# Postwar Visions of Apocalypse and Architectural Culture: The Architectural Review's Turn to Ecology

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ABSTRACT    In the post-war era, Hubert de Cronin Hastings, the owner and editor (until 1971) of the English periodical *The Architectural Review* (*AR*), saw mankind facing its demise through its own scientific creation, the atom bomb. Hastings's editorial policies for the *AR* were very much influenced by the prospect of impending nuclear disaster during the Cold War and the decline of the British Empire in a world divided into the mandates of two superpowers. While the post-war period brought mistrust of the promise of emancipation through technology and

science for those like Hastings, for others there was all the more reason to believe in these ideals with the dawning of a consumerist society and the development of pop culture. Within this cultural context *AR* aimed to develop and sustain an environmental culture as a holistic strategy in order to respond to planning problems. Targeting not only architects but local and national authorities as well as the 'man on the street', *AR* launched a series of campaigns that aimed to increase environmental awareness against post-war industrial transformation and the rise of consumerism. After the decline of the affluent consumer society of the 1960s and the devaluation of the pound in 1967, *AR* revamped its structure and contents and launched its 'Manplan' campaign, reacting against economic crisis and environmental decline. Taking issue with 'Non-Plan: An Experiment in Freedom' written by Reyner Banham, Peter Hall, Paul Barker and Cedric Price in *New Society* in 1969, 'Manplan' demanded centralization and comprehensive planning against decentralization and dispersal as a means of planning democracy. According to the editors, scientific progress enjoined to consumer culture and ever-expanding economic growth brought a ruthless exploitation of resources as well as destruction of the natural landscape. Before the journal itself went into economic crisis and Hastings left the editorial board, the first issue of the pioneering journal *The Ecologist* themed 'A Blueprint for Survival' was brought on the board's agenda by Hastings. In the light of global warming and increasing rate of environmental disasters today, the history of *AR*'s editorial campaigns deserve renewed interest. This paper focuses on the neo-romantic ideology that underlay the post-war editorial policies of *AR* motivated by approaching environmental disaster within the continuum of a quarter century.

## Introduction: Faces of Disaster

[An] insane over-confidence in the specialised powers of metropolitan industrialism has brought us to the point where … the risk to human survival is becoming evident, [and] … there is the clear impossibility of continuing as we are. (Williams, 1973)

+ On 16 May 1968, only a few weeks after the tenants had moved in, one side of Ronan Point collapsed due to a gas leak explosion, killing four people and injuring many. Ronan Point, in Newham, London, was one of the many 'system-built' tower blocks, easily assembled from pre-fabricated concrete elements bolted together like a kit of parts in a short time. Following the Second World War, many high-rise blocks were built as an easy solution to the housing problem in Britain. High-rise blocks were interpreted as synonymous with the Modern Movement, and the disaster had a significantly negative impact on the public's perception of Modern architecture and Modernism. Paralleling the May 1968 riots in France, the disaster followed a decline in the British economy and a loss of confidence in consumer society after the pound was devalued in 1967.

The 1960s can be characterized as a decade of conflicting trajectories. In these turbulent years, optimist belief in the emancipatory potentials of technology and consumer culture coexisted with prophecies of doom attached to the impending threat of nuclear warfare.

For some younger architects the 1960s was a decade of plastics, of pneumatic structures, geodesic domes, hovercrafts, 'scientific' housing patterns, expendability and inspirational techno-gadgetry like moon probes. They wore blue jeans and t-shirts instead of double-breasted jackets and bow-ties, lived in the euphoric world of drugs and pop icons, imagined future cities that walked and talked, flew and plugged-in. They believed in the power of indeterminacy and experiments in democratic planning, in freedom via consumer choice and sometimes revolt. For others it was a time of resistance against much of the above: a decade of Italian townscapes, the reappraisal of vernacular architectures and folk art, the rise of environmentalism and the green movement, the campaign for nuclear disarmament, heightened sensitivity towards planned use of world's economic resources and a split in socialist politics. But for all in Britain, it was a decade of unexpected economic prosperity followed by a shocking decline.

