

Class Notes

by Michael Benedikt

1. “You reveal a great deal about your class,” writes Paul Fussell, “by the amount of annoyance or fury you feel when the subject is brought up.” People of the working class, he explains, generally don’t mind thinking or talking about it, since they know there is little they can do to change their station. And nor, really, do they want to, the upper classes being perceived, for all their money, as weightless and effete, and the middle classes as slaves of the marketplace, cogs in the bureaucracy, and generally “loathsome in their anxious gentility.”¹

Members of the upper class don’t mind broaching the topic of class either, says Fussell, since they know themselves to be on top of the system, securely above the fray.

No, it is the hard-working, hard-consuming middle class that feels the annoyance. It is the middle class that does not accept its fate and function, that believes in social mobility, that envies the style and security of the networked rich on the one hand, and the claims to authenticity of those who earn their keep by the sweat of their brows or by facing real danger, on the

other. It is the middle class that is looked down upon by both sides in return, and the middle class that grumbles or walks away, denying class a role or a reality in American society even as it studies, with great care, the rungs of the ladder.

Fussell’s choice of the word “reveal” is interesting. After all, what does it mean to have one’s class revealed by one’s *feelings* about class, feelings which, if they remain unexpressed, constitute a revelation only to oneself? How could one not already know one’s class? Is class necessarily a subject of self-delusion, revealed in the way one’s true personality is revealed by clever questionnaires (“Are You Afraid to Love?”) scored at the end of the magazine?² And why be taken aback by the possibility that others, either by observing the way you respond to the very subject of class or by observing your choices in clothing, language, leisure activity, and so forth, might have a way to identify your class independently of your claims to, or disavowals of, membership in any one of them?³ There is something subversive, out of one’s control, about class, and

this is threatening. Certainly, there is no position from which one can write about social class in America objectively, if (success at) objectivity is measured by the reader's inability to identify the class of the writer or belief that the writer has transcended the whole system.⁴

Over all these questions hangs the single question: Why does class matter? One can see why health and wealth and power matter, but why *class*, which is a category wrapped up with ideals of virtue and style, ideals that, in a polyglot democracy anyway, are many and diverse? Don't class distinctions just devolve to *good vs. bad*, me (*better*) vs. you (*worse*)?

2. Given: Most people are uncomfortable with examining (or is it "exhuming"?) the idea of social class, and perhaps more so today as income inequality in America reaches new extremes and hordes of the newly rich cast about for status-effective ways to spend or "lock in" their money. In England, peerages are for sale even as the House of Lords is dismantled. But America has no aristocracy—at least not one based on ancient, royal grants of land or monopolies. Americans as a people are unusually committed to believing that their society is a meritocracy in which a person's social station (not to say income) is strongly correlated to the value of what he or she contributes to community and country. And yet we know that this correlation is weak, a half-truth at best, an ideal propounded for its motivational effect. Advantage preserves itself—who doesn't know that? We know that for every self-made person, risen by his or her own efforts and ingenuity from sweeping floors to racing yachts, there are twenty others quietly enjoying lifestyles and positions that depend critically, if not wholly, on long-held family wealth and connections, on having had a certain education, and that for every person who migrates from lower or middle to upper class via schooling, occupation, or spouse, there are a

thousand more that stay right where they are, and a vanishing few that go the other way.

Does the ladder of class distinctions stop at Beacon Hill? Is class an all-or-nothing affair, Groton-to-Harvard-to-Wall Street . . . or the wasteland? Not at all. Every state and city and town has its own Old Families and moneyed elites. In every ghetto and country club, church and synagogue, boardroom, seminar room, and shopping

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center, the drama of displaying superior "natural" status among one's nominal peers is played out. Backgrounds are checked, styles assessed—the class system in holographic miniature. Thorstein Veblen, noting wealthy Americans' proclivity for "conspicuous consumption" at the turn of the 19th century, did not predict the subtlety with which the class game would come to be played at the end of 20th, while Karl Marx's description of "class struggle" as the engine of social evolution seems, since the Depression anyway, no longer to apply, having long since transmogrified into issues where class is not mentioned: civil rights, feminism, and the daily dust-ups between Republicans and Democrats over the finer points of taxation, education, immigration policy, and campaign finance reform (not to mention squabbles over, and at, the National Endowments for the Humanities and the Arts).

