

Ada Louise Huxtable and the Exaltation of Reinforced Concrete Utilitarian Buildings in the Mainstream Press: The beginnings of architectural criticism of the engineer's role

*Alberto Bologna*

Ada Louise Huxtable's interest in the impact of civil engineering on architectural conceptualization goes hand in hand with her curiosity in construction history, and was present from the early years of her career, when she studied the work of Ransome. She went to Italy in 1950-52 as a Fulbright scholar and met Nervi. This period led her to become the most authoritative mainstream press critic to treat engineers' works like that of architects, giving them great visibility. Upon her return to America, Huxtable began to publish articles on American utilitarian iconic buildings. But it is her 1960 book, *Pier Luigi Nervi*, which achieved a breakthrough. Huxtable entered the debate on the inappropriate dichotomy between the role of the architect and that of the engineer. Her critical approach and considerations are part of a cultural moment in which engineering works begin to be analysed, considered and exposed on a par with true works of art.

Biography

Alberto Bologna, Architect, Ph.D in History of Architecture and Town Planning, trained at Politecnico di Torino, in Italy. Since 2011 he is scientist (post-doc) at the Laboratoire de théorie et d'histoire 3 (LTH3) at the École Polytechnique Fédérale de Lausanne (EPFL), in Switzerland.