British architectural history still focuses on the 'avant-garde' discourse of the time, which was closely connected to the rise of popular culture, consumerism, and the technological development brought about by the post-war military-industrial complex. Against this limited emphasis, cultural histories illuminate a much broader field

forcing the architectural historian to re-evaluate this historiography and to unearth the period's conflicting dynamics. It is undeniable that, in this period, pop culture and mass media dominated the cultural scene more than ever before in Britain, while this development was closely followed and criticized by different ends of the ideological spectrum.

Starting from 1946, *The Architectural Review* (*AR*) was run by an editorial board that pursued a continuous editorial policy until its owner and chief editor Hubert de Cronin Hastings retired in 1974. To summarize briefly, this editorial policy consisted of

- creating an urban design idiom by reinterpreting the late 18th-century picturesque theory entitled 'Townscape';
- the appraisal of local vernaculars as a cultural resource for modern architecture to develop anonymous but diversified regional vocabularies;
- the construction of an architectural historiography that supported and justified these intentions.

This editorial policy was formulated by Hastings (owner and editorial director of the Architectural Press in the period between 1927–73, chief editor of *AR* between 1927–73), J. M. Richards (joined as assistant editor in 1935, editor between 1939–70) and Nikolaus Pevsner (editor between 1941–70). It resulted in series titled 'Townscape' (1949), 'Outrage' (1955), 'Counter-Attack' (1956), 'The Functional Tradition' (1957), 'Manplan' (1969) and finally 'Civilia' (1972).

By the second half of the 1950s the urban design emphasis in *AR*'s townscape policy was expanded to cover the broader consequences of planning, or lack thereof, on the larger environmental scale. This was not only due to a need to expand the limited focus of townscape in order to address planning in a larger scale but was also due to increasing awareness of impending environmental disaster. During the Cold War era, Hastings saw mankind facing demise via its own scientific creation, the atom bomb. Hastings' editorial policies for the *AR* were very much influenced by the threat of nuclear warfare and the decline of the British Empire in a world divided into the mandates of two superpowers. Having witnessed the destruction of the Second World War and being convinced of the urgency of putting an end to the arms race during the Cuban missile crisis, the period brought disbelief in technology and science's promise of emancipation for Hastings.

Within this cultural context *AR* aimed to develop and sustain an environmental culture as a holistic strategy in order to respond to planning problems. Targeting architects, local and national authorities and the man on the street, *AR* launched a series of campaigns that aimed to increase environmental awareness against post-war industrial transformation and the rise of consumerism.

This paper focuses on the neo-romantic ideology that underlay the editorial policies of *AR,* motivated by approaching environmental disaster, which, in due course, affected architectural discourse in Britain. *AR*'s approach attempted to re-articulate the relationship of man to nature as formulated by 18th-century British Romanticism, in opposition to seeing the environment as an object of natural sciences and a resource that can be taken under control and exploited by advanced technology. Based on my archival research, I will emphasize the role of Hastings' manuscript *The Unnatural History of Man* as a programmatic palimpsest for *AR*. I also aim to show how *AR* attempted to overcome the stereotypical clichés of resistance to progress and revivalism attached to its policies by pointing to the necessity to incorporate the means of science and technology into an environmentalist struggle.

I will illustrate my points by making specific references to the last two campaigns of *AR* under Hastings' editorial rein between 1969 and 1972, named 'Manplan' and 'Civilia'. I will then discuss his late ideas that never came to materialize as editorial policy, that is, his turn to ecology as a new guiding framework for environmental planning and architecture.

## A Neo-Romantic Society: Hastings' Britain

*The Architectural Review*'s concern with the environment, aligned with the building of a modern city under 'Townscape', was the reflection of a larger social and cultural project, the precepts of which were alluded to but not explicitly stated. The major figure who laid out this project was Hubert de Cronin Hastings. Hastings is referred to as a 'self-concealing genius' by Nikolaus Pevsner and credited by J. M. Richards as the originator of the interest in the wider environment (Pevsner, 1967; Richards, 1980). It is not clear whether everyone involved in *AR*'s editorial board was aware of Hastings's project completely, or of the ideological ramifications of his intentions. The editorial board was persuaded, if not convinced, that this project's environmental ideals ought to be followed, and that its holistic cultural programme should be translated into the editorial policies of *The Architectural Review*. This social and cultural project was explained in a manuscript written by Hastings, entitled *The Unnatural History of Man* under the pseudonym Ivor de Wolfe. Including some of his writings from the early 1940s, Hastings continuously revised, re-edited and shortened this text to another version, which was published under the title *The Alternative Society* in 1980.[1]