No, the surest guide to the unspoken and yet powerful American class system is one's own experience of it, beginning, say, in high school and going on into adult life and every social occasion in which money, influence, and questions of taste are mingled together.⁵

3. Since the beginning of (social) time, high class has been associated with the possession of significant wealth.⁶ But more than that, it is associated with the *age* of that wealth. Grand-dad's money is better than dad's, and great-granddad's is better yet. Laundered by time, Old Money enters the social imagination not as something wrested from others, but as the natural property of its present owner, inherited like eye color or height or native ability,

and supplying an uncanny gravitas to whatever inane (or brilliant) thing its owner now proposes. Interestingly, unlike the self-made man—who is likely to hold the poor man responsible for his own poverty and who *takes* power as he takes everything else—the one who has never had to work for a living but does anyway, and who understands by his own example that life is unfair, attracts to himself an enviable natural authority. This issues too from his confidence, which is based on deep financial and social security. Such a person is more likely than the self-made one to help the less fortunate; he is more likely to support the public welfare, funding hospitals, churches, and schools, and to act as custodian of life's Better Things with gifts to universities, museums, research institutions, orchestras, and to those who would create fine architecture for them. Presumptuous? Perhaps. But the alternative in this age of tax revolt is corporate sponsorship, which is more self-interested by far and has no class at all.⁷

4. Wealth that survives generations bespeaks responsible stewardship at least, but having class—and this is a favorite line of architects—is not the *same* as

having money or material wealth, old or new. Class, high class, is a matter of good taste and refined behavior, both of which can be cultivated by anyone with a bit of determination and moderate financial means. Higher education is the key, along with foreign travel (especially through western Europe).

These observations lie at the core of what architects believe in part because their entire profession is often framed as a *helping* one, a service; and although this is never said, the service provided by architects, as much as anything, is to preserve or to elevate the class of their clients. If one's class were unimprovable by informed choices in the realm of cultural consumption and production, architects would forfeit a great deal of what they are good for in society. They would become engineers. Besides, higher education and foreign travel are the two ways in which architects who were not "to the manner born" elevate their *own* class, and so it is not uncommon for architects to invite certain new clients to join them in travel, or tactfully to offer them reading material.⁸

In this democratic age, architectural firms serve a wide range of clients. And the class of architecture firms, like the class of law firms, maps nicely onto the class of their major clients, from the Department of Corrections at the bottom, through suburban commercial developers in the middle, to urban cultural institutions and wealthy individuals at the top (again, the older and greater the wealth the better). The architecture world's "star system," known unto sickness by educators, owes its remarkable entrenchment at least as much to the star-architects' lifelong commitment to, and success at, promoting their own class status and that of their clients as to their hard work and design talent. And it's their class, as much as their ideas, that the schools hope will rub off when the "stars" visit for a review or lecture.

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tion—the ostentatiously unostentatious watch, eyeglasses, and suit, plus a single odd sign of "flair"—but also the signature style of the office. Here, for reasons we will look into, the more singular and more spare the design, the more expensively, spotlessly Less, the better.⁹ At the other extreme, though, and equally effective at purveying/conveying class, is catering to Old Money's felt obligation to maintain America's cultural heritage. Dress? Slightly shabby, styles from the attic. Car? Some nondescript older model. Architectural passion? Historic preservation.

In manner, some architects, modestly well-off, protect or elevate the class of their wealthier clients with the tact of a custom tailor—a word here, a frown there—the impeccability of the results being a function of their long experience or natural reserve. Others protect and elevate the class of their clients with their own renown as the charismatic architect of other clients with class and good taste. Either way, and whether the minimalist or traditionalist path is taken, to be avoided at all costs is the middle, the Marketplace, anything too new or fashionable, anything too colorful or "interesting."¹⁰

Remember that one of the major stylistic and rhetorical foundations of Modernism (in both architecture and art) lay in mocking the kitsch tastes of the 19th-century European bourgeoisie. In this the Modern movement was itself a "class move," a self-propulsion by architects and painters (and writers) away from the dreaded middle class, away from their parents. Modernism as a style, especially in its Miesian or Abstract-Expressionist or Minimalist manifestations, fulfills its anti-bourgeois, kitsch-bashing function to this very post-Postmodern day. Indeed, turning once again to an obsessive interest in its own means and methods (this is the hallmark of Modernism, as T. J. Clark shows in *Farewell to an Idea*) and shorn of its once-socialist impulses to liberate and enrich the lives of ordinary people, architectural

Modernism's theoretics grow more snobbish and confrontational with every passing year.¹¹

Architectural historians too play the game, addressing themselves to specific classes and class ambitions, bestowing and undoing lineages, blessing and unblessing styles as appropriate to the age. As actors themselves in the court of Architecture, they take good care with the company they keep and the effects of their pronouncements on their status. Contrast Vincent Scully to J. B. Jackson.

