

# Structuration of Individual and Community in Scandinavian Time and Space: Three Conditions of Architectural Expression

DENNIS DOXTATER  
University of Arizona

## SPACE AND MEDIA

Not unlike the structuralist/semiotic influences of a decade or two ago, the more recent preoccupation of architectural scholars with "discourse" methodologies, e.g. those of Foucault, Derrida, Habermas, Gadamer et. al., shows our continued acceptance of the metaphor of architecture as language or language-like. Social philosophers and historians struggle to cast the correct political context of social groups held together by language discourse, from talking to writing. Bourdieu's concept of "practice", an attempt to get at the essence of social experience in some actual physical, spatial context, seems more "environmental" but probably relies again on the cementing properties of language. And even though Giddens' interests in "structuration" attempt to show how small scale groups and discourse transcend space and time to institutional entities, the ultimate source of social meaning, as in Derrida, is "talking".

Why do we as architects continue to believe that architecture and architects influence social thought and action primarily through some sort of "linguistic" process? When one spans the whole of primitive, traditional or vernacular architecture, including important aspects of Non-Western monuments, major symbolic effects appear to come not so much from any metaphor of natural or built form as linguistic text, but from the organization and experience over time of the physical environment itself. The present work is based upon the idea that in spite of decidedly discursive processes of style particularly in Western and Modern societies, vast non-discursive processes have been and may still be possible. The recognition of this potential, however, requires a break in our dependence upon other, linguistically based disciplines of inquiry. In the attempt to theoretically integrate the total continuum of human expressive experience with space, present definitions of architectural discourse offer a very useful contrast with non-textual or environmentally based practices, a distinction between rhetoric and ritual. Given the possibility of essentially different kinds of architectural expression, process and political effect, one can then attempt to map such variations of "symbolic

phenomena" across social scale and historical time, i.e. as aspects of structuration.

In the geographical history of Scandinavia, we are fortunate to have Pred's (1986) richly detailed analysis of how different social spheres and scales interact in structuration processes. While the dominant interest of the work is space—"The social becomes the spatial. The spatial becomes the social" (Pred 1986:198)—attention is not given to actual symbolic conceptions of space or architectural/settlement form. Perhaps there is a linguistic assumption here as well. The early nineteenth century break-up of the *Skånsk* villages of Southern Sweden radically changed the physical distances between farm folk, and therefore processes of structuration. But little is said about the way space and symbolism is used differently by these different groups. To many scholars, the enclosures of Scandinavian farms represent perhaps the greatest single explanation of modernization and individualization in the culture. Relationships between individuals and family, and family and community were never to be the same again. As it turns out, a more comprehensive view of expressive experience suggests a less permanent evolution away from traditional forms, and a much more recent "becoming", in Pred's terms.

To understand Scandinavian space over time, one must conceptualize a continuous effect of social space, either territorial or sacred, in its relationships to more linguistic or medial forms of expression and social influence. Within the spatial stratum of effect, human territoriality is not that unlike the way many animal groups use space. The ritually sacred depends of course on extensive symbolic association. Both systems are useful in the organization of society, but generate the power to influence in fundamentally different ways. The power of territoriality comes from immediate recognition of physical force, or other associated signs of occupation including legal ownership. The most traditional expressive space, however, organizes domains of symbolically opposed thematic meanings which can then be manipulated in ritual performance. Hypothetically, a culture highly organized by sacred ritual spaces has little territoriality, and conversely, a highly territorial society has few sacred places.

When does this say about the role of language originated symbolic expression? Anthropologists often make the implicit assumption that more primitive territoriality is distinct from symbolic space, again because of the role of language in the creation of the symbolic. Yet if language is seen as the primary vehicle of organizing symbols in the mind, the role of symbolic space becomes just one of many medial forms of expression. Such views beg the question of ritual effect. The ritual performance of symbolic experience in space could be very different from other medial or linguistic "reflections" of myth, folklore and the like. Thus one might think of both territoriality and sacred space as part of the fundamental stratum of social space. We then may consider more linguistic "texts", including these aspects of architecture, as additional forms of social influence, whose effects must be integrated with variations of social space.

Certainly the relationship between sacred or cosmological conceptions of space and linguistic myths of origin will be difficult to sort out. Still, it seems logical to see the human use of space as fundamentally primary. It makes little sense to assume that very powerful territoriality at some magical point is suddenly invalidated by the symbolic definition of space or cosmos in an origin myth. It seems more logical to view ancient sacred systems of symbolism as emerging from long territorial experience of living in environments, rather than "thinking them" as part of some essentially linguistic process (for a more contemporary view of this independent expressive potential of space, see Gagliardi's introduction: 1990).

Given this perspective, then, we become interested in how expression as textual media influence spatial effects, both sacred and territorial. How do oral myth and folklore extend or otherwise manipulate ritual processes on the ground? What is the effect of written texts which are based upon the ancient cosmologies? What happens when the written discourses of the Reformation are imposed. How do the more "scientific" cosmologies of the Age of Enlightenment actually influence sacred or territorial space? More particularly as architects we wish to know how discursive or stylistic use of architecture as a linguistic text or communicational device alters social space--which itself involves other aspects of architecture. We want to know the expressive details of how people's beliefs are actually influenced during structuration.

**THREE ORDERS OF SCANDINAVIAN EXPRESSION**

The following provisional definitions attempt to show how combinations of media and social space correspond to real historical events and ultimately to distinctions of architectural meaning. This structuration occurs between social groups with either like or different degrees of power, and between most physical scales of the larger Scandinavian culture. The recognition of possibly separate forms of expressive experience flowed naturally from diachronic studies of architecture and settlement form in Norway and

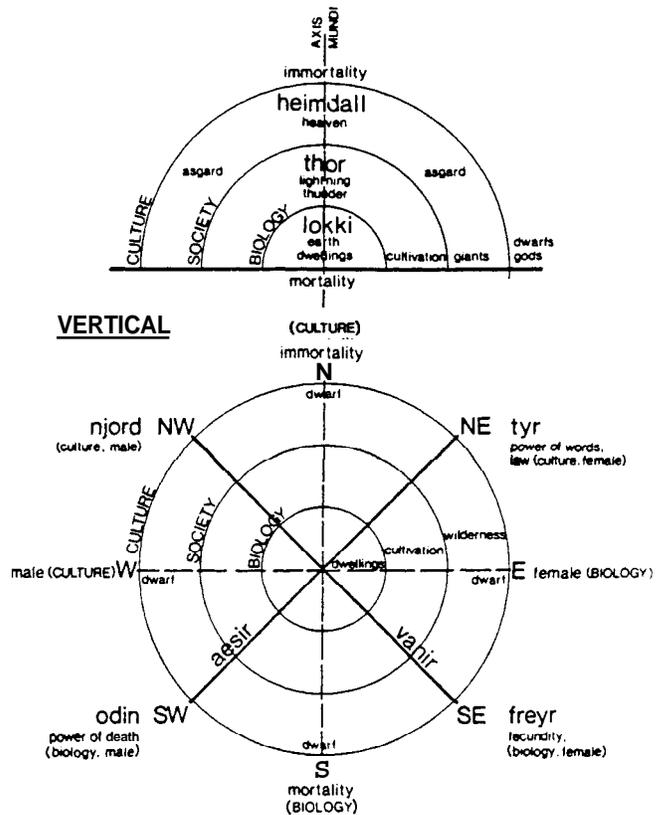


Fig. 1 (a) Viking brooch as cosmogram; (b) Cosmogram as derived from Norse myth

Sweden. Only after contrasting the influences of the very ancient Norse cosmologies with the more territorial and stylistic effects of early urban architecture, was one forced to devise a possible third form of spatial experience to account for what is often referred to as the "peasant village".

