



Spring/Summer 2018

Hb: 978-1-1382-1312-8 | eBook: 978-1-315-44912-8 |

TABLE OF CONTENTS:

Chapter One

The Positivist Imagination: Civic Virtue, Sociology and City Design

Chapter Two

Auguste Comte: Envisioning Utopia

Chapter Three

Richard Congreve: A Systematic Policy for Imperial Devolution

Chapter Four

Frederic Harrison: A Social Programme for an Industrial Republic

Chapter Five

Charles Booth: Moralising Space, Positivist Sociology and Limited Socialism

Chapter Six

Patrick Geddes: A Culture Policy for Garden City-states

Chapter Seven

Victor Branford: City Design, the Third Alternative

Conclusion

Altruistic Agencies

Moralising Space

The Utopian Urbanism of the British Positivists, 1855-1920

By **Matthew Wilson**

College of Architecture and Planning,
Ball State University, Muncie, Indiana, USA

Amidst the soot, stink and splendour of Victorian London a coterie of citizen-sociologists set out to break up the British Empire. They were the followers of the French philosopher Auguste Comte, a controversial figure who introduced the modern science of sociology and the republican Religion of Humanity.

Moralising Space examines how from the 1850s Comte's British followers practised this science and religion with the aim to create a global network of 500 utopian city-states. The book shows that through to the interwar period, affiliates to the British Positivist Society – Richard Congreve, Frederic Harrison, Charles Booth, Patrick Geddes and Victor Branford – attempted to realise Comte's utopian network called the Occidental Republic. Much to the consternation of the church, state and landed aristocracy the Positivists organised urban interventions, led ad hoc sociological surveys and propagated polemical programmes for producing idyllic city-communities.

Moralising Space traces how the Positivists' humanist activism, aiming to coordinate science and industry to improve the lives of the masses, percolated into the works of Ebenezer Howard, Patrick Abercrombie, Louis Sullivan, Frank Lloyd Wright, HP Berlage, Walter Gropius, Le Corbusier and the Smithsons. Effectively this book contributes to our understanding of Positivism as a utopian spatial design praxis and thus to our knowledge of how it served as an impetus to the early modern movements of architecture and urbanism.

Matthew Wilson is an Assistant Professor of Architecture at Ball State University. He earned a Master of Arts with distinction from the Architectural Association and a PhD in History from Royal Holloway, University of London. As an intellectual historian Wilson's research focuses on the political, philosophical and epistemological movements of spatial design.

20% Discount with this flyer!
enter the code FLR40 at checkout

Hb: 978-1-1382-1312-8 | £84.00 UK/\$124.00 USD