The same might be said of well-known architecture critics.¹²

5. If the class of architects (and architectural firms) corresponds roughly to that of their typical clients, the class of architects as a group can be contrasted to that of construction contractors and their workers and artisans as a group. Indeed, the relationship between architects and builders, especially once a job is under way, is bedeviled by class ill will—with "class struggle" for the affections and resources of the client/lord. Moreover, the same distinctions shadow the relationships between architects and "their" consulting engineers, and between out-of-town design firms and local production firms. In most such contexts, the (design) architect is perceived by the local architect, contractor, and workers as the dandy, the pretender, the one who won't get his hands dirty, who doesn't understand how things *work*.

In the minds of owners and builders in particular (representing the landowning class and the working class respectively, regardless of their actual bank balances), the architect is situated in the saddle-low middle between them: "loathsome in his anxious gentility," as Paul Fussell would put it, grateful for the chance to be creative, and yet obligated everywhere to represent the owner's interests. Architects resist these social perceptions, of course, and it is interesting to see how they do so. First, they cast themselves as princely coordinators of the whole

enterprise, approached by supplicant clients who, without them, could not turn their characterless dollars into glorious real estate or places of charm, called upon by builders who, without their detailed instruction, would be helpless to proceed, and solving all problems that might show up in the light of a grander and more comprehensive vision. Second, architects find plenty of others to look down on: buyers of tract mansions, people who haven't been to Lugano, skinflint clients, builders who don't read plans (actually, all builders), etc., etc.¹³

Within the architect's office, too, a similar set of status distinctions holds, and these only roughly track salary and experience. Design partners may top business partners more often than not, but partners who manage technical matters or in-house staff issues regularly come second or third. Designers lord it over project managers, and both look down on specifications writers, while model-builders and CAD jockeys spar over who has the future in their hands, who are the real artists. On the construction site, a powerful hierarchy of trades obtains, with joiners being "better" than carpenters, plasterers better than sheetrockers, electricians better than plumbers, concrete-layers and steel-setters better than excavators and shorers, anyone operating a machine better than anyone using their (gloved) hands, dry work beating wet work,¹⁴ indoor work beating outdoor, union beating non-union, and so on.¹⁵

6. One searches for some reason in, and some reason for, this eternal scrimmage for "natural" privilege. Would the world be better a better place without caste or class? Would it be more fair? Against the democratic impulse to say "yes!," one must at least consider the possibility that it might not, that the social game of "class," and the complex pursuit of it, serves some larger purpose and some overall benefit. Are there not other games—the marketplace to name one, politics to name another—that vivify and or-

ganize us? And would the more avid pursuit of higher class, insofar as it is *not* identical with money or power, not be an improvement over the pursuit of money or power alone?

What, then, *is* class? And how might one in good conscience, and against cries of "inequity!" and "elitism!," admire and want it for oneself? The need to bring this complex subject quickly back to architecture requires me to sketch out what could be elaborated at length.

Social stratification along class lines has been a universal of human civilizations. For the ancient Greeks, our cultural forebears, high "class" was attached to *arete*, or excellence, pursued and achieved.¹⁶ To hold on to class as a workable modern concept, one needs only to allow the idea of excellence to (continue to) break free of notions of race, creed, wealth, education, or birth—factors the Greeks long thought necessary if not sufficient for *arete*—and break free of these notions not just in the eyes of the law (the First and Fourteenth Amendments, the Civil Rights Act., et al.) but also in our hearts and minds.

What does this leave, then, for social "class" to be about? It leaves the *virtues*. (Indeed, *arete* in some translations means virtue.) It leaves the ideal of exemplifying those virtues, and it leaves open the belief, begun with the ancient Sophists, that the virtues can be taught to and cultivated by anyone who applies him or herself to the project. Such were the bases for humanism.

We hit the main problem immediately: There are scores of virtues, and no individual person can exemplify them all. Moreover, many of the virtues are contradictory (tact and forthrightness, for example), making their deployment circumstantial and subject to the application of yet another virtue, wisdom.¹⁷ And then there are cultural and religious traditions that disagree as to which of the virtues are more important—more virtuous—to possess. All these traditions must solve the common problem of how to

inculcate willingness to apply oneself to being virtuous in the first place.

