The Next Environmental Revolution
Architecture: Boring Buildings

SARAH GOLDFAGEN  DECEMBER 12, 2001

ow that the World Trade Center towers are gone, will Tony Soprano still glance at them in his side-view mirror as he drives home on the New Jersey Turnpike? Or will The Sopranos' producers have him looking back at the now denuded skyline of Manhattan—at the squat residential towers of Battery Park City, all dressed up in frills and pink veneer?

Not likely. The twin towers were that rare entity in the American architectural fabric: a good, perhaps even a great, work of architecture.
Changes in Design Ideas for Built Environment

- Circumstances on the ground
- Technologies and materials
- New information streams
New Information Streams

Psychology
- Environmental
- Ecological
- Evolutionary
- Social
- Occupational

Science and Medicine
- Cognitive neuroscience
- Public Health

Studies in Cognition
- Cognitive Linguistics
- Philosophy of Mind/
Embodied Cognition

A new paradigm: how environments shape human lives
Human response to and experience in environments
physiological, cognitive, psychological
Mind-Body Connection
Humans experiencing environments nonconsciously

Ackerman, Nocera & Bargh (2010): Experiment 1

- Ps asked to evaluate job candidate applications – based on CV
- CV given on either a) heavy clipboard or b) light clipboard
- Those holding heavy clipboards rated applicants as more suitable
- Why?
  - Because ‘heavy’ implicitly associated with perceived seriousness of application
  - Suitability impression activated
Human experiencing environments
nonlogical/associative: embodied cognition

FlashReport

Shedding light on insight: Priming bright ideas

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Multisensory and Multimodal
canonical neurons → J.J. Gibson’s notion of affordances
“Perception is perception for action”
Nonconscious, Non-logical/Associative, Multisensory, Multimodal PRIMES
New paradigm of human-environment relationship

Mind-Body

Mind-Body-Environment
Critical factor in human response to environment is DESIGN:
Learning and cognitive development
Effects of human-centered design
Biophilia and biomimicry
Employee retention: 1% reduction annual turnover
• Worker productivity: 16% increase in first year
• Absenteeism: 19% decrease
• Presenteeism (includes focus, attention): 16% increase
• Employee communication: 42% increase
• Employee sharing of ideas and collaboration: 44% increase
• Promote health and well being
Building owners adopting human-centered WELL standard report:

73% positive impact on building leasing
62% positive impact on building value
79% positive impact on occupant satisfaction

Dodge Data Analytics, The Drive Toward Healthier Buildings (2016)
Human habitats
possibilities for development directly linked to environmental factors
Form
wayfinding, imageability, placemaking
Surfaces and materials
Construction details
Enriching Environments

Environmental Influence

- Experience affects brain development
Poor design decisions lead to poor outcomes
No such thing as “neutral”
Patterned complexity and legibility
Changeability and placemaking
Design is a public good: the kind of art that everyone deserves
Social determinants of health

The determinants of health and well-being in our neighbourhoods
mountains

rivers

forests

plains/fields

Environment

1960

2018
Built environment

- Landscape architecture
- Urban design
- Infrastructure
- Architecture
- Interior design

1990

2018
How can we create more enriching, human-centered environments? (X2 -- more of them, and more human-centered)