### The unnatural history of man

There is no evidence as to when exactly Hastings wrote *The Unnatural History of Man* other than 'October 1958', typed on one of the chapters by his secretary. The manuscript itself is more than 880 typed pages and the conclusion is missing; or maybe Hastings never finished the initial manuscript. The text, however, incorporates

some of the similar themes and even paragraphs of Hastings's article 'Townscape: A Plea for an English Visual Philosophy Founded on the True Rock of Sir Uvedale Price', which stirred a lot of controversy when it was published in *AR* in 1949. In my opinion, *The Unnatural History of Man* was a palimpsest, written over and over, which incorporated Hastings's thoughts from the late 1940s to the second half of the 1950s. This manuscript also became the backbone of *The Alternative Society* in 1980.

At the time when Hastings's manuscript evolved, Britain's role as a world power as well as its social structure changed dramatically. Assuming a lesser role in comparison to the two rising global powers of the Cold War, the Empire shrank gradually and became a Commonwealth of semi-independent nations. The economy did not get a major relief before the 1960s – the age of pop and the rise of mass culture – and sank even worse in the late 1960s. The increasing influence of the United States on British culture started to disturb some of the British intellectuals, although others were willing to embrace it in the name of liberalism against the paternal welfare state.

The second half of the 1950s also witnessed the New Left's rise in Britain.[2] Britain's imperial aspirations concluded as a result of the Suez Canal crisis. The invasion of Hungary and Khrushchev's denigration of Stalinist policies created a sense of betrayal in the British Left and evoked the need for change to come from outside the home of the October Revolution. According to Dennis Dworkin (1997), the New Left

> came together in response to the Suez and Hungary crises in 1956 and then consolidated in a shared commitment to the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament (CND) of the late fifties and sixties. New Left activists attempted to create a new political space on the Left, and their project was critical to the development of radical historiography and cultural studies in Britain.

Hastings' manuscript, coming from the pen of a high middle-class, public-school educated, late-Victorian gentleman, echoed the then-contemporary developments in the world. His commentary on the contemporary scene was combined with a historical evaluation which stretched from England before the industrial revolution to his day.

### A portrait of doom

The evidence shows that Hastings worked on his manuscript through the 1950s to the 1970s until he published a much-reduced version in 1980, entitled *The Alternative Society*. Written in the form of a reformist manifesto, it is impossible to summarize the contents of the manuscript within the confines of this paper. Throughout the

years that it was being revised, however, the central message of the manuscript was kept intact: a social crisis and a state of paranoia had enveloped Western civilization. The British had to assume a pioneering role to overcome this crisis and stop the approaching disaster, which could bring the end of human civilization.

In the introductory chapter entitled 'New Elizabethan', Hastings set out by drawing a portrait of doom. He argued that there was a prevailing angst in the people of his day, although advocates of technological progress came out with the promise of a better future everyday. His pessimism stemmed from the fact that a holistic vision of life was irrecoverably lost under the influence of the cult of expertise and the pursuit of progress merely via science and technology. A new comprehensive ideological stimulus was needed in order to initiate a 'collective come-back'. For Hastings, it was the duty of the British to propose a new utopian ideal to overcome the Cold War division, like they had offered before and during the birth of the Industrial Revolution via Romanticism.

### The neo-romantic society

Hastings believed that Britain could reinvigorate British cultural traditions and animate them with a reformist spirit to give a utopian message against the two prevailing political models: the savage capitalism represented by the US and the authoritarian socialism represented by the USSR. The new British society could instead be modelled on the political and cultural ideals of the 'Cromwellian revolution' of the 17th century by emulating the reformist political spirit of Oliver Cromwell. Idealizing the protectorate, Hastings argued that Cromwell's vision could be creatively reinterpreted in order to formulate a pluralistic democracy that would safeguard the welfare of every individual as well as that of the natural environment.

