This piece of work had an extraordinarily lasting effect on thinking about design method. It is all the more remarkable since there is only one reported attempt to use the method and that did not result in any obvious success (Hanson 1969). The reason for the failure of Alexander's method results from his erroneous assumptions about the true nature of design problems, and we discuss this in the next chapter. However, that generation of design methodology for which Alexander's work now stands as a symbol was motivated by the common unease shared by designers about the inadequacy of their models of reality. Unfortunately the new models, which were frequently borrowed from operations research or behaviourist psychology, were to prove just as inadequate and inaccurate as designing by drawing (Daley 1969). Perhaps the real reason for the influence of Alexander's work was that it signalled yet another change in the designer's role. The issue no longer seemed to be one of protecting the individuality and identity of designers but, rather, had become the problem of exercising what Jones called 'collective control' over designers' activities. Somehow the whole process had to become more open to inspection and critical evaluation. The model of scientific method proved irresistible. Scientists made explicit not just their results but also their procedures. Their work could be replicated and criticised and their methods were above suspicion. How nice it would be if designers followed such a clear, open and public process! This idea caused many writers to develop models of the design process itself and we shall examine some of these in the next section. But where does all this leave the designer's role in society today?

Future roles of the designer

In our current state of uncertainty it is hardly valid to give a definitive view of the future, or even present, role of the designer. Cross (1975) asks us to consider whether we are now entering a post-industrial society and consequently in need of a post-industrial design process. The difficulty with this question is really how one views the prospect of life in such a post-industrial society. This issue is essentially a political debate about the extent to which we wish to decentralise the centres of power in our society. Some writers hail the looming energy crisis as providing the critical push towards a return to self-sufficiency. Others claim that the inertia of our technological development is too great to be stopped and that we shall

find other means of providing centralised forms of energy. Thus our views about the future role of designers are inevitably linked to the kind of direction in which we wish society to go. Markus (1972) suggests three broad views which designers today may hold about their role in society.

The first role is essentially conservative, centred around the continued dominance of the professional institutions. In such a role designers remain unconnected with either clients or makers. They passively await the client's commission, produce a design and withdraw from the scene. There are already real problems with this approach. In the case of architecture the client may often be some branch of government or a large commercial organisation, and in such cases architects frequently become employees rather than consultants. We might expect that an architect seeking out this conservative role would be supported by the RIBA, but professional bodies tend to respond to threats against their roles by gradually redefining their role (Elliot 1972). Thus, when the traditional role of building designer is threatened by obsolescence, changing technology or the changing nature of the client, architects may either seek to redefine themselves as the leaders of a multi-professional team or withdraw to the earlier territory of aesthetic and functional designer. It seems doubtful that a professional body such as the RIBA can continue for long to support both the general private practitioner and salaried government employee. In many ways this role has come under a considerable double threat recently. Governments in many countries seem to be following the lead given by Margaret Thatcher in dismantling public sector service professional departments and by portraying the professional bodies and institutes as protectionist rather than concerned with the public good.

The opposite to this conservative approach is actively to seek different structural changes in society but which also would result in the end of professionalism as we know it. Such a revolutionary approach would lead the designer to associate directly with user groups. Since this kind of designer is also likely to believe in a decentralised society he or she would be happiest when dealing with the disadvantaged, such as the tenants of slum clearance areas, or the revolutionary such as self-sufficiency communes. In this role the designer deliberately forsakes positions of independence and power. Such designers no longer see themselves as leaders but as campaigners and spokespeople. A significant difficulty with this role is that since these kinds of client/user groups are unlikely to control any resources valued outside their limited