial position until 1978 and drew in a wide range of brilliant contributors and guest editors. He also contributed directly, writing as "The Editor" and under the pseudonym "Ivor de Wolfe" (occasionally "Ivy de Wolfe" and "Ivor de Wofle"). [6] Over fifty years, Hastings had an outsized influence on British and anglophone discourse on architecture, but one that was beginning to fade in the late 1960s with the rise of the neo avant-garde sentiments of younger architects reflected in the rival British magazine *Architectural Design*.

The idea that would become Townscape began with Hastings's reading of Christopher Hussey's *The Picturesque* of 1927 [7] and his plan with Nikolaus Pevsner in 1942 to make a picturesque revival in architecture and urbanism. Beginning with the problem of postwar reconstruction of bombed cities, Townscape opposed *tabula rasa* modernist urbanism and instead proposed respect for existing, contingently developed urban forms, into which uncompromising modern buildings could be inserted.

**4** *Architectural Review* 159, no. 892 (1971).

**5** On Hastings's life and career, see John Glancy, "The Battles of Hastings," *Architectural Review* 233, no. 1396 (June 2013), 102–9; D. A. C. A. Boyne, "Hastings, Hubert de Cronin (1902–1986), Editor," *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, https://www.oxforddnb.com/ (accessed Apr. 4, 2020).

**6** It is possible that the pseudonym is a reference to Elsie de Wolfe and her *The House in Good Taste* (New York: The Century Co, 1913). Hastings takes up the nom de plume after the first article to lay out the Townscape concept, which is attributed to The Editor. There Hastings argues that a visual consistency in urban form is possible with buildings of differing periods and styles, an approach he claims makes for successful interior design, and which (although unmentioned in the article) was an approach identified with the interior designer Elsie de Wolfe. The same article, in its title, also makes a glancing reference to Camillo Sitte, who wrote of the importance of "exterior furnishings" in his *Der Städtbau* (1889), which had recently been translated as *The Art of Building Cities: City Building According to Its Artistic Fundamentals* (New York: Reinhold Publishing Corporation, 1945). The Editor, "Exterior Furnishing or Sharawaggi: The Art of Making Urban Landscape," *Architectural Review* 95 (Jan. 1944), 2–8.

**7** Christopher Hussey, *The Picturesque: Studies in a Point of View* (London: Putnam, 1927).

The Townscape movement consisted of a series of polemical articles, special issues and recurrent sections of *AR* directed at challenging the established practices of the architecture and planning professions. [8] Its principal claim was that we should understand the built environment visually and empirically, rather than as the outcome of abstract systems. Hastings and Pevsner believed this visual empiricism to be innate in the British people, joining the polity with shared aesthetic preferences such as the love of landscape. Pevsner, James Maude Richards, Hugh Casson, Gordon Cullen, Kenneth Browne, and numerous others developed the idea of Townscape from the mid-1940s. In its latter incarnations, Townscape had various names and permutations of focus, including "Sharawaggi," "Outrage," "Counter-Attack," "Manplan," and lastly, "Civilia." The movement combined Hastings's belief in the aesthetics of the picturesque as a matter of an anti-idealist national character with Pevsner's idea that modern architecture had come of age but that modernist town planning was still axial and baroque, not yet having assimilated the realization that the irregularity of modernist buildings, based on the specificities of function and site, was applicable at an urban scale. Furthermore, this application of irregularity was a lesson that could be illustrated by late eighteenth-century gardening and the precinctual planning of Oxbridge colleges and London's Inns of Court.

Partly tinged by surrealism and the early involvement of painters Paul Nash and John Piper in *AR*, Townscape proposed that such starkly disjunct building forms and styles could be unified in urban experience if they were designed into an overall structure of visual experience. Townscape owed considerable debts to German *Stadtbaukunst* literature, a fact elided during the War years. [9] Townscape has come to be remembered as conservative and nostalgic of traditional building forms. This is, in part, because of its publishing history. The summative book *Townscape* was published by the Architectural Press in 1961, authored by Gordon Cullen, [10] *AR*'s graphic director whose brilliant drawings had given life to the concept in the pages of the journal. It included Cullen's illustrations for modernist polemical projects for the rebuilding of St. Paul's precinct and Bankside, with imaginary insertions much inspired by Hugh Casson's design vocabulary. In 1971 Cullen published *The Concise Townscape* through Hastings's Architectural Press. [11] The concise edition presented the idea of Townscape with images of traditional urban forms while suppressing the modernist projects of the earlier *AR* campaigns. That *The Concise Townscape* must have passed over Hastings's desk is a case for reading *Civilia* as Hastings's correction to Cullen and thus Hastings's assertion of patrimony

**8** The Townscape idea is first stated in The Editor, "Exterior Furnishing" (see note 6); it is then renamed in Ivor de Wolfe, "Townscape: A Plea for an English Visual Philosophy Founded on the True Rock of Sir Uvedale Price," *Architectural Review* 106, no. 636 (Dec. 1949), 354–62. On the origins of Townscape, see Mathew Aitchison, "Visual Planning and Exterior Furnishing: A Critical History of the Early Townscape Movement; 1930 to 1949" (PhD thesis, University of Queensland, 2009); Mathew Aitchison, "Townscape: Scope, Scale and Extent," *Journal of Architecture* 17, no. 5 (2012), 621–42.

**9** Elsewhere I and others have argued that the modern reception of picturesque theory ought to be understood as a passage between Britain and Germany. John Macarthur, Mathew Aitchison, and Jasper Cepl, "*Das Malerische* and the Picturesque: Seeing Architecture in Translation," *Architectural Histories* 7, no. 1 (2019), http://doi.org/10.5334/ah.290 (accessed June 11, 2019); John Macarthur and Mathew Aitchison, "Pevsner's Townscape," in Mathew Aitchison, ed., *On Visual Planning and the Picturesque* (Santa Monica: Getty Research Institute, 2010), 1–43. Also see Ákos Moravánszky, "The Optical Construction of Urban Space: Hermann Maertens, Camillo Sitte and the Theories of 'Aesthetic Perception'," *Journal of Architecture* 17, no. 5 (2012), 655–66.

**10** Gordon Cullen, *Townscape* (London: Architectural Press, 1961).

**11** Gordon Cullen, *The Concise Townscape* (London: Architectural Press, 1971).

over the idea of modernist Townscape. Nevertheless, it was *The Concise Townscape* which was a publishing success; the book has never gone out of print and still dominates the reception of the movement.

Townscape had important effects on postwar architecture through its reconceptualization of the relation between urban form and building form, long after its original aims were forgotten. This is clear in the debts to Townscape of a book much more influential than *Civilia*: Colin Rowe and Fred Koetter's *Collage City* of 1978. *Collage City* was important at the time of publication in the rise of contextualist urbanism, but it, and Rowe's teaching in the United States, also had long-lasting effects on concepts of architectural form. [12] Rowe's ideas of architectural form having a relatively autonomous history as a body of precedents was fundamental to the diagrammatic and procedural form generation of the architecture of the late twentieth century, and this, too, was based in analogies to political theories of liberalism. [13] Both books relied on the use of collage and gave the concept of collage a political meaning as a critique of utopianism and social engineering that was core to liberalism in the Cold War. Rowe's claim that one might have "enjoyment of utopian poetics without the embarrassment of Utopian Politics" [14] is a good characterization of both the books.

