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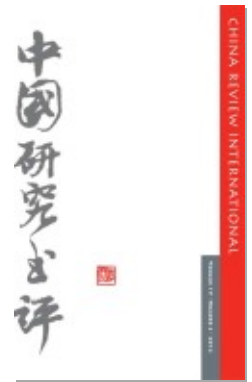
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## Anywise (review)

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view provides a basis for the reassessment of social conditions and contemporary cultural factors that affect patronage and creation and the meaning and function of a work of art. *Art in China* is an excellent book written by an author with an inquisitive, probing mind, worth reading by anyone seriously interested in China.

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Cynthia C. Davidson, editor. *Anywise*. Cambridge: MIT Press, 1996. 256 pp. Paperback \$35.00, isbn 0-262-54082-7.

*Anywise* is the fifth in a series of eleven planned volumes documenting the annual international cross-disciplinary conferences sponsored by Anyone Corporation to investigate the condition of architecture at the end of the millennium. The book consists of more than a dozen offerings by such internationally renowned contributors as David Harvey, Peter Eisenman, Masao Miyoshi, Tao Ho, and Sandra Buckley, and it tries to address two major questions: (1) how can an urban building relate to the changing demands of a city, and (2) how can a city meet its own needs in a globalized economy?

Since a new form of international capital has emerged, and since the essence of international capital is a concern with expanding markets, architecture has been reduced to the status of infrastructure. It is no longer seen to hold any symbolic or ideological value because the media have taken over the iconic role that architecture once played. Moreover, if the new architecture of simplicity is in reality an accommodation to the "downsizing" of capital projects, architecture has fallen into a new conservatism that has simply been dressed up to look modern. It has come to represent an ideology of accommodation to the realities of capitalism, and the architecture of accommodation thus satisfies the desire of capital for information. Meanwhile, as the city struggles to gain a competitive edge in a global network, it simultaneously strives to decentralize its functions in order to manage growth and to reduce its economic vulnerability to the unpredictable forces of the market beyond its borders. It is perhaps in this context that the issues of accommodation versus transgression, skill versus discipline, quantity versus quality, modernity versus technology, movement versus structure, process versus product, gradient fields versus discrete forms, and the narrative versus the

prescriptive, as well as issues of colonial domination and cultural imperialism, echo throughout the entire book.

Because the conference represented by the essays here took place in a metropolitan setting in one of the newly industrialized “Asian Tiger” countries (Seoul, Korea), participants from the West seemed inclined to believe that NICs are good at “deciding” things—even though they often decide themselves to death. In other words, more haste simply results in less speed. Most developing countries, Asian countries included, posit the problem of quantity, of mass production, on the basis of trivial models and on a scale and at a speed for which nobody seems to have adequate instruments for ensuring architectonic quality.

In this vein, the current building boom taking place in China is viewed as another indiscriminate transplantation of Westernization, and this is seen to be far from what true modernization should be. Nevertheless, this appears to be a general trend in most LDCs, and following this trend may be summarized as adhering to three major “faiths”: (1) there is faith in “becoming”—but this is actually a faith in the *present moment*; (2) there is a faith in the existing reality, which necessarily privileges *things*; and (3) there is a faith in “being,” which is consequently oriented toward *form*.

Ironically, modern life often creates unnecessary problems, and the solutions to these problems become an opportunity to make money. It may be observed that in the name of modernization, homogenization (or convergence, for that matter) occurs along certain lines that cut across national boundaries, and yet sharp differentiation (or divergence) still appears inside these boundaries.

Throughout the entire conference, the participants discussed the palpable differences between the East and the West, between Asia and Europe. The dialogues and sometimes heated arguments nevertheless dealt only with visible conflicts and confusions. The anxiety over how architects can prevent the modern tragedy of mid-century urbanization from becoming a twenty-first-century postmodernist farce lingers throughout the whole discourse in this book. Nonetheless, the essays here conclude on a note of optimism. Architects think, and hope, that people in the core as well as the peripheral regions of the world will dare to grasp the problem of infrastructure and that the public sector will dare to make critical interventions, dare to transgress, and dare even to accommodate—but, above all, dare to experiment.

However, for most latecomers to the development camp, the struggle between an “existence rationality” and their “vulnerable” position in an ever-globalizing market is essentially a day-to-day life task. Their choice of modernization process certainly must not be telescoped into such simplistic notions as the integration of “Western technology” and “Eastern morality.” Unlike their predecessors, LDCs cannot afford to waste time, and they are often deprived of the privilege of undertaking the modernization process step-by-step within a gen-

erous time frame of one or two centuries. In an era of increasing globalization, they are left with perhaps only two choices: to become or not to become a member of the capitalist world system while under heavy pressure from without—and from within, in the form of rising expectations among their own impatient citizens. This is a big challenge and presents LDC planners and policy makers with cruel choices—as Denis Goulet succinctly illustrated in a succession of studies back in the 1970s. Thus Fengshui 風水 may not necessarily be the perfect example of Eastern tradition, just as the computer may not be the ideal symbol of the totality of Western civilization. In other words, in the struggle to reach the top, what room is left for latecomer developing countries in an ever-expanding capitalist hegemonic world system? Can they afford the luxury of holding to tradition at the cost of modernization, however defined?

Altogether, *Anywise* is a book about architecture, but it is also a book about urbanization, modernization, and development, viewed particularly from the standpoint of the contrast between East and West. Globalization, growth, the information age, modernity, postmodernity, technology, and tradition are all touched upon. Scholars in architecture, planning, sociology, and development—and policy makers as well—should all be able to draw both theoretical and practical inspiration from this book.

Hsiao-hung Nancy Chen

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Wm. Theodore de Bary and Tu Weiming, editors. *Confucianism and Human Rights*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1998. xxiii, 327 pp. Hardcover \$40.00, ISBN 0-231-10936-9.

In their highly publicized media events in both the United States (October 1997) and China (June 1998), Presidents Jiang Zemin and Bill Clinton expressed disagreement on their respective views on human rights. Reporting on these summit meetings, the American news media further exacerbated the difference by using the Tiananmen Square mass demonstrations of Spring 1989 and the subsequent Beijing massacre on June 4 as convenient points of reference. Granted that the television image of government tanks and guns against helpless Chinese students