

## *Conclusion*

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The preceding chapters have distinguished the fundamental topics of architectural theory as universal underpinnings, conventions, principles, and convolutions, the last three characteristic respectively of the eras before 1800, from 1800 to 1965, and after 1965. This categorization associates the types of theory with the chronological circumstances of their development, but it does not foreclose the validity of employing the earlier theories in the present. Old theories have a way of reasserting their value, either in combination with new theories or as options alongside the others. The distinctive characteristic of the most recent theories, those designated as convolutions, is their capacity to enrich and enlarge the scope of design potentialities without voiding the ability of the older theories to nurture culturally relevant designs. In other words, it is still possible to create worthwhile buildings using the theory of classical conventions—even with a computer—just as it is also possible to do so with the theory of modernist principles. Indeed, to embrace the convolutions as the only theories relevant to the present is to risk falling into a morass of self-indulgence. The architect who would be maximally free to produce optimal designs for particular situations is one who recognizes the importance of being conversant with the entire range of architectural theory, free to pick and choose theories according to their appropriateness to a given situation.