Understanding *Civilia*, as a late iteration of Townscape and a progenitor of *Collage City*, has something to tell us of the thread from the 1930s to the recent past. This thread connects the reception of utopian modernist doctrines in a skeptical liberal anglophone culture to the procedural concepts of design that have developed out of Rowe's thought and teaching, and through to the present rediscovery of liberalism by critics of architecture's complicity in the social and spatial inequities called neoliberalism. The entanglement can be traced through the grain of Hastings's own citations back to the nineteenth century. In *Civilia*, in 1971, Hastings repeats parts of texts he wrote and published in *AR* in the late 1940s, and these, in turn, draw on his reading of Edwardian political theorists, such as Leonard Trelawny Hobhouse, John Morley, and, in particular, Ernest Barker. Their texts continue to frame Hastings's understanding of contemporary liberal theory, from Friedrich Hayek in the 1940s to Isaiah Berlin in the 1970s. Even in the 1970s, when casting his ideas in terms of the environmental crisis, over-population, and the "oil shock," Hastings's ideas remain faithful to Edwardian liberalism. Rowe, a generation younger, draws more explicitly on Berlin and Karl Popper in his attempt to underpin architecture's formal autonomy through concepts of procedural liberalism, that

**12** Michael Jasper relates the book to Rowe's teaching in Michael Jasper, "An Architectural-Urban Strategy: Re-Reading Rowe and Koetter's Collage City," in Gevork Hartoonian and John Ting, eds., *QUOTATION: What Does History Have in Store for Architecture Today? The 34th Annual Conference of the Society of Architectural Historians, Australia and New Zealand* (Canberra: SAHANZ, 2017), 279–88.

**13** On Rowe's liberalism I am indebted to the analysis of Robert Somol who has argued that liberal political theory underlies Rowe's architectural formalism and that this strongly influenced the American neo-avantgarde of the late twentieth century. His argument is strengthened by understanding how much Rowe's ideas owe to Townscape and Hastings's liberalism. See Robert E. Somol, "Oublier Rowe," *Any* 7 (1994), 8–15; Robert E. Somol, "In Form Falls Fiction: Misreading the Avant-Garde in Contemporary Architecture" (PhD thesis, University of Chicago, 1997); Robert E. Somol, "Still Crazy after All These Years," *Assemblage* 36 (1998), 84–92.

**14** Rowe and Koetter, *Collage City* (see note 3), 90.

is the legal and constitutional mechanisms that guarantee rights of freedom. Rowe's ideas are contemporaneous with the American rewriting of liberalism as the ideology of those nations that styled themselves as "liberal democracies" in the 1970s and 1980s, just as classical economic liberalism was being revived.

Rowe and Hastings both thought that the parallels of freedom in politics and architecture had a necessary relation that needed articulation, one captured in Hastings's claim that one could smell architecture and hear politics. I disagree, and follow Michel Foucault in thinking that there is no fundamental freedom that is managed differently in politics and cultural discourse, and that "freedoms"—including those of the architect—are produced and distributed as acts of governing. [15] So, the purpose of the present paper is not to follow Hastings and Rowe in an attempt to find the political determinates of architecture, nor even the scope of a politics of architecture. It surely is urgent to encourage political awareness and responsibility among architects, but whether there can be a relation between the political theory and architectural forms, as Hastings and Rowe supposed, is a moot question. Even if it is possible to raise this question again in a form relevant to today, this is beyond the scope of what I attempt here. Rather, I have the more limited aim of making visible the uptake of theories of liberalism in architectural theory, where whatever a politics of architecture might be is deferred in favor of theorizing analogies between political theory and architectural theory. Such an understanding is relevant in light of the present vogue for repoliticizing architecture in opposition to neoliberalism, which is in danger of repeating the tropes of the political position it opposes by creating an image of a coherent liberalism that is a logical account of economic forces, which are, in turn, considered almost natural. I argue that before attempting to evaluate the agency architecture might have in opposing the actual economic and spatial inequities that are described as neoliberalism, it is worthwhile investigating an influential strand of architectural theory that has drawn deeply on the convoluted theories of liberalism.

15 Michel Foucault, *The Birth of Biopolitics: Lectures at the Collège De France 1978–79* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008); Michel Foucault, *The Government of the Self and Others: Lectures at the Collège de France, 1982–83* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010); Michel Foucault et al., *The Foucault Effect: Studies in Governmentality; With Two Lectures by and an Interview with Michel Foucault* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991).

## Civilia

The imaginary city of Civilia is described as being "located in the heart of the Midlands at the center of the nation's communication system" [16] on the site of a disused quarry. The fictional premise of the book is that it documents the design and successful construction of Civilia, a new high-density city. At a regional level, the *Civilia* "Planner's Report" concludes that high-density new cities like Civilia will save the countryside from Hastings's real foe: the suburbias spreading out across England like "the sprawl of the

16 De Wofle, *Civilia* (see note 1), 31.

mining camp." [17] The flourishing of Civilia has had the effect of punctuating and marking a limit to the conurbation of Birmingham, Coventry, and Leicester, thus preserving a green belt to the north. In contrast to suburbia, the residents of super-dense Civilia look out across beautiful rural England which Civilia has saved, and to which they have an equality of access. Hastings explains the relation as that of a beehive to its territory: "Opposition of 'town' and 'country' perpetuates one of those false antitheses that obscure the real issue, better illustrated in the beehive and its territory where the emptiness of the territory and the congestion of the hive have significance insofar and only insofar as they illuminate the bee polity, the bee way of life." [18]

The real pleasure of the book are some 200 compelling photomontage images made by Browne (assisted by Priscilla Baschieri-Salvadori, Hastings's daughter). Browne's means of producing convincing images of Civilia is a brilliant conceit. [19] The base images, which are said to describe the topography of the Midlands quarry site, are actually photographs of the Amalfi coast taken from de Wolfe's earlier book *The Italian Townscape* of 1963. [20/figs. 2 a–b] Browne and Baschieri-Salvadori then swept the floor of *The Architectural Press* and collaged together photographs of the best buildings of recent decades. Favorites that appear in several of the realizations are Hugh Casson's Arts Faculty at Cambridge, Churchill College Cambridge (Sheppard Robson and Partners), Moshe Safdie's Habitat at Montreal, the student housing at Durham University by Dick Raines of the Architects Co-partnership, Queen Elizabeth Hall, the Hayward Gallery, and Basil Spence's New Zealand Parliament, which in New Zealand is nick-named "the Beehive." What Civilia provides is an image of "bee-polity" [21] presented in its actuality and connoting, but not describing, a political settlement in which architecture has great agency.

The images are accompanied by de Wofle's commentaries, which mix evocative descriptions of the experiential aspects of the city with melodramatic descriptions of the issues *Civilia* is intended to confront. Like the beehive, Civilia is described as a habitation and a space of sociability, and whatever productive work Civilia's population does happens elsewhere in the conurbation. Unlike the bees, the inhabitants of Civilia can be both drones and workers. [22] In a follow-up issue of the journal, Ivor de Wofle and Browne propose in more detail what a Civilia-like approach to housing in the UK would be, and de Wofle calls the inhabitants "Civilians." [23] The name "Civilia" implicitly evokes *civitas*, the agreed distribution of rights and responsibilities that will reproduce a desirable kind of citizen—a modern English

**17** Ibid., 26.

**18** Ibid., 10.

**19** The book does not mention this, but Erten states that Hastings was also involved first hand. Erdem Erten, "I, the World, the Devil and the Flesh: Manplan, Civilia and H. de C. Hastings," *Journal of Architecture* 17, no. 5 (2012), 703–18.

