Chapter 39. POSTSCRIPT
TWO QUOTES
By R. R. Reno & Christopher Alexander

“Bright, energetic, ambitious ... students ... possessed an amazing ability to understand without being moved, to experience without judging, to self-consciously put forward their own convictions as mere opinions. On the whole, they seemed to have interior lives of Jell-O... The guillotine of professorial intervention need fall only once or twice before students realize that all truths are relative, and some are more relative than others... Whether students lack convictions or disguise them, the educational effect is pretty much the same. The most important question in people’s lives — that is to say, the question of how they should live — remains largely unconnected to the sophisticated intellectual training that continues to take place in the classroom.” — R. R. Reno.

“Around 1990, I was on the board of accreditation of Rice University. And there I was, talking to students, talking with faculty. To everyone I met, student or faculty, the dean, whatever, I said: “Do you know the difference between a good building and a bad building, and can you explain it?” And everybody said “No”. I mean, there were very few people who said “No, and I regret it”, or “No, isn’t that weird?” Some students did, especially the younger ones. So when we had to write our report, and everyone said, “So what do you think, does this school pass?” I said “No. Absolutely not. It’s a joke.” And it became a really serious problem. They didn’t know what to do with me. Finally, they got the president, because this was really embarrassing. I wasn’t a big enough person to be really worrisome, but... ” — Christopher Alexander.


** Extract from the unedited transcript of a 2002 interview by Wendy Kohn, sponsored by the Wilson Quarterly. Taken with permission from Patternlanguage.com.