

The space city, on the other hand, is an agglomeration of various spatial structures in pursuance of development; the ductus of the structure steers the unavoidable proliferation into ordered channels; freedom lies in the infinite possibilities of combination.

When the details are suitably designed, co-ordination of measurement permits the mutual interchange of all parts. This makes possible solution of the basic dilemma between the dynamic of urban life and the static of the built structure. Electronic calculating centres will examine the static and organizational conditions calling for change: automatic factories will produce the material substance of the city.

Multi-storey inhabited spatial carrying structures will bridge over great spans by their static height. In the centres of density the city will rise up from the ground, leaving the latter to mechanical transport. The possibility of greater density, building over traffic areas and watercourses, keeping whole stretches free for flowing or stationary traffic, the strict segregation of types of traffic, make possible solution of the problems of circulation in centres of traffic concentration. The smallest possible number of obstacles stand in the way of traffic and its unforeseeable development, thereby avoiding from the outset the majority of the problems we face today. On the other hand, the space city creates a continuous, three-dimensional public space which was lost when the motor-car perverted streets and squares into motorways and parking lots.

A three-dimensional system of co-ordinates identical with a spatial grid will facilitate organization and orientation in the space city, yet the multiplicity of the possible material forms it can take leaves room for individuality and anarchy. Thanks to the ordering of space, the architectural substance is adaptable to every topographical datum, absorbing, altering, levelling, or raising it.

The space city accompanies the profile of the landscape as a crystalline layer; it is itself a landscape, comparable to geological formations with peaks and valleys, ravines and plateaux, comparable to the leafy area of the forest with its branches. To regenerate existing cities, structures will stretch above their degenerate sections and cause them to fall into disuse.

Consistency of these ideas demands that property or exploitation rights shall no longer – in pursuance of the agricultural tradition – be related to the surface area (as the medium of agricultural production) but to utilizable space. The compact city offers possibilities of an improved heating economy, a self-air-conditioning; in the future it will even permit a controlled internal climate of the city, which could radically reduce the cost of insulating the individual building. The space city is the structural, systematized, prefabricated, growing or shrinking, adaptable, air-conditioned, multi-purpose space labyrinth that can be fitted together or taken apart at will.

1960

## Constant: New Babylon (excerpt)

Up to 1953, Constant (Nieuwenhuys) (b. 1920 in Amsterdam) was a painter. At this juncture, he states: 'The picture of the world changed; mechanized, technoid environments emerged. But the artist stood aside, was obviously incapable of participating in the process.' Constant roamed through Paris and London, observed each city and its construction. He recognized agglomeration as an artistic medium. 'Demain la poésie logera la vie' was henceforth his theme. In 1956 he met Asger Jorn and Debord and developed with them the first plans for 'unitary town planning'. But their standpoints quickly diverged. Constant began his story of New Babylon.

Individualist culture is at an end, its institutions are exhausted. The present task of the artist can only be to prepare the way for a future mass culture. For if there is still to be any talk of culture it will have to carry a mass society, and then the means can be sought only within mechanization. The shaping of the material environment and the liberation and organization of everyday life are the points of departure for new cultural forms. My *New Babylon project* arose as an illustrative sketch and elaboration of these ideas. It is the *experimental thought and play model* for the establishment of principles for a new and different culture.

New Babylon is not primarily a town planning project. Equally, it is not intended as a work of art in the traditional sense nor as an example of architectonic structure.

New Babylon in its present form may be construed as a proposal, as an attempt to give material shape to the theory of unitary town planning, to maintain a creative game with an imaginary environment that is set in place of the inadequate, unsatisfying environment of contemporary life.

The modern city is dead; it has fallen victim to utility. New Babylon is a project for a city in which it is possible to live. And to live means to be creative.

New Babylon is the object of a mass creativity; it reckons with the activation of the enormous creative potential which, now unused, is present in the masses. It reckons with the disappearance of non-creative work as the result of automation; it reckons with the transformation of morality and thought, it reckons with a new social organization.