In the society he imagined, scientific rationality and technological determinism would only play a secondary role on the human condition. The picturesque, 'a radical, anarchist and disorderly ideal … [and] a tremendous event in the long apprenticeship of democracy' was to be the aesthetic metaphor of libertarian democracy. Hastings even proposed an economic model to reorganize the relationships between the individual, the State and the private sector. In this model the roles of the individual and of the State were configured by an analogy to the 18th-century gentry. The model conceived what he called a 'New Elizabethan' state, as the balancing mechanism that would serve as guardian for the individual against the greed of capitalism. Like the gentry guarding those who cultivated and lived on his land, the State would guard the collective Estate. This collective estate was the total environmental resources of the Nation, owned jointly by the citizenry and the State. The individual by having a stake in the collective Estate would rise to the level of the gentleman as well. There were rare instances in the pages of *AR* when such analogies would be openly stated. In the August 1956 issue, Gordon

Cullen's study of 'Bingham's Melcombe' – a case of wire routing through the rural landscape – argued for 'improvement' as a vital strategy for the environment:

> The curse of the English landscape is the absentee landlord. The old landlord, the man who created it, has been taxed out of existence and the new landlord, local and national authority, lives in town or suburb. Consequently that sense of personal responsibility arising from a knowledge and love of a particular piece of countryside is missing and is replaced by a beneficent but remote control: the difference between a parent and a foster parent. (Cullen, 1956)

One of the aims of *AR*'s environmental policy, therefore, was the transference of these traditional values of the gentry to the citizen and to the planning authorities and the creation of a cultural continuity absolved from its class basis. The ideas in *The Unnatural History of Man* would be more explicit in the later campaigns. Manplan became the first direct initiative for Hastings to disseminate these views within a demand for reform, and Civilia, a fictional new town and the swansong of Townscape, became the dream in which his ideals were given shape in the early 1970s. Before we move on to these campaigns, how *AR* attempted to mobilize environmental consciousness by its earlier effort will be briefly explained.

### Mobilizing Environmental Consciousness

After the Conservative victory in the 1951 elections, the priority given to planning by the previous Labour government gradually faded. At this time, *AR* was fighting a battle on two fronts, one against the Town and Country Planning Association's insistence on low-density policies and its new towns and, second, the government's move away from national planning.

In 'Outrage', the June 1955 special issue under the editorship of Ian Nairn, *AR* warned its readers against blighting the British landscape.[3] Ian Nairn (1930–83) was not an architect or a historian like his fellow *AR* editors or contributors; he was educated in mathematics and was a National Service Royal Air Force pilot. Nairn's knowledge of Britain and environmental problems mostly stemmed from his awareness of the country surveyed from the air (King, 1996). His being an outsider and his sensitivity to the environment must have especially appealed to Hastings, since he believed that *AR* had a duty to develop such sensitivities in its readers even if they were not architects.

In this issue, the journal predicted a bleak future for the British landscape under misguided forces of planning machinery and development. The environmental mess encroaching upon the new towns and their surroundings was called 'Subtopia'.[4] Abandoned air fields as remnants of war, miles of concrete, wire and asphalt with

repetitive homes of ribbon development, precious agricultural land greedily subsumed by pollutant industrial sprawl. The whole issue was devoted to a visual survey of 'outrages' that scarred the face of the land from Southampton to Carlisle, from the south of Britain to the north, inculcating Hastings' prophecy of doom. In the conclusion, *AR* called citizens to action. The salvation of the environment meant the salvation of mankind:

> What must we do to be saved? These pages offer a Manifesto and a call to action, a programme and a checklist of malpractices for which the opponents of Subtopia must be ever on the alert. The programme calls for the development and enhancement of the differences between places, it is oriented towards topographical responsibilities, rather than administrative ones, what can be seen rather than what it says on a piece of paper . . . The action is needed now . . . from all of us. The defence of the individuality of places is the defence of the individuality of ourselves. (Nairn, 1955)

In *AR*'s message, the citizen had become one with his environment, the environment had become the home of the nation. Hence, *AR* urged the citizens and the local authorities to condemn Subtopia and aimed to mobilize them to rehabilitate the damages. The campaign's ultimate intention was to make a 'sufficient [number of] people sufficiently angry' and to bring down the fall of Subtopia. In the concluding manifesto for the 'layman', *AR* stated: 'Don't be afraid that you will be just one individual registering dissent. It is *your* country that is being defaced; it belongs to *you*, and as an individual amongst fifty million individuals, not a "set of income groups" or an "electorate".'