In some overall evolution, ancient territorial societies became highly sacred, thus eliminating territoriality. As social organization modernizes, sacred space is broken down admitting once again aspects of territoriality. Modern discursive forms of architecture as language or style may depend intrinsically upon territorial preconditions. Small autonomous villages show little territoriality, little sacredness, and minimal discursiveness. Such may be a theoretically distinctive form of social space, in addition to the territorial and the sacred. Architectural form participates differently in each condition.

In very traditional pre-village farm societies, the ritual use of ancient cosmic meanings dominated architectural and landscape conceptions. Little if any "linguistic" manipulation of form was evident and territoriality was perhaps as well absent. In the early urban, however, little sacred use of space could be discerned, while architectural style and territorial location was all important, as "front and back rooms" in Goffman's terminology. The autonomous peasant villages were ritualistic to a degree, but could not openly use the

ancient ritual points of contact with the old Norse spirits. But neither could they manipulate the facade of their individual farm buildings for purposes of family identity or status.

In terms of structuration, ancient Norse systems of ritual could be used to organize a relatively egalitarian society at larger scales, like greater Iceland, to Post-Christian communities at the scale of valleys or fjords. These systems may only have been minimally altered rather than eliminated by Christianity, at least up to the Reformation. At the opposite end of time and space, Lutheran and Bourgeois discourse became dominant with the more affluent urban classes, and even created the first class distinctions between landed and tenant farmers. In the villages, however, much more of the traditional Norse symbolism still defined the balance between individual family and cooperative community, but in a more architecturally patterned unique form of ritual practice. More textual discourse, expressed by catechism, church territory and style, ran parallel to the internal workings of the village. This discourse structured relationships with larger scales of Scandinavian society.

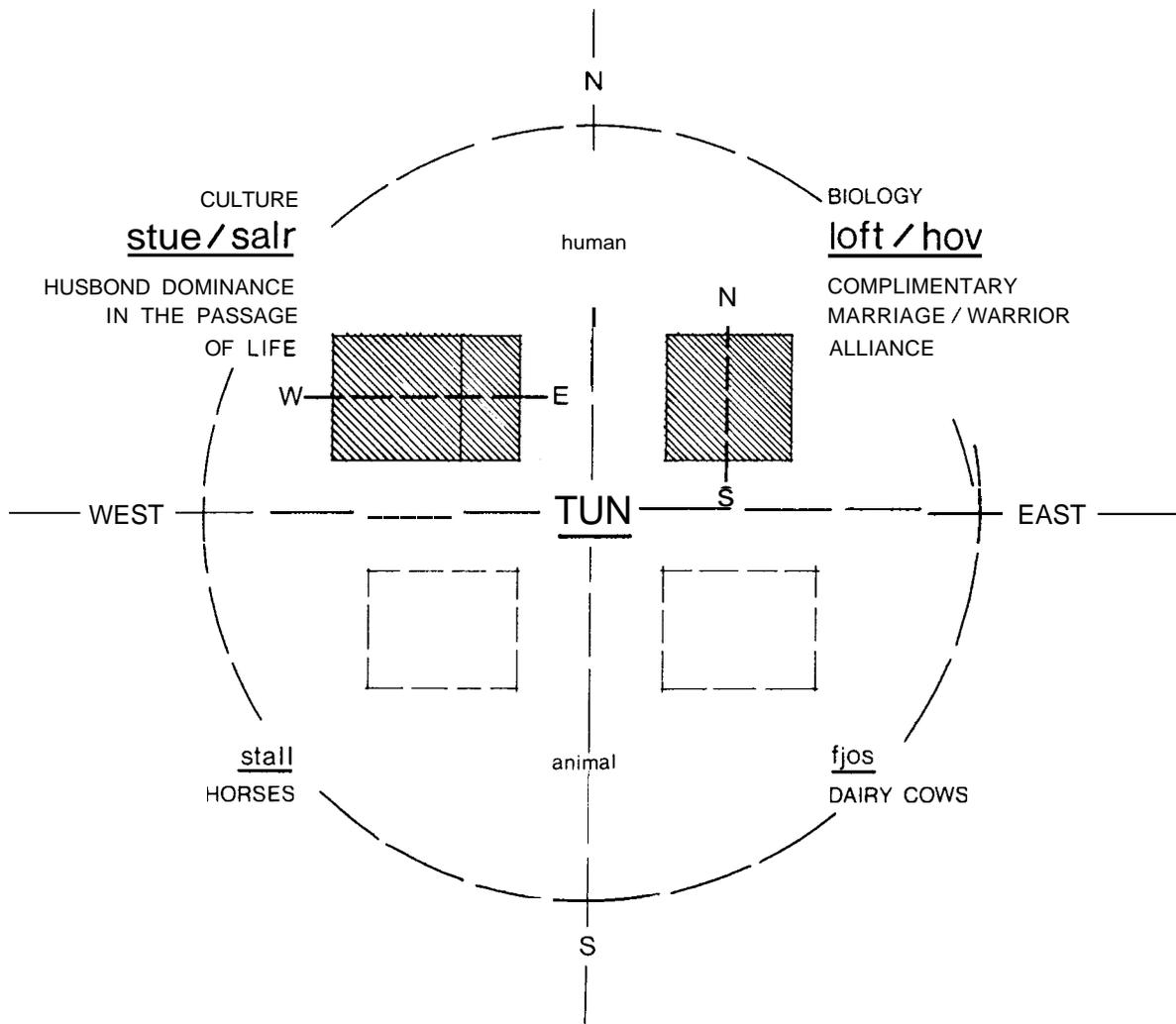


Fig. 2. Ideal diagram of *tun* cosmos (from Doxtater 1981)

## FIRST ORDER: THE FOLK WEDDING AS SACRED RITUAL

The geometry of the ancient Norse cosmos is apparent in small artifacts (fig. 1a) and the novel Viking camps in Southern Scandinavia. Although the actual meanings of the ancient ritual directions are derived from Norse myth (fig. 1b), as recorded linguistically in the 13th century (Doxtater 1981:30), this should not suggest any primary causality of the textual over the spatial. The environmental opposition between the all-powerful spiritual and natural North and the subordinate human and architectural South, has certainly been much more pervasive over vast periods of time than verbal or written forms. These ritually effective systems stretched from the smallest scales of the autonomous single family farm to regional and national scales of some size, e.g. the ancient natural *Ting* site at the *axis mundi* of Iceland itself.