**20** Ivor de Wolfe, *The Italian Townscape* (London: Architectural Press, 1963).

**21** De Wofle, *Civilia* (see note 1), 10.

**22** Ibid.

**23** Ivor de Wolfe, "Sociable Housing," *Architectural Review* 153, no. 920 (1973), 202–4.

kind—and the collage city of Civilia is an image of that *civitas* and its "civilians." The one ideal that Hastings holds to is the independency of the English national character and its expression in a sensibility for landscape. [24] The book describes numerous quarters, for instance: the Marina, the lake and its connection to the nation-wide canal system suitable for recreational boating; "Pop End," Civilia's Soho with 24-hour bars centered around "Rabbit Yard, where students from the University create their own ambience"; "Spa," a quarter with the hospital and gyms; the main street with its shopping; "Tivoli," which consists of islands

**fig. 3** Village Green. Source: Ivor de Wofle, *Civilia: The End of Sub Urban Man; A Challenge to Semidetsia* (London: Architectural Press, 1971), 138 (fig. 142). By permission of RIBA Library.

**24** The idea is well described by David Matless, *Landscape and Englishness* (London: Reaktion, 1998). Julia Stapleton gives an account of the concept in the work of Ernest Barker, one of Hastings's main sources. Julia Stapleton, *Englishness and the Study of Politics: The Social and Political Thought of Ernest Barker* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994).

and quays for "modern acts of eating, drinking, dancing and living it up in general," the central citadel, the cathedral, and a "Field of Mars." [25] The university, which although does not have a separate section describing it, appears frequently and seems to be the only "industry" in this apparently classless society. *Civilia* rather emphasizes pubs (Hastings lists twenty-one pubs, bars, and bistros in Tivoli by name) and small boat sailing alongside an Italian-like market and café culture. Civilia is supposed to provide an aesthetic pleasure, which is the key justification of its expensive infrastructure: "Now comes the crunch. Providing the multitude of services and structures a city needs is not a cost-free operation and from the public's point of view they are worth the millions spent on them when, and only when, the end product is likely to repay the outlay by providing society with a toy it will enjoy." [26] Common aspects of human existence become visible in Civilia, forming a kind of social contract. The sequence is important: Hastings believed that the image of civil life had to come before, and be the basis of, a social contract. This image-driven social contract ought to obviate the need for more explicit social planning, as well as more tangible social contracts, such as schemes for public health and education.

**25** De Wofle, *Civilia* (see note 1), 73, 149.

**26** De Wofle, *Civilia* (see note 1), 52.

As remarkable as the compelling images of the city are, the refusal of the book to provide any of the quantitative social planning or dimensioned drawings that would have been required

to build it, or which might have provided the regulatory framework or design principles to enable it to evolve, is conspicuous. There is no morphology of landholdings and transportation, nor plans of buildings nor types of buildings, figures for population density or floor areas to be achieved. Similarly, there is no diagram of water supply or sewage disposal and no discussion of the ownership of land and buildings, their procurement, or the government of the city and its building program. In the book *Civilia*, the number of viewpoints and the consistency of the scale of the buildings and site shows that Browne (and perhaps Hastings) must have "planned" Civilia at some level of detail, and most likely used orthographic drawing, but no plans or sections of building or urban spaces are presented. Given the complete lack of planimetric and quantitative information, the book presents remarkably well-developed images of the public places of Civilia, describing the life and urban character of the different precincts of the city. **fig. 3, 5, 6** Reading de Wofle's commentary with Browne's "designs," we can picture how high-density living, shared outdoor space, and grade-separated public transport systems would feel, even if we know nothing about what makes them viable. There is no reference to the kinds of abstraction that could be mistaken to be a system or ideal—not only are there no plans but there are no policies, only the presumption of the benefits of landscape conservation and modern architecture.

An implicit argument of the book is that we can understand and appraise the merit of Civilia without what would normally be understood as "planning," with its abstract generalizations and principles, and indeed without professional town planners, who Hasting distrusted. [27] This conceit goes back to Townscape's call in the 1940s for city planning to be primarily visual. Hastings proposed that no authentic modern urban design could arise through technocratic processes and that no detailed design could be made without first establishing an image around which a social consensus could be formed. He presents an everyman "Bill Brown" unable to accept innovations in architecture and urban design:

*"It isn't that he is a fool; he is quite capable of imagining the complications inherent in planning, even of making sacrifices for the greater good of the greater number, but he cannot, he feels, be expected to do his part without being given an idea, a pretty clear idea, of what it is all leading up to. ... If this argument is right, one of the vital questions the professional planner has to ask himself today is: Can I find a picture that will give my non-technical fellow countrymen a vivid impression of the good things coming to them, if they give me the*

**27** In the *AR* version of "Civilia" a warning is published under the heading "STICK IT," which reads: "Professional town planners can safely disregard this article, which takes the technical heat out of planning in an effort to deflate the science to a level at which it can be kicked around by ordinary people in the course of intelligent lay discussion. No real purpose is served by keeping it as a mystique available only to specialists whose policies (which affect everyone) are made behind closed doors." Ivor de Wofle, "Towards a Philosophy of the Environment," *Architectural Review* 159, no. 892 (1971), 326–34, here 327.

*chance that I ask for. But before he can do that the planner must himself have a picture. And by the word picture is meant—literally—a picture; a picture of how his town will look."* [28]

Hastings goes on to claim a national picture-making aptitude and a native theory, the Picturesque. It was just two years before this first Townscape article appeared that Hastings had commissioned Pevsner to give scholarly weight to the argument that England had its own anti-idealist urban planning tradition based on an empirical approach to planning from sequential viewpoints developed in picturesque landscape design. [29]

## Hastings's Liberalism [30]

Civilia's vision of personal freedom—enabled, but not directed by the state, barely planned but functioning organically through ingenuity and compromise—is an image of what an organically liberal society might be. Somehow Civilia is supposed to have been constructed without an interventionist state, thus avoiding the problems that Karl Popper and Fredrick Hayek critiqued at the beginning of the Cold War of what they saw as the social liberalism of the soon-to-be welfare state as being on the slide towards socialism. [31] While the passage from Townscape to Civilia matches the period of the reformulation of classical liberalism in the 1940s to the triumph of Thatcherism in the UK (and thus the origins of present neoliberalism), Hastings's liberalism comes from an older tradition.

Hastings's views were formed in the interwar period when Edwardian "New Liberalism" and its concerns for social justice were becoming calls for state planning to enable democracy in the face of rising totalitarianism of the right and left. English social liberalism supposed a relatively high degree of state intervention to secure the space for individual freedom, and this was the case across the political spectrum from figures on the left such as George Orwell and Ernst Bevin, to conservatives such as Ernest Barker, Ernest Benn, and Prime Minister Stanley Baldwin. [32] This is the strand of thought that was to form the welfare state in the post-Second World War period, yet Hastings's social ideas belong with those

**28** The Editor, "Exterior Furnishing" (see note 6), 2.

**29** Pevsner contributed many articles for *AR* and worked on a book project commissioned by Hastings, only recently reconstructed by Mathew Aitchison and published as Nikolaus Pevsner and Mathew Aitchison, *Visual Planning and the Picturesque* (Los Angeles: Getty Research Institute, 2010).