By this patriotic call, 'Outrage' aimed to mobilize the whole population to claim its democratic right to the environment independent of ownership, class or status. It did not matter whether one owned the land or simply enjoyed it as a visitor; as a patriot the responsibility fell on everyone's shoulders. The issue ended with a 'checklist of malpractices' addressing the 'layman'. The checklist was a set of questions to be asked about the towns, the country, the suburbs and the wild. It would provide the necessary public surveillance to keep development and 'wrong' planning practices from 'defacing' the land. Every reader that heeded the message would become the agent of the anti-Subtopian campaign. *AR* also demanded that local authorities commission architects to oversee visual control in the environment and to police Subtopia.

One year later, another special issue called 'Counter-Attack', again under Nairn's editorship, was published to cure 'public helplessness' against Subtopia (Nairn, 1956). While 'Outrage' claimed to diagnose environmental illness, 'Counter-Attack' hoped to provide the antidote for the cure. 'Counter-Attack' construed the public as a body of

people uneducated in environmental visual qualities, speechless victims of the planning machinery detached from the decision-making institutions. Following Townscape pedagogy, 'Counter-Attack' collected precedents into a case-book. These precedents, however, hoped to illustrate how certain solutions succeeded in 'bringing modern life to terms with the landscape' and 'to arm the public against the wrong way and [provide] examples of the right way of doing things'.

'Counter-Attack' suggested that 'a team of expert planners and architects inside the Ministry of Housing free of administrative ties' teach how 'to think visually and to reword the planning legislation'. As a result, *AR* hoped Townscape pedagogy would infiltrate into the very centre of the planning machinery in order to curb sprawl and to check the undesired impact of Subtopia. *AR* also urged the establishment of a body of financial aid for countryside preservation, based on the example of the 'Historic Buildings Council' for the townscapes and landscapes that could act as 'live pattern-books' for the future.

In the conclusion, 'A Vote of Thanks' addressed the authorities which responded to the call to rehabilitate Subtopia, listing and honouring certain county planning authorities, preservation societies and individuals. This note in 'Counter-Attack' testified to the fact that, within the year that passed, 'Outrage' had managed to reach local authorities and organizations. The success of the campaign encouraged the continuity of *AR*'s propagandistic discourse.

Six months after the publication of 'Counter-Attack' in June 1957, *AR* announced the opening of a 'Counter-Attack Bureau' on the cover. Intended to serve as 'a watch and ward service for the good character of visual England', the bureau would help the so-called 'victims of Outrage' by offering them consultation for their planning needs and complaints. It meant that via the consultancy of Gordon Cullen and Ian Nairn, *AR* would be directly involved in the planning problems brought into attention by its readers. Two years later, Nairn published a progress report of the Bureau (Nairn, 1959). The Bureau was frequently consulted. According to Nairn, 200 cases were sent to *AR* in 1958 alone. 'Outrage' remained a permanent feature of *AR* as a section and was emulated by other architecture periodicals during and after Hastings' ownership.

### Manplan versus Non-Plan

Only 15 months after the collapse of Ronan Point, *AR* drastically revamped its structure and contents and launched its 'Manplan' campaign against economic crisis and environmental decline. Reacting against the frustrating results of modern planning, like the new towns and mass housing, Manplan demanded a change in objectives one more time counting the numerous disasters that tainted the 20th century:[5]

What is wanted now is a new image for the twentieth century in its third phase, which will unearth from beneath the lumber of war, napalm, famine, genocide, concentration camps, conveyor belts, population explosions, sonic booms and silent springs, a mission--and a determination--to swing the new potential of technology as revealed in the moon probes, behind the real objectives of human society. The British are bad technocrats, good humanisers. Or were once. It could be a role.[6]

