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# Another Echo of History

John McKean

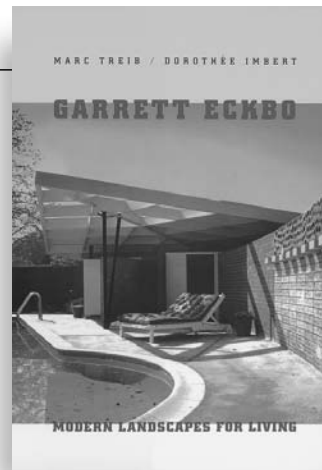
registered newer “deconstructive” architectural trends, but for the most part its central buildings are three or four stories high with broad, welcoming stairways at their fronts.

The name “Gateway Center” is perhaps more revealing than intended. It is meant to signal that these new buildings will be the entrance to OSU, a kind of formal welcoming zone between town and campus. But, as the historian Jacques Le Goff has observed, gateways serve two functions: they allow entrance and deny entrance, they invite and repel. As it stands now, the Gateway Center, with its planned office spaces and mall stores, does not do what a gateway to a university should do: namely, invite one into an area where people gather to talk, read, think, experiment, create, argue, and, most of all, share their work. The Gateway Center does not offer a symbolically appropriate entry into a public university that is the largest in Ohio and one of the two or three largest in North America. If anything, it reads like office space for the various insurance companies that have made Columbus a center of that industry.

Perhaps, though, the Gateway Center will come in time to seem a cutting-edge statement, one that announces how the university is less a place for independent intellectual and artistic life than a subsidiary of corporate culture. If so, the Gateway Center will seem a successful piece of site planning. In the meantime, it threatens to become a barrier between the university and the community surrounding it.

In the recent issue of *Places* on “Considering the Place of Campus,” it was interesting to read Henry Millon’s historical review of the 1968 work on Italian university campuses by architect Giancarlo De Carlo (“The Echo of history,” Vol. 17, No. 1, Spring 2005). For those without easy comprehension or access to the volume

he discusses, I might flag another fascinating essay by De Carlo—more abstract perhaps, but very much part of the same train of thought. Entitled “Why/How to Build School Buildings: Order-Institution vs. Education-Disorder,” it appeared in *Harvard Educational Review*, No. 4 (1969), pp. 12-34.



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