**30** Erdem Erten and Anthony Raynsford have each done much to unpick Hastings's politics and, like earlier publications by Mathew Aitchison and myself, emphasized that Hastings's cranky ideas and even passages of text were reiterated from the 1940s to his last publication. It seems that Hastings voted for the Conservative Party and saw himself as a Tory, but the argument of the present paper is that it is the wider tradition of liberal political theory that is at stake. See Erdem Erten, "From Townscape to Civilia: The Evolution of a Collective Project," (paper presented at the Cities of Tomorrow: 10th International Planning History Conference, University of Westminster and Letchworth Garden City, July 10–13, 2002); Erten, "I, the World" (see note 19); Anthony Raynsford, "Urban Contrast and Neo-Toryism: On the Social and Political Symbolism of the Architectural Review's Townscape Campaign," *Planning Perspectives* 30, no. 1 (2015), 94–128.

**31** Friedrich A. Hayek, *The Collected Works*, vol. 2: *The Road to Serfdom: Text and Documents; The Definitive Edition*, ed. Bruce Caldwell (London: Routledge, 2008); Karl Popper, *The Open Society and Its Enemies* (London: Routledge, 1945).

**32** My understanding of the history of liberalism in Britain relies on Michael Freeden, *Liberalism Divided: A Study in British Political Thought 1914–1939* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1986); Julia Stapleton, "The National Character of Ernest Barker's Political Science," *Political Studies* 37 (1989), 171–87; Stapleton, *Englishness* (see note 24); Julia Stapleton, "Resisting the Centre at the Extremes: 'English' Liberalism in the Political Thought of Interwar Britain," *British Journal of Politics and International Relations* 1, no. 9 (1999), 270–92.

**fig. 4** "The Town Wall: Cliffhanger Restaurant." Illustration prepared for Ivor de Wofle, *Civilia: The End of Sub Urban Man; A Challenge to Semidetsia* (London: Architectural Press, 1971), 100 (fig. 102).

of liberals in the 1930s who were opposed to an activist liberal state, preferring instead an ideology of liberalism that strongly connected personal freedom, democracy, and Englishness.

Barker, who was particularly important to Hastings, described himself as belonging to "the constant stars of the ancient Whig tradition," presumably meaning Burkean liberalism. [33] Michael Freeden, in his description of the split in liberal thought in the interwar period, places Barker with the liberal centrists who defended individuality and private property against left-liberal demands for redistributive social justice, welfare and organic communities. [34] Freeden writes that Barker was "one of the few centrist-liberals to accord the state a moral role, he saw it as the facilitator not of a social morality but of a network of individual moral obligations, in which personally responsible individuals exercised claims on each other." [35] This is a reasonable account of the state agency that is supposed to have constructed Civilia, but only in order to provide a space for subjects to form themselves.

Barker, and many others including Stanley Baldwin, George Macaulay Trevelyan, writers Edward Morgan Forster and George Orwell, as well as painters such as Paul Nash and John Piper (who were associated with the *AR*), saw the English countryside as both emblematic and formative of a particular national character of empirical observation, practical compromise, and affection for eccentricities and decay. [36] Pevsner, who had been trained in *Kunstgeographie*, brought much of this together in his Reith Lectures "The Englishness of English Art" of 1955, one chapter of which was an argument for *AR*'s picturesque revival in architecture. [37] A certain English "independency" was thought to form a tacit social contract that showed there was no need for social engineering in health and education, for un-English idealism, or for metered equality. Hastings's proposition, very much influenced by this constellation of thinkers, is that a modern picturesque aesthetic and ethic learned from aesthetic tolerance could avoid the detailed regulation of urban space by government that would limit individual freedoms.

Civilia's theoretical basis is laid out in de Wofle's essay early in the book entitled "Towards a Philosophy of the Built Environment," which opens with the tirade:

*"Planning is for freedom. The million dollar question, what freedom is for, needn't detain us here since of the two kinds of freedom, freedom-for and freedom-from, the planner is concerned for practical purposes with the second, designed as it is to release the citizen from the restrictions, frustrations, obstructions, injunctions, objections, restraints, vetoes, bans, barriers,*

**33** Cited in Stapleton, "National Character" (see note 32), 176; see also Ernest Barker, *Political Thought in England 1848 to 1914* (London: Geoffrey Cumberlege, Oxford University Press, 1915).

**34** Freeden, *Liberalism Divided* (see note 32), 13.

**35** Ibid., 223.

**36** Peter Mandler, *The English National Character: The History of an Idea from Edmund Burke to Tony Blair* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2006); Joshua Esty, *A Shrinking Island: Modernism and National Culture in England* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2003); Alexandra Harris, *Romantic Moderns: English Writers, Artists and the Imagination from Virginia Woolf to John Piper* (New York: Thames & Hudson, 2010).

**37** Nikolaus Pevsner, *The Englishness of English Art: An Expanded and Annotated Version of the Reith Lectures Broadcast in October and November 1955* (New York: Praeger, 1956); Mathew Aitchison, "Pevsner's *Kunstgeographie*: From Leipzig's Baroque to the Englishness of Modern English Architecture," in Andrew Leach, John Macarthur, and Maarten Delbeke, eds., *The Baroque in Architectural Culture, 1880–1980* (Farnsworth: Ashgate, 2015), 109–18.

*embargoes and bloodymindedness which prevent him from bothering about the first."* [38]

Adepts of the theory of liberalism will have noted that de Wofle is channeling Isaiah Berlin's pivotal essay "Two Concepts of Liberty" of 1958, which argued that only a negative concept of liberty, a "freedom from," is philosophically viable. [39] Hastings, like Berlin, sees no practical way to draw a line between a positive definition of what freedom is for and utopian prescriptions for the form that freedom ought to take. Hastings opposed the Town and Country Planning authority's New Towns in the 1940s and Milton Keynes in the time of *Civilia*. [40]

From Berlin's concept of negative freedom, de Wofle goes on to cite Adam Smith and Thomas Malthus. Analogizing Civilia as a beehive and a bee polity not only puns on Basil Spence's New Zealand Parliament, which features prominently in Browne's images, it is also an unacknowledged reference to Mandeville's eighteenth-century economic tract *The Fable of the Bees, or, Private Vices, Public Benefits*. [41] Mandeville had influenced Smith's ideas of the market's "invisible hand," and was rediscovered in Hastings's time by John Maynard Keynes who cited Mandeville on the problematic effects of thrift when taken up by a whole population. [42] *Civilia*'s emphasis on lifestyle, boating, pubs, browsing produce markets, and the revels of university student life, would then be consistent with Keynes's ideas of stimulating demand in a consumer economy. James Maude Richards and Hastings had in 1942 developed their own theory of the relation of production, consumption and distribution, which is repeated in *Civilia* as a theory of spatial "contacts" in which "the interplay of productive and consumptive movements, by demanding a distributive pattern, evokes the organisation we call a society." [43] This idea follows, unacknowledged, John Stuart Mill's theory that the production of wealth is a law of nature, while the distribution of wealth is social—contingent not only on legal statutes and institutions but also on how these actually work given the modes of conduct of a particular society. [44] City and region can be understood as consumption and production, in which the role of architects and planners is to understand the pattern of contacts that connects every aspect of economic and social distribution. A city like Civilia, through its pattern of consumption, produces a differentiation at another level. This is a true social differentiation; like the class differences assumed but nowhere discussed in Civilia, these naturally occurring urban identities are visible in built form: "Instead of standardisation, variety. Variety of forms, sizes, targets, idiosyncrasies; no jumbling of functions. University towns, manufacturing towns, country

**38** De Wofle, *Civilia* (see note 1), 5.

**39** Isaiah Berlin, "Two Concepts of Liberty," in *Four Essays on Liberty*, ed. Isaiah Berlin (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1969), 118–72.