Even well up into the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries in more isolated valleys of Norway, did ancient Norse sacred meanings of space continue to maintain the egalitarian balance between autonomous farm families and the collective valley group. A primary group of farmers participated with each other in cosmically organized ritual events, while closer neighbors exchanged labor. An archaeological study of one such farm (fig. 2), whose dwellings can be dated back to the early Middle Ages, reveals a clear sacred organization to the overall layout. This ritual potential of the farm *tun* as it is called, is intensified in the complex spatial symbolism of the principal locus of ritual, the main dwelling or *stue*. Even the enigmatic early Christian stavechurches in these valleys never dislodged the importance of the dwelling as primary place of contact with the other world. Only relatively late, after the Reformation, did Christian discourse and textual media manage to eliminate the formal use of *stue* for ancient sacred ritual.

Certainly the wedding was the pinnacle of all the rituals which maintained that delicate balance between individual farm families and the community of farmers, in an ecology of extremely limited land and resources. Today in Scandinavia, of course, the wedding is the one rite of passage perhaps least successfully incorporated into Christian discourse and church ceremony. It seems that more couples either live together in common-law or go through a simple state event, than are married in a Christian rite. In the traditional folk culture, both in sacred and village societies, the wedding was the primary means of becoming a legitimate member in the all-powerful community of farmers. This was the means of establishing a collective self, as it were, to balance the patriarchal self dedicated more naturally towards the preservation and well-being of the largely autonomous farm family.

Marriage began with a lengthy courtship process which saw the young maids move from their "female" lodging over the dairy barn (in the appropriate association with the cosmic directions of figures 1 & 2) to the upper floor of the granary,

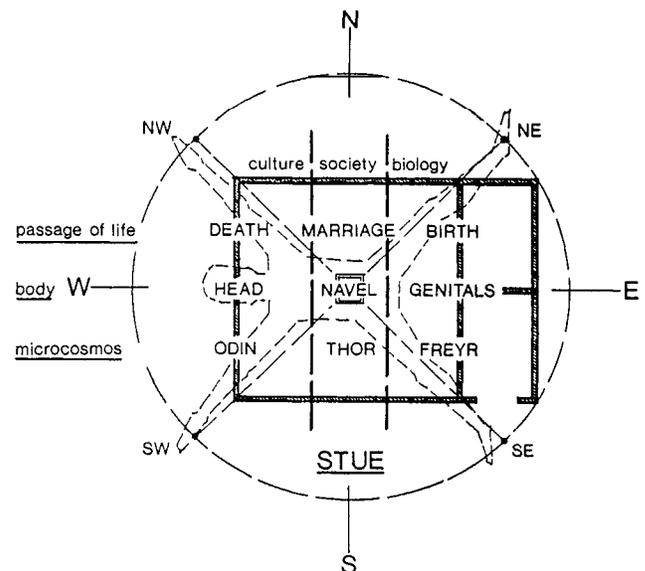
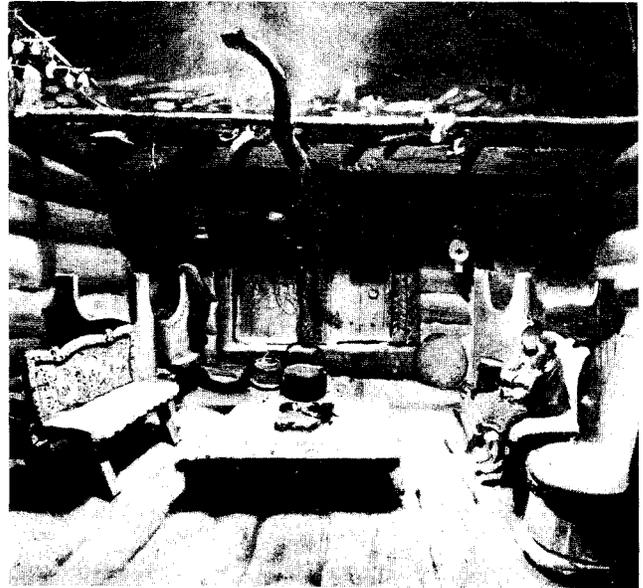


Fig. 3. (a) Aamli *stue* interior, Setesdal, Norway (Norse Folkmuseum photo); (b) Ritual domains of the *stue* (from Doxtater 1981).

or storage structure of farm wealth, the *loft*. For these and more ancient reasons the *loft* threshold, which manipulates the North-South axis between spirits and humans, has always been the most symbolically elaborated. While there may be a limited expression of individual status and even graphic style in these carvings, more typical of third order process, such is minimal compared to the overall subordination of architectural form to ritual meanings and layout. Once in the *loft*, a nightly courtship dialogue ensued; the boys stood down in front; the girls passed judgment from the windows above.

The inviting of the young man up into the bed chamber of the *loft*, and the ritual or physical act of intercourse which followed, marked the conclusion of the courtship phase of

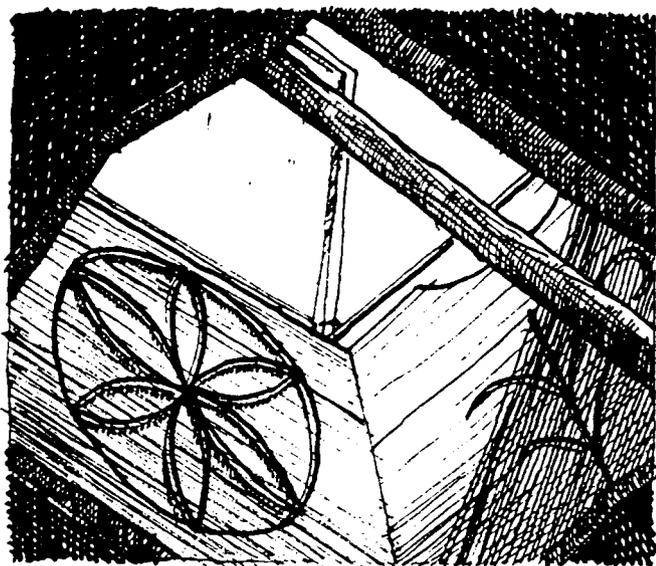


Fig. 4. Smoke vent, *axis mundi*, in the Norwegian *stue*

marriage. Some days after, an "inviting" man rode around to the ritual circle of farmers, placed his hand on the pole which opens and closes the roofvent, and announced the time and place of the coming wedding (fig. 4). This placing of the hand on the symbolic *axis mundi* provides a wonderful comparison between a sacred or ritual legitimacy and "third order" legitimacy effected by the placing of one's hand on the Bible, the symbol of Christian discourse.

The wedding rites proper occurred over several days and began with the "playing of the bride" by the fiddler, a procession from the Eastern courtship loft to the Western *stue* and principal site for cosmic ritual (fig. 3). The geometric character of bride's dress and particularly important brooch all reflect the still powerful Norse meanings of space and time. The bride must be ritually freed from the ritual protection of her family's ritual home. More specifically, the ritual focuses on the elaborate "bride's bench" at the center fire and *axis mundi* (fig. 3). The ritual act at the principle axis of contact itself conceptually moves the bride and the rest of the participants to the world of the spirits who must ultimately legitimize the new community members.