But it also reckons with facts like the rapid spread of the world population, the perpetual growth of traffic, the cultivation of the whole planet, and total urbanization. Thus the project takes account of the purely functional problems of current town planning, traffic and housing and strives for extreme solutions. But its main theme is a new regard for social space. It is the medium for a new creativity that is to manifest itself in daily life, by means of a continually varied arrangement of the environment, in harmony with a dynamic way of life. In a technical respect, it is a simple, thoroughly structured framework, a scaffolding set on pillars and raised up *in toto* from the ground. Thus

the ground is left at the free disposal of traffic.

Division of the scaffolding into smaller units (sectors), each 5 to 10 hectares large, gives rise to a complicated, netlike pattern interspersed by remnants of landscape and crisscrossed by a traffic grid, which can run independently of the built-up area.

On the raised platform, dwelling and social space form a vast coherent edifice which, in all its several storeys, is artificially air-conditioned and lit. The upper terrace, the 'roof', can include sports areas and airports.

Apart from dwelling quarters, the interior of these sectional buildings consists of a large public space serving the purposes of social life. It is divided up by means of movable walls and constructional parts into variable volumes that can be linked by a play of stairs, platforms and corridors. This gives rise to a multiplicity of different ambiances that can be altered at any given moment. The character can be influenced and determined by an abundant manipulation of colour, sound, light, climate, by the use of the most varied kinds of technical apparatus, and by psychological procedures. The shaping of the interior at any given moment, the interplay of the various environments takes place in harmony with the experimental life-play of the inhabitants. The city brings about a dynamically active, creative unfolding of life.

One can wander for prolonged periods through the interconnected sectors, entering into the adventure afforded by this unlimited labyrinth. The express traffic on the ground and the helicopters over the terraces cover great distances, making possible a spontaneous change of location.

The function of dwelling is adapted to this adventurous and dynamic life. It can scarcely be planned any longer to cater for permanent dwelling. The dwelling spaces, as parts of the rest of the interior space above which they are scattered, are best regarded as a kind of residential hotel in a non-commercial sense, favouring frequent change of domicile.

Such a project is dependent upon sociological, psychological, scientific, technological, organizational, and artistic factors.

Already at this Utopian stage a collective collaboration of the most varied interests is an inescapable condition.

But New Babylon will first be realized by its inhabitants.

1961

## R. Buckminster Fuller: The architect as world planner (excerpt)

On the occasion of the congress of the International Union of Architects in London in 1961 Richard Buckminster Fuller spoke on the task of the architect in the present world situation. As thirty years before, Fuller developed a planning programme that was to span the entire world. He projected the idea of a world in which the means of existence had been made completely available to mankind. The architect, he said, must become a world planner who has arrived at a fixed hierarchy of processes in the world and on the basis of this hierarchy practises world town planning with all the scientific aids at his disposal.

... I propose that the architectural departments of all the universities around the world be encouraged by the UIA to invest the next ten years in a continuing problem of how to make the total world's resources serve 100% of humanity through competent design.

The general theory of education at present starts students off with elementary components and gradually increases the size of the complex of components with which the student will be concerned. The scheme is to go from the particular towards the whole but seems never to reach the whole. In many of the architectural schools the first-year student is given a problem in terms of a country town and has to plan and design the buildings for that country town. The next year he must do a larger town, a small industrial town. In the third year he is engaged in a large industrial city, and in his fourth year he is engaged with larger cities, such as London or New York. The schools never reach out to national, let alone world problems. Local town planning is almost everywhere invalidated by the sweep of world events. The automobile highway cloverleaf programmes are inadequate to the concept of total man being advantaged with his own vehicle; parking problems continually frustrate and negate the too-local horizon of town planning.

The first year's total world planning by the students and its designed implementation may be expected to disclose great amateurishness and inadequacies, but not only will the criticism come from the architectural profession, it will also be evoked from the politicians, from the economists, the industrialists, excited by its treading on their doorsteps, out of which criticism the next year's round of world designing by the students may be greatly advantaged. The second, third, and fourth years should show swift acceleration in the comprehension of the problem and the degree of satisfaction of the problem.

The world planning by the students must be predicated upon the concept of first things first, upon a scheduled hierarchy of events.

The comprehensive world resources data now exist in a number of establishments, but is primarily available to all the universities of the world through UNESCO. What UNESCO does not have, it is in a good position to direct the researcher to successfully acquire.