**40** Hastings and Kenneth Browne recast *Civilia* as a wider attack on the New Towns in the special issue "Sociable Housing" in 1973. De Wofle, "Sociable Housing" (see note 23). Browne made two other attempts to use the Civilia concept on actual projects. The first of these was Kenneth Browne, "'Civilia in the Docklands': A Prescient Study for a Renewal of London's Docklands," *Architectural Review* 151, no. 902 (1972), 216–22. The second was an analysis of and praise for the original design (greatly compromised in execution) of a New Town at Irving by Hugh Wilson and Lewis Wormersley 1967. See Kenneth Browne, "Test Case: Irving New Town," *Architectural Review* 154, no. 920 (1973), 251–62.

**41** Bernard Mandeville, *The Fable of the Bees: Or, Private Vices, Public Benefits* (London, J. Rorerts [sic], 1714).

**42** John Maynard Keynes, *General Theory of Employment, Interest and Money* (London: Macmillan, 1936).

**43** De Wofle, *Civilia* (see note 1), 9.

**44** Richards and Hastings describe these economic roles as kinds of persons: the "P-Men" (production), "C-Men" (consumption), and "D-Men" (distribution). James Maude Richards, "Destruction and Reconstruction: A Theoretical Basis for Physical Planning," *Architectural Review* 91, no. 542 (1942), 39–42; "Destruction and Reconstruction: A Theoretical Basis for Physical Planning, Part 2," *Architectural Review* 91, no. 543 (1942), 63–70. Kevin Vallier, "Production, Distribution, and J. S. Mill," *Utilitas* 22, no. 2 (2010) 103–25, here 114 (citing John Stuart Mill, *The Collected Works*, vol. 2, ed. John M. Robson (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1963), 22).

towns, market towns, dead market towns. Lost villages, isolated hamlets, … ." [45]

The right balance of city and country is not to blend them as in suburbia, nor to manage them into the uniformity of the welfare state, but to enable the expression of differentiation that is the ultimate purpose of the productive substructure; what Hastings "will not stomach is the mass medication pumped out from the Government machine, as sort of bureaucratic *fiat lux* under which, in the cause of 'equal opportunity,' Rugby where that ball was first picked up burgeons like Leicester into a factory town, and Leamington, a Spa, into a factory town, and … [continues with list]." [46]

Hastings's description of the socio-economic determination of urban form and his disparagement of government can sound as if this were an Edward Lear version of today's neoliberalism, but the situation is more complicated, both in the particular case of Hastings and the history of liberalism. Hastings's social and economic theory was developed in the 1940s and 1950s as a manuscript, "The Unnatural History of Man," only published, in part, some four decades later, after he stood down as editor of the *AR*, under the title of *The Alternative Society: Software for the Nineteen Eighties*. [47] The abbreviated version of his "Unnatural History" manuscript was his only publication under his own name. In *The Alternative Society*, Hastings argues for kind of liberal society that might have, but did not, come out of the English Civil War—one which might still be possible. In what had become by then an almost private language, Hastings calls this "NU JU," a mock "hip" version of the New Jerusalem that had been evoked by his hero Oliver Cromwell and traduced (in Hastings's view) when the metaphor was recycled by the Attlee government in the formation of the postwar welfare state. This same disquieting combination of political theory and pop culture banter marks the rhetoric of *Civilia*, which could well be understood as NU JU. Civilia seems to be without divisions of social class because its "differentiation" from other cities produces upper-middle classness as a normative subjectivity of Civilia, but in *The Alternative Society*, Hastings imagines a new "gentry," who might well be "civilians." Based on his understanding of the role of the gentry in the productive compromises during and after the English Civil War, Hastings proposes a future consumption-led economy where the "hard leisure" of a new gentry reconceptualizes "work" as the production of demand. [48] Allowing for its great eccentricities, his idea is prescient of the current logic of accumulating and mining social media and e-commerce data, and the model of the entrepreneurial self in neoliberal economies.

**45** De Wofle, *Civilia* (see note 1), 12.

**46** Ibid.

**47** Hubert de Cronin Hastings, *The Alternative Society: Software for the Nineteen Eighties* (London: David and Charles Limited, 1980).

**48** Ibid., 126–27.

In de Wolfe's 1949 Townscape essay, there is a long argument not only about the nature of freedom but also the patrimony of liberal political theory, an argument that is continued, and in part verbatim repeated, in *Civilia*. He continues a rhetorical trope from the eighteenth century where William Mason and Horace Walpole had made analogies between politics and gardens in which the baroque axiality of French gardens formed in plan stood for absolute monarchy; while in the English style of "point of view" planning, taking advantage of contingencies was said to be not only proof of the English prowess in empiricism but an allegory of constitutional monarchy. [49] Hastings and his protégé Pevsner bring this analogy with landscape down to a fine level through close readings of the meaning of the picturesque in the letters of Uvedale Price and Humphry Repton. For its eighteenth-century apologists, the Glorious Revolution of 1688 was to be celebrated as a compromise that avoided the alternative tyrannies of absolute monarchy and the republicanism of Cromwell. The Crown became an empty cypher, powerless but empowering, by filling the space of possible tyrants. As a metonym of this constitutional compromise, Price and Repton both advocated the reintroduction of formal elements within an irregular landscape as one principle of picturesque design.

**49** Horatio Walpole, "On Modern Gardening," in *Anecdotes of Painting in England*, vol. 4 (Strawberry-Hill: Thomas Kirgate, 1771), 117–57; William Mason, *The English Garden: A Poem. In Four Books* (York: A. Ward, 1783).

In both "Townscape" and *Civilia*, Hastings's argument for seeing these urban design issues in political terms begins with a discussion of Charles Baudelaire's recounting of Ernst Theodor Amadeus Hoffmann's description of synesthesia. Hoffmann reported that when he smelled red or brown nasturtiums, he heard a distant oboe. [50] Baudelaire's combination of synesthesia with Emanuel Swedenborg's concept of an essential correspondence of all things, and Baudelaire's consumption of hashish, suggests to Hastings that "Politics can smell too, can't it?"

**50** De Wolfe, "Townscape" (see note 8), 356, repeated in de Wofle, *Civilia* (see note 1), 7.

*"Let us come clean at this point and say the argument is that there is a prima facie case for expecting politics and landscape to reveal Hoffmann's 'essential concordance'. ... What this article sets out to do is to take a specimen case, ... Picturesque Theory and by relating it to its political background try whether there isn't some correspondence which would permit the terminology of the one to be used for the better understanding of the other. If, in the process, one seems to be writing not about town planning and landscape, but about democracy and liberalism, that is only to be expected; that is, so to speak, describing nasturtiums in terms of grave, deep oboe notes."* [51]

**51** De Wolfe, "Townscape" (see note 8), 356.

With this license of the synesthesia of architecture and politics, Hastings starts with the Greeks, and then spends time with Machiavelli, Locke, Hobbes, Shaftesbury, and Humboldt.