Being in the other world, the wedding journey is dangerous; the bride must be protected with actual weapons. Here we have a good indication of the nominal effect of early Christian churches. After the Black Death many valley and fjord churches were without a priest. It was sufficient during the ritual to arrive at the threshold of the church, which may have even been built upon an earlier sacred natural site. The act of passing under the church threshold itself, not any textually based Christian rite, effected the return to the world of the humans. The way back to the farm was happy and festive. The guns were put away and ale drinking began. The fest at the farm consumed large amounts of ale and food. The ale mugs sculpturally express the sacred transformation effected by ritual drink. Similarly, food brought by the participants from their own farms had to be protected by cosmic graphics on the containers.

Finally we can comment on the theoretical relationship between what must be a very powerful ritual experience, and sacred reflection in the verbal medium of folklore. Given an understanding of the spatial sequence of events in the wedding, and their symbolic meaning, one can then see an isomorphism between a popular tale and the general wedding just described. "East of the Sun and West of the Moon" (Asbjornson & Moe: 1962) is a cosmically structured story about a young maiden who rides off with a white bear to the other world. The bear is a changeling, really her bridegroom. The episodes of the tale parallel the actual folk wedding. Certainly it cannot be said that the layout of farm and the ritual movements of the actual wedding have in any sense originated from either ancient Norse sacred myths or later contemporaneous folktales. The socially shared and lived in built and natural landscape in itself should be a sufficiently expressive vehicle. Do verbal forms of sacred expression add symbolic detail to environmental frames?

## SECOND ORDER: THE COOPERATIVE VILLAGE

At various times in the contact with Christian discourse, the structuration of different scales of Scandinavian society into

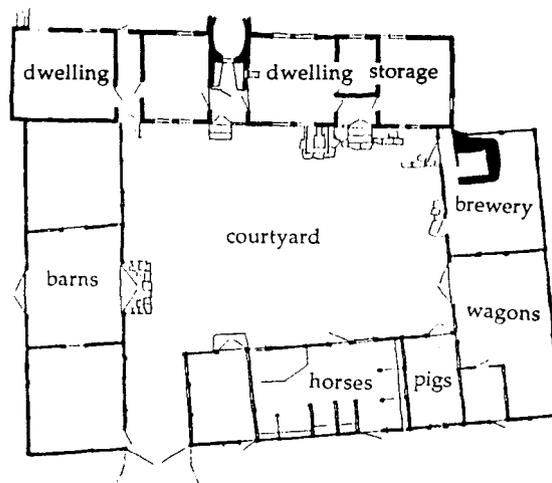
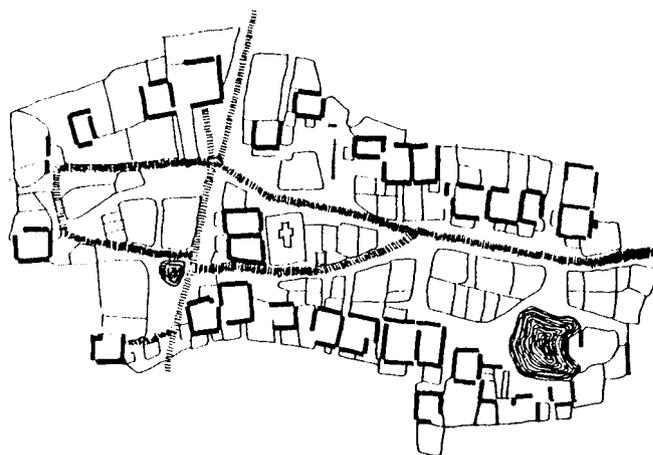


Fig. 5. Middle Ages Skånsk village and plan of individual family farm

national entities demanded the outright elimination of Norse ritual performance and sites. The dwelling on the autonomous farm had to lose its significance as the primary place of contact with the spirit world. Collective ritual in natural sites had to finally be absorbed into the liturgical practices of the physical church. But this transformation was not immediate or total. A phenomenon of village formation appears to have occurred in response, at different places and different times in Scandinavia, according to the historical conditions of structuration, although some communities of autonomous farms never did go through this second order stage (see Doxtater 1990 for discussion of more direct evolutions from sacred to textual conditions). The formation of "systematic" villages, in Erixon's terms (1960), could well be as much an expressive as purely economic or political response. These traditional farm cooperatives didn't aggregate simply because of any defensive need. True, these village-like settlements often clustered around or were adjacent to a church, but we will see that the relationship of one to the other was more parallel than hierarchical.

While the obvious sacred places of ritual contact with the other world have finally been confined to the now "textual" architectural setting of the church, these increasingly cooperative communities are still highly ritualistic. Yet they do not admit the kind of stylistic presentation associated with what is here being called "third order" uses of space and media. This only happens with the enclosure acts and break-up of many villages in the early nineteenth century. Hypothetically it is the actual form of the settlement and architecture itself which maintains much of the old symbolism and social balance of patriarchal family and collective community. This form of ritualistic expression is limited in comparison to the sacred; it cannot be extended beyond the landscape edges of that particular community. But these, along with many other ideas, must await further research.

The earliest and best known of these evolutions from the sacred, are the Middle Ages villages of Denmark and Southern Sweden (fig. 5). Their organization either along the principal road or around a common green can be strikingly formal. While the adjacent church shows some linguistic expression on the exterior, it is primarily on the inside that its medial shift is most apparent. The internalized forms of second order villages and composition of building elements of the individual farm theoretically reflect a new expressive necessity rather than the more purely psychological or territorial reaction to social change. But this remains to be seen. A pre-enclosure diagram of field ownership (fig. 6a) illustrates the increased need for cooperative sowing and harvesting activities, for example, in second-order society. Well known for their egalitarian organization, the village councils were responsible for the details of those farming activities which were necessarily cooperative. These councils ran parallel to and were largely independent of village councils organized by the Church, another contrast between kinds of social organization and means of expression.

After each council meeting, as well as countless other

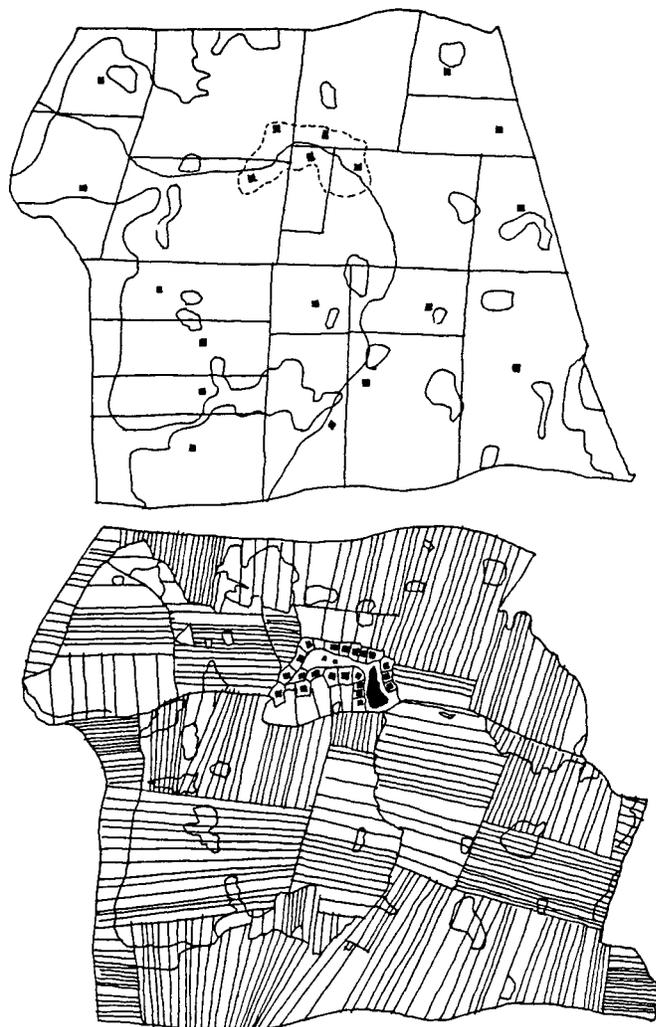


Fig. 6. Changes in field ownership and location of individual farms in Skbnsk village: before and after enclosure (Werne 1980:207)