Manplan was published in the form of visual essays followed by short captions to address the changes in mass media and aimed to strike visual society by the force that brought it into being. Written in the rhetoric of 'revolutionary humanism', as *AR* called it, the first issue aimed to voice 'the sense of frustration' that British society suffered. Photographs portrayed British people in a frenzy of production in industrial plants, waiting in boredom in overcrowded public transportation, students revolting, cars overcrowding eighteenth century parks and invading the countryside, high-rise office and housing towers invading London. The editorial introductions, presumably written by Hastings, sounded the critique in *The Unnatural History of Man* that he must have been revising at this time for *The Alternative Society*.

According to Richards, 'Manplan' was coined by Hastings as another catchy neologism to attract *AR* readership, but what Richards overlooked was that it directly opposed another phrase, 'Non-Plan'. Opposing the ideas put forward in 'Non-Plan: An Experiment in Freedom', an essay written by Reyner Banham, Peter Hall, Paul Barker and Cedric Price in *New Society* in 1969, 'Manplan' demanded centralization and comprehensive planning against decentralization and dispersal as a means of planning democracy. According to the editors scientific progress enjoined to consumer culture and ever-expanding economic growth brought a ruthless exploitation of resources as well as destruction of the natural landscape.

'Non-Plan: An Experiment in Freedom' was published six months earlier in the *New Society*. In the form of a counter-cultural critique Banham and Hall demanded an experiment in planning democracy by lifting planning restrictions and allowing people more freedom of choice, arguing for decentralization and dispersal (Banham *et al.*, 1969). Manplan was directly opposed to the idea in order to prevent its popularity as a nationwide policy. Instead of 'letting planning loose', the editors once more stipulated a comprehensive planning mechanism. Instead of 'Non-Plan' they wanted 'man to plan'.

Although they occupied antithetical poles, both 'Manplan' and 'Non-Plan' were reactions against the planning practices that had been employed until the late 1960s. What separated them was their respective ideological support for the uses of technology and for 'pop culture'. While 'Non-Plan' applauded the freedom of choice that consumer culture brought forward, 'Manplan' was highly sceptical

of it. As 'Non-Plan' was enthusiastic about decentralization and dispersal, 'Manplan' argued that the whole 20th-century planning experience was a proof of its failure. If 'Non-Plan's' favourite cities were Los Angeles and Las Vegas, 'Manplan's' were London, traditional British market towns and Italian hill towns.

The issues, starting from the second, were thematically organized around communication (referring to transportation networks), industry, education, religion, healthcare and welfare, local government and finally housing. With each issue, 'Manplan' deployed an attack on the bureaucratic mechanisms that organized the above-mentioned fields and the inefficiencies of the democratic consumer society. The editors maintained that the logic of the Industrial Revolution was no longer applicable and the communications revolution had started. Manplan demanded that politicians exert control on the disruptive effects of transportation and industry on the environment by drawing out a holistic, integrative structure. Transportation, it argued, had to rely extensively on fast rail and canals to dominate over the car and air with airports pushed to coastal areas and linked by fast trains. Arguing that industry had become less polluting, 'Manplan' reverted to the earlier arguments of 'Townscape' to reintegrate the separated functions of the city. The editors opposed the continuity of the new towns experience by arguing that industrial concentration proved to be wrong and expensive. In the fourth issue on education, 'Manplan' attacked the British public schools system as elitist and creating 'a self-perpetuating oligarchy' instead of creating a unified society. In order to produce a society divested of class segregation, schools had to be integrated into the community and designed by user participation. Arguing that science is almost elevated to the status of religion, *AR*'s romantic bias within this reformist rhetoric took a new turn with 'Manplan's' fifth issue on religion. *AR* advocated that in the world of the early 1970s, which was becoming more and more suspicious of the objective truth of science, religion would assume a new unifying role and increase 'man's chance of unfolding the ill effects of industrialization'. 'Civilia' would follow 'Manplan' as a commentary on urbanism and industrialization in the light of the ideals stated in 'Manplan'.