Hastings's potted history of liberalism touches on the potential conflicts of liberty and democracy, and he is highly exercised by the notion of democracy as the sovereignty of Reason:

*"The vulgar idea that democracy means freedom, and that freedom comes in where despotism goes out—the popular antithesis between democracy and tyranny—is a mere colloquialism. The tyrant goes on, though in a hydra headed form that may or may not be more lethal. What in the first stirrings of the democratic ideal in fact we see is ... the Renaissance conception of the sovereignty of Reason [which] develops in*

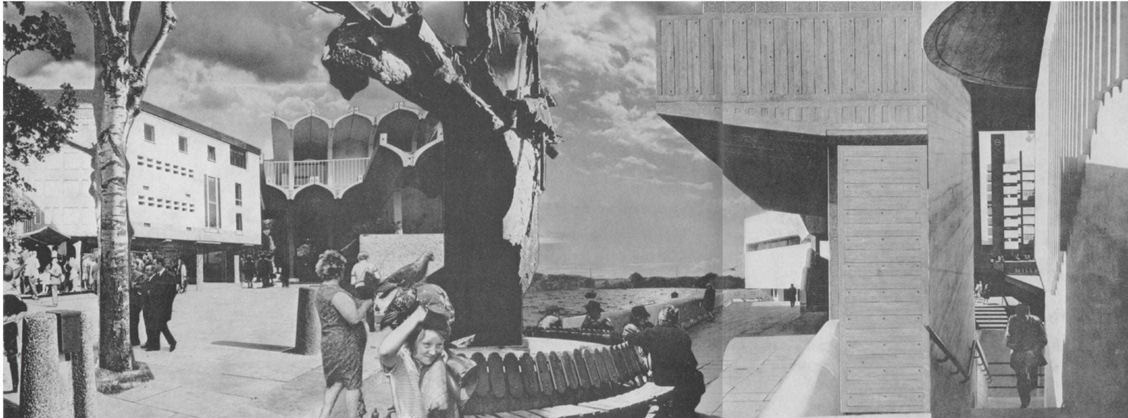

**fig. 5** Pump Yard. Source: Ivor de Wofle, *Civilia: The End of Sub Urban Man; A Challenge to Semidetsia* (London: Architectural Press, 1971), 66 (fig. 63). By permission of RIBA Library.

*the process the new conception of the Prerogative of the Intellect ... . The exercise of reason does not permit of inequalities in the units of reason. Egalitarianism, in short, is the sense of one man being free of another so that he is free to work in the light of reason."* [52]

52 Ibid., 357.

For Hastings, the threat of the dictatorship of the majority that is contained in democracy is tied up in these claims of the sovereignty of reason, reason as a positive aim of freedom, which he identifies with French rationalism and Voltaire, while he proposes that we ought to follow Rousseau's concept of personal independence, which, confusingly, he uses to explain the particularities of English "Radical Liberalism":

*"We now have the rational canon of French democracy defined as the assumption that liberty by making the individual free to get at the truth, which is* one, *will end by establishing universal conformity; and on the other hand what for want of a better word what I have called the radical canon, of English democracy, based on the belief in individualism* per se; *as a departure from conformity, as a means of differentiation."* [53]

53 Ibid., 358. Emphasis in original.

For Hastings, the problem of rational liberalism is that it leads to a belief in one form of freedom and one model of democracy, while he sees freedom as individuation and the English constitutional settlement as "unique and idiosyncratic as cricket." [54] True freedom "to be thy self" ought to lead to differentiation at a personal, urban, and national level, as in the case of Civilia, where

54 Ibid.

patterns of individual preference in consumption produce the city's character.

## Collage City

Rowe and Koetter's "Collage City" was originally a special issue of the *AR* in 1975, and took a position close to Hastings's line, but their book, published three years later, attacked Townscape and was published not by the Architectural Press but by MIT Press. [55] *Civilia* and *Collage City* fall on either side of the rupture of postmodernism and the linguistic turn in humanities scholarship of the late twentieth century. The visuality of the neo-picturesque looked simplistic when compared to Rowe's syntactical understanding of classicism and consequent combinatorial and procedural design techniques, which went on to dominate architectural discourse and technique. However this apparent antipathy between Rowe and Hastings obscures significant similarities of *Collage City* and Townscape/Civilia that emerge with closer examination of their formal values and use of political theory.

An anti-idealist urbanism where buildings and landholding patterns of different periods overlay one another in a kind of collage is the proposition of both *Collage City* and Townscape from the 1940s through to *Civilia*. Elsewhere I have compared *Civilia* and *Collage City* on the basis of their common idea of supposing that new architecture should speak to historical layers of urban form. [56] This is particularly apparent in their use of collage to imagine urban conditions. The difference is in the viewpoint: Rowe and Koetter's is a collage of the plan, while Civilia is represented from terrestrial viewpoints. [57] The tactic of using collage to speculate about possible forms of urbanism is common to both of them and allows each of them to evade the accusation of utopianism. Both opposed the formal consequences of utopia while supposing that images of utopias, and attempts at their realization, had driven the historical development of architectural thought: architecture developed in the space between ideals and the empirical facts of their partial implementation or failure. Despite the differences in graphics and viewpoint, Rowe's description of collage as a

**55** Colin Rowe and Fred Koetter, "Collage City," *Architectural Review* 158, no. 952 (Aug. 1975), 66–91. Rowe and Koetter, *Collage City* (1978) (see note 3). Rowe was a protégé of Rudolf Wittkower and hence on the classical side of the classic/romantic opposition that mapped the factional divisions of the time. These factions are described in Peter Reyner Banham, "Revenge of the Picturesque: English Architectural Polemics, 1945–1965," in John Summerson, ed., *Concerning Architecture: Essays on Architectural Writers and Writing Presented to Nikolas Pevsner* (London: Allen Lane, The Penguin Press, 1968), 265–73; also see John Macarthur, "'The Revenge of the Picturesque,' Redux," *Journal of Architecture* 17, no. 5 (2012), 643–53.

**56** Macarthur, "Figure from Above" (see note 2).

**57** This relation of viewpoints certainly has a political meaning. The history of mapping and aerial viewpoints is closely linked to sovereignty and the viewpoint of the king. The modern, actual, aerial view of powered flight analogizes the vicarious sovereignty that citizens enjoy in a democracy. The present paper takes this argument further, beyond the semiotics of viewpoint, to the language of political theory coming into architectural theory. This brief summary draws on my "Figure from Above" (see note 2) and my *The Picturesque* (see note 2), which in turn draw on John Barrell, "The Public Prospect and the Private View: The Politics of Taste in Eighteenth Century Britain," in J. C. Eade, ed., *Projecting the Landscape* (Canberra: Humanities Research Centre, ANU, 1987).

concept applicable to the urban condition is true of both books: "Collage ... seems to be a technique for using things and simultaneously disbelieving in them, because it is also a strategy which can allow utopia to be dealt with as image, to be dealt with in *fragments* without our having to accept it *in toto*." [58]

**58** Rowe and Koetter, *Collage City* (see note 3), 149.

The circumstantial evidence that Townscape functioned as a precedent for *Collage City* is strong. As well as "Collage City" being first published as an *AR* special issue, Rowe's earlier essays on the relations of classicism and modernism were published in *AR* in the same years that Townscape emerged. [59] In the book version of *Collage City* the theoretical text is followed by an "excursus" of examples for reflection very much in the manner of the "Townscape Casebook." Furthermore, much-feted essays about American urban form, such as Rowe's analysis of Lockhart, Texas, are clearly in the mold of Townscape case studies. [60] There is also a legal inflection put on precedent in both works. These similarities have tended to be overlooked because the books sit on either side of the watershed of postmodernism, but also because of Rowe's framing of his and Koetter's concept.