cooperative work events of all sizes, a fest would have to follow, usually rotating around to particular farms as did council leadership itself. Today this village organization has been logically linked to the cooperative nature of modern work in Scandinavia. In many respects, however, it has been assumed that such organization is fostered primarily by economic necessity and the simple Scandinavian legacy of being able to make decisions in groups. The implicit part of this assumption says that the rich symbolic, ritual and expressive basis of earlier (sacred) egalitarian forms has been replaced by purely economic and social rationality. This assumption deserves far greater attention.

Second order communities were still maintained by a great deal of the old symbolism, though with a new emphasis on architectonic expression and perhaps with a related increased reliance upon folklore. Did cooperative work in fact depend upon the old Scandinavian ethos, just as larger social organizations had in the past? We know that often the dwelling portion of the farm complex still maintained its ancient East-West orientation (Minnhagen 1973:27). And often the old sacred farm tree of the ancestors appears to have

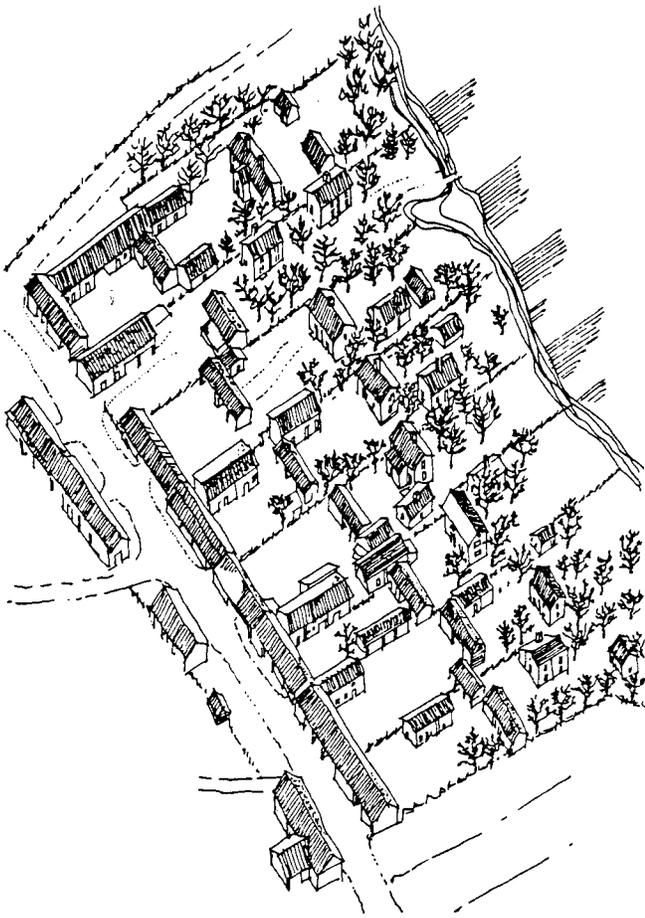


Fig. 7. Systematic organization of farms in a central Swedish community (Werne 1980:16)

been relocated within the family courtyard. At the scale of the village itself, much of the old ritual still went on, particularly that all-important collective Norse ritual of Midsummer, never really incorporated into the Christian calendar and often associated with all the ancient meaning of the wedding. Even in more recent forest communities in Dalarna, Sweden, permanent *Maistanger* (may poles) at least outwardly carry old meanings of cosmic *axes mundi*.

Other more recent examples of clustered farms can be found in the forested parts of Sweden (fig. 7), or on islands like Öland. Many of these villages had no physical relationship to a church. Quite remarkable, and perhaps later, were the clustered *tuns* of Norway. Why were most of these long lived, successful second order forms eventually enclosed or broken up in further processes of historical structuration? Again, most dramatic was the impact discussed by Pred in Southern Sweden and Denmark (fig. 6). Was it simply because the return to individually assembled farm plots was somehow once again more efficient? Or was it because of an essentially spatial and medial conflict of expression and social control? In spite of the immediate adjacency of church

discourse and stylistic setting, structuration processes had had only limited effect. The farm communities were still too independent from larger social, political and economic spheres. It was only with enclosure that class distinctions—and the discursive use of style—were finally forged within the farm communities. The emergent landed farmers no longer belonged primarily to any local collectively, but emulated the bourgeoisie in the growing cities.

### THIRD ORDER: PRESENTATION, STYLE AND DISCURSIVE TERRITORIALITY

In both first and second order societies, the symbolic and ritual use of space encompasses all aspects of the culture's natural and built environment, whether at the systematically large scale of Iceland, for example, or in the "peasant" scale of the village and surrounding landscape. The question arises whether typical forms of territoriality can exist under such conditions. Much of the ritual effect, in fact, may be directly or indirectly aimed at the control of territorial motivations. These would naturally lead to unequal distributions of wealth and eventually social discord. This is not to say that all sacred systems are egalitarian, though such appears to have been the Scandinavian case. Whether or not all second order or closed corporate communities are so remains to be seen.

The concept of third order attempts to organize thinking about how symbolically "intact" and extensive environments, sacred landscapes and peasant villages essentially, begin to be broken down in historical structuration processes. In particular it seems logical to focus on two separate but related aspects of this change. First of all, more recent and modern structuration obviously attempts to organize space far beyond the abilities of intact ritual systems. Thus where there is an absence of spatio-symbolic definition, one would expect space to become available for more territorial manipulation. Theoretically related to this fundamental shift of structuration to include both aspects of the basic social stratum, are textual expressions of discourse. Here we have the important linkage between actual written texts and the styles and metaphors of built form (see for example Duncan & Duncan 1988). Undoubtedly associated with these aspects of third order phenomena is Goffman's presentational idea of "front" and "back" rooms, something which may not exist in ritual environments. Finally there is no need to believe that these so-called orders are mutually exclusive. We will see examples of second order communities who use presentational expression to manipulate more territorial relationships between themselves and outsiders.