### 'Civilia': A Picturesque New Town on Brownfields

The transfer of Hastings' ideals expressed in *The Unnatural History of Man* into architecture and city planning continued until the last campaign of his editorial rein. After withdrawing 'Manplan' due to the decline in sales, Hastings thought that he could affect planning authorities and the people of Britain by promoting an alternative new town that would incorporate the environmental ideals that *AR* had been preoccupied with in the last twenty five years. If a convincing precedent could be created, it could be followed by others. This alternative town would be called 'Civilia' (de Wolfe, 1971).

Although 'Townscape', 'Outrage' and 'Counter-Attack' – which were the ancestral campaigns of 'Civilia' in the 1950s – had expressed an explicit anti-expertise attitude and attempted to remedy the fallacies of planning by visual and psychological responses, 'Civilia' included a planner's report.[7] The two planners approved Hastings' agendas by stating that 20th-century planning policies had been threatening city centres. They recommended a 'reversal of present, largely unplanned decentralisation trends by injecting new centres strategically placed' to attract sprawl and to rehabilitate existing centres. The 'utopian' schemes of the early 20th century had to be abandoned as it was impossible to create 'a definable and controllable "balanced community" that can be accommodated within an architectural unity expressed in the form of a new town.'

The choice of location for 'Civilia' responded to environmental concerns and the town was proposed for a site near north Nuneaton, on old quarries. The site was found remarkable for the 'picturesque visual drama' due to abrupt level changes and the exposed rock surfaces of the quarry, as well as its central location in terms of sprawl. It offered a fantastic opportunity for Hastings to realize his dream: The town would direct technology for the benefit of the environment by rehabilitating a brownfield site and create a centre of attraction by solving the problems of earlier urban developments. The romantic dream to be at peace with nature entailed its healing. Civilia was represented via photomontage images that brought together photographs from Hastings' 1963 book *The Italian Townscape* and of well-known projects from the pages of *AR* such as Moshe Safdie's Habitat, the viewing platforms of the South Bank exhibition and Paul Rudolph's Yale School of Architecture. By employing collage and photomontage Hastings also aimed to point to the fact that the modern citizen could easily come up with his or her dream of a city.

While 'Civilia', like *AR*'s other campaigns, owed its power to the visual content that accompanied its provocative texts, this visual language also proved to be its ultimate weakness. Although the texts hypothesized that it was possible, it still did not have a plan, an analysis of material necessities, the types of industries it could support or the specific urban problems it would create a solution for, other than the existing sprawl. Its final image implied a total control of form, contradicting its first principle, user participation. It was a romantic utopia with an anti-utopian aim, but it ended up being no less 'authoritarian' than the Ville Radieuse of Le Corbusier, which Hastings had attacked since the start of his editorial career in the late 1920s.

## Conclusion: The Neo-Romantic Compromise: Ecology

The resistance of *AR*'s editorial policies to decentralization and its aim to keep the city compact and dense obeyed the ethical imperative to preserve the resources that fed the city from the very moment of 'Townscape's' inception in the late 1940s. Preserving

these resources meant preserving the livelihood of those who cultivated these resources, as well as the landscape as a means of rehabilitation for the citizens. While Hastings aimed to translate the values of the 18th century gentry into the 20th century, he also transformed this figure into a warrior of ecology. 'Culture in resistance' was directed to environmentalist action. The economic downturn in Britain in the late 1960s, as well as the student riots, convinced Hastings that he should question British society via 'Manplan'. Aiming to portray the possibility of an urban utopia that could cure the environmental defects that emerged as a result of the post-war industrial transformation, 'Civilia' presented *AR*'s final answer to the new towns.

After Hastings disbanded the editorial board and became editorial administrator over a body of younger editors in 1971, he wanted to reformulate *AR*'s environmental emphasis. Among Hastings's documents are memoranda to the board, which show that he aimed to start a series of articles by taking the January 1972 issue of *The Ecologist* – subtitled 'A Blueprint for Survival' - as a springboard. A pioneering document of the environmental movement, the campaign that the Ecologist started with 'A Blueprint for Survival' created the foundation of the Green Party in Britain (Pearce, 2000). Pointing to the 'gravity of the global situation', *The Ecologist* demanded 'a new philosophy of life and a precise and comprehensive programme' for creating the society that could implement this philosophy (Goldsmith *et al.*, 1972). Hastings' prophecy of doom in *The Unnatural History of Man* (1958) was vindicated in 1971 by the support of a large group of scientists that signed *The Ecologist*'s manifesto.[8] Under the protective umbrella of environmentalism, neo-romanticism made its peace with science.