Consider a few of the many virtues: moderation, forbearance, forgiveness, hope, faith, optimism; kindness, hospitality, charity; piety, compassion, courage, creativity, wisdom, resourcefulness, skill, vigor; prudence, fairness, honesty, and discretion. Or consider these pairs of more circumstantial virtues, each half of which seems to have its time and place: caution/daring, extravagance/thrift, insistence/acceptance, reverence/irreverence, obedience/rebellion, cooperation/competition, humility/pride, justice/mercy, realism/idealism, skepticism/faith, chastity/profligacy, "commonness"/gentility, forcefulness/gentleness, formality/casualness, passion (ateness)/reason(ableness), and so on.

My suggestions are two. First, that the social classes, like individuals, "specialize" in upholding and exemplifying certain virtues over others. They do so already, and should: such is the complexity of the task. And second, that *all* the virtues are necessary, acting in concert and in toto, for a society—and that means the individuals in it—to thrive.

Neither suggestion is new. Economist Dierdre McCloskey has argued eloquently that middle-class, bourgeois virtues such as thrift, prudence, consideration, affection, reliability, and so on receive short shrift in popular culture, even though the exercise of these virtues is critical for the economy.¹⁸ Nelson Aldrich, Jr., makes a similar point, contrasting Old Money's (belief in its) custodianship of such virtues as loyalty, truth-telling, sportsmanship, modesty, generosity, and gratitude against the virtues of entrepreneurial "Market Man"—i.e., "industry, single-mindedness, energy, tenacity, alertness, and the intellectual courage to face the facts and calculate risks and benefits. . ."—which are decidedly middle or upper middle class but not one whit less necessary or admirable.¹⁹ The lower classes champion their own virtues too, and these overlap in interesting ways with the upper

class's: courage (grit), loyalty, honor, charity, plain dealing, patience, amity, and so on.

The point is more universal yet. There are virtues appropriate to soldiers, to merchants, to clerics, farmers, athletes, philosophers, statesmen, and craftsmen. Jane Jacobs, in *Systems of Survival* (1992), makes much of this point. All virtues are unnatural in as much as they demand something from us over and above what we would do simply following our instincts, but no virtue taken to an extreme remains one: Moderation is called for, as Aristotle pointed out in the *Nicomachean Ethics*. And just as *all* good roles in a

neediness nor somewhere express it. Think of the exceptions: Richie Riches endlessly dissatisfied and self-pitying on the one hand, and people who have nothing yet are stoic and serene on the other. The latter have class, the former do not—no matter how refined their tastes in food or art. Both kinds of people strike us deeply when we encounter them precisely because they are reversals of expectation.

Now the “conscious suppression of any show of neediness” is a virtue related to but not the same as pride, which, when a virtue rather than a vice, implies appropriately high self-regard. It is something else. Accompa-

laid out and judged—as present, questionable, or lacking—and that the very selection of issues and virtues suggested by the student, and/or by his or her interlocutors in response, has considerable class resonances.²¹

Suppose, though, that the assumption of the superiority of one class (of virtues) over the others could be set aside on the enlightened belief that *all* virtues are worthy of respect, cultivation, and reward. This would still leave open the nobility question. How does this manifest itself?

Well, beyond expressing tolerance and good will, class-wise students—class-wise architects—presenting their work, will be careful to act as if all their needs had already been met. They will appear in no need of permissions or compliments, assurances, money, or agreement—certainly in no dire need. Any hint of self-pity would be expunged. But the power of this neediness-denying virtue (real or dissembled) goes deeper into architecture's fabric and history than this or that architect's manner with clients. It goes to the very nature of design and the architect's choice of style. What do I mean?

8. Consider Miesian Modernism once again. What did the Farnsworth House, or its later emulation by Philip Johnson in New Canaan, exemplify, if not the class-emblematic transcendence of ordinary human needs for thermal comfort and visual and acoustic privacy? These were shown to be meetable—that is, discardable—by pure force of character. Thus were Illinois and Connecticut turned into Eden by sheer class power. These simple glass boxes were tours de force over those fussy, Old Money mansions and their clubby comfortable furniture—they were class coups d'état.