The enclosure acts in Scandinavia seem to have broken up ritual systems of space, creating in their place an obvious territoriality, particularly in terms of the new property of the increasingly few landed farmers. Just as dramatic was the creation of urban concentrations of people and industry, a comparatively late experience in the culture. These settings, of course, were the primary loci of territorial and discursive



Fig. 8. Cosmic "discourse" in Sor-Trondelag, Norway, mid-1800's.

structuration between the recently rural work class and the bourgeoisie, itself often influenced by commercial interests controlled by foreigners.

In the farm communities, third order use of architectural expression could not initially utilize the exterior of the dwelling, but created the *fin* rum or parlor inside. This is an obvious Goffman "front room" with strong discursive associations to Lutheranism and urban bourgeois values. Hypothetically these third order forms can only occur in the absence of intact ritual definitions. The exterior of the farm dwelling was still largely constrained, even by very ancient sacred definitions. In this community of dispersed farms in early nineteenth century Sor-Trondelag, Norway (fig. 8), style and presentation are limited not only in their association with the threshold, but in the manipulation of form by different farms. As the story goes in this area, the traveling carpenter, undoubtedly trained in bourgeois, urban styles, contracted individually with each farm to carve their thresholds as well as cabinets and other interior furnishings. But in virtually all examples at different farms the major motifs are quite similar and constrained.

The red and white style of decorative painting across central parts of Sweden and Norway can itself be considered part of the rural discourse which attempted to distinguish things traditional and indigenous from things urban and European. The texts of folk revivals, such as this train station in Norway (fig. 9a), recreate images used more rhetorically than ritually. And finally of course the increasingly territorial family dwelling and home become available for the communication of style, status, and other third order purposes (fig. 9b). The use of the dwelling as territory and rhetorical image reaches an extreme, perhaps, in this suburban house in Southern Sweden (fig. 9c). Here the discourse is textually intertwined with the electronic medium; the style of this home is called "The Dallas".

Third order space and architecture reached something of a zenith in the urban settings of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries (fig. 10). Neo-Renaissance texts were

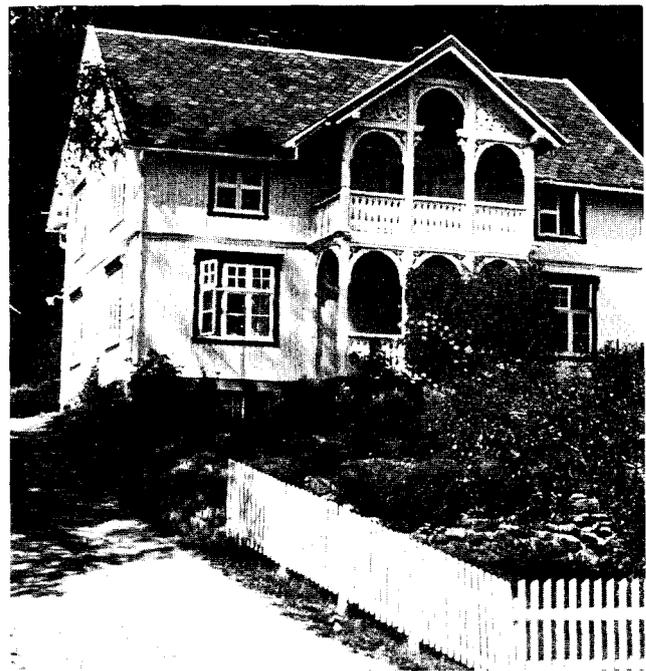


Fig. 9. (a) Folk revival train station, Norway; (b) Dwelling facade as stylistic discourse, Norway; (c) Contemporary suburban home, "The Dallas," Sweden.

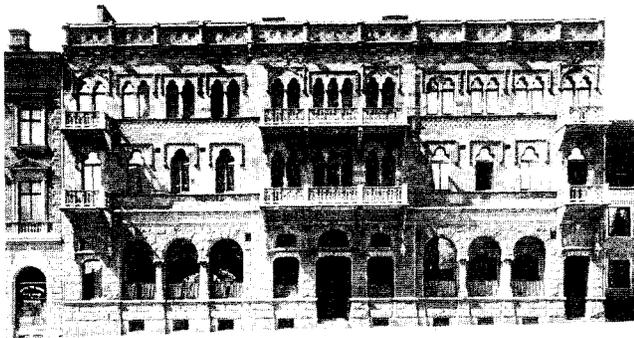


Fig. 10. Bourgeois discourse, central Lund, Sweden (Kulteren photo).

associated with the territorial centers of towns and cities claimed by banks and insurance firms with prestigious apartments above. Bourgeois organization emphasized an extreme of patriarchal authority. The presentational front rooms of banks and homes contrasted sharply with back rooms where an obedient territoriality was the rule. Even the collective worker's movement had to resort to third order expression with the facades of their city locales, and parks. Far more could be said about the discursive role of modernism in Scandinavia as an architectural style, though Asplund's Stockholm library was much more an artistic metaphor of ancient Nordic space than an expression of style and status (fig. 11). Today the superficial post-modern texts of McDonaldism paint a new rhetorical facade on what was intended to be facadeless. Now there is room for much simpler kinds of territoriality.

### THE EXPRESSIVE FORMS OF SELF-DETERMINING GROUPS

Clearly we have seen the breakup of the formalized ancient cultural relationship between family and community. The spatial and medial effects of third order structuration seem to have effectively isolated the family and other social groups. With the recent informalization and apparent decline of presentational systems of discourse—and related international electronic content—one may find an increasing primitive territoriality occurring universally in our cities and towns. Even the linguistic uses of architecture, e.g. as deconstructed texts, are increasingly questioned.

Yet we shouldn't too quickly assume that the stratum of social space has lost its ability to organize society in more expressive even ritualistic ways. One should at least ask if cultural or expressive space still can still function in electronic, universal societies? Will these rely upon a somewhat intact corpus of latent ethnic symbols? Recent "becomings" of society and space in Scandinavia are extremely interesting.

First of all, a great deal of symbolism and tradition still exists in many media; it is however largely a nostalgic legacy