Hastings also aimed to contact the leaders of the environmentalist movement like Max Nicholson (1904–2003) and Bob Boote, founders and administrators of institutions such as the World Wildlife Foundation and British Nature Conservancy. Nicholson had already written articles for *AR* during the 1960s, which aimed to ally scientific research, the use of technology, natural conservation and planning. The existence of this document and *The Ecologist* within Hastings' papers indicate that Hastings' project to align *AR*'s editorial policies with the concerns of global ecology and green politics remained incomplete after he retired. To overcome the apocalyptic vision of industrialization and economic growth, Hastings had recognized that *AR*'s cultural programme had to articulate a new role for science and technology within a global framework. However it was time for him to turn this project over to the younger generation of editors that he put in charge.

### Notes

1. The original manuscript is in the possession of Miss Priscilla Hastings, the daughter of Hubert de Cronin Hastings, who kindly allowed me to see it.

2. The emergence of the New Left is generally regarded as a result of British intellectuals' disenchantment with Stalinist politics and a move away from the dominance of the USSR for redefining socialist theory and practice. On the New Left, see Dworkin (1997) and Kenny (1995).

3. Nairn later wrote for the *Observer* and the *Sunday Times* and collaborated with Pevsner on the 'Buildings of England' series for Surrey (1962) and Sussex (1965). Nairn's contribution to architectural discourse has not been thoroughly researched. although Gavin Stamp's article provides a very useful introduction in 'Ian Nairn', *Twentieth Century Architecture: The Journal of the Twentieth Century Society* (7): 19–30. In his memoirs Richards, understandably, refers to him as 'Hastings's man more than mine' (Richards, 1980). His *Nairn's London* (1966) by Penguin and *Guide to Modern Buildings* (1964) for London Transport, has proven to be very popular (King, 1996).

4. 'Subtopia: Making an ideal of Suburbia'. Visually speaking, the universalization and idealization of our town fringes. Philosophically, the idealization of the little man who lives there (from suburb+utopia).' (See Nairn, 1955.) The term 'Subtopia' later became very popular and started to be used for monotonous urban sprawl.

5. 'Manplan' was published as four consecutive issues starting from September 1969, after which it became bi-monthly until the last issue appeared in September 1970, totalling eight. Peter Davey, in his contribution to the special *AR* centennial number in 1996, notes that Hastings insisted on the change from the earlier layout of *AR* into the form of visual essays. Richards opposed the idea and opted for the publication of special issues as before to keep the contents of *AR* tailored to the existing readership. As Richards had anticipated, *AR* went into a financial crisis in 1970 as a result of the 'Manplan' series. This opposition seems to have led to the whole renewal of the editorial board between 1971 and 1974 starting with the sacking of Richards from the position of executive editor and the departure of Pevsner. Also see Richards's opposition to the campaign in his *Memoirs of an Unjust Fella* where he declared that he refused to take part (Richards, 1980).

6. No signature was given for the quote provided, though it is likely that Hastings wrote this piece.

7. The planners are listed as Rodney Carran (DipTP, AMTPI) and Michael Rowley (AADip, ARIBA).

8. The manifesto's opening lines stated: 'The principal defect of the industrial way of life with its ethos of expansion is not sustainable. Its termination within the lifetime of someone born today is inevitable – unless it continues to be sustained for a while longer by an entrenched minority at the cost of imposing great suffering on the rest of mankind. We can be certain however that sooner

or later it will end … either against our will, in a succession of famines, epidemics, social crises and wars; or because we want it to – because we wish to create a society which will not impose hardship and cruelty upon our children – in a succession of thoughtful, humane and measured changes.' (Goldsmith *et* al., 1972).

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## Biography

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