can be perverse.

When trees are cut for timber, for instance, the profits from their sale are added to GNP. But nothing is subtracted from GNP for the loss of the forest. Economists do, however, count money spent to combat environmental destruction and pollution. Thus, the $40 billion that Postel says Americans dole out to doctors each year to treat pollution-related ailments is, strangely enough, counted as wealth. Despite its devastating effect on Alaska's wildlife, the 1989 Exxon *Valdez* oil spill actually showed up as a *gain* in GNP: The clean-up generated $2 billion in income. Postel charges that the result is "an inflated sense of both income and wealth, creating the illusion that a country is better off than it really is."

The new "alternative GNP" is a step in the right direction, in Postel's view. She also favors punitive taxes on polluters and incentives for corporations to replenish the natural resources that they use. But for any significant environmental improvement to be possible, she concludes, politicians and business must be weaned from the notion that growth is essential for a healthy economy.

Nonsense, says Reilly, the administrator of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). Although he agrees with Postel that excluding natural resources from GNP creates a distorted picture of economic health, a growing economy, he insists, is the best hedge against ecological abuse.

Only in wealthier societies, he writes, do people "pay attention to the quality of their lives and the condition of their habitat." Japan's historically heavy pollution levels tumbled as its economy grew rapidly in the 1970s and 1980s. As the U.S. economy expanded over the last 20 years, he says, standards established by the EPA cut particulate emissions by 63 percent and carbon monoxide by 40 percent. Without the phase-out of leaded gasoline, he adds, lead emissions alone would be 97 percent higher than they are today. Lake Erie, declared dead 20 years ago, is now the largest commercial fishery in the Great Lakes. Meanwhile, in developing countries and in Eastern European nations, pollution remains out of control.

For good reason, Reilly says. Compliance with EPA regulations costs the United States $90 billion (about 1.7 percent of GNP) annually. Poor countries, he concludes, can't *afford* a clean environment.

ARTS & LETTERS

Urban Blight

"The Prince, the People, and the Architects" by Nathan Glazer, in *The American Scholar* (Aut. 1990), 1811 Q St. N.W., Washington, D.C. 20009.

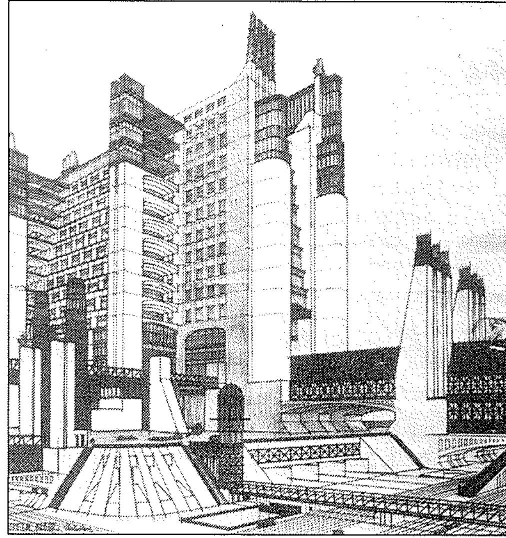
Modernist architecture, born after World War I in the "Bauhaus" of Germany's Walter Gropius, arrived in the United States in the 1930s to much critical acclaim. In New York, Boston, and other cities, whole city blocks were razed to make room for new "stripped down," "functional," high-rise apartment buildings for workers, "scientifically" situated to capture the sun. Today, writes Glazer, a Harvard sociologist, this "socially concerned" architecture has been roundly condemned by, among others, the Prince of Wales. "Soulless, bureaucratic, and inhuman," is his verdict. Architects have reacted hysterically. One writer likened the prince's preference for single-family homes to the tastes of the Nazis. His call for a return to classical architectural forms has been denounced as elitist, colonialist, and imperialist.

And yet, Glazer observes, the common people for whom the gleaming towers were designed seem to have sided with Prince Charles. Over the years they have bitterly defended their "grubby" tenement houses, pushed up against the pavement in front and boxed in on all sides in back, against the urban renewal schemes of ar-

chitects and urban planners. And now, middle-class gentrifiers see many of the old tenements as diamonds in the rough.

Why is it, Glazer asks, that the old houses, built by speculators, "with ostensibly no attention to personal taste and desire, thrown up to cover the most land and make the most money, using the materials and technology of the 1870s, [have been] considered superior by many of those living in them to the new flats designed by the best planning authorities using good architects?" Because most people, especially those raising families, share a "taste for the low-rise, the small-scale, the unit that gives some privacy, some control, some access to the ground, a small piece of land wholly under one's control."

These are tastes that architects and urban planners do not find very interesting to explore or to satisfy, Glazer observes. In hindsight, urban planners might have admitted that leveling neighborhoods and uprooting long-standing communities was an extreme step. Instead, they have attacked working-class people and their defenders as boorish, backward-looking philistines. Glazer finds it ironic that modernist architecture, conceived to provide housing for the working-class, should now require an elitist defense.



The best-laid plans: Antonio Sant'Elia's 1914 citta nuova *apartment building complex, which featured external elevators and a tramway.*

McPoetry

"The Contemporary Workshop Aesthetic" by David Dooley, in *The Hudson Review* (Summer 1990), 684 Park Ave., New York, N.Y. 10021.

The poet Donald Hall recently lamented that instead of nurturing young artists, this country's flourishing university poetry workshops are turning out scribblers of lukewarm "McPoems." Dooley, who is also a poet, believes he knows why.

The "workshop lyric," as Dooley dubs most of the poetry written by university-trained poets in the last 30 years, is the diminished legacy of "confessional" poets such as Sylvia Plath, "quasi-surreal" poets such as W. S. Merwin, and "regional-pastoral" poets such as Wendell Berry. While these artists grappled with words, ideas, and emotions, Dooley writes, workshop poets merely mimic their forms.

Workshop poets are paralyzed by what Dooley calls "three terrors: terror of emotion, terror of thought, terror of language." The adept composition of their predecessors is replaced by heightened, awkward diction, as in Stephen Dunn's highly acclaimed "The Routine Things Around the House," in which he writes: "Mother, dead woman/who I think permits me/to love women easily . . . ."

Workshop poets mostly write free verse, Dooley notes, because rhyming poetry requires more effort than they are willing to muster. Laziness also accounts for the flaccid images common in their work, most notably the ubiquitous "adjective noun of noun" phrase (such as "sweet revisions of memory" or "dim lands of peace") decried by Ezra Pound years ago. Emotion, indeed any genuine expression, is replaced by blandness. In the hands of a workshop poet, Dooley continues, once-effective traditional poetic techniques, such as the "line/break," made popular by William