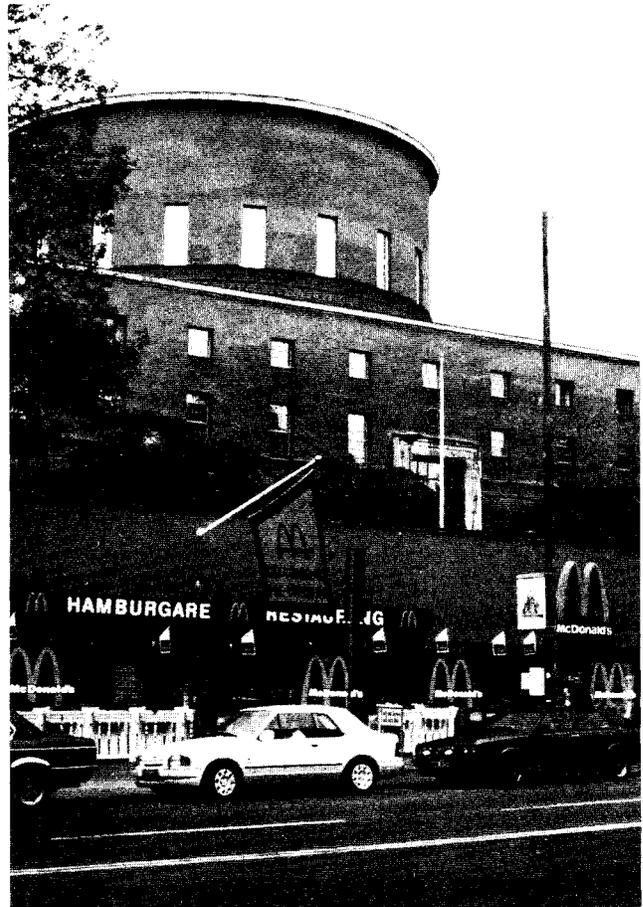


Fig. 11. Stockholm city library by Asplund and MacDonaldis

of meaning unorganized, as it were, by expressive space and ritual performance. Often meanings from different expressive orders are intermixed. Turn of the century photographs, usually in front of the traditional *loft*, show presentational styles of architectural facade superimposed with the ancient sacred association between men and horses, women and dairy cows. While meaning of wealth and prosperity is still being associated with this building, these third-order lofts no longer help to organize ritual performance. More recently, the *loft* image has become the primary communicator of a discourse about the traditional values of the old folk society. Modern farms will often have an elaborately decorated store or catalogue bought, usually prefabricated *loft*. The *loft* form has also been used as the logo for a chain of supermarkets.

Many remnants of the purely spatial structures of the old sacred systems still may be found. The most dramatic of such are still associated with ritual-like social gatherings. Many Scandinavians place their Christmas Tree in the center of a room, rather than a corner. Throughout Scandinavia at Midsummer, people will gather around Maistanger in farm yards, country inn settings, rural villages, city parks and the like.

Certainly the most prominent environmental form which maintained the symbols, spatial meanings and even rituals, was the phenomenon of the folk museum in the middle of the city, a historical presence in most Scandinavian cities or

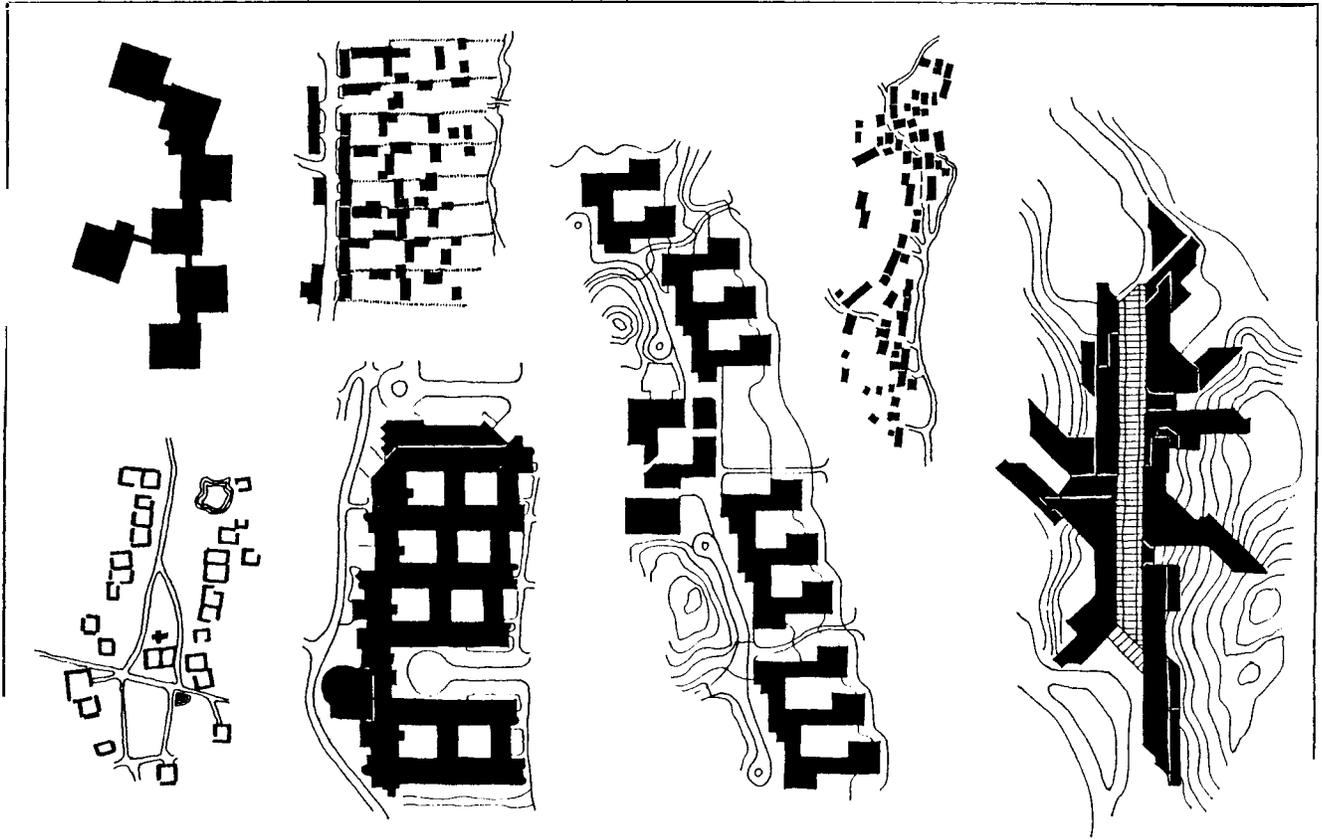


Fig. 12. (a) Stockholm's Folk Museum, Skansen (Skansen photo); (b) Plan diagrams of traditional villages and recent offices, Sweden.

towns of any size (fig. 12a). Perhaps less active today than during the early and middle portions of this century, the assembled farm dwellings appear to have functioned far beyond any simple interpretation of historical objects and images. Because of the actual participation in folk museum events, there may have been an effective preservation of second order ways of life, as a counterpoint to the surrounding third order society. Following this speculation, one perhaps begins to understand the cultural and even expressive precedents to the recent small scale reemergence of these folk-like communities as co-housing projects. Now increasingly popular elsewhere, we ask whether these Scandinavian innovations are actually a reemergence of some of the old symbolism and ritual meanings of space? Or are they simply the result of practical and logical expediency in a world of high costs and fluctuating family composition?

The author's recently published work on changes in the organization and architecture of Swedish offices (Doxtater 1994) makes the comparison with traditional second order villages—here seen in terms of actual plan layout (fig. 12b). Some are villages, some are corporate buildings. The study argues that architectural form was causally important in the expressive, ritualistic processes which have emerged over the past fifteen or twenty years. Along side of the actually much smaller phenomenon of co-housing in Scandinavia, one could argue that work settings have been the most socially and culturally critical. Evidence exists, in fact, that these new second order work societies have begun to rival socially isolated home and family relationships. According to a European study of work, the Swedes were about the only ones to say that they looked forward to going back to work after the weekend.