Both of these buildings fail entirely as models for architecture in general, of course, which would not be a problem if this were not exactly how they were proposed by their architects and taken by the architectural press. That is, they failed as models for architec-

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society must be filled if it is to function, so are all their different and associated virtues worthy of respect, cultivation, and reward. Excellence is no one person's prerogative, nor that of any one social class, occupation group, or style. The virtues group themselves, as it were, into perhaps a hundred common selections of three or four or five; and “class” accrues to anyone, of whatever income, education level, or family background who succeeds in exemplifying one such group richly while failing in none of the others. I think this is wisdom about virtues. As far as it goes.

For there is one more virtue that, like wisdom and moderation, is all but preconditional to placing well and yet troubling in its application: *the conscious suppression of any show of neediness*.²⁰ This virtue both sets up and plays havoc with the verticality inherent in social status. For it is simply easier for people born into Money and/or who grow up around helping, connected, well-off, and educated family members not to feel needy in the first place, and harder for people born into poverty, ignorance, or neglect neither to feel

nied by a normal amount of tolerance and good will, one might call it *nobility*. The risk in seeking nobility—at least by this definition of it—is, alas, succumbing to the vice of *pretension*, which is what happens when nobility's signs become an aesthetic—a style—that masks deficits in other virtues or excellences in non-upper-class virtues, such as thrift, and when the need most denied is also the one most dire: the need for class elevation itself.

7. Now let us return to architecture. Try this experiment. Sit in on a design review at an architecture school and close your eyes. Listen carefully to the terms used in praise or criticism of the work being presented. You will find that most of the terms used are virtues (or vices) more appropriate to people than to buildings: The design is (or is not) honest, strong, respectful, critical, graceful, sensitive, interesting, careful; has integrity, is not wasteful, is intriguing, inviting, bold, challenging, practical. . . . Call it literary personification; call it critique of the student's character, dress, or body *through* their work. The point is that certain virtues are

ture in general in every way but one: as demonstrations of how to elevate one's class through (a) hiring a high-style architect, and (b) building in a style that spurned needs and masked thrift. When genuine needs are spurned rather than satisfied, and especially when they are spurned out of a strategic need to avoid the display of neediness, the results can only strain at, not achieve, nobility. Not only can the psychic toll be considerable, but the whole strategy is eminently cooptable by those whose real interests are economic.²²

In art, roughly the same dynamic had been holding since around 1910. Only the proletariat needed paintings that depicted people and scenes with verisimilitude, narrativity, and moral uplift (if it could be said that they "needed" paintings at all). The middle class, striving ever to be upper, could accept affordable and "impressionistic" versions of this, replacing moral with romantic aesthetic uplift (fields, flowers, peasant maidens); but the upper middle classes of the art world, wanting to show that their every practical and ordinary need was met, were soon convinced to admire nothing more than paint-on-canvas that was about paint on canvas.²³

Look around at the state of our architectural culture in the year 2000. The dominant strategy for class supremacy remains attached to the ascetic/minimalist/modernist program of neediness denial, with all sensuality, all richness, all tradition, all need for physical and psychological comfort surrendered to the un-admitted need for art-world prestige, and sublimated to reading/writing about the extremely subtle charms of raw concrete and translucent glass, tall empty spaces, and light. Most artists aren't having it. They have long since moved on to more complex emotional territory. Most Americans aren't having it either, if for different reasons. The question is: Do you care?

Notes

1. Paul Fussell, *Class: A Painfully Accurate Guide*

through the American Status System (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1992 [1983]), 16.

2. Fussell's book ends in just this way, with entertaining questionnaires that purport to determine your class but actually test how well you remember his do's and don'ts (and can thus dissemble). Of course, one can always try to get a fix on one's friend's or rival's class using this handy instrument.

3. For example, by so genially holding the opinions I report in the first paragraph, doesn't Fussell signal reflexively, self-referentially, that he is *not middle class*? Or does he mask his precisely middle-class anxiety with the very volume of his erudition on the subject?

4. Actually, at the end of his book, Fussell leaves himself (and you and me?) wiggle room by inventing a new class, which he calls the X-class: a group of educated iconoclasts outside of the whole system, irreverently mixing and matching the preferences and virtues of all three classes—lower, middle, and upper—for its own pleasure and uses.