**59** Colin Rowe, "The Mathematics of the Ideal Villa: Palladio and Le Corbusier Compared," *Architectural Review* 101, no. 603 (Mar. 1947), 101–4; Colin Rowe, "Mannerism and Modern Architecture," *Architectural Review* 107, no. 641 (May 1950), 289–99.

**60** Gordon Cullen, "Townscape Casebook," *The Architectural Review* 106 (1949), 363–74; Colin Rowe and John Hejduk, "Lockhart, Texas," *Architectural Record* 121 (1957), 201–6; Scott Colman, "Rowe's Courthouse Utopia," in *Proceedings of the Society of Architectural Historians, Australia and New Zealand 32: Architecture, Institutions and Change* (Sydney: SAHANZ, 2015), 92–101.

In the *AR* version of "Collage City" Rowe tries to make a careful and modest attempt to distinguish his and Koetter's project from Townscape, criticizing the latter as an attempt to "placate and console," contrasting it with Archigram. But he also claims that Townscape and Archigram have in common an aesthetic of random disjunctions of building and urban form, one historical the other futuristic, which the superior historiography of *Collage City* can overcome. [61] Later, in the book version, Rowe and Koetter heat up the contrast considerably and claim that the situation of architecture and urban life has been reduced to a non-choice between modernist technological millennialism and the administered popularity of Townscape. They write these are: "two alternative prisons for the human spirit ... one of them is a fortress with electronic controls while the other is an open gaol conducted on compassionate principles." [62]

**61** Colman, "Rowe's Courthouse Utopia" (see note 60); Rowe and Koetter, "Collage City" (see note 55).

**62** Rowe and Koetter, *Collage City* (see note 3), 98.

As Townscape has come to be remembered less as Hastings's *Civilia* and more as Cullen's popularist and traditionalist *The Concise Townscape*, Rowe and Koetter's differentiation of their project from Townscape is rarely questioned. But it was at the time. Nathan Silver wrote to *AR*, accusing "Collage City" of plagiarizing his and Charles Jencks's book *Adhocism* of 1972. [63] In response to Silver, Reyner Banham wrote a letter to the editor (who was Hastings):

*"SIR: Now that the authorship of 'Collage City' is apparently up for grabs, may I press the strong claim of that genuinely mythical figure 'Ivor de Wolfe.' Quite the most provoking*

**63** Charles Jencks and Nathan Silver, *Adhocism: The Case for Improvisation* (London: Secker & Warburg, 1972); Nathan Silver, "Letter: Collage City," *Architectural Review* 158, no. 944 (Oct. 1975), 192.

*aspect of [Rowe and Koetter's] essay ... is the manner in which it restates—in more Whiggish prose and with longer footnotes—the standpoint adopted by 'de Wolfe' in his celebrated article 'Townscape ... a visual philosophy founded on the true rock of Sir Uvedale Price,' equally suspicious of universal utopia and equally delighted by the juxtaposition of fragmentary designs.* And that was the AR for December 1949." [64]

Banham's satire goes on to claim that Rowe and Koetter's critique of Townscape is proof that that they could not be the authors of "Collage City." He then drops the pretense, writing: "Rowe/Koetter are observably right about most of the world's habitable cities (Los Angeles, too, is a collage of busted Utopias)—but 'Ivor de Wolfe' was right before any of them!" [65] This is a double attack, first on Rowe and Koetter for not acknowledging their debts to Townscape, and then a dig at Hastings, which is relatively gentle considering that the latter had attacked Banham and Hall in 1973 for wanting to turn Britain into Los Angeles. [66]

The problem of utopia for Rowe is how to "bust" it—utopia being for him the empirical success of modernist architecture and the failure of the ideals it was supposed to embody, the "cut-price *ville radieuse* ... which both inspires and deserves destruction." [67] Modernism, once broken, emptied of its politics, social agency, and coherence as an image, can become, for Rowe, like other past architectural formal languages—so much material for an autonomous architectural culture. *Civilia* lies on the far side of the threshold of postmodernism. Hastings and his readers want to hold faith with the *ville radieuse*, but deny the *tabula rasa* necessary to make it. *Civilia* is a gestural utopia, like the gestures of an actor who imitates spontaneous human expression, and, at the same time, introduces a gap, an interruption so that the gesture can be conventional, can represent its own immediacy in its repeatability. [68] In *Civilia*, a recognition of the gesture of utopia is a necessary beginning of its critique.

This "busted utopian" thinking is not only a formal matter; it is a part of the liberal critique of Marxist thought during the Cold War and an entrée

**64** Peter Reyner Banham, "De Wolfe the Author? (Letter to the Editor)," *Architectural Review* 158, no. 945 (Nov. 1975), 322. (Emphasis in original.)

**65** Ibid.

**66** Ivor de Wolfe, "Sick Remedy: Aping the USA," *Architectural Review* 154, no. 920 (1973), 245–50. With more space it would have been useful to include a further three-sided contrast between Hastings, Rowe, and Banham. In particular the *New Society* article "Non-plan" of 1969 was based on another strand of liberal discourse, one much drier in economic and aesthetic terms. Peter Reyner Banham et al., "Non-Plan: An Experiment in Freedom," *New Society* 13, no. 338 (1969), 435–43; Cedric Price, "Non-Plan," *Architectural Design* 69, no. 5 (1969), 269–73; Jonathon Hughes and Simon Sadler, eds., *Non-Plan: Essays on Freedom, Participation and Change in Modern Architecture and Urbanism* (Oxford: Architectural Press, 2000).

**67** Colin Rowe and Fred Koetter, "Collage City" (see note 55), 72.

**68** On Bertold Brecht and Walter Benjamin's concepts of gesture and interruption, see Samuel Weber, *Theatricality as Medium* (New York, NY: Fordham University Press, 2004).

into the political theory that both Hastings and Rowe cite to authorize their prescriptions to architects. Hastings's critique of modernist urban planning follows Friedrich Hayek's ideas of the abuse of reason as a goal in itself. [69] Rowe presents the problems of closed systems of architecture much in the same light as Karl Popper's *Open Society and its Enemies* and his critique of social engineering. [70] Beyond the political and practical objections to utopianism in urban design, this strand of architectural theory also analogizes the liberty of the designer in the act of design with the value and the problems of freedom in liberal political theory. One foundation of modern liberalism —as old as Shaftesbury and made into something of a civil philosophy by Friedrich Schiller—is the idea that the autonomy of aesthetic judgement is an analogue of political judgement, and thus the experience of freely making or judging art is a kind of training in civic life and political judgement. [71] This thesis was strongly promoted through the war years by Herbert Read and was the basis of much cultural diplomacy during the Cold War. [72] Schiller and Read are concerned with aesthetic reception and art education, but the analogy doubles on itself in the case of the artist or architect. In Romantic models of creativity the passage from material constraint to freedom is made exemplary. Hastings and Rowe are not merely explaining the responsibilities of architects and the hard truths of the conditions under which they operate; they are also saying something about the freedoms of the architect in the act of design, which is somehow the same as freedom of political thought. Theories of design like *Civilia* and *Collage City* propose a method to free the architect in a project to free the public.

