so did Stirling. Nevertheless, it is fascinating for an historian like myself to see that when Schubert's precepts about the use of a filtering interlayer, the use of an anamorphic blashet of air between the two planes, the placing of light sources between the planes (but not beams) and all the rest of it, the result is quite as marvelous as he prophesied it would be in 1814. I have not yet seen the History Faculty from outside after dark, so I don't know if it fulfills the Schubertian role of an "aisle reflector" illuminated light (Leicester Hall is magnificently, of course, one can hope) but in one way the interiors are right against Schubert's ideas, and the appropriate一只手 of Schubertian practice as well. Wherever light is required under opaque, not glassed, ceilings, it comes from the filtered fluorescent tubes, without shades or diffusers, mounted on surfaces painted hard glass white. As described, it sounds awful, as experienced is it never troublesome (light for reading will be supplied locally be fittings on the desks and lends a certain sparkle to distant views through the book-stacks, etc.

At least, that is how it appears to be the main reading room. In the smaller seminar rooms and offices the situation may prove different. There are bound to be complaints about the lighting because that is a fashionable thing to complain about, but even when allowable

human ecologies and academic conservation has been made, it seems possible that detail modifications will be made in some of the rooms because of localized patches of glass or shadow. Already, in some of the smaller rooms on the west face of the building and in corridors up on the top floor, there have had to be remedial alterations to cope with thermal problems (extra ventilation, venetian blinds, etc.)

However, there are some persistent moral doubts about the environmental conditions in the smaller spaces which do not spring from the basic design of the building (it should be remembered that its construction had to be turned through ninety degrees after design was completed, through fault of the architect) but from the original provisions made for controlling heat and light, and the level of performance demanded of the occupants.

The ventilation provided is hot water convection in the upstand beam on the edge of the floor slab, ventilating loxaxes in the patent glazing, and venetian blinds hung in the space between the glazing and the upstand. Now, with the hulking intention of preventing direct sunlight, the loxaxes are placed so that they are masked by the up-stand, and their control handles are therefore a little difficult to reach. But they are also masked by the venetian blind when these are in the down position (which they normally will be on days just enough) to require adjustments to the loxaxes is quite to easy get on top of control handles twisted up in the slats of the blind.

Situations like this are governed by Murphy's Law (also known as Fagy's Law) which predicts the probability of mechanical disaster by the formula: if anything can happen, it will. Such probabilities are high anyway, but in this case they are likely to be raised by the fact that most of the rooms of the building will be humanities-collected, and therefore likely to fail below the national average, because of the need to accommodate the size of the classes. Controls that get fouled up through mismanagement by the student body will tend to be left in that condition while the occupants make verbal revenge on the architecture. If revenge cannot be taken, it may be on the University Grants Committee as the agent of a policy of allowing building budgets too skimpy to permit decent environmental installations, which in this case would be the complete automation of the environment or controlled enough to provide idealization upon which the human budget cannot.

The best solution was the environment provided by Stirling and his consultants will require some skill to expect from the proper employment throughout the building. Not only in the main room, but in the larger volume of the room in the reading rooms as well, the environment requires conscious manipulation by a responsive interplay between the architectural principles for housing, lighting and ventilation is incorporated in the indoor decor which is also the command post from which an assistant library supervises the library and its contents, so that the library's life is a circulation of the library under the hand of a single person——let us hope that the library goes the way of kind of capricious (or design directive) it deserves.

It may seem eccentric to have begun thus, with the environmental mechanics, in discussing a building in a context where problems of style and cultural values are usually taken to be pre-eminent, but the peculiar relationship of the History Faculty building to the Cambridge scene can only be tackled in this way, to my opinion. Let me explain at once that my opinion is that of a persistent user of both libraries and seminar rooms, with fairly well-developed professional reflexes, especially where libraries are concerned.

What makes a library a good place to work in, and thus an effective contributor to the cultural values of the university which is a member, is complex, and ultimately engages almost every known aspect of architecture. That engagement begins with the creation of a satisfactory life-support system of heat, light and ventilation, but many of the problems that are discussed above (this is obvious, yet there are too many libraries that fail even at this physiological level, and every scholar has his private black list). But even in terms of physical comfort, the matter is a good deal more subtle, and extends well beyond what mechanical services can provide.

Thus the business of working with books is a primarily cognitive affair, but the provision of adequate light of the right colour and quality does not itself give adequate service of this function. It is physically impossible to keep one's eyes on the print for more than a certain period of time (varying with one's own psychophysical makeup and the nature of what one is being read) and what is seen when the eyes are lifted is crucial. Not only must the length of focus, but what is seen in long focus must possess certain qualities too.

As far as I can make out from my own experience, one's eyes are then different from what is seen in the desk in front of the reader. It might be the view out of a window into the campus or city beyond, or it might be an architectural interior striking enough to hold the interest of the viewer——not unlike a perspective of bookshelves and eight-foot high suspended ceiling, but something like the handcrafted sparseness of Mackintosh's library at the Glasgow School of Art, or the upholstered cofferings of the Eiffel

The History Faculty does not provide either a classroom view from its reading rooms that can be actively enjoyed—and this is not intended as a value judgement on other buildings in

The space between the near-aware and the distant earth with the History Faculty, the transparency to long enough to reach the planes between the external facess of the near-awareness of the near-awareness, the distantly placed, and the position of the ventilating louvers.

A diagram of the reading room as seen from an environmental view.

The space between the near-aware and the distant earth with the History Faculty the transparency to long enough to reach the planes between the external facess of the near-awareness, the distantly placed, and the position of the ventilating louvers.