5. Books like Paul Fussell's and Nelson W. Aldrich Jr.'s *Old Money: The Mythology of America's Upper Class* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1988) serve mainly as devices for sharpening recognition. One might also add to the reading list the essays of Lewis H. Lapham, the novels and essays of Tom Wolfe, the novels of F. Scott Fitzgerald, Sinclair Lewis, Theodore Dreiser, John Cheever, and Jane Austen and E. M. Forster, and indeed most British novels published in the 20th century and popular British films, Merchant Ivory or no.

6. The correlation is more to wealth than income. Wealth is stored in private real estate, artworks, gems, ownerships of patents, businesses, or sports teams, or in bonds and other secure investments.

7. Indeed, with corporate and new-money philanthropy, the transfer of prestige is often from grantee to grantor. The working class is charitable on much smaller scales, of course, as money is given to friends, family, and churches. The transfer of prestige is less important.

8. The hope for improvement in one's inherited class status through education and foreign travel (not to mention "manners") is characteristic of the aspiring upper middle class, sniffs Fussell. But he stops short of saying it is (therefore?) mistaken. One cannot help but note the immense popularity of extended, for-credit, European travel programs at the better (but non-Ivy League) schools of architecture across America.

Is this not a faint echo of the once *de rigueur* Continental tour undertaken by young well-born English and American gentlemen?

The phrase "to the manner born," as a description of upper class membership, is often mistakenly heard as "to the manor born." The phrase is Shakespeare's (*Hamlet*, I:iv). When it comes to class, does behavior beat architecture? 9. Lest you think I speak only of modern houses for the rich, look at the houses designed and built by Samuel Mockbee and his students for poor residents of rural Mississippi, or at Rob Wellington Quigley's SRO hotels in San Diego—all more organized, more tasteful, more blank and crisp than what folk-architects would come up with. These are definitely *classier* environments than the norm for the building type, and probably better-functioning ones too, although the latter judgment depends on how sensitively one studies vernacular building types and decoration styles in relation to the lives traditionally led in them.

10. You're thinking: Hey, what about Gehry? How does this rumpled fellow from Canada and California with a head for business equal to his head for form become engaged by the likes of such blue-blood institutions as the Guggenheim to design the fabulously entertaining, aggressively original museum in Bilbao? Is this building—is this pairing—a "class act" or a "class-transcending" one? Is this building (and indeed, his earlier Disney Concert Hall) not a hair's breadth away from a straight Disney attraction? Compare and contrast the manner in which and the reasons for which, Yoshio Taniguchi won the competition to add to the Museum of Modern Art. It would seem that the heritages of Frank Lloyd Wright and of Ludwig Mies van der Rohe are quite distinct, and destined never to meet except in didactic contrast, as in Gwathmey/Siegel's addition to the Guggenheim in New York. (Of course, that the latter building is now *old* helps its class a great deal. At the time it opened it was sniffed at as populist.)

11. After the Second World War, that Miesian Modernism was so cheap to build in knock-off commercial forms *and* would still be "read" by class-conscious cognoscenti as abstract art, as Cubism continued, as space/time "investigated," and all that, constituted a fabulous stroke of luck for urban developers. This was a double whammy to *architecture*, though, and it left the man in the street speechless, powerless, and sad. In the long run it made architects the Enemies

of the People they didn't need to be.

For more argument along these lines, see my "Less for Less Yet: Architecture's Value(s) in the Marketplace," in the Winter/Spring 1999 edition of this magazine. For a broken-backed apologia promoting the careers of a new round of Modernist designers (complete with a group photograph enshrining Philip Johnson), see Herbert Muschamp, "Crystal Corridor in the City of Glass," *New York Times*, December 24, 1999, at <http://www.nytimes.com/yr/mo/day/news/arts/international-style.html>.

12. Here's sport: Watch Herbert Muschamp, architecture critic for the *New York Times*, playing David, try to topple Donald Trump (Goliath, Philistine) on the hilltop pages of his paper with a barrage of critical pebbles and barely veiled condescension ("But I love the color, contentiousness and comedy Mr. Trump brings to the urban scene"), this without using the word "class" and yet marking, for all readers, where class lies, and who has it, and who among architecture's patrons does not, because they won't hire the New Modernists that Muschamp likes ("Trump, His Gilded Taste, and Me," *New York Times*, December 19, 1999).

