Modernism's death after the first energy crisis of the 1970s and the start of the ecology movement, subsequent stylistic movements have shown little recognition of nature, preferring instead to link with critical theory in Poststructuralism. Nor have they had the century-long influence of Modernism with its focus on the important worldwide issue of mechanization. In making a strong case for sustainable architecture, Professor James Steele has written that following Modernism was a 25-year run of Postmodernism, to be replaced in turn by Deconstructivism. Hyped in their turn as the styles of the moment, "the half-lives of subsequent movements seem to have diminished radically."[3]

Yet there are important exceptions to the general indifference of the design community to designing with nature. There are some good examples of solar design in the United States but most have been single buildings, not whole communities. Timothy Beatley, professor of urban and environmental planning, has explained that planners and local officials in the United States can learn from the sustainable-cities movement in Europe where technical and public policy innovations promoting solar design have been adopted. He points out that solar has gained considerable ground there, especially in Germany, the Netherlands, and the Scandinavian countries. Solar is now commonly incorporated into new construction and redevelopment projects. "Several cities . . . are even beginning to describe themselves as 'solar cities,' most notably Frieberg, Berlin, and Saarbruken in Germany."[4]

There are important lessons to be drawn from Beatley's descriptions of solar-design gains in Europe. The first is that the cities he mentions are all in latitudes around 50°N, a highly significant fact proving that nearly all of the world's cities can use solar energy. And the second lesson is that compact urban form and other sustainable design measures need not conflict with a high quality of life. Indeed, just the opposite. "Compact, denser, walkable com-

munities offer tremendous amenities, social and environmental, and are life-enhancing as well as ecologically restorative."[5]

Besides offering the potential to resolve worldwide energy problems, the new architecture must offer variety and choice for those who spend time in a place. Students in my design studio brought this basic fact home to me a few years ago. One spring afternoon, they complained about not being able to relieve conditions in the studio simply by opening a window to the pleasantly cool outside breeze. Since the subject of the studio was designing with nature, I had much sympathy with their frustration in a totally sealed, uniformly conditioned building. When the class met again, the studio was notably more pleasant. The students had unscrewed and set aside the obscure panels below the windows, admitting the most wonderfully refreshing breeze. After some discussion of the matter, we agreed that the panels would surreptitiously stay open for the few remaining weeks of the spring semester. But then they would be quietly replaced for the next class to figure out its own choices for comfort.

People really do need to experience diversity and change, not monotone and universal homogeneity. It is certainly true that there is no pleasure in being uncomfortable. But our systems do not need to deny any variation that might call us to make choices, to give us individual control. Architect Louis Kahn anticipated the potential of variety and choice when he said of his design for the Exeter Library, "You get a book and move toward the light." With that simple declaration, he made a design connection between the dynamism of space, nature, and our participation in it.

The new architecture of the sun will integrate sophisticated mechanical–electrical systems with the more traditional means of migration, transformation, and metabolism. In a more balanced approach to environmental regulation, there is what architect Lisa Heschong has described as the potential for "sensuality, cultural