The crisis of urbanism is worsening. The construction of neighborhoods, old and new, is obviously at variance with established modes of behavior, and all the more so with the new ways of life we seek. As a result, we are surrounded by a dull and sterile environment.

In old neighborhoods, the streets have degenerated into highways, and leisure is commercialized and adulterated by tourism. Social relations there become impossible. Newly built neighborhoods have only two themes, which govern everything: traffic circulation and household comfort. They are the meager expressions of bourgeois happiness and lack any concern for play.

In response to the need to construct whole towns rapidly, cemeteries in reinforced concrete are being built where great masses of the population are condemned to die of boredom. For what is the use of the most astonishing technical inventions that the world now finds at its disposal if the conditions for deriving benefit from them are lacking, they contribute nothing to leisure, and the imagination defaults?

We require adventure. Not finding it any longer on earth, there are those who want to look for it on the moon. We opt first and foremost for a change on earth. We propose to create situations here, new situations. We intend to break the laws that prevent the development of meaningful activities in life and culture. We find ourselves at the dawn of a new era, and we are already trying to outline the image of a happier life and a unitary urbanism—urbanism made to please.

Our domain is thus the urban network, the natural expression of a collective creativity, capable of understanding the creative forces being released with the decline of a culture based on individualism. To our way of thinking, the traditional arts will no longer be able to play a role in the creation of the new environment in which we want to live.

We are in the process of inventing new techniques; we are examining the possibilities offered by existing cities, and making models and plans for future ones. We are aware of the need to take advantage of all the new technologies, and

* * Internationale situationniste 3 (December 1959), pp. 37–40.
we know that the future constructions we envisage will have to be flexible enough to respond to a dynamic conception of life, creating our surroundings in direct relation to constantly changing modes of behavior.

Our concept of urbanism is thus a social one. We are opposed to the concept of a garden city, where spaced and isolated skyscrapers must necessarily reduce direct relations among people and their common action. For close relations between surroundings and behavior to be produced, the agglomeration is indispensable. Those who think that the rapidity with which we move around and the possibility of telecommunications are going to dissolve the common life of agglomerations have little idea of humanity's true needs. Instead of the idea of a garden city, which most modern architects have adopted, we set up the image of the covered city, where the layout of thoroughfares and isolated buildings has given way to a continuous spatial construction, elevated above the ground, and which will include groups of dwellings as well as public spaces (permitting modifications of purpose depending on the needs of the moment). Since all traffic, in the functional sense, will pass underneath or on overhead terraces, streets can be done away with. The great number of different traversable spaces of which the city is composed form a vast and complex social space. Far from a return to nature—the notion of living in a park, as solitary aristocrats once did—we see in such immense constructions the possibility of overcoming nature and regulating at will the atmosphere, lighting, and sounds in these various spaces.

Do we mean by this a new functionalism that will put increased emphasis on the idealized utilitarian life? Let us not forget that once the functions are established, they are followed by play. For some time now architecture has become a game of space and environment. The garden city lacks environments. We, on the contrary, want to take advantage of them more consciously; we want them to correspond to all our needs.
The future cities we envisage will offer an unusual variety of sensations in this realm, and unforeseen games will become possible through the inventive use of material conditions, such as air-conditioning and the control of sound and lighting. Urban planners are already studying how to harmonize the cacophony that reigns in present-day cities. Before long they should find there a new area for creation, as with many other problems that will emerge. Space travel, which has been predicted, may influence this development, since bases established on other planets will immediately raise the problem of sheltered cities, which may provide the model for our study of future urbanism.

Above all, however, the decreased amount of work necessary for production due to extensive automation will create a need for leisure, different behavior and a change in its nature, which will necessarily lead to a new conception of the collective habitat having the maximum of social space, contrary to the concept of a garden city, where social space is reduced to the minimum. The city of the future must be conceived as a continuous construction on pillars, or else as an extended system of different constructions, in which premises for living, pleasure, etc., are suspended, as well as those designed for production and distribution, leaving the ground free for circulation and public meetings. The use of ultra-light and insulating materials, now being tried experimentally, will allow for light construction and broadly spaced supports. In this way it will be possible to build a multilayered city: underground, ground level, stories, terraces, of an expanse that may vary from a neighborhood to a metropolis. Note that in such a city the built surface will be 100 percent and the free surface 200 percent (parterre and terraces), while in traditional cities the figures are approximately 80 percent and 20 percent; in the garden city this ratio can at most be reversed. The terraces form an outdoor terrain that extends over the whole.

Section view of a covered city.
surface of the city, and which can be used for sports, as landing pads for planes and helicopters, and for vegetation. They will be accessible everywhere by stairways and elevators. The different levels will be divided into neighboring and communicating spaces, artificially conditioned, which will make it possible to create an infinite variety of environments, facilitating the casual movement of the inhabitants and their frequent encounters. The environments will be regularly and consciously changed, with the help of all technological means, by teams of specialized creators, who will thus be professional Situationists.

A study in depth of the means of creating environments and their psychological influence is one of the tasks we are presently undertaking. Studies involving the technical achievement of supporting structures and their aesthetics are the specific task of artist-architects and engineers. The contribution of the latter above all is an urgent necessity if we are to make progress in the preparatory work we are undertaking.

If the project we have just set forth in a few broad outlines risks being considered a fanciful dream, we insist on the fact that it is feasible from the technical standpoint, desirable from the human standpoint, and that from the social standpoint it will be indispensable. The growing dissatisfaction that grips all of humanity will reach a point where we will all be driven to carry out projects for which we possess the means, and that will contribute to the realization of a richer and more rewarding life.