One cannot yet claim to have firmly established that formalized spaces and non-sacred ritual practice depends upon ancient Norse symbolism, as it undoubtedly did even in second order villages. Nevertheless, here is an extremely unique social and architectural phenomenon in an increasingly electronic, universal world. Some sort of cultural space appears to be working. Certainly there is no primitive territoriality, and there is little evidence of presentational discourse in the facade, decoration or territorial location of social elements. One finds no "front" and "back" rooms. Workers do not close the doors to their individual rooms. On the other hand there are strong spatial oppositions, and frequent ritual practices between individual (formerly patriarchal) and collective entities—the ancient Scandinavian balance, once again. One even can argue that traditional communal symbolism of North and Nature often is played off against the more individual architectural elements, though one certainly cannot speak of ritual points of contact with the other world.

The climax of the book is the recent SAS headquarters near Stockholm (fig. 13). While reported as the product of a benevolent Swedish executive and a competition winning Norwegian architect, it is as much the culmination of an office ethos institutionalized across the length and breadth of

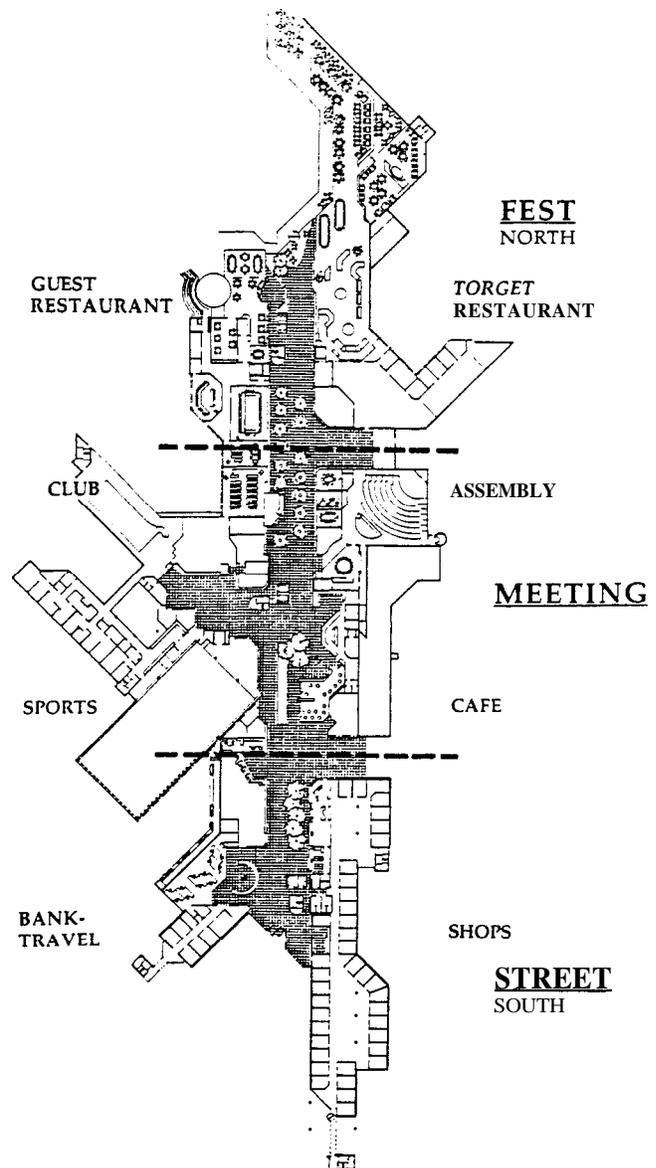


Fig. 13. Ritual domains and thresholds in SAS headquarters building, Stockholm.

at least the Swedish corporate landscape. Its northern street terminus of fjord and market go far beyond the reported third order metaphor of "pedestrian street" (Duffy 1989). From the smallest scales of the now standard individual office and opposed collective "living room", to the scales of department and the organization as a whole, this place is much more like the traditional village society (which it was actually called in the design process) than any essentially third-order urban entity. The importance of the street lies not in its provision of territorial neutrality and social spontaneity, but in its organization of socially and functionally critical ritual practice. This includes celebrations of the three national days, new air routes, and the several others. Artistic forms of culture are not given a presentational or discursive setting, but take place in the northern terminus with accompanying food and drink. Most spectacular is the procession of Santa Lucia on the 13th of December.

One can obviously only leave the reader with this very brief example of the possible reemergence of second order society in Scandinavia. When we add the phenomenon of co-housing in Scandinavia together with the even larger one of co-working, the evidence of something becomes even more persuasive. We really know quite a bit about first and third order expression in themselves, though less perhaps about how they interact in processes of historical structuration. In conclusion, one may say that there is a greater need to study the role of architectural form in smaller, localized "second order" communities. We need to know first of all whether such form is an expressive part of larger structuration processes. If really a special form of ritual practice and social space, what are the prospects in more intact cultures like Scandinavia, and can they be exported to larger more diffuse societies with increasingly primitive territoriality? In spite of the persuasiveness of electronic media, are small enclaves of non-sacred ritual space possible, or even desirable?

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Asbjornson & Moe: *A Time for Trolls*. Oslo: Johan Grundt Tanum Forlag, 1962.
- Bugge, Gunnar & Norberg-Schulz, Christian: *Stav og Laft*. Oslo: Norske Arkitekters Landsforbund, 1969.
- Doxtater, Dennis: "Meaning of the Workplace: Using Ideas of Ritual Space in Design", in Pasquale Gagliardi (ed) *Symbols and Artifacts: Views of the Corporate Landscape*. pg. 107-128. Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1990.
- Doxtater, Dennis: "Socio-political change and symbolic space in Norwegian farm culture after the Reformation", in *Vernacular Architecture*, Mete Turan (ed). Aldershot, England: Avebury, 1990.
- Doxtater, Dennis: *Architecture, Ritual Practice, and Co-Determination in the Swedish Office*. Ethnoscapes Series, No. 12, Aldershot, England: Avebury, 1994.
- Doxtater, Dennis: *Thursday at a Crossroads: The Symbolism, Structure and Politics of "Center" in the Old Scandinavian Farm Culture*. Dissertation: University of Michigan. Ann Arbor, MI: University Microfilms, 1981.
- Duffy, Frank: "SAS co-operation. *Architectural Review* 3-1989, pg. 42-51.
- Duncan, J. & Duncan, N.: "(Re)reading the landscape", *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space*, Vol. 6, pg. 117-126, 1988.
- Erixon, Sigurd: *Byar, gårdar och hus under Bjarka-Saby*. Stockholm: Nordiska Museet, 1984.
- Erixon, Sigurd: *Svenska Byar*. Stockholm: Nordiska Musset, 1960.
- Gagliardi, Pasquale: "Artifacts as Pathways and Remains of Organizational Life", in Gagliardi (ed): *Symbols and Artifacts: Views of the Corporate Landscape*; pg. 3-40. Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1990.
- Goffman, Erving: *Frame Analysis*. New York: Harper & Row, 1974.
- Minnhagen, Monika: *Bondens bostad*. Lund: CWK Gleerup, 1973.
- Pred, Allan: *Place, Practice, and Structure*. Cambridge: Polity Press, 1986.
- Werne, Finn: *Allmogens Byggnadskultur - Förvandling och Upplösning*. Dissertation: Chalmers tekniska hogskola, Goteborg, 1980.