And more: In this long article, Muschamp tells of inviting Donald Trump to meet him and Philip Johnson at the Museum of Modern Art in front of Andy Warhol's "Gold Marilyn," there to have some sort of style/class showdown. (Johnson had earlier been fired by Trump on a project. Muschamp had criticized many of Trump's buildings in the pages of the *New York Times* over the years.) Trump arrives and throws his coat and binder down on a nearby sculpture by Donald Judd, obviously *mistaking it for a coffee table!* Oh my. Wait till I tell . . . But no, Muschamp, good chap that he is, rather *likes* Trump. Indeed, he writes, "to my eyes . . . [Trump's] public persona is itself a cultural artifact of museum quality." The patrician upper classes, of course, only value things that are of "museum quality," a proclivity that nicely supports those editors, academics, dealers, curators, and critics who have the proven ability to discern it for them. Trump himself as a collectible? How droll.

13. To be more complete, one should make note of a kind of architect who identifies more closely with the virtues and values of builders than those of most architects and clients. These architects like to build things themselves occasionally, not just to get a job done but to keep their craft "hand" in. Prouder of what they

know about the details, materials, and tricks of the construction trade than they are of what they know, say, of history, they seek to validate their status among builders they work with (some of whom are personal friends) and at the same time to rebuke their more effete colleagues, effete because they only talk or draw. Often the children of working-class parents, for them "architecture" means "good building" (and "good" means well-put-together and liked by lots of regular people). If they use the computer, it is just another *tool*. And so forth. My difficulty in "naming names" here—names that you would recognize, that is—goes to the heart of the problem. This sort of architect gets no press. Working-class Americans would certainly say that this sort of architect is also the one who really "has class." Many bluebloods would agree.

14. But see plasterers and sheetrockers, above, a reversal of dry over wet. On the job site, it is often personality—force of character—that overrides these preliminary assignments.

15. More broadly, it is a tragedy of some proportion that, with ongoing automation, the considerable aesthetic appeal of physical labor has been taken from the working class as a political instrument. Today, one gets a "great body" from the gym, not the job—from rock climbing, not rock carving.

16. Let it be noted that reference to ancient Greek ideals in this context is an upper-class gambit. For the modern sociologist, "class" refers to a group of people of the same socioeconomic status. Much lies compacted behind this inelegant word, "socioeconomic," especially behind the "socio" part. Class is the largest scale at which the dynamics of individual social status works itself out.

17. For a full-length study of wisdom and its status as a "meta virtue," see Amélie Frost Benedikt, "Philosophical Wisdom: An Inquiry and Some Proposals," PhD dissertation, the University of Texas at Austin, 1999.

18. Donald McCloskey, "Bourgeois Virtue," *American Scholar*, Spring 1994, Vol. 63, No. 2, 177–193, and Dierdre (once Donald) McCloskey, "Bourgeois Values," *Center 10: Value* (Austin: Center for American Architecture and Design, 1999), 1–4.

19. Aldrich, 92. Aldrich is amazingly insightful on the issue of virtues and class throughout pages 91 to 93 of *Old Money*.

20. The reasons for this are many, and I shall not go into them here. I go into this in chapter

three of my *Value: Economics, Psychology, Life* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, in press.)

21. A finer taxonomy than "upper," "middle," or "low" is required for this. Here is one: upper/patrician, upper/aristocratic, upper-middle/professional, upper-middle/entrepreneurial, middle/bourgeois, lower-middle/bourgeois, lower-middle/craft/guild, upper-working (proletarian)/skilled, lower-working/unskilled, welfare-case, destitute. Fussell (see pages 24–50) fleshes out a more elaborate "anatomy of the classes." Read any architect's description of the virtues of his architecture and the chances are that all of them are virtues he himself wishes to exemplify as a person.

22. For the tragic story of Edith Farnsworth and the personal and class struggle represented by the design and occupation of her house, see Alice T. Friedman, "Domestic Differences," in Christopher Reed, ed., *Not at Home: The Suppression of Domesticity in Modern Art and Architecture* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1996), 179–192. The architectural press at the time, of course, hailed the Farnsworth House as a masterpiece—just as it later did Johnson's house in New Canaan. See also note 11 above.

23. Collectors needed more than this, of course, and still do: a measure of assurance of museum quality, some brouhaha about the work (but not too much), and a reasonable shot, therefore, at making a safe investment as well as at raising their class. Not for nothing did Marcel Duchamp, after he gave up satirizing the art world through art, become an anonymous buyer-agent of his peers' work for wealthy collectors.

For an account of modern art's origins, ironically, in the rise of the bourgeois marketplace for commodified painting in the 19th century, see Patricia Mainardi, *The End of the Salon* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1993).

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