Recently, Tony Bennett has criticized aesthetic theory, and particularly that of Jacques Rancière, as taking historically specific forms of self-making and constructing these as freedom *per se*. For Bennett, the "contention that the aesthetic does indeed, as Adorno contended, produce a relationship in which the self 'stands free of any guardian' itself relies on guides such as Kant, Adorno and Rancière who instruct us to seek such freedom." [73] Much of what I have been concerned with in this essay has involved aiming the terms of Bennett's critique in the other direction. Architects and writers on architecture since Romanticism have taken it for granted that architecture ought to be made and experienced in a state of freedom. What greater authority could a guide to this freedom have than a franchise in political theory?

**69** Hayek, *The Road to Serfdom* (see note 31).

**70** Popper, *The Open Society* (see note 31).

**71** The role of the history of art in delineating and legitimizing social hierarchies was famously critiqued by Pierre Bourdieu. See, amongst others, Pierre Bourdieu, *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1984); Friedrich Schiller, *On the Aesthetic Education of Man*, trans. E. M. Wilkinson and L. A. Willoughby (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1967). Also see John Barrell, *The Political Theory of Painting from Reynolds to Hazlitt: "The Body of the Public"* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1986); Thomas Osborne, *Aspects of Enlightenment: Social Theory and the Ethics of Truth* (London: UCL Press, Routledge, 1998); Nikolas Rose, *Powers of Freedom: Reframing Political Thought* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999).

**72** Herbert Read, *Education through Art* (London: Faber and Faber, 1925); Herbert Read, *The Education of Free Men* (London: Freedom Press, 1944).

**73** Tony Bennett, *Making Culture, Changing Society* (London: Routledge, 2013), 129.

## Architecture and the History of Liberalism

Duncan Bell has given a useful account of how liberalism came to be a meta-category of political theory, and how "most inhabitants of the West are now *conscripts of liberalism*: the scope of the tradition has expanded to encompass the vast majority of political positions regarded as legitimate." [74] Bell argues that we should understand liberalism in the context where it has been used rather than to think that there is any inherent core to the concept. With that aim he shows that, while there are many antecedents for thought on liberty, "liberalism" as a political ideology was constructed from the mid-nineteenth century onward. It is from that relatively recent ideological moment that a history was retrospectively constructed of a coherent discussion of freedom commencing with Locke and crossing the centuries. In the Edwardian texts that Hastings read, such as those of L. T. Hobhouse, John Morley, and Ernest Barker, Locke's empiricism was connected with Machiavelli's anti-idealism, Hobbes's statecraft, Rousseau's and Paine's social contracts, and Burke's understanding of the conflicts of freedom with democracy. [75] It was even later, in the aftermath of World War Two, and via Hayek and Popper, that liberalism became the state ideology of a kind of anglophone democracy. In the postwar United States of America, which laid claim to a history of seventeenth-century protestant non-conformists, the notion that "democratic liberalism" was the secular form of Western civilization became an article of faith. The ideology of "democratic liberalism" had, by then, taken on a positive project of the kind that Berlin would disapprove of: a freedom *for* democracy.

74 Duncan Bell, "What Is Liberalism?" *Political Theory* 42, no. 6 (2014), 682–715, here 689. (Italics in original.)

75 Leonard Trelawny Hobhouse, *Liberalism* (London: Williams and Northgate, 1911); Barker, *Political Thought* (see note 33).

It is not surprising that architectural discourse, like other realms of thought, has been a "conscript of liberalism," but Bell's account of the relatively recent construction of liberal-"ism" suggests we look more closely at the chronology. Surely, we can smell a politics around the discussion of freedom in architectural theory. Hastings is not clumsily appropriating some political concepts agreed upon since the seventeenth century; rather his writing plays a small but active part in that moment when liberalism generated its postwar historical narrative and ideological bearing. And by the 1970s Hastings and Rowe's nuanced attitudes to ideals of positive liberty, to utopias, partial, unbelievable, or "busted," are still a part of the process of forming the consensus that liberal democracy was the telos of Western civilization. It is timely to remember that, conscripted to liberalism, architectural discourse has been a part of what has made it.

Current critiques of the architecture of neoliberalism, of the agency of architects in the financialization of building, or of their role in the production of subjectivities compliant with a

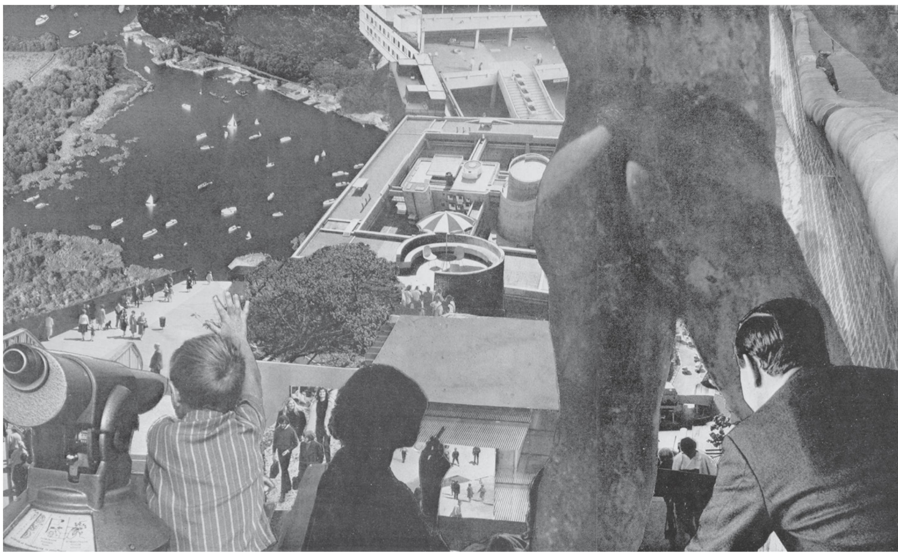

**fig. 6** The town wall. Source: Ivor de Wofle, *Civilia: The End of Sub Urban Man; A Challenge to Semidetsia* (London: Architectural Press, 1971), 104–5 (fig. 107). By permission of RIBA Library.

liberalized workforce have thus far ignored the simpler, and indeed, more actionable problem of the appropriation of liberal political theory into architectural theory. As the tide of opposition to a neoliberal world grows, there is a little wave of liberal theory and its critique washing into architectural theory to explain the problems of freedom to architects. [76] While the circumstances of architecture and the politics of our time are different to those of Hastings or Rowe, we risk repeating their rhetoric by rolling out a history of political theory to enfranchise us in confronting present problems. Not to realize the complex and varied history in which architectural thought took on different strands of liberalism means risking repeating the homology of freedom as a value common to both societal forms and architecture's disciplinary structure. What it would mean to disentangle architectural practice from the mechanisms of liberal governance and how that might be achieved are difficult questions. But architectural theory has been conscripted into liberal discourse and need not be. Hastings quipped that the relation of architecture and politics was synesthetic; that one could smell architecture and hear politics. Then and now, there is too much synesthesia in architectural theory.

**76** See, for instance, Douglas Spencer, *The Architecture of Neoliberalism: How Contemporary Architecture Became an Instrument of Control and Compliance* (New York: Bloomsbury Academic, 2016); Reinhold Martin, "Critical of What? Towards a Utopian Realism," in William S. Saunders, ed., *The New Architectural Pragmatism: A Harvard Design Magazine Reader* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2007), 150–61; Keller Easterling, *Extrastatecraft: The Power of Infrastructural Space* (London